

# Matthew 7:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

## Analysis

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You recognize trees by fruit, prophets by conduct and teaching effects. Grapes don't grow on thornbushes; figs don't grow on thistles. Similarly, false prophets produce bad fruit—destructive teaching, immoral living, divided churches, damaged disciples. True prophets produce good fruit—holiness, love, truth, unity, maturity.

## Historical Context

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This principle echoes Jesus's teaching that good trees bear good fruit (verses 17-18). James warns that teachers face stricter judgment (James 3:1). Paul commanded Ephesian elders to guard against wolves entering the flock (Acts 20:28-30).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What fruit do you see in the lives of teachers you follow and churches you attend?
2. How can you examine your own fruit to ensure you're not deceiving yourself about spiritual health?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτούς· ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς· μήτι  
**by** G3588 **their fruits** G2590 **them** G846 **Ye shall know** G1921 **them** G846 G3385  
G575  
συλλέγουσιν ἀπὸ ἀκανθῶν σταφυλὴν, ἢ ἀπὸ τριβόλων  
**Do men gather** G4816 **by** G575 **thorns** G173 **grapes** G4718 **or** G2228 **by** G575 **thistles** G5146  
σῦκα  
**figs** G4810

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 12:33** (Parallel theme): Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

**James 3:12** (Parallel theme): Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

**Matthew 7:20** (Parallel theme): Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.