

## Things That Deceive

Hebrews 3:13

### I. Introduction: 1, 2

1. **3** The reason many people will be lost is because they are deceived. That is why the Bible constantly warns us about being deceived. Deception caused the very first sin (**1 Tim. 2:14**: *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*). Sin is deceitful! **Heb. 3:13**: *“but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*
2. In the Old Testament God warned the children of Israel, *“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not **deceived**, and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them”* (Deut. 11:16). Let’s consider some things that can deceive us.

### II. Discussion:

1. **4 Evil Company**: **1 Cor. 15:33**: *“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”* Why? Because who we spend our time with influence us. Why? Because regardless of our age we all are subject to “peer pressure” (**1 Pet. 4:3-4**: *For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.*). One of the biggest regrets in my life is that I associated with the wrong “crowd” in my youth. Let us reject evil company and associate with good company! **2 Pet. 1:1** (e.g., potluck)
2. **5 Law of Sowing and Reaping**: The law of sowing and reaping is an immutable law of nature (sow corn, reap corn; sow wheat, reap wheat). But somehow folks don’t think what is true in the natural, physical realm is true in the spiritual realm...but it is! **Gal. 6:7-8**: *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.* (e.g., Antediluvian world, Saul, David, Judas Iscariot) \*\*\*“Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny.” Charles Reade
3. **6 Lusts and Pleasures**: **Titus 3:3**: *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.* Think of all of the rich and famous who have publically stumbled and wrecked their reputations (e.g., Bill Clinton, impeached for perjury and obstruction of justice; Tiger Woods, fell from grace for his dalliances with multiple women (morals of an alley cat) led to a divorce settlement north of \$100 million). Sin’s pleasures are fleeting! **Heb. 11:25** We may deceive others, and even ourselves, but we will not get away with it! **Num. 32:23**: *“be sure your sin will find you out”*; **2 Cor. 5:10**
4. **7 False Teachers**: When false teachers persuade people to believe something that is not true they have deceived them. The wise man said, *“He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness, but a false witness **deceit**”* (Prov. 12:17).
  - A. We are warned of false teachers and their destructive and deceitful ways in
    - 2 Corinthians 11:13-15** *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.) and*
    - 2 Timothy 3:13**: *But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

This is why John said, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 Jn. 4:1) Most false teachers are “nice guys”!

- B. John further says we can discern between the “spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” by examining whether the teaching agrees or disagrees with that of the inspired Bible writers (1 Jn. 4:6). Thus, we must guard ourselves against being deceived by searching “the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11) so that we may know the truth of God’s word (**Jn. 8:32:** *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* 2 Tim. 2:15: diligent study!). It is not politically correct to call out false teachers today. **We must develop a spine when it comes to false teaching and false teachers! (Eph. 5:11:** *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”*).  
**\*\*Edmund Burke:** “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

5. **8 Riches:** Folks that have been blessed with an abundance of this world’s possessions can be lured into a false sense of security (that’s most of us in America!). Jesus warned that after some obey the word they will “become unfruitful” because of the “**deceitfulness** of riches” (Matt. 13:22).

Beware! Riches give a false sense of security! **Lk. 12:15:** *“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

The desire to be rich is very dangerous! **1 Tim. 6:9-10:** *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

We must put our trust in the Lord not in our bank account, stock portfolio, IRA!

**Prov. 11:28:** *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.*

**1 Tim. 6:6-8:** *Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*

**1 Tim. 6:17-19:** *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

We truly cannot “take it with us”! Example of Pearl West and her “list.”

**Eccl. 5:13:** *“There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt”*

**1 John 3:17:** *But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? (\*\*Acts 20:35); **Lk. 12:20-21:** “But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

6. **9 Strong Drink:** The wise man said, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is **deceived** thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1). Be not deceived, the Bible condemns every kind and amount of intoxicating drink (**Prov. 23:29-35; Eph. 5:18:** *“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,”; 1 Pet. 4:1-5:* *oinoflugia*, drunkenness; koomos, party with heavy drinking; potois, what we might call a cocktail party, open bar, tippling, social drinking).

Life is too serious not to be sober! “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8); hence, “Put away thy wine from thee!” (1 Sam. 1:14). It amazes me when a Christian tries to justify/rationalize drinking alcohol! “Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.” (Prov. 23:31-32) Alcoholism, example setting! Why did David

try to get Uriah to drink alcohol? I Sam. 11 Majority of traffic deaths and murders are attributed to alcohol. How can a Christian have any part with that?

7. **10 Satan:** Satan is so sly and subtle, Paul calls him a “deceitful worker” because he “*himself is transformed into an angel of light*” (2 Cor. 11:13-14). Satan brought sin into the world through deception (1 Tim. 2:14). Hence, John describes him in this language, “*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which **deceiveth** the whole world...*” (Rev. 12:9). Don’t be deceived! Satan is the father of all liars! (Jn. 8:44) **Eph. 6:11:** *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles (methodeia) of the devil.* Satan “*deceived Eve by his craftiness*” (i.e., cunning, skillful, clever, deceitfulness)→**Gen. 3:4:** “*Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’”* Rationalization! “You deserve a break today!” “Only this once.” “Only a little, what can that hurt?!”
8. **11 Our Own Selves:** Paul warned “*Let no man **deceive** himself...*” (1 Cor. 3:18). We can easily deceive ourselves! Self-deception is the most dangerous form of deception! **Jer. 17:9:** “*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?*”

“Nothing is so difficult as not deceiving oneself.” Ludwig Wittgenstein (*Culture and Value*)

**Must not get a “big head”!**

**Prov. 16:18:** *Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall:*

**Rom. 12:3:** *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*

**1 Cor. 10:12:** *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

Thus, we must lay aside all our prejudices and preconceived notions and examine ourselves: examine our behavior, our attitudes, our weaknesses and our religious beliefs. Our examination must be brutally honest with an open mind and an open Bible (2 Cor. 13:5). Have you examined your ways? (**Lam. 3:40:** *Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD;*)

“The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others.” Fyodor Dostoyevsky (*The Brothers Karamasov*)

### III. Conclusion: **12**

1. Recall God’s desire is that “*all men...be saved, and...come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Tim. 2:4).
2. Therefore, let us remember there are many things in the world to deceive us and turn us away from God! \*\*

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end” (Heb. 3:12-15).