

What do I do if I've been a victim of false teaching (e.g. Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn)?

If one has been fooled by false teaching, he is often in the best position to help refute such doctrines (Gal. 1:6, 7; 1 Jn 4:1–6). Jesus said: You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (Jn 8:32). The Lord puts a prophetic burden on the believer to help clarify errors for others (Jn 17:17) and to glorify himself (Hab 1:1, Ga 6:2,5). Christians have learned a great deal from those who have escaped the clutches of cults and 'isms (Ga 5:9).

Being lied to can be painful. Lies destroy: people, families and entire nations (Jer 5:31). This was why apostates were put to death (Deut. 13:1–10). Sadly, some people *prefer* lies. Isaiah's listeners rebuked him: Don't tell us what is right. Tell us nice things. Tell us lies. Forget all this gloom. Get off your narrow path. Stop telling us about your 'Holy One of Israel.' (Is 30:11-12, NLT); or, in the ESV: speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions (Is 30:10, ESV).

Satan doesn't care what lie one believes so long as he believes *a* lie that would lead him astray (Mk 4:15, 2 Cor. 11:13–15). The believer having come out of false teaching is in a unique position to help a deceived individual. The apostle John wrote: These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie (1 Jn 2:26–27a).

Jesus assured his followers: I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt 16:18). Genuine believers guard the truth (2 Tim. 2:1, 2).

Before one can receive the good news of Jesus Christ, he must first understand the bad news: He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (Jn 3:36, ESV).

Jesus had told the disciples how difficult it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Mt 19:23-24).

They asked him: "Who then can be saved?"

He answered: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible (Mt 19:26)." Men are saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8).

The deceived are prisoners of war. Regarding Jude 22-23¹, John MacArthur wrote:

[V] 22 compassion. These victims of the apostate teachers need mercy and patience because they have not yet reached a firm conclusion about Christ and eternal life, and so remain doubters...who could possibly be swayed to the truth.

[V] 23 others save. Others, who are committed to the errors taught by the apostates, need immediate and forthright attention before they are further entrenched on the road to the fire of hell (cf. v. 7) as a result of embracing deceptive lies.²

¹ ²² And of some have compassion, making a difference: ²³ and others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.¹

² MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). The MacArthur Study Bible (electronic ed., p. 1988). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

Pray for the unbeliever (Jas 5:16). The same devil prays on people in different ways. The apostle Paul wrote: We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12). Christians can win people to Jesus Christ as his return draws nigh (Lk 21:28).
