

Lesson 1 – Taking Deception Seriously
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Introduction: The outcomes of our eternity depends on our overcoming deception

A. Overcoming the great deceiver, Satan, involves seeing and overcoming deception and choosing what is good and right. (Jn 8:31-32, 36-37; 1 Jn 2:13-14)

1. Did everyone believe in Jesus? Why?

2. The battle between God and Satan is a battle for our hearts. The path for each is as different as light and darkness. (Jn 1:4-5, 9-12)

B. We must learn to take deception seriously!

1. How many times did Jesus say beware, take heed, be not deceived and many other warnings to His disciples concerning deception. (Lk 12:1-3)

2. What is deception?

Deception - ἀπάτη, ης, ἡ (1) *trickery, deceitfulness, deception* (CO 2.8); of the appeal of riches *temptation, seduction, delusion* (MT 13.22); of the attractiveness of sin *deceit, deception* (HE 3.13); (2) of pleasure that involves one in sin *deceitful pleasure, evil fun, dissipation* (2P 2.13) – Friberg

3. Satan is relentless. We can easily be moved from faithful service to hypocrisy.

I. We can be easily be deceived

A. Imagine trying to play chess with a grandmaster. We do not have a chance.

1. Now imagine trying to match your mind against the powerful spiritual being called Satan. (Eph 4:14, 6:11-13; 1 Pt 5:8)

Wiles - μεθοδεία, ας, method, procedure; in the NT in a bad sense, as scheming to deceive *craftiness, cunning, deception* (EP 4.14); plural *stratagems, cunning attacks, tricks* (EP 6.11)

2. Jesus tried to warn Peter about the power of this great deceiver. (Lk 22:31-34)

3. What kind of thinking could have led Peter to ignore this warning? What kind of thinking can we similarly engage in?

B. The lazy mind will not resist the pressures of the world. (Lk 11:34-36)

1. What are some of the “shortcuts” to reason? Most of them involve our desire to belong and to be consistent.

1. Reciprocation - “There is an obligation to give, an obligation to receive, and an obligation to repay.”

2. Commitment and consistency - . Once we have made a choice or taken a stand, we will encounter pressures to behave consistently with that commitment.

3. Social proof - “We view behavior as more correct in a given situation to the degree that we see others performing it.”

4. Liking - “People prefer to say ‘yes’ to those they know and like.”

5. Authority - “We tend to follow authority figures. An order from an authority is usually seen in isolation instead of the situation as a whole. We are as vulnerable to the symbols of authority as to its substance.”

2. These shortcuts were very effective in keeping men from following Jesus. (Jn 7:48-49; 12:42-43; Mt 10:37-39)

3. When people “follow their gut” they are taking the easy path. (Prov 17:16)

C. All men must prioritize the subjects that they carefully think about.

1. We do not have the time or energy to carefully analyze every decision and action we take.

2. We need to heed scripture as to the things we carefully consider! (Deut 12:28-30; Lk 8:18; 12:15; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 10:12)

3. What do we *put at the forefront* of our thoughts each day?

II. Why do men have difficulty hearing God's word?

A. They have based their life on *their desires*. (Jn 8:43-44)

1. Hearing depends upon *the intention to learn and obey*.

2. *The heart is easily deceived* to believe what you wish to be true. (Ex. Politics)

3. Only when we are humbled and *really want truth* can we be helped. (Rom 8:5)

B. They have *rejected reason for emotion*. (Deut 29:18-19)

1. Consider what one professor has to do with his class! (Teaching how to think)

2. We cannot escape *the need for reason and discernment*.

3. Can we handle an alleged contradiction? A character attack? Our own confusion?

4. Consider the effort and reason that was needed to believe in Jesus. (Mt 16:13-15)

5. Consider a few examples in the book of John. (Jn 1:46; 6:60, 66; 10:19-21)

C. They have *become proud*.

1. Many have made themselves their own God. (Ezk 3:5-7)

2. Over time *a heart can turn and be hardened*. The ability to hear is now lost.

3. This is the true division point in the church over generations. Who are *serious* about hearing and doing God's will? Israel lost that desire! (2 Kgs 18:11-12)

III. When we refuse to hear and think then we will be unprepared

A. Jesus *taught plainly* to His disciples about His death. (Lk 9:22, 44-45)

1. These were good men but they were overconfident and *did not listen well*.

2. They correctly reasoned to see that Jesus was the Son of God. (Mt 16:16-17)

3. In the same context Peter disagreed with the Son of God!! (Mt 16:21-23)

4. He thought that the Son of God could not be killed! Their *own prejudices were not overcome* because they did not seriously listen to God's words.

5. We must never think that *we are wiser than God!* (1 Cor 1:25)

B. Jesus pleaded with and then *led his disciples by example to prepare*. (Mt 26:37-41)

1. Preparation required *energy and trust*.

2. *The mind and the will* had to be prepared. Jesus could not slip even for one second! (Mt 26:53-54)

C. Judas had more fundamentally ignored preparation.

1. He *had ignored his own heart and was blind*. He did not care for others and served his own lusts. (Jn 12:6)

2. How could he ignore such point-blank warnings? (Mt 26:24-25)

3. He also thought that he had a sure and easy way to make money! He also likely thought that Jesus could not be killed. (Mt 26:14-15)

D. His enemies *were completely unprepared*.

1. Why were the Jews indifferent to *the obvious power in the miracles of Jesus?* (Jn 11:47-48; 12:9-11)

2. They were so *consumed by their own passions* that they could not think.

3. The Jews, the Romans and Satan himself *were not prepared for this day*.

(1 Cor 2:6-8)

Conclusion: Are we a people prepared to meet our Lord?