

# SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

## DISCERNING ITS LIES—OVERCOMING ITS POWER

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### Introduction:

- Definitions: (Webster)

**-Deceive (verb)** = “ensnare; to be false; cheat; to cause to believe an untruth. The word *DECEIVE* implies the imposing of a false idea or belief that causes bewilderment or helplessness or furthers the agent’s purpose.”

**-Deception (noun)** = “the fact or condition of being deceived”

**-Deceptive (adj)** = “tending or having the power to deceive.”

- Deception began in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:1-3 - *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" [2] The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, [3] but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "*

-Adam and Eve believed that God did not really mean what He said about the “tree.” Falling into the trap of deception became the doorway for sin to enter their life. The Apostle Paul expresses this concern in II Corinthians 11:3:- “*But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*”

- The unredeemed heart is deceitful.

Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)- “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*”

Jeremiah 17:9(KJV) – “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*”

*"Once a person is deceived, he does not recognize that he is deceived, because he has been deceived." – Francis Frangipane – [The Three Battlegrounds](#)*

- There are many warnings in Scripture concerning the rise of deception in the “last days.”

Matthew 24:24 – “*For false Christ’s and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.*”

1 Tim. 4:1 – *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”*

- Ultimately, Satan, the greater deceiver, will be overthrown and defeated. A day of final victory for Christ’s Kingdom will come!

Rev. 12:9 – *“The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

Rev. 20:10 – *“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

- Every true believer must be **aware** of the lies of deception but must not live in **fear** of deception. Through Jesus Christ, we are *“more than conquerors”* (Romans 8:37). *“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work”* (I John 3:8b).

## Objectives for this lesson:

1. Give biblical examples of how deception is manifested
2. Give biblical exhortations concerning deception
3. Observe specific characteristics of a deceptive spirit
4. Observe deceptions that affect the church and believers in general
5. Learn ways to discern and overcome deception
6. Discern ways to pass this teaching on to others

## A. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF HOW DECEPTION IS MANIFESTED

1. The mouth, tongue, lips – Psalms 10:7; 36:3; 50:19; 52:2 Jeremiah 9:8; Romans 3:13
2. Bad advice – Proverbs 12:5
3. Deceitful heart – Proverbs 12:20; 26:24; Mark 7:22
4. Fraud – Proverbs 20:17
5. Rebellion – Jeremiah 8:5; Hosea 11:12
6. Refusal to acknowledge the Lord – Jeremiah 9:6
7. Deceptive leaders/prophets – Jeremiah 14:14; 23:26; II Corinthians 11:3
8. False scales – Hosea 12:7
9. People who reject God – Romans 1:29
10. Deceptive philosophy – Colossians 2:8
11. Deceptive wages – Proverbs 11:18

12. False witness – Proverbs 14:25
13. False affection – Proverbs 27:6
14. Deceitful desires – Ephesians 4:22
15. Wealth – Matthew 13:22
16. Rejection of truth – Isaiah 30:10; Romans 16:18
17. False thinking – Jeremiah 37:9
18. Claim to be without sin – I John 1:8
19. Trusting what is worthless – Job 15:16
20. Alcoholic beverage – Proverbs 20:1
21. Pride of heart – Obadiah 1:3
22. Sin – Romans 7:11
23. False sacrifice – Malachi 1:14
24. Incorrect evaluation of one self – Galatians 6:3

**For reflection and application:**

1. Based on the above list, how has deception operated in my life?
2. What has been the consequence of allowing deception to operate in my life?

**B. BIBLICAL EXHORTATIONS CONCERNING DECEPTION**

1. Exhort with pure motives – I Thessalonians 2:3; II Corinthians 4:2
2. Encourage one another daily so that we are not hardened by sin's deception – Hebrews 3:13
3. Speak truthfully about your neighbor – Proverbs 24:28
4. Be alert to deception – Matthew 24:4; Mark 13:5
5. Be aware of false prophets – Matthew 24:5, 11; Luke 21:8; II Timothy 3:13
6. Grow in spiritual maturity so as to avoid deception – Ephesians 4:13-14

7. Beware of “empty” words (“religious smooth talk” Msg ) – Ephesians 5:6
8. Reject worship of false gods – Deuteronomy 11:6
9. Live sexually pure lives according to God’s standard – I Corinthians 6:9
10. Believe that what we sow we will reap – Galatians 6:7
11. Beware of evil men and seducers – II Timothy 3:13
12. Reject the sinful passions of life that we once practiced – Titus 3:3

**For reflection and application:**

1. What exhortation(s) above, regarding deception, really speak to me?
2. What decisions must I make in my life in order to overcome deception?

**C. SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A DECEPTIVE SPIRIT\***

1. Lying – giving of false information with the desire to deceive
2. Delusions – deceiving self into believing lies; often used to cover painful experiences of the past
3. Rationalizations – attempting to deal with serious problem superficially; making excuses to justify behavior
4. Wrong doctrine/misuse of Scripture – reasoning a conclusion or position, then using the Bible to support the conclusion

\* These four points are adapted from, Demolishing Strongholds, Mike and Sue Dowgiewicz, Aslan Publishing

**For reflection and application:**

1. What are ways I might be tempted to practice deceit in my everyday life based on the four characteristics of a deceptive spirit?
2. What are examples of a deceptive spirit I’ve seen in the life of other believers? (Beware of a judgmental spirit).

