

The Key to Killing Deception

For many years, I believed that I was damaged goods and could only have a second-rate life. I thought that the sexual and emotional abuse I endured as a child was somehow my fault, that it had happened because something was wrong with me.

As a result, I felt a false sense of responsibility to fix my circumstances. But I couldn't make that happen, which only caused more self-condemnation, and I didn't like myself very much.

For so long I believed this terrible lie about myself. It's easy to do this, because you simply don't know when you're deceived. It's also dangerous because the lies we believe become our reality when they are truth to us.

After I became a Christian, I thought that the only way God could love me was if I did everything right. That was just another lie that caused me to continually strive to do good, "impressive" things to earn the approval of God and people. For example, I really thought I was something special when I was on the church board and in a leadership position.

Another result of this deception was that I found it easier to see what was "wrong" with other people. I was so critical and judgmental. But seeing the faults in others just kept me from seeing what was wrong with *me* for a long time. And that was exactly what the enemy wanted.

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In John 8:31-32 (NKJV), Jesus says, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

It's so important for us to know the truth, because the lies we believe—especially about ourselves—cause many problems in

our lives. That can mean trouble in relationships, in our work, in our health or other areas of everyday life.

But when we pursue a relationship with God and finally face truth—and that ultimately means the truth about ourselves—we grow spiritually. God is looking on our heart, and He's concerned about our motives. In fact, He's more interested in *why* we do the things we do than *what* we're doing.

I've learned to ask God on a regular basis, "Show me truth. Help me face the truth You show me—especially what You show me about myself."

Once God shows us the truth about ourselves, we can no longer hide from it. The Bible tells us the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. He knows just how and when to guide us, and He is gentle and always does what is best for us.

It's not easy, but I want to encourage you not to reject God's guidance just because it may not feel good in the moment. Just because something doesn't feel good doesn't mean it's not good for you. Remember, God *always* has His best plan for your life in mind.

The Red Dress

I remember when God used a red dress to reveal some truth I needed to face about myself. It was brand-new and I hadn't worn it yet. Well, I was praying for a friend and asked God what I could do to bless her, and He spoke to my heart to give her that dress.

Immediately, I began to reason with God, "But it's new!" He told me once more to give her the dress. I tried again, "But God, I bought these really nice earrings to go with it." He said to give her the earrings too! So I prayed, "God if this is *really* You..."

Finally, I realized that red dress was too important to me. I

had to face truth in that moment: Did I want to obey God or be selfish? I decided to humble myself and give my friend the dress.

The Truth About My Problem

You know, this struggle really wasn't about the dress—it was more about my heart. God was teaching me how to be a steward and not an owner of things. I discovered that if I'm not so attached to things, it won't be hard to give them away when He asks me to.

We all have times like this in our relationship with God if we are willing to be completely honest with Him and let Him search our hearts. If we want to grow closer to Him, we must learn to examine our motives and be honest with ourselves when God shows us something that needs to change.

Pray that you will know the truth so you can be set free from deception. And then face the truth God shows you—about *you*. Remember, when you embrace the truth, it will set you free!
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