

Lesson Aim: To reveal the nature of deception so that the believer can discern the truth in order to live freely in Christ.



connecting

Prayer: Start your time in prayer together, asking the Holy Spirit to lead your discussion with discernment and truth.

Ice-breaker: Share about a time when you were completely deceived. How did it make you feel? OR have you ever seen someone close to you hurt deeply by deception?

1. **Read Matthew 24:4, 11 and 2 Corinthians 11:3.** The New Testament makes it clear that the deception of believers is a real and constant threat. **Read Jeremiah 17:9.** One source of this deception is ourselves. Looking over the *Sources of Deceit: Ourselves* section in your message notes, can you share any examples of ways you have deceived yourself?
2. **Read Galatians 6:7.** Practically speaking, what does it mean to “reap what you sow”? Are there any examples (positive or negative) you can share of seeing this principle in action?
3. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:33.** What are some examples of how you have seen or experienced this aspect of self-deception to be true?
4. What are some ways you have been able to find balance in this area (developing a core of Christian friendships while not becoming too isolated from the lost)?
5. Jesus makes it clear in **Matthew 24:24** that deception will also come through “false messiahs and false prophets.” **Read Jeremiah 23:16-24.** Why would these false prophets be motivated to speak words of comfort about the judgment that was coming? Why was God so angry about their proclamations?
6. Can you think of some modern-day examples of false prophets? What kind of damage has been done through their teaching?
7. **Read 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 2:18 and I John 4:1-6.** What are some present-day lies from the Enemy that the world has really bought into?
8. **Read Proverbs 14:33, 16:21, 17:24, 18:15.** What are some characteristics of discernment described in these Proverbs?
9. **Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-15.** Think of someone you know who has demonstrated a good deal of discernment. What are some words you would use to describe them as a person?
10. What are some ways you can strive for a similar direction in your life and refine your ability to distinguish between good and evil?



growing



sewing



reaching

Close in prayer as the Lord leads you.

STEPS TO FREEDOM - TODAY – 2:00-5:00 PM – MAIN AUDITORIUM

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ If I tempt you... you know it ▶ If I accuse you... you know it ▶ If I deceive you... you don't know it
- ▶ Matthew 24:4 - *Jesus said: "Watch out that no one deceives you."*
- ▶ 2 Corinthians 11:3; 2 John 7; Matthew 24:11, 24, 25

SOURCES OF DECEIT (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9)

A. OURSELVES (Jeremiah 17:9; Hebrews 3:13)

- ❶ We have deceived ourselves if we only hear the Word and do not do it (James 1:22; 4:17; 1 Peter 1:13).
- ❷ We deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin (1 John 1:8).
- ❸ We deceive ourselves if we think we are something when we are nothing (Galatians 6:3).
- ❹ We deceive ourselves if we think that we are wise in this age (1 Corinthians 3:18, 19).
- ❺ We deceive ourselves if we think ourselves to be religious and yet do not bridle our own tongue (James 1:26).
- ❻ We deceive ourselves if we think we will not reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).
- ❼ We deceive ourselves if we think the unrighteous will inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9).
- ❽ We deceive ourselves if we think we can continue to associate with bad company and not be corrupted (1 Corinthians 15:33).

B. FALSE PROPHETS & TEACHERS (Matthew 7:15; cf. Jeremiah 23:16-22, 25-40)

- ❶ They will show signs & wonders (Matthew 24:24; Revelation 13:11-14; Deuteronomy 13:1-4)
- ❷ They will work within the church (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
- ❸ They have common characteristics (2 Peter 2:1, 10-19)
 - ▶ Despise authority (v.10) ▶ Arrogant (v.10) ▶ Carouse where they don't belong (v.13) ▶ Adulterous eyes (v.14)
 - ▶ Seductive (v.14) ▶ Greedy (v.14) ▶ Slaves of depravity (v.19)

C. DECEIVING SPIRITS (1 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-6)

DISCERNMENT

A. MOTIVE IS CRUCIAL (1 Kings 3:1-12)

- ❶ Not to promote self, nor gain an advantage
- ❷ But to understand justice (i.e. distinguish between right and wrong)

B. DISCERNMENT IS ON THE PLANE OF GOOD & EVIL (1 Corinthians 12:10)

C. DISCERNMENT IS ESSENTIALLY A FUNCTION OF THE SPIRIT, NOT THE MIND (1 Corinthians 2:14-15)

D. INCREASES WITH MATURITY (Hebrews 5:11-14; Proverbs 4:18)

COME BACK THIS AFTERNOON