

Don't Fool Yourself

Text : **Galatians 6: 1-10**

INTRODUCTION :

A. The world we live in is a very deceptive place.

1. Increasingly, nothing is as it seems.
 - a. We dare not take anything at face value.
 - b. Even the most vigilant person is deceived daily.
2. Technology - Deception is a multi-billion dollar industry in this country.
 - a. TV commercials are designed to stretch misrepresentation to its legal limit.
 - b. Food labels need an attorney with a science degree to interpret them.
3. As far back as history goes; man has entertained himself with slight of hand.
 - a. Every ancient court had its magician.
 - b. Even today some magicians make millions. (**Siegfried and Roy**)
4. It has gotten to the point that we can't believe our senses.
 - a. Photoshop can alter a picture beyond reality.
 - b. Computers can create video clips of things that didn't even happen.
 - c. Artificial colors, flavorings, and even smells make foods taste like other things.

B. Magicians are not the only professional deceivers.

1. In many instances lawyers are hired to obscure the truth.
ILL.- A witness appeared to be very distressed while on the stand so the judge asked him what was wrong. The witness responded, *"I vowed to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but every time I try to do so that attorney objects."*
2. Politicians survive on deception.
ILL.- While making a campaign speech, someone in the audience told a politician that his opponent had accused him of lying. The politician responded, *"I've never lied to you. It's just that the facts don't always match what I believe and say."*
3. Purveyors of false religion deal in deception.
 - a. **One of the most famous media evangelists admitted that he believed baptism was essential to salvation. However, when he was asked why he didn't tell people they had to be baptized, he replied, "That's just too controversial. It would limit the number of responses we get during our crusades and the number of churches participating."**
 - b. **A double-jointed preacher had worked for a "faith healer." Until he was discovered, he had followed him from town to town getting healed.**

C. Worse than other deceiving us, .. we even deceive ourselves.

1. At times, each of us has convinced ourselves of some untruth.
 - a. A friend purchased a karaoke machine and came to believe he could sing.
 - b. Our running back would not wash his lucky socks during the season.
2. Some self-deceptions are embarrassing, even foolish, but not harmful while others bring great harm.
 - a. A young couple convinces themselves that they can afford their dream house.
 - b. A stalker convinces himself that a stranger loves them.

TRANSITION :

Self-deception is a problem in the spiritual realm as well (Jer. 17:9) so let's take a few minutes to look at some ways it can affect us.

I. We deceive ourselves about sin.**A. We live in an age of declining morals.**

1. Throughout history moral values have varied.
 - a. Early Rome and latter Rome are not comparable.
 - b. The dark ages followed the age of enlightenment.
2. All great nations have risen and fallen according to a set pattern.
 - a. Become drunk on their success. (**Undisciplined and lazy**)
 - b. A few people get control of most of the land. (**centralized power**)
 - c. They become overly tolerant. (**coddle criminals**)
 - d. Moral values fall. (*including* : **increased homosexuality**)
 - e. The family unit decays. (**The family is the primary transmitter of values.**)

B. When sin is socially acceptable, it does not seem so bad.

1. When godly people keep silent, the wicked dominate society. (**This is how Sodom was created. It did not start off wicked.**)
2. That for which one could have been jailed is now protected.
 - a. An entire political movement revolves around a woman's right to murder her child.
 - b. Sexual perversion is no longer a crime. (**Now those who oppose it are criminals.**)

3. Government permits sin to be practiced openly so it can be taxed.
4. Our culture increasingly has reduced itself to the animal level.
 - a. If it feels good, do it. (**Satisfy your urges, don't deny yourself.**)
 - b. Sex has become a national obsession. (**It now defines relationship.**)

C. God has not changed his attitude toward sin.

1. Sin still brings God's wrath down on the individual and on nations.
I Cor. 6: 9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
 2. In Christ, God will forgive sin, **but** He will not accept it or even tolerate it.
 - a. **Gal. 6: 7-9** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. **8** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. **9** Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.
 - b. **Prov. 14:34-** Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.
- D. Man does not have the right to re-define sin. (**But every generation tries.**)**
Isa. 5:20- Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
 Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;
 Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

II. Another of the most common forms of self-deception is our view of ourselves

- A. It is almost instinctive within man to excuse his own sins.
Gal. 6: 3-4 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. **4** But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.
- B. We can always find someone who is worse than we are.
 (*And when we need an excuse ... we can also find someone better than us.*)
II Cor. 10: 12- For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

C. All have sin so ALL need a savior.

1. **I John 1: 8-** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
2. **Rom. 3:10 , 23 ; 6:23**

III. Christians deceive themselves about our spiritual strength.

A. God's Apostle warned us :

1. **Rom. 12: 3-** For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.
2. **I Cor. 10: 12-** Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

B. The book of James warns us about thinking we have arrived.

Read & Exeget ... James 1: 21-27

C. Some who think they have arrived spiritually, haven't even started.

1. **Matt. 7: 21-23** Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **22** Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" **23** And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'
2. No matter how convinced one is, GOD knows those who are His.
 - a. **John 10: 14-** I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,
 - b. **II Tim. 2: 19-** Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."
3. No matter how convinced one is that he is the Lord's, it is the Lord alone who divides His sheep from the goats, His wheat from the tares.

D. Christians must constantly be examining their own hearts and lives.

1. Too often we spend more time looking at others than at ourselves.
Rom. 14: 4- Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.
2. **II Cor. 13:5-** Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!

CONCLUSION :

A. The devil is a deceiver and has been from the beginning of time.

1. He lied to Eve in the garden. **Gen. 3**
2. Until this very day he uses all manor of deceit.
 - a. **II Cor 11: 13-15** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **14** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. **15** Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.
 - b. **II Thes. 2: 9-12** *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, **10** and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. **11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, **12** in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*
3. Deception is at the very core of Satan's nature.
 - a. **John 8: 44-** You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
 - b. THEREFORE ... when we deceive ourselves, we are serving the devil.

B. Obviously ... the Christian must be on a constant quest for truth.

1. It is only the truth that will set us free and keep us free. (**John 8:32 -cf- 17:17**)
2. It is only when that word of truth is internalized that one is saved. (**James 1: 21**)

C. Our security depends upon a daily reality check.

1. *"Am I walking in the word today."*
2. Our walk with Christ is one day at a time.
 - a. Society cannot define sin. (**only God**)
 - b. We will never be able to completely stop sinning.
 - c. We will never reach the point where we can let our guard down.

D. I John 1: 6-10 ... God will keep us saved, BUT only if we are honest with Him.