

*Protect Yourself
from Deception*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of deception can sometimes be very difficult for a pastor-teacher to approach. Yet, it is necessary to address this area. A pastor is commissioned to preach the whole counsel of God. Therefore, by teaching on this subject, issues will be brought to light, causing many to avoid the pain and destruction that can come from deception.

It breaks my heart to see teenagers and adults living with attachments to the world. Their manner and dress reflect the spirit of our sensual age. They have been entrapped by Satan in a dangerous deception—a path that is riddled with defeat, disease, and death. The worst thing about it is that they do not realize and will not acknowledge that they have a problem. They hear the Word of God on these subjects, and yet they continue in their ways.

This booklet was written because deception is a very serious matter. Satanic influence, with

its projections to the unconscious and subconscious mind, is stronger than it has ever been. Christians must understand the dangers of deception and recognize the consequences of living in it. But we must also recognize that God has provided a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). It is through the living Word, Jesus Christ—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Chapter One
INTERNAL CONSPIRACIES

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

To be deceived (*apo planao* in the Greek text) means to turn away from and to depart from the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the grace of divine absolutes. It represents a departure from the mind of God and results in receiving wrong information. Those who are deceived enter into wrong interpretations of the Word. They hang around the wrong crowd. They defy and disagree with people who try to point out their deception, and they use defense mechanisms against God Almighty and His Holy Word.

Deception is a serious issue because it causes internal conspiracies. Some people hardly know

they are being deceived. They follow the wrong paths and are destroyed (Isaiah 3:12). They grope in darkness and never turn to the light (Job 12:25). Their hearts turn away from God (Deuteronomy 30:17). They will not hear. Ultimately, they withdraw from their local church and start railing against bona fide tables of organization, even when godly leaders are loving and kind to them. They lie repeatedly because that is the essence of deception.

Satanic Projections

I visited a man in the hospital who, at 29, had suffered a major heart attack. When he fell ill, he asked his wife to call me. He admitted, in so many words, that he had been deceived into thinking that he didn't need anything—especially God. On that day, however, he saw his need for the Lord, and he got saved.

Satan has armies of demons whose job is to deceive people through projections to their subconscious mind. Some of the most difficult people to deal with are those who are deceived. A deceived person will hear the Word of God and not practice it (James 1:22). He is like a man who beholds himself in the mirror, but forgets what manner of man he is. He is deceived, so he sees

nothing wrong in his reflection. Those, however, who look into the perfect law of liberty and continue in it are blessed in everything they do. They are not forgetful hearers; they are doers of the Word.

Negative Volition

In an internal conspiracy, the mind is deceived, the emotions are deceived, and the conscience is deceived. As a result, every relationship this person has is seen through a heart that has been deceived.

The conspiracy begins when a person's old sin nature works in conjunction with the volition and self-consciousness, stimulating the will to want something that isn't rightfully his. He desires something that doesn't belong to him and pursues a lifestyle that he shouldn't pursue. This person's conscience, with its norms and standards for living, has become perverted, distorted, and corrupted. His volition toward God is negative, and his mind is filled with mental attitude sins and deceptions.

Certain people see human frailty in another and tear down what is strong and powerful for God in a ministry: They attack unity in the Body of Christ. They attack strength because of their

over-occupation with frailty. They attack and cause division, and that is a very serious thing.

Chapter Two

DECEPTION'S DESTINATION

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:9-11).

Often, people never know that they are living in deception. That old dragon, the serpent, deceives the world. He accuses the brethren from morning to night. This accuser is the author of deception in the whole world.

Everyone has been deceived at one time or another. Perhaps we have withdrawn from God; or we have robbed Him by withholding tithes and offerings rather than trusting Him for His provision; or, we have said that we would do something and then do not do it. That is being a hearer of the Word, but not a doer of it. At those times, God spoke, but we were passive and did not apply what He said to us. That is deception.

Sin unto Physical Death

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Peter 3:17-18).

“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

“But when we are judged, we are chastened

of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:29-32).

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).

The Process of Discipline

God has a remedy for deception, and it is through a process of discipline. And in certain cases, that process can lead to an early death. This is what the Bible teaches. Those He loves, He chastises and disciplines (see Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6). But in every case, His purpose is not to punish but to reconcile the child of God to Himself, producing peaceable fruits of righteousness.

First, God instructs us with specific truth from the Word through the pastor-teacher. The truth convicts us either of righteousness, which is godly, or of unrighteousness, which is sin. Once we have been convicted in an area of sin, He will warn us repeatedly through the Word and the Holy Spirit. If a believer refuses to yield to the truth, God will chasten him through a variety of means. If he still does not respond, God

will bring in a severe form of discipline, referred to as scourging, usually only once or twice in his lifetime.

