

How the Love of God Protects us from Deception

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Introduction: Overcoming deception is a crucial goal of spiritual growth

- A. God wishes us to develop skills to overcome deception. This is a fundamental key in ascertaining spiritual growth. **(Heb 5:13-14)**
 - 1. Sadly many have come to label this ability to discern and act as “negative teaching.” Satan has deceived many Christians. **(Isa 5:20-21)**
 - 2. The “lazy mind” walks away from the effort it takes to develop discernment.
- B. The entire battleground of salvation and damnation surrounds deception.
 - 1. What is the core work of Satan? **(Jn 8:44-48)**
 - 2. Satan’s work results in men being unwilling to see and acknowledge what is true. Think about the tragedy that follows in the lives of such people.
 - 3. The essence of salvation is finding the truth that makes us free. **(Jn 8:31-32)**
 - 4. Truth is often painful and challenging. Truth brings us to know God and the grace and guidance He abundantly provides.

I. God wants us to build our hearts to imitate His own ways

- A. Spiritual growth allows God’s love to change our every thought! **(Mt 22:37-40)**
 - 1. All deception is contrary to the God of light, the One who never lies. **(James 1:17-18; Titus 1:2)**
 - 2. How should a Christian view all deception?
- B. We not only must hate the deception others put on us, but we also must come to hate the “worldly acceptable deception” we are tempted to justify. **(James 4:4)**
 - 1. When our opposition to deception is partial then we have opened our heart to completely fall under the deception of Satan.
 - 2. Truly in these matters it can be said “give Satan an inch and he will take a mile!” Actually he will take our souls if we do not fight. **(2 Thess 2:11-12)**

II. Learning to love justice and mercy

- A. The greatest step in overcoming deception is to “press towards” having a pure heart. **(Mt 5:6-8; Prov 22:11)**
 - 1. Because of God’s mercy I can find repentance and forgiveness.
 - 2. It takes effort and pain to be honest about what is in your own heart. Taking the easy way will never lead to repentance. **(Prov 27:19; Jer 17:9-10; 2 Cor 7:8-9)**
- B. We face a great test of our hearts in how we think about and treat others.
 - 1. How would I want others to treat me? **(Mt 7:12)**
 - 2. This is what makes God’s character so appealing. **(Ex 34:6-7)**
- C. A hypocritical heart will make false assumptions and act without mercy.
 - 1. We must be committed to principle and not let emotions drive us. **(Jn 7:24)**
 - 2. Emotional people can be easily manipulated to a false reality.
 - 3. Jesus was successfully slandered because people did not pursue justice. **(Lk 7:33-35; Prov 18:8)**

4. "What do I know?" "Do I really think I can read minds?" (James 2:13)

III. How do we resolve differences in understanding?

A. Carefully *define the issue* and *the words used* in the study.

1. Honest people seek to *accurately understand the differences to be resolved*. When an issue is properly defined *only then can we properly apply scripture*.

2. Dishonest or ill-informed people will *make use of "straw men"*. When a position sounds ridiculous please *take the time to be sure it is accurate!* (Mt 11:18-19)

3. How many of us want to be misrepresented? *Do not do this to another*. (Mt 7:12)

4. Some intentionally create confusion to *raise the emotion level*. (James 3:16-17)

B. What happens when words are used *without proper definitions*?

IV. How do we deal with this culture on homosexuality?

A. What Bible passages apply? What terms need to be defined? What is (are) the specific question(s) to be addressed?

1. How does *the culture frame the issue*? How does the Bible address the issue?

- Four words I've grown to fear: "The Bible is clear . . ." - Mike Cope

- **American Christianity**: Defend yourself, defend "biblical marriage", defend your faith, defend your borders. **Jesus Christianity**: Identify with those who suffer and LOVE them. Relinquish political control and care for the least of these.

- **Seth** - "From reading Facebook & Twitter today, you would think Obama just announced he is signing an order banning Christianity in America. Such hate from people who are called to love."

- **My Response**: - "...Seth, I am assuming we agree on the following question, but I would like to ask it for clarity in this discussion. What should the Christian's attitude be towards the practicing homosexual? Should we tell them to repent? *If so, what should he repent of?*"

2. Is the practice of homosexual sex a sin? (1 Cor 6:9-11; Rom 1:24-28)

3. What are some *common arguments made to justify this practice*?

B. "The Bible is *a reflection of the culture of that time*. Our culture is now different!"

1. What is "culture"? It is a system of values!

2. Did cultures in the 1st century accept homosexuality? Did that change the meaning of scripture? (Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Pt 3:1-2)

"God said it, I believe it, that settles it"...Uhhh...no...God said it, someone translated it into your language divorcing it from its own culture, you read it with a preconceived belief lens, then interpreted it and became convinced in your heart you knew what meant even though it bore no resemblance to the original audience or culture it was spoken into to begin with..."

C. "*Homosexuals are born this way*. They did not choose this lifestyle so it is not sin."

1. If that can be proved then the Bible would still *tell us to not practice this desire!*

The alcoholic is told to put this desire away and *not to act upon it*. (Rom 8:13-14)

2. There is no proof that homosexuality is inborn.

D. "If you deny practicing homosexuals membership in your church then *you are bigoted and hate-filled* just like those who hated blacks in the 1950's."

1. Political forces have adopted this approach. There is a storm coming our way!

2. We must wisely and lovingly seek to convert all. (2 Tim 2:24-26)

"The result of a consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth is not that the lies will now be accepted as truth, and the truth defamed as lies, but that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world — and the category of truth vs. falsehood is among the mental means to this end — is being destroyed." The possibilities for lying become boundless and frequently meet with little resistance. - Hannah Arendt