

“What’s the Big Deal About Deceitfulness”

Acts 5:1-11

It is absolutely essential that we as believers, according to Thessalonians 4:12, “...**walk honestly**...” in our conversation, in our lifestyle, and in our doctrine for the purpose of personal holiness, ecclesiastical purity and unity and power, and for an effective witness to unbelievers. This is not only a discussion about the importance of casting off the human tendency to lie and cheat and deceive and fraud; it is also an appeal for us to start being truthful and trustworthy and honest and righteous. After studying this topic in conclusion about all of our responses, whether it be our responses to trials, temptations, inquiries, crisis, opinions, preaching, or relaying a story, giving an illustration, answering questions, or simply thinking our thoughts, our communication is either truthful or it is touched with a measure of deception.

I. How deceitful is Satan?

A. Attacks the Integrity, Authority, and Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures-

2 Corinthians 4, he tried to question Paul’s authority. 1 Thessalonians 2:3-7 – “For our exhortation was not of deceit, not of uncleanness, nor in guile; But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness; Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, not yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.”

B. Attacks the Person and Work of Christ – 1 John 2:22 – “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” John 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

C. Attacks the Credibility of Believers-

1. Constantly accusing our standing before God.
2. Continually insists on asserting his parental “rights” to control us.

II. How deceitful are we? Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Romans 1:29 – “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity whisperers;”

Some of the more common deceptions include:

- A. Sin will never hold me longer than I want it too.** Romans 7:15-20.
- B. Sin will never take me where I don’t want to go.** 2 Peter 1:8-9
- C. Sin will never ruin me more than I grant it permission.** James 1:14-16 – “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.”
- D. Sin will deliver what it promises.** Genesis 2-3.
- E. Sin doesn’t affect me as it does others.** 1 John 1:8- If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- F. God won’t care about some of the little “things”.** Ex. Achan. “...Be faithful in the little things...”
- G. I deserve more exaltation than I have been given.** Ex Ananias and Sapphira; Satan himself.
- H. My action or behavior or conduct will not affect my life in an inappropriate way.** Galatians 6:3-8 – For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that taught in the world communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

- I. **Materialism: I need more things than what God has ever given me.** Ex. Gen 2, "...Eve saw..."; and Demas. Mark 4:19 – And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.
- J. **Work Salvation: I can do such and such and God will accept me based on my works.** Example: Nicodemus in John 3.

III. **What is included when we refer to Deceitfulness? Some definitions include:**

"Deceit is the basic fault line in the foundation of the soul because deceit hold all other virtues hostage" – Robert McQuilken.

- A. **Deceit:** *to mislead by a false appearance or statement or emotion; it is the intentional concealment or misrepresentation of the truth.*
- B. **Manipulation:** *influencing or attempting to influence the behavior or emotions of others for one's own purposes.*
- C. **Crafty:** *skillful in underhand or evil schemes.*
- D. **Lying:** *deliberately untruthful.*
- E. **Fraudulent:** *deceit or trickery perpetrated for profit or to gain some unfair or dishonest advantage.*
- F. **Delusion:** *a false belief or opinion or a false belief that is resistant to reason or confrontation with actual fact.*
- G. **Hypocrisy:** *giving the false pretense of having virtues, moral principles, or religious beliefs that one does not really possess.*
- H. **Mislead:** *to lead or guide in the wrong direction or to lead into error of conduct, thought, or judgment.*

IV. **What are some "patterned responses" of deception in our everyday**

relationship with people?: 1 Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

- A. **Temper Tantrums**
- B. **Illness**
- C. **Silence**
- D. **Excuses:** It's the other person's fault, I couldn't help it, everybody's doing it, it was just a mistake, nobody's perfect, the devil made me do it, I was pressured into it, I didn't know it was wrong, that was the way I grew up and it was okay then; these are all subtle form of blame shifting, not taking responsibility for the weaknesses, sins and shortcomings of my character.
- E. **Crying, whining or weeping**
- F. **Withdrawal**
- G. **Arguing**
- H. **Insistence on being right**
- I. **Inability to admit wrong.**

V. **How is deceitfulness most often communicated? The tongue!**

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

- Romans 3:13 – Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips,
- Psalm 109:2 – For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are open against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
- Psalm 10:7 – His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.
- Psalm 50:19 – Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.
- Special Note: James 3 is a good study on the power of the tongue and how to understand and contain it.

VI. These attitudes and actions can be destroyed by maintaining:

A. A firm grip on Biblical Doctrine. 2 Timothy 3:13-27 – “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

B. A firm hold on the grace of God

C. A firm grasp on getting instruction from your authority and godly counselors

D. A firm governable disposition to obey the truth. Matthew 22:37, “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind...” James 1:22 – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

1. You must obey and love God out of a **Single heart** – One doesn’t try to love God and the world at the same time.
2. You must obey and love God with a **Single mind** – one must keep their eyes firmly fixed on serving God alone.
3. You must obey and love God with a **Single will** – one who seeks to serve one master totally and absolutely.

E. A firm goal:

1. To abhor every evil way – 1 Peter 2:1, “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.”
2. To be honest in all things – Honest: honorable in principles, intentions, and actions; not disposed to lie, cheat, or steal; upright.
3. To control the tongue – Ephesians 5:29, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” Job 27:4 – “My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.”
4. To encourage fellow believers – Hebrews 3:13, But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Special Note: “Trust is the one quality most violated by the expression of deceit” but:

- a. God can be trusted faithfully. Proverbs 3:5-6
- b. God’s Word can be trusted fully. 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- c. Godly believers can be trusted freely. 2 Timothy 3:15-17

“Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.”

1 Peter 2:22

Resources: “The Integrity Crisis” by Warren Wiersbe; “The Book of Virtues” by William Bennett; “Knowing Your Enemy” by Dwight Pentecost; “Put away the Toys” cassette by Pastor Charles Wood, and Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary.