

“Be Not Deceived”

Romans 7:9-11

Introduction: Self-deception is a problem and it is all too common. The Bible has many references to this problem. As humans, we have a terrible propensity to deceive ourselves in many ways. Our study today is to look at the many warnings against our tendency toward self-deception.

I. The deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-13; Rom. 7:11).

A. Sin is our own doing. We can't blame anyone but ourselves (Jas. 1:13-16).

B. Sin will cause us to lose our souls (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

C. We cannot and should not pretend to be sinless (1 Jn. 1:8). At the same time, we should not fool ourselves into thinking that sinning is an acceptable practice (1 Jn. 3:7-8). Those who sin are serving their master.

D. Worldly churches will not talk about sin. It hurts the self-esteem of their members. So they allow each person to decide what sin is for themselves. But they won't talk about it in church. Hence, we can see how Satan deceives people about sin (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

E. Some churches of Christ will not allow certain sinful topics to be discussed from the pulpit. Sin itself is deemed inappropriate for public consumption. For example, marriage, divorce, and remarriage (MDR), alcohol, or anything that might offend the visiting public. Some of these churches won't even allow guest preachers to speak from their pulpits in order to control God's message from exposing the sinful conduct of their own members. They see themselves as wise while they are made fools by the deceitfulness of sin.

II. The deceitfulness of ourselves.

A. Are we wise or just fools (1 Cor. 3:18-20)? God knows your thoughts and “*He catches the wise in their own craftiness.*” Members may think it wise not to teach against certain sins, but they are really thinking foolishly. We should not think highly of ourselves (Gal. 6:3).

B. Perhaps we are trying to avoid pointing out error in our brethren for fear of exposing our own hypocrisy (Matt. 7:3-5). This passage isn't trying to dissuade us from pointing out error, it is admonishing a self-reflection before we point out the error in others. We might think we are being wise by avoiding the subject altogether but all we are doing is practicing self-deception. If we deceive ourselves into thinking we are wise in these matters; beware, lest our hypocrisy become known to all.

C. James tells us we deceive ourselves if we don't act upon what we know to be true (Jas. 1:22-25). It is not enough to know God's will. We must do it and we will be blessed in the doing of it.

D. Do we deceive ourselves by not taking an active part in the Lord's work (Gal. 6:7-10)? How is God mocked?

1. By our complacency in the work.
2. By catering to our fleshly desires rather than God's desires.
3. We mock God when we think we can go to heaven without sowing the seed.
4. Perhaps we deceive ourselves into thinking that people won't respond anyway so we do nothing. The Lord says we will reap if we don't quit. So let's do what we know is good and right by all men. Let's teach God's will.

E. If we don't take our actions seriously, we deceive ourselves and our efforts to be religious and pleasing to God are vain (Jas. 1:26).

III. The deceitfulness of others.

A. Evil men will deceive others while they deceive themselves (2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Pet. 2:13).

B. They will try to deceive you with their words (Eph. 5:6-7). Lying is very prevalent in our society.

C. We should avoid such men because we may become just like them (1 Cor. 15:33).

D. Wouldn't it be a shame if we were drawn away from serving God (Deut. 11:16)?

Conclusion: Sadly, many people will be drawn away into false practices while believing they are doing God's will (Matt. 7:21-23). Isn't it sad to see so many people in this world deceiving themselves concerning their own salvation? Many people will lose their souls because of self-deception. How about you? Have you been deceived?