

SELF DECEPTION

In our last letter, we introduced the subject of self-deception and its dangers. **James 1:26** states, "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless." Remember what A.W. Tozer said regarding self-deception: "Of all forms of deception, self-deception is the most deadly because he is his own enemy, working a fraud upon himself. Because he does not resist the deceit in his own self."

I also had mentioned how **Hebrews 12** emphasizes the importance of allowing God to correct us. Failing to give Him preeminence prevents us from gaining the discernment necessary to avoid self-deception. We see this clearly in the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden. **1 Timothy 2:13-14** says, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." For years, these verses were a mystery to me, but I found a key insight in **1 Corinthians 3:18**: "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise."

Genesis 3:6 reveals Eve's thought process: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate." I noticed that while Scripture describes what Eve was thinking, it does not detail Adam's. However, it does tell us that she took the fruit, gave it to her husband, and he ate. It was at this moment that the eyes of both were opened. The Bible is clear that the Devil is the great deceiver. From both **1 Timothy** and **Genesis**, we see that **Eve was deceived by an outside source, but Adam was deceived by an internal one.**

Adam's thinking was influenced in three key areas: his **associations**, his **environment**, and what he **allowed to influence** him. Satan observed how Adam was influenced by Eve and knew exactly what would challenge God's command.

Jesus highlights the laws of association in **Luke 14:26-27**:

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear

his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

The word hate here basically means prioritizing one over another. In Adam's case, he placed Eve above God, violating the fundamental rule of association: never put anything before Him. We see this pattern throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments. Isn't this one of the most significant struggles affecting our walk with God today?

Matthew 16:24-25 expresses this clearly:

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'"

Self-deception is easy to fall into, especially through the associations and environments we choose to place ourselves into. This is why we must put God first, denying even our own desires when they contradict His Word (**Luke 14:26**). Paul asks in **2 Corinthians 6:14**, "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" The answer is in the Word. Jesus has given it to us, and every believer has the witness of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction. Adam knew the truth, yet he surrendered his heart to self-deception when he placed Eve before God. If we are not careful, the law of association will affect our inner thoughts, leading our minds into environments that pull us away from God (see **1 Kings 11:2-6**). Our hearts are fragile and easily influenced, so **we must be diligent in keeping the Holy Spirit as our primary guide and staying in the places where He leads us.** By doing so, we can stay on course, avoid the enemy's traps, and be effective witnesses for Christ.

As you reflect on identifying self deception in your life, remember **Proverbs 13:20**: "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed."

Be blessed,

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