

Be Not Deceived

I. Introduction

- A. Scripture repeatedly stresses the need for us to avoid being deceived (i.e., being led, typically through trickery or guile, to stray from the Lord) (cf. **1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:33; Gal. 6:7; James 1:16**). Consider some ways we can be deceived into disobeying God, and some keys to guarding against this.

II. ...By Self

- A. One of the most common types of deceit is *self*-deceit. If we're not careful, we can deceive ourselves into thinking we're right with God when we're not. **James 1:22, 26; 1 John 1:8**
- B. We might also deceive ourselves by thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to. **1 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 6:3**

III. ...By Pride

- A. This ties in with something else that can deceive us...the pride of one's heart. **Obadiah 3**
- B. The Pharisees of Jesus' day demonstrate how delusional one can become if he or she is puffed up with pride. **John 7:47-49**

IV. ...By the "Fleeting Pleasures of Sin"

- A. Something else that can deceive us is what Hebrews 11:25 calls the "fleeting pleasures of sin" (ESV). Moses had the foresight to see through the deceit of pursuing instant gratification at the cost of one's soul. So must we. **Hebrews 11:25; Proverbs 7:21-23; 20:1 (23:31-32); 1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

V. ...By Riches

- A. Our Lord also warns against the deceitfulness of riches. While material things have their place, many are deceived by them. **Matthew 13:22; Song 416, v. 2; Luke 12:15-21**

VI. ...By Bad Influences

- A. Scripture further warns against being deceived by bad influences. While we should seek to influence those of the world for good, we must be careful not to allow the influence of worldly people to turn our moral standards away from the truth. **1 Corinthians 15:33**
- B. One of the reasons given for church discipline is the potential for brethren to be deceived by those who promote error. **Romans 16:17-18**

VII. ...By False Teachers

- A. A specific type of bad influence is the false teacher. Scripture repeatedly warns against being deceived by false teaching. **Colossians 2:4, 8**
- B. False teachings are often "explained" by erroneous claims that might seem right on the surface. False teachings are also often things that many want to hear. This creates a great need for vigilance. **2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:6**

VIII. ...By Wrong Standards of Righteousness

- A. It is also easy to be deceived by a wrong standard of righteousness. **1 John 3:7**
- B. For instance, self-examination that is based on how one measures up to other fallible people (instead of how one measures up to God's Word) is a recipe for being deceived. **2 Corinthians 10:12; Matthew 10:35-37**

IX. ...By Worldly Wisdom

- A. We must also not be deceived into viewing morality based on "societal norms." The world's standards of what matters in life and the world's standards of what is right often conflict with what God teaches in His Word. **Revelation 3:17; Matthew 7:13-14**