

The Deceitfulness Of Sin

Adolf Hitler once said, "If you tell a lie long enough, loud enough, and often enough, people will believe it." The Hebrew writer said, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). The Holy Spirit tells us that sin is deceitful. Likewise, Satan is a liar. Jesus said of him, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Satan is a master liar and he is out to steal your soul. Because of the dangers involved, we need to be aware of the deceitful measures Satan will use to spiritually destroy you.

The office was surprised when Sally, an overweight young lady who had been on a diet, walked in with a cheese cake in her hand. "Where did you get the cheese cake?" they asked. "God gave it to me," was her reply. "I was driving past the bakery, and I said, 'God, if you want me to have a cheese cake, let there be a parking space open right in front of the bakery,' and sure enough, after six times around the block, there it was!" Is it not strange how easily mankind can be deceived? The consequences of deception are often small and insignificant, but on other occasions they are tragic. Paul wrote, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (Romans 7:11). The Hebrew writer expressed it this way: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13). The deceitfulness of sin is seen in at least six of the following ways.

First, sin will picture itself as the only solution to the problem. For example, state residents are told the only way to increase state revenues (barring taxes which everyone hates) is to have a lottery (or legalized gambling), which violates righteous principles. When young Christians are out with their friends and one of them proposes to do something sinful, they are put in a situation to commit sin because it seems to be the only viable solution to prevent embarrassment. This temptation prompted Paul to write, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Too many times we follow the path of least resistance, and Satan always wants that path to be sin!

Second, sin will picture itself as the only true road to happiness. If we had the power of insight into the human heart, there would be no doubt the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 was extremely excited about beginning his new life in "riotous living." However, the stench of the pig pen showed him just how mistaken he could be. The world has sold Christians on the idea that they must go out and "make something of themselves" by earning vast sums of wealth. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Set your spiritual priorities on God and let God bless you as He wishes (Colossians 3:1-2).

Third, sin will picture itself as eternal pleasure. The man or woman in sin says, "I want this to go on forever." It never does. An old anti-drug commercial asked, "What happens when the music stops?" That's a great question. Sooner or later it's time to pay the fiddler. Moses understood this principle, and the Hebrew writer said, "By faith Moses,

when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26). Whether the payment for sin comes in the form of pregnancy, alcoholism, custody battles, disease, church discipline, or the final judgment, we will answer for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Fourth, sin will picture itself as completely innocent. Many children of God are steadfast in their convictions against drunkenness, but they feel there is nothing wrong with social drinking because it appears "innocent" (cp. 1 Peter 4:3). Young Christians may know that fornication is sinful, but will take great pleasure in lasciviousness, which is the inappropriate and unrighteous handling or touching of males and females (Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19). How do you really stand on issues such as the lottery being just as sinful as Las Vegas gambling, R-rated movies being just as sinful as explicit pornography, and euphemistic speech being just as sinful as profanity? Do not let yourself be fooled. Sin is far from innocent (Ezekiel 18:24)!

Fifth, sin will promise liberty, but give bondage. How true is the principle spoken to the Romans: "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). Concerning this principle Peter wrote, "For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved" (2 Peter 2:18-19). Today we hear men and women saying, "Don't shackle us with your brand of morality." They speak evil of the word of God, not realizing they are being held captive by Satan.

Sixth, sin will picture itself as the one component which makes life worth living. How many times have you been asked, "You mean you would not tell even one dirty joke?" or "You are telling me that you would not even tell a little white lie?" Christians are mocked as idiots and made to feel that their lives are worthless because they do not participate in sin. However, the Christian's obligation must be identical to the Lord's when He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). Be strong in withstanding the petty claims of the world. Sin will never make life worth living; sin can only bring sure and swift spiritual death (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3).

Do not be overcome by the deceitfulness of sin. Satan is a master liar who is looking to steal your soul. Blinders are put on horses so they will not be scared by what they spot with their peripheral vision. Take the "blinders" off your spiritual "eyes" so you can "see" the deceiving nature of sin (cp. Matthew 13:13-17). Adolf Hitler was exactly right when he said that people will believe a lie given the correct circumstances. We are a holy people (1 Peter 1:16) who are different in nature when compared with the world (1 Peter 2:9), so act like people of God!

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