

Lies We Tell Ourselves About Sin

Introduction. The results of being spiritually deceived are the same whether Satan, someone else, or you ends up being the source of the deception. But being self-deceived is probably the most dangerous because it tends to be the most pervasive, and the hardest to correct. Friedrich Nietzsche said, “The most common lie is the lie one tells to oneself; lying to others is relatively the exception.” We can become complicit in our own deception in many ways, but we will concentrate on six lies we tell ourselves about sin in this lesson.

I. “It’s Not That Bad”

- A. The effort to classify sin is one of the first steps — the “entry level” — for self-deception. We begin to deceive ourselves by relegating some sins to the “not so bad” category — after all, “It’s not like I killed someone, I just...”
- B. Two facts need to be realized. First, sin is sin (1 John 3:4). Second, New Testament lists that contain sins such as idolatry, adultery, and homosexuality also include covetousness, reviling (slandering), and swindling (cheating) in those that prevent the attainment of Heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Apparently, God does not use the same system of classification that we do.

II. “It Doesn’t Hurt Anyone But Me”

- A. With this second lie, we admit that the thought or deed is “sinful,” but still seek to deceive ourselves by assuming its effect is just personal. No matter how secret the sin, or innocuous its effects may seem — personally or otherwise — sin never affects just you! It affects God and Jesus too (Genesis 6:7; Hebrews 6:6).
- B. Think of each and every one of your sins as driving additional nails into the hands and feet of the Savior, and the heart of His Father as He watches, and then ask yourself, “Is this sin really worth that?” None of them are, and we need to stop deceiving ourselves into thinking our sins occur in a vacuum.

III. “It’s Only This One Time”

- A. Even if this were true, and it rarely is, once is still enough. I understand that 1 John 3:7-10 speaks of the “practice” of righteousness and sin, but remember that one sin committed one time also caused the apostle Peter to pronounce Simon as being “in the gall bitterness and the bondage of iniquity” (Acts 8:18-23).
- B. This third lie we tell ourselves is an attempt to convince ourselves that “one time will not matter.” The Old Testament examples of Cain (Genesis 4:3-15), Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:1-7), and Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2) all demonstrate the fallacy of the “just one time” lie.

IV. “One More Time Then I’ll Quit”

- A. Notice the progressive nature of these self-deceptions. Each time a previous lie is shown to be a lie, and even admitted to be false, we stubbornly and foolishly tell ourselves another one to keep up the deception.
- B. This demonstrates the real problem: we simply want to sin (Hebrews 3:13), and are willing to keep lying to ourselves (and others) to feel better about the fact that

our lusts and desires are getting the better of us (James 1:14) and that our hearts are not right (James 4:1-4). The “one more time” lie just furthers that narrative with another layer of self-deception.

V. “I Can Quit Anytime”

- A. Sin, like drugs, is habit-forming, pervasive, and destructive. And just like a narcotic, it gives the user a false sense of control or security until it has gained complete mastery and domination (Romans 6:12-13). None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.
- B. The fifth lie with which we attempt to deceive ourselves about sin is “I’m in control, I can quit anytime I want.” While this is technically and theoretically true (cp. Galatians 5:23), the reality is often very different. Typically, with this particular lie, we are just making another provision for our flesh in regard to its lust (Romans 13:14).

VI. “God Still Loves And Will Forgive Me”

- A. It is true that God always loves us (Romans 8:35-39). But it does not follow that God will continue to forgive sins of which we are unwilling to repent (Luke 17:1-4). God loves and promises to save us from sin — not save us in sin!
- B. This sixth lie represents a complete surrender of ourselves to sin. At this point we have given up and given in so totally that we no longer even attempt to excuse or mitigate our sin. Now we are not even trying — sin has mastered us and Satan is in control of our lives, and it all started with one “little” sin, and one “little” lie to ourselves about it! It does not have to be this way (1 Corinthians 15:34).

Conclusion. The corpse flower, native to the forests of Sumatra, can grow up to ten feet tall. Once open, the spiky, bright red bloom looks like rotten meat, a veritable welcome mat for the insects that pollinate it — flies and carrion beetles.

The corpse flower looks like something has died. It smells like something has died. It has the same chemicals that dead bodies produce. The flower, which begins to disintegrate after two days, is nothing but a big practical joke to the flies and other carrion insects. Unlike other plants that offer nectar, there is no real reward here. They think they are going to get a meal because it smells like something dead.

How like the corpse flower is the story of sin. It is attractive. It holds out promises yet has no true rewards. And it ends in death. We need to learn to set our course by the stars, not by the lights of every passing ship (1 John 2:17).

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