

# Choose What Is Right: A Study in Discernment

## Lesson 6-Sheep Follow the Shepherd, Not Strangers



Discernment is being able to tell the difference – from rightly handled, in context Scripture – between sound, biblical doctrine and false doctrine.

[Read John 9-10:21, 27](#)

### Questions to Consider

1. Read John 9. Note the motifs of darkness and light, blindness and sight, night and day. What do darkness, blindness, and night represent? What do light, sight, and day represent? What is Jesus saying about Himself in v. 5? What is the spiritual truth Jesus is trying to convey in chapter 9 – to His immediate audience, and to us? In what ways does this story mirror a person being saved?

What is the spiritual parallel and significance of 8-9? In what ways do we look different to others after salvation?

Describe all of “the works of God” (3) that were displayed in the blind beggar – was it simply God’s power to heal, or was there more to this situation than that?

2. Review legalism and antinomianism in [Lesson 3](#). Which kind of false doctrine were the Pharisees displaying in chapter 9? Give some specific examples of their legalistic remarks, accusations, beliefs, etc.

Compare the works of God displayed in the blind beggar to the works of “[their father, the Devil](#)” (John 8:44) displayed in the Pharisees. What fruit do we see from the works of God? From the works of the Devil? What is the culmination of the works of God (30-32, 35-39)? The culmination of the works of the Devil? (39-41)

3. Compare the healed man's parents' fearful response to the Pharisees (18-23) with the healed man's "wild abandon" response to the Pharisees (17, 24-34). What made the difference between those two responses (35-38)? Can a false teacher have power over someone who has truly been set free in Christ? Why or why not?

4. Describe Jesus' disposition toward the false teachers in chapter 9. Toward the repentant, victim of the false teachers? What example does this set for us regarding our own disposition toward false teachers versus our disposition toward those who are trapped in false religious systems and need the gospel?

5. Read John 9:35-10:21 below without chapter and verse markings.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?" Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Do you notice the flow from chapter 9 into chapter 10? What does that tell you about the timing and the relationship between the events and remarks in chapter 9 and Jesus' teaching in chapter 10? (Hint: See 10:21b). How do the events of chapter 9 lay the foundation for the teaching of chapter 10?

6. Carefully study 10:1-21. What type of [literary device](#) (\*\*\*) is Jesus using to illustrate His point in chapter 10? Is Jesus using literal or figurative language in this passage?

Identify who or what each of the following represent (hint: there's some overlap):

- The thief/robber (vs.1,8,10)
- The shepherd (vs.2)
- The gatekeeper (vs.3)
- The sheep (vs.3ff.)
- The stranger (vs.5)
- The door of the sheep (vs.7,9)
- The good shepherd (vs.11,14)
- The hired hand (vs.12,13)
- The wolf (vs.12)
- The flock (vs.16)

7. False teachers today often use the phrases “The sheep hear his voice” (vs.3), “they know his voice” (vs. 4), “they will listen to my voice” (vs.16), and “My sheep hear my voice” (vs. 27), from this passage to teach that Christians should hear God talking to them audibly (extra-biblical revelation). Examine all of the references to listening, hearing, and voice in this passage. Is this passage teaching that you should hear God talking to you audibly? Why not? What role does context play in your answer? If this passage is a metaphor, which uses figurative language, why would the “sheep” part of these phrases be figurative but the “voice/hear/listen” parts be literal?

Explain what Jesus means in vs. 3b-5, 8, 16b, 27 when He says that His sheep listen to His voice and follow Him, and that they will not follow the voice of strangers. What does “knowing” Jesus and His voice (vs.4-5, 14b) have to do with this? Think back over the message of chapter 9. How does having one’s “eyes opened” connect to this?

If genuinely regenerated Christians (Jesus’ sheep), generally speaking, do not follow false teachers (thieves, robbers, strangers), what can we [reasonably conclude](#) (1 John 2:19, 1 John 2:3-6, 1 Corinthians 2:12-14) about people who claim to be Christians, yet whose lives are marked by a consistent trajectory of following false teachers and listening to the voice of false doctrine over a long period of time? Are these people likely to listen to and understand your voice and the voice of Scripture as you point out what is

unbiblical about their favorite false teachers? (vs.6) Why not? Thinking back over the message of chapters 9 and 10, what do they need *first* in order to “see the light”?

