

How to See Clearly When Deception Clouds the Truth

“Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction” (2 Thess. 2:3).

We live in an age of full-blown deception. Agendas rule, as propaganda reigns. Many people in authority seem disingenuous at best, and totally corrupt at worst.

Our leaders lack moral clarity, which reflects the heart of the people. Values that were once held in high esteem seem to have all but vanished from our society.

The apostle Paul wrote of a time such as this in 2 Timothy 3:13. He said, “Evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

It is almost impossible to watch the actions and listen to the words of our leaders without seeing this truth being played out. It seems there is no shortage of men who would seek to mislead the masses for their own personal gain.

Only weeks ago, the U.S. Senate’s failure to defund Planned Parenthood revealed multiple forms of deception played out on a national stage. Some Senators are deceived and believe that continuing to fund Planned Parenthood is the proper thing to do.

Others have made the decision to fund Planned Parenthood because they fear political implications of casting a vote to defund the group. They are deceived if they believe such a choice is appropriate.

Others seem to understand the issue, yet have a complete lack of moral clarity; they stand and try to defend Planned

Parenthood, when the true nature of that organization is currently on full and inarguable display.

It appears other opportunities to defund Planned Parenthood are coming soon for both the Senate and House leaders. Our prayer is that voices of moral courage would prevail.

Is deception a malaise limited only to the secular world? Certainly not. Due to compromise and not knowing the Word of God, more and more deception has infiltrated the church in America. In fact, an argument could be made that Christians in North America bear little resemblance to the church in the Bible.

The more Christians err and are not held accountable, the more grievous the occurrences become. Compromise becomes the ultimate slippery slope.

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, observed: "As the most dangerous winds may enter at little openings, so the devil never enters more dangerously than by little unobserved incidents; which seem to be nothing, yet insensibly open the heart to great temptations."

The definition of temptation is "the act of alluring or being allured." It is exchanging the short-term benefit of something for the long-term consequences of it.

In the Lord's Prayer when Jesus prayed, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13), the word temptation had an even broader meaning. He used the Greek word, peirasmos, which refers to a person being "put to test." This testing involves situations where we are challenged to keep the name of God honored in our lives.

Sadly, keeping the name of God honored is no longer a priority in our culture and not even a priority to some in the church. Navigating this post-Christian society is becoming increasingly complex. Deceptions in the church range from

unsound doctrine to complete apostasy, including:

- Humanism
- Universalism
- Replacement theology
- Shifting away from biblical family values
- Shifting toward pro-choice movement
- Over-emphasis of prosperity teachings
- Rejecting the existence of hell
- Irrelevancy of the law (Biblical and societal)
- Challenging the authority of the Word of God
- Hyper-grace teachings that condone sin
- Incorporating New Age concepts
- Demanding that the church stay out of politics
- Belief that the kingdom of God is allegorical (not literal)

In addition to these false teachings, several pastors of nationally recognized mega-churches are known for illicit, corrupt behavior. Too many Christian ministers living in North America are truly living in darkness. The sad reality is that they are also paving a path of destruction for those who follow them.

The apostle Paul warns in 2 Timothy 4:3-5: "For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but they will gather to themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, having itching ears, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn to myths. But be self-controlled

in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and prove your ministry.”

It is much easier and requires less effort to believe a myth than it is to do our due diligence to search out the truth. It is much easier to be led by our emotions than it is to line the facts up with biblical truths.

It is much easier to gloss over sin in the church, rather than take an unpopular (but biblical) stand. It is much easier to do nothing than suffer the pushback that is so prevalent in our culture today. It is time for the church in America to repent!

Apostasy in the church is nothing more than spiritual adultery. Even if a church’s stand may offend some, we must stay true to God in all matters. We cannot pick and choose which doctrine is acceptable—or, worse yet, unacceptable to us.

John Calvin, a 16th-century French Reformer, said: “The excellence of the church does not consist in multitude but in purity.”

If the church today is confused, we should expect that our society would reel in chaos. If the church succumbs to the temptation of deception, we definitely should expect our culture to cave. The buck stops with the followers of Christ. This is our time and on our watch—the responsibility rests on our shoulders.

In these times in which we live, there is no room for any form of deception. Loving and holding to the truth will stave off deception. Jesus warned that a day would come where strong seducing spirits would be given power in the earth. Is that day upon us?

Satan wants the church to remain deceived. He craves worship from the world and accomplishes this through mass deception.

He wants the church to be weak and ineffective. Yet, he is never to be believed because he has “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. When he lies, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

In these times, God has a unique role for each person. This role requires a “laying down” of certain things we would rather hold onto. These things may vary individually, but obedience is the key for God’s blessing and favor to flow.

It is time to rally behind the pastors who unswervingly hold onto the truth and refuse to compromise its integrity. If your pastor is one who values the sanctity of life, biblical views of marriage, support for Israel, support for persecuted Christians worldwide and support for our constitutional rights of free speech and freedom of religion—thank him, encourage him and pray for him every day.

Unless we quickly see a revival in this nation, we will see further erosion of biblical beliefs—leading to total intolerance. We must be serious about our faith now and diligently stand against that which opposes our God.

The stakes are extremely high; across this globe, peoples’ lives hang in the balance. Will you agree to be the beacon of hope God is calling you to be?

To quote civil rights leader and steadfast Christian voice Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.: “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetuate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

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Julie Boles, MSN, WHNP is passionate about seeing the kingdom

of God advanced. She has served in multiple ministries, including student ministries, overseas missions and a vibrant women's prison ministry. She also has over 27 years of experience in women's health care. Julie writes weekly at her blog Jewels and Gems. She and her husband, Brent, make their home in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.