

Lesson 3 - How God's Love Protects us from Deception

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Introduction: God wants us to build our hearts to imitate His own ways

A. Spiritual growth allows God's love to change our every thought! (Mt 22:37-40)

1. All deception is contrary to the God of light, the One who never lies.

(James 1:17-18; Titus 1:2)

2. How should a Christian view all deception?

B. We not only must hate the deception others put on us but we also must come to hate the "worldly acceptable deception" we are tempted to justify. (James 4:4)

1. When our opposition to deception is partial then we have opened our heart to completely fall under the deception of Satan.

2. Truly in these matters it can be said "give Satan an inch and he will take a mile!" Actually he will take our souls if we do not fight. (2 Thess 2:10-12)

I. Identifying and hating all deception

A. God wishes us to develop skills to overcome deception. This is a fundamental key in ascertaining spiritual growth. (Heb 5:13-14)

1. Sadly many have come to label this ability to discern and act as "negative teaching." Satan has deceived many Christians. (Isa 5:20-21)

2. The one who has a "lazy mind" simply walks away from the effort it takes to develop discernment. He may even be highly critical of those who do.

"In an age in which discernment is viewed as a vice and gullibility as a virtue, there is a price to be paid if one decides to be "picky" about what to believe and how to live."

3. I want to develop the ability to "judge" or "discern"! I want everyone I love to imitate God's character in this. (Ps 119:104, 128, Heb 1:9)

B. I must carefully seek to identify and eliminate all deception in dealing with others.

1. The flat contradiction of truth is a lie. (1 Kings 13:18)

2. A statement that is only true when fully stating the case can become a lie when part is "mentally reserved" or withheld.

a. If he had said, "It is no sin to come," would have been to lie, even though in his mind he knew what would be true: "after you have obeyed God."

b. It is better not to speak than to attempt a "middle ground" in partial truth.

3. Equivocation with the conscious intent of deceiving is a lie.

a. To equivocate is to use words susceptible of two or more meanings. It is a lie when such a word is used to intentionally convey a different meaning to the hearer so that he reaches a false conclusion. (Ex. He believes that baptism is necessary for salvation!)

b. The fact that he substitutes the correct meaning in his own mind does not deliver him from guilt.

4. A statement out of context is a lie. (Mk 14:57-58; Jn 2:22)

5. A statement or act expressed in duplicity is a lie. (Mt 26:48-49; Lk 20:21-23)

a. Duplicity is "deception by pretending to entertain one set of feelings and acting under the influence of another." (Webster's Dict.)

- b. It is duplicity when we bless one while at the time in other settings undermine his influence and reputation. (Ex. Song Smiling faces)
- 6. A lie may be unstated but conveyed by silence or innuendo.
 - a. There are times when the occasion demands that one speak. (Ex. email)
 - b. If remaining silent conveys a false answer then even in silence it is a lie.
(See article by Gene Frost -- http://www.aubeacon.com/Articles2010/Article_ToTellTheTruth.htm)

II. Learning how to love justice and mercy

- A. The greatest step in overcoming deception is to “press towards” having a pure heart. **(Mt 5:6-8; Prov 22:11)**
 - 1. Because of God’s mercy I can find repentance and forgiveness.
 - 2. It takes effort and pain to be honest about what is in your own heart. Taking the easy way will never lead to repentance. **(Prov 27:19; Jer 17:9-10; 2 Cor 7:8-9)**
- B. We face a great test of our hearts in how we think about and treat others.
 - 1. How would I want others to treat me? **(Mt 7:12)**
 - 2. Each of us would desire true justice and mercy to be shown to us! This is what makes God’s character so appealing. **(Ex 34:6-7)**
 - 3. Each of us want to be treated fairly (justice) and be given grace (mercy) to make correction. Do we do this to others or are we deceiving ourselves?
- C. A hypocritical heart will make false assumptions and act without mercy.
 - 1. In the world we are given allowances while others are judged without mercy.
 - 2. In the world we want others to understand us but we do not lift a finger to understand others.
 - 3. In the world we will hold grudges and seek revenge. We will trust no one but ourselves. **(Titus 3:3)**
 - 4. It is in this kind of heart that deception cannot be overcome. Are we putting justice, mercy and faith in first place? **(Lk 11:42; 38-39; Mt 23:23-24, 26)**

III. Some challenges we face in honestly pursuing justice and mercy

- A. Selfish people are quick to make unrighteous judgment on others. **(Mt 7:1-4)**
 - 1. God appeals to us to remember others that have judged us unfairly. He is repeating the golden rule in a different form. **(Ex 22:21)**
 - 2. One of the great challenges we face is to be pulled into an unjust and unmerciful mindset. It is a poisonous form of hatred. **(1 Jn 3:15; Lev 19:16-18)**
 - 3. When you let your mind go down this path you will likely give in to mistreatment of others. What can be taken from those you hate? **(Lev 19:34-37)**
- B. We must be committed to principle and not let emotions drive us. **(Jn 7:24)**
 - 1. Emotional people can be easily manipulated to a false reality.
 - 2. Jesus was successfully slandered because people did not pursue justice. **(Lk 7:33-35; Prov 18:8)**
 - 3. Ask these questions often: “What do I know?” “Did this really happen or do I really think I can read minds?” Have friends that help you! **(James 2:13)**
 - 4. Am I letting unresolved issues of the past poison me? Often our hurts have distorted the past as well. **(Eph 4:26-27)**