Is it possible for a genuine sheep (Christian) to wander a few steps away from the Shepherd toward a false teacher (i.e. temporarily show an interest in a false teacher or false doctrine)? [What does a Good Shepherd do](#) (Ezekiel 34:11-12, Ezekiel 34:16, 1 Peter 2:25) when a sheep wanders?

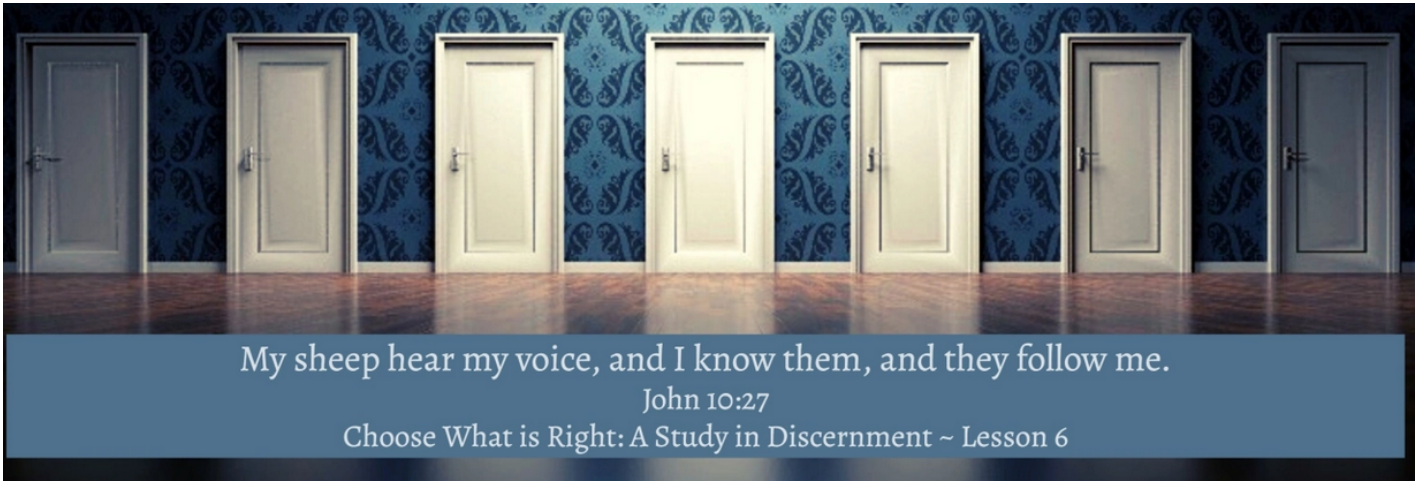
8. Explain why it is crucial for the local church to have a gatekeeper (3) who only opens the door to sound doctrine and the true Jesus of Scripture, and who chases off the thieves, robbers, and strangers (1,5) who sneak in (1)? Compare your answer to [Titus 1:9-16](#).

9. In [Lesson 5](#) we touched on the idea of whether or not a false teacher (someone who consistently and unrepentantly teaches demonstrably false doctrine, not a doctrinally sound teacher who occasionally makes a mistake) could actually be a genuinely regenerated Christian. Notice the way this passage describes false teachers, their goals, and their effects. What inferences can you reasonably draw about a false teacher’s salvation?

## Homework

- Read my article [Basic Training: The Bible is Sufficient](#). (\*\*\*)see link)
- I have heard this scenario from Christian women numerous times and experienced it myself, personally: “I went to a women’s Bible study where they were using a book by \_\_\_. I sat there and listened, and I just knew something was wrong. I didn’t know my Bible well enough at that time to be able to put my finger on it, but I got out of there, started studying my Bible and researching this teacher, and now I know she’s a false teacher.” Have you ever had an experience like that? How does the concept of sheep listening only to the Shepherd and not to strangers apply to this scenario?

## Suggested Memory Verse



<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/metaphor/>

<https://michellelesley.com/2017/03/10/basic-training-the-bible-is-sufficient/>

<https://michellelesley.com/2023/05/24/choose-what-is-right-a-study-in-discernment-lesson-6/>