

Careful Who You Run With

The topic Deceptive appearances, wrong choices

The object A Hershey chocolate bar and Ex-Lax. Break off a piece of each so they look similar.

The lesson Hold up both pieces (supposedly, both are chocolate). As you speak, gesture as if you're offering them to this or that student—but never actually let them out of your hand. On the basis of appearances alone, we might be happy

to have some of this chocolate for a treat.

The result for choosing this one

(show the chocolate) is pleasure, a zit or two,

and maybe some extra weight. The result of choosing this one, however (show the Ex Lax), is extra time in the bathroom.

Appearances can't always tell you what the best choice is.



Scripture warns us that the promises and claims of today's false prophets may seem sweet and tasty—but when we consume their ideas and philosophies, there's turmoil waiting on the inside.

That's why Scripture instructs us to look deeper than just the outside appearance when making choices—to look instead toward the fruit, or result, of the decision. In fact, this one question can save you a lot of grief: *If I make this choice, how will it turn out in the end?* Just like choosing between these very similar looking squares, what you swallow can lead to very different outcomes.

The Word Matthew 7:15-20; Amos 2:4-5
See also Proverbs 13:5, 21:28

Discussion starters

1. Where in our culture today do you hear the voices of false prophets?
2. **What sort of disguises do these false prophets wear** (sexy, successful, intellectual)?
3. What kind of lies are false prophets telling us these days?
4. Give examples of "good fruit" and "bad fruit" in your life. What kind of results, or fruit, are you looking for?

Life changers

1. Through which influences are you personally *most* exposed to the lies of the false prophets: Friends? Music? Movies? TV? Family? Magazines? Teachers? Or—?
2. When you're making a decision, are you more inclined to ask, "How do I want this to come out in the end?" or to tell yourself, "This is what I want to consume now"?
3. Think of your own life...have you swallowed any lies of false prophets? Which lies?