At that point, if the believer's heart is hard toward God and the truth, God will take him home "early" by allowing him to die ahead of his designated time on earth. Of course, only God knows what that time is, and it is not up to anyone to judge another who may be suffering for righteousness' sake.

Many dear people who have gone home to be with God lived as great Christians. They have gone to heaven because their time on earth was through; however, we will never know how many people have died ahead of their time. They may have died under discipline because they refused to deal with deception.

Some people are being chastised, but they act as if there is no chastisement going on. They become diseased, yet continue to sin outwardly and overtly. In 1 Corinthians 11:29, some were getting drunk at communion times. Because of this, some of them became weak and sick; and some did die.

The graveyard at Corinth was filled with saved people who had been taken to heaven early because of the sin unto physical death

(1 John 5:16). These people just kept on sinning. They would not listen! Instruction from the Word of God came. Chastisement came. Still, they would not stop sinning, so God had to take the next step. They were taken to heaven, leaving this earth early, and they will suffer loss of rewards in eternity.

Wrong Response, Right Response

In Acts 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of land and gave part of the money to support the early church. But Ananias lied by telling Peter that he and his wife had given all the money from the sale to the church. It was a lie before the Holy Spirit, and Ananias immediately died. Awhile later, Sapphira (not knowing what had happened) came in, repeated the lie, and she fell dead. These two people died in their youth because they lied about money.

It doesn't have to reach that point, however. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul addressed a man who was living in fornication, saying he was going to deliver this man's "flesh unto destruction, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (see 1 Corinthians 5:5). This man repented, but the local church did not immediately receive him back into fellowship. So Paul

then had to rebuke the church at Corinth, telling the people to forgive the man and welcome him back (see 2 Corinthians 2:7-11). This man recognized his deception and got right.

Chapter Three

GOD'S PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE AND DELIVERANCE

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

"For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteous-

ness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:6-11).

God disciplines us for our benefit. His chastisement is meant to produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness in our lives. Like Job, we should say to God, "Cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (Job 6:24). "Show me, Lord, where I am deceived." God desires to deliver us, and instead of erring, we will seek understanding as we come out of deception (Isaiah 29:24). The Lord will deliver our souls from death (Psalm 56:13); He will deliver us from terrible afflictions (Psalm 34:19); and He will deliver us from many distresses (Psalm 107:6). His deliverance is always according to His many mercies (Nehemiah 9:28).

Micah offers an example of how to respond to God's discipline.

"Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

"I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will

bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness" (Micah 7:7-9).

The Points of Discipline

The sin unto physical death is very serious. Before allowing this to happen, God goes through several points of disciplining the Christian who will not obey and apply the word of love, the word of grace, and the word of faith and mercy.

First, God warns the deceived person so that he can be brought under tremendous conviction. If conviction from the Bible only hardens his heart further, God allows him to react to his life. This person cannot stand his life, and he will grow weary, withdraw, and become angry. Then the Lord may deal with him through his finances, prohibiting him from being blessed. He may allow problems in relationships, especially with other believers who are walking in the light. Next God may allow a period of physical affliction.

If this person still hasn't gotten right with Him, God will allow the emotional and physical problems to intensify.

Hebrews 12:6 speaks of scourging, which is last step before physical death. Literally, it

means the person is flat on his back. The only place he can look is up, toward heaven.

If scourging doesn't bring about a response, then God says, "Come up with Me. Come to heaven. Your soul-body will be perfect, and you will be happy, though you have lost all rewards because you would not come out of your deception."

Recognition and Rebound

God loves us, and He disciplines His children in love. As a father deals with his child, so our heavenly Father deals with us. He needs to deal with sin that separates us from fellowship with Him. And believe me, He will deal with it.

Some Christians may think they are getting away with certain sins, but they are deceived. God will deal with these people—not to punish them, but to restore them to a personal spiritual relationship with Him.

The prodigal recognized that he was being chastised when he came to the end of himself (Luke 15:17). When he came home, his father ran to him and kissed him on the neck over and over again (Luke 15:20). That is how God responds to anyone who turns toward Him after being chastised.

CONCLUSION

If these words have brought conviction to your heart, confess your sin and immediately rebound. God is lovingly patient in this process. He has been waiting to be gracious to you. Let Him show you where you have been deceived.

Deception is always followed by discipline. But you have an opportunity to respond right now, to get right with God. Do not be insensitive to what is going on in your life. Ask God, and He will answer you. He will reveal any areas where you are deceived. Turn to Christ and experience the dynamics of God's grace. He will deliver you, cleanse you, and bless you again.

Maybe you think you don't have a problem with deception right now, but keep these things in mind. Many people today are living with a grieved Spirit because they lack definition in areas of deception and discipline. Be aware: Satan's armies are always out to deceive. Hear and obey the Word of God. Draw near to the

Body of Christ as it is represented by the local church to which you are called.

May God bless us all in the providential love and power of Jesus' name.