## **D. SOME DECEPTIONS THAT AFFECT THE CHURCH/BELIEVERS (The following illustrations are deceptive lies of Satan. Why?)**

**(The Scripture verses behind the “deceptive lie” show us the truth of God’s Word. Many more references could be given. I challenge you to search the Scriptures to find out what God says about these deceptions.)**

1. God’s word is NOT truth, it only contains truth. (II Timothy 3:16; John 17:17)
2. I will NOT reap what I sow. (Galatians 6:7; II Corinthians 9:6)
3. God loves everyone so therefore we should also accept as brothers or sisters in Christ homosexual partners who claim to be Christian and are committed to each other. (I Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:26-32)
4. What I want to do with my life is really no ones business.(Luke 12:20; I Corinthians 6:20)
5. The unborn are fetuses that have no rights because the mother has a right to choose if the child should be born. (Psalm 139:13; Luke 1:41)
6. My spiritual leaders have no authority over my life. I have authority over their life. (How is this attitude demonstrated?) (Romans 13:1-2; Hebrews 13:17)
7. There is no consequence for unforgiveness. (Luke 6:37; Matthew 6:15)
8. I do not need to be discipled or make disciples. (John 15:8; Matthew 28:18-20)
9. The local congregation exists to meet my needs. If it doesn’t, I will find one that does. (Matthew 16:24; Acts 4:42-47)
10. No one really understands me or my problems. (Galatians 5:13; James 5:16)
11. Having all my needs met will make me happy. (Luke 12:15; Mark 10:21-22)
12. Having a marriage partner will make me complete. (Colossians 2:10; Romans 5:17)
13. God understands that I’m not perfect but I will try hard to do better. (Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 4:13)
14. I will participate in church life when I feel like it and when I have time. (Luke 9:24; Hebrews 10:25)
15. I earned my money so I will choose what I want to give to the church. (Mark 12:41-44; Malachi 3:8-12)
16. On an additional piece of paper, list additional deceptions that you observe or ones that you are tempted to believe.

**For reflection and application:**

1. Looking over the list above, how have I personally walked in deception? What are additional ways I am walking in deception?
2. What am I willing to do about it?

**E. WAYS TO DISCERN AND OVERCOME DECEPTION**

1. Be alert to the powerful and subtle nature of deception. (I Peter 5:8)
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to make your heart sensitive to deception or even reveal deception that has already entered your mind and heart. (Ephesians 5:15-16)
3. Live a life of passionate intimacy with God. (Matthew 22:37)
4. Repent of sin quickly because unconfessed sin becomes an open doorway to Satan. (I John 1:5-9)
5. Be careful what you watch, read, and listen to. (I Thessalonians 5:22)
6. Resist pride at any cost and be humble at all times. (I Peter 5:5)
7. Read God's Word, the Bible, continually. (Psalms 119)
8. Believe and obey God's Word. (I Peter 1:13-16)
9. Be discipled and live in close fellowship with God's people, the local congregation. (Ephesians 5:21)
10. Choose to live a lifestyle of absolute surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 2:5-8)
11. Be filled with the Holy Spirit! In this way, no other spirits have room to enter. (Ephesians 5:18)
12. Be submitted to godly authority. (Romans 13:1-2)
13. Dress daily in the God's armor. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

**For reflection and application:**

1. Based on the list above, what areas do I need to grow in as a disciple of Jesus so that I may walk in spiritual freedom?

## CONCLUSION:

- The points listed above are not exhaustive as it relates to the subject of “spiritual deception.”
- We must recognize deception for what it is. It is UGLY! When deception enters the life of a believer or church, the fruit it produces is distasteful: Spiritual indifference; division; apathy; lack of commitment; error; mistrust; turmoil;...
- When a believer or congregation recognizes deception, repents of it, overcomes it by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, it produces good fruit: Spiritual sensitivity; unity of purpose; abundant life; encouragement that comes through proclamation of truth; rest; commitment; loyalty;...
- In these days of great spiritual deception that is flooding the earth, let us commit ourselves to:
  - walk in the Light and Truth of God’s Word
  - honor, believe, and obey God’s Word to the best of our ability
  - rest in the power of God’s Word and promise when he says, “*Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the World*” (I John 4:4b)!
  - be assured of the fact that the devil (*the deceiver*) will experience his ultimate defeat by being thrown into hell to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelations 20:10).
  - give glory to the Lamb of God with a sincere heart of adoration, declaring His victory forever and ever. Amen!

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I encourage you to do the following:

1. Look up the verses that we did not have a chance to look at and reflect on them.
2. Give careful attention to the reflection questions in your own quiet time.
3. Consider using this teaching as a lesson in a small group, church Bible study, or in whatever way it can be passed on to others. Feel free to adapt the outline to fit your needs or add insights that you wish to add. (If you plan to use this outline, I would appreciate knowing so that I will not come to your church and teach the same thing. If you would like a copy of the outline to be sent via e-mail (Word document) so you can edit it for your need, please ask me at [henrymilleb@verizon.net](mailto:henrymilleb@verizon.net).

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