

7 Recognizable Traits of Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

Since encountering my own situations with wolves in sheep's clothing, I found myself reflecting on these encounters and trying to learn from them. My stories regarding wolf-wrangling bear some similarities with those of others people have shared with me. I've written articles about healing from a wolf attack and how to wrangle with a wolf, so I wanted to take some time and learn from these situations. We must learn how to spot a wolf.

The Bible warns us to "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Yet it also tells us that false prophets will increase in the last days (see Matt 24:11). This tells me that we must learn to identify a wolf in sheep clothing or a false prophet. It's not so that we can become judgmental or jaded, but it's so we can protect ourselves and other sheep around us. We must guard the sheep in our churches. We must protect the young believers. We must do what God commands us in Matthew 10:16: "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Many believers fall into the trap of being mauled by wolves because they want to believe the best in people. I'm not encouraging people to believe the worst of others, but I do encourage people to be wise.

The problem with wolves in sheep's clothing is that from afar, they look like sheep. It isn't until you get close that you can recognize they are a wolf and not a sheep. Therein lies the danger of getting hurt and falling into a trap of the enemy. But because I've wrangled with a few wolves, I've learned to spot them more quickly than I used to. Below is a list of ways I've learned to tell the difference:

1. Wolves will have an issue with spiritual authority. Jesus

knew authority and knew what it meant to be under authority. He said He didn't do things unless He'd seen His Father in heaven do them (John 15:19-20). Real prophets are not rebellious people. They understand authority. In my wolf encounters, the people in question had issues with spiritual authority.

Wolves will tell you they don't have such an issue, but watch them carefully. Do they have a spiritual covering? In one of my WISC (wolf in sheep clothing) encounters, this individual pretended to have a covering, but after I learned he was a WISC, his pastor who was supposed to be his covering contacted me. It came to find out that this WISC had issues for a long time. In another WISC issue, I caught this man lying to our pastor. Had it been a one-time thing, then maybe the person just isn't mature. But in these situations, it was a pattern that happened over and over again.

2. Wolves will try to manipulate and control you. WISCs can be some of the sweetest of people as long as they think you can be controlled. They will operate under tactful intimidation and often, you don't realize what's happening right away. This is not from God. God doesn't manipulate and control, and anyone who says they're sent by God cannot operate under this spirit either.

3. When wolves are in a fight, they will go for blood. We all go through situations where we will act less than perfect in conflict, but wolves take that a step further. Once they get a taste for blood, they will attempt to go for it in arguments. They will suddenly turn vicious. They will justify their actions covered in a cloud of fake Christian cliches. I once talked with a WISC who thought it was his job to destroy anyone who remotely conflicted with him. He thought God had appointed him some kind of enforcer. But God doesn't do that. Even when Jesus hung on a cross, He cried out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34b). Although God doesn't expect you to be a doormat, I've seen

wolves act like rabid animals. This is the nature of the spirit they are operating in. Please pay close attention that your enemy is not the person, but the devil to which the person has given a foothold in their life. This is a spiritual matter.

4. Wolves will act one way around those they think matter and suddenly change behind closed doors. I was once on a prophetic team with a man who I came to later know was a WISC. He was one of the nicest of people when relating to leadership, and he was to me until conflict happened. We were once in a room prophesying over a woman. When the woman left the room, he turned to me and told me that the “devil had been telling him all about me.” This man changed quickly from appearing to be a sheep prophesying to someone who was ready to attack me.

5. There is some rotten fruit in the life of a wolf. The Bible is very clear that we need to learn how to check the spiritual fruit in others. Are they people of peace, patience, gentleness and self-control? Don't get me wrong; we've all fallen short in these areas. What are the situations that tend to follow them? Are they constantly stirring up chaos? Do they consistently set you on edge?

6. Wolves are often accurate in the spiritual gifts. Please note that just because someone has spiritual gifts does not mean they are heaven-sent. Many times, I've seen people mistaken by these individuals just because they were gifted or because a 'prophetic word' seemed accurate. Please, pastors, do *not* put them in charge of your departments just because they are gifted. Watch their lives, because if you're not careful, they will devour your sheep.

7. Wolves didn't always start out being wolves. I don't believe all wolves started out being wolves. Often, they are gifted individuals who just got lost somewhere along the way. Both big wolf-encounters I faced had a similarity. The wolves

were both people who had father fractures and never quite healed. They were people who let the idea of success get in the way of morality. Somewhere they became deceived, and their judgment was clouded. They both believed that they were being used by God, but the fruit just wasn't there. The good news is that I believe that these people, along with other WISC, are not so far gone that they can't repent and turn back to God. I believe God still wants to use them; however, I believe they will have to go through a pruning season first.

Perhaps you (like me) have found out about WISC the hard way. The good news is that now you'll be better at spotting them. Wolves can be complicated. Pray for them from afar. Handle them how God is telling you to handle them. Be wise, and keep moving forward. {eoa}

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