

Freedom from Deception

The first step of recovery from deception is knowledge of the truth. The only antidote for a lie is the truth, thus there is no deliverance from deception apart from the knowledge and acceptance of the truth. And facing the truth, regarding certain spiritual or “supernatural” experiences, is painful to the pride of the person deceived. He has built his faith, concerning his own spiritual condition, based on assumptions and experiences, and that left no room for real doubt.

We find it hard to say, “I was wrong!” People do not like to admit they have been deceived; some simply cannot. That is deep-seated arrogance. They are the hardest to reach with the truth especially the Gospel. You have to really love the truth to accept truth that cuts and humbles.

When the deception has been in place for a long period of time, the deceiving spirits may actually get the deceived believer to defend their work in him and fight tenaciously to guard the cause of the deception. The objective is to keep the deceived in their hold, even after he has found them out. They give even more “spiritual” experiences to the deceived to convince him he is wrong. One of the greatest hindrances to the truth is when the believer gives more credence to his experiences than to Scripture. This is the “you can’t say anything to convince me X is wrong” syndrome, which we also know as passivity of the judgment or reason. As long as the believer is unwilling to accept arguments from Scripture that cast doubt on his experiences, he will remain in deception.

Once there is a willingness to accept the truth, it is possible to break free from deception. There are several stages to the breaking free process, and all are important to success.

Usually the **first stage** is to doubt the experience. I cannot over emphasize how important it is not to quench or ignore the first doubt you have about an experience as to its source. Doubt is actually the first penetration of the truth into the mind. Some instantly quench doubt, fearing they are “doubting God”. They look upon doubt as temptation and resist it. The problem is most Christians have had “do not doubt God” drilled into their brains, and they take any doubt, judging, critique, or enmity as evil.

Unbelief of spirit manifestations are commanded in 1 John 4:1 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” To doubt God, as in not to trust Him, is sin, but to doubt supernatural manifestations is simply a call to exercise the use of the faculties God has given us, which all believers should use to discern “good and evil”. Doubt in this context is not a sin, but is really the Holy Spirit moving the human spirit to action according to 1 Corinthians 2:15.

The **second stage** is the admittance of possibility of deception, though it can sometimes precede the doubt stage. To admit the possibility of deception is really something every believer ought to acknowledge. None of us are immune to deception, and the moment we begin to believe we are immune is the very moment we have been deceived. We are all too willing to admit that others can be deceived but we want to believe we cannot be. That is a dangerous position. This certainty of personal exception is what makes it so hard to break through with the truth.

Others are certainly misled, but we think we cannot be. That is “beholding the mote” in your brother’s eye while blind to the “beam” in your own.

Mt 7:3 And why beholdest thou the **mote** that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the **beam** that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the **mote** out of thine eye; and, behold, a **beam** is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the **beam** out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the **mote** out of thy brother’s eye.

A mote is a splinter, and a beam is just that, a beam. You can see the failure in your brother but cannot see it in your own life. An open and humble attitude ought to be, “If others, why not I?” Such an attitude is at least partial assurance against deception.

The **third stage** is the discovery of the deception. Light and truth alone can make you free, and once the believer admits the doubt and opens his mind to the truth that he is liable to be deceived just like everyone else, then to that open mind and attitude truth is given.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Those who are in deception and practice evil reject the truth, but those who receive the truth are attracted to the light (truth). Sometimes the deception is seen all at once; at other times the revelation is gradual.

The **forth stage** is the acknowledgement of the deception. Once the discovery of the deception is made, there must be the acknowledgment of the deception. The truth must not only be faced, but it must also be owned. Name it! Say it out loud, “I have been deceived, and this is how...!” That becomes a powerful statement against the enemy! By naming the nature of the attack, it helps keep you focused on what you need to do to resist it. If you can’t name it, ask in prayer for light to be shed on it.

During this recovery or “fighting through” period the enemy will see their hold coming to an end and will resist. They will never let go, until the cause of the deception is fully

removed, until every trace of the deception is illuminated by the light of the truth. As long as there is a piece of the deception still in place, they will continue the attack. They will do everything possible to convince you that you are wrong about them and their lies. They will attempt to confuse and bewilder the victim by pouring on guilt and accusations to convince him he is wrong. It is essential that the recovering believer not accept guilt, until he is sure it is deserved and NOT from lying spirits.

One of the keys to detecting a deception is knowing what your normal spiritual life looks and feels like. When you can look at your spiritual walk and say to yourself, "This isn't normal," you know then that you have a problem. When your spirit is troubled, there is a problem that needs dealing with. It may simply be sin and it may be far more complicated and be an attack on your person by evil spirits.

Here are some hints for helping to maintain "normal".

First is your attitude toward the past. There should be no regrets or brooding over past things done or undone. It is too late; confess it and move on. For victory in life there must be victory in the past and all its failures. I hate to be the one to break the news, but you aren't perfect. Get over it!

Secondly is your attitude toward the future. It is okay to think about the past and the future as long as it does not become brooding and worry. You do what you must do as part of your responsibilities to the best of your ability in the context of your training, time and priorities. Guess what? – You can't become an expert in everything. Even if you could, there aren't enough hours in the day to attend to everything. Get your priorities in order, and that means doctrine first; after that you are on your own. After you have prioritized and done your part (the mundane things we all must do), you must put the rest in God's hands and not worry about it. The moment you worry about what is out of your control is the moment you say to God, "You can't handle this, so I will worry about it." As if that will improve anything!

Thirdly is your attitude toward the present moment. Keep your focus on the now and doing what you need to do now. Keep your focus on God and His Word and growing in that knowledge.

Mt 6:34 Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Maintain a steady attitude and action of the will. Your free will is God given, and He intends for you to use it. Begin by willing that your mind will not be passive, and will to recognize everything that comes from the enemy. Take full control of your actions. The powers of darkness are not defeated by mere determination but are rendered powerless by the act of the volition choosing in the strength given to the believer by God to stand against them.

In the end it all comes down to the Word of God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Use the weapon of Scripture. The believer's defense is Bible doctrine. In fighting back the believer must wield the Truth as the divinely provided weapon. All this simply means is the believer must act intelligently. He must know the Truth and act on it. When being deceived the intelligence is unused; remember, we called that "passivity"? By contrast recovery from deception calls for the full use of intelligence using Bible doctrine. You go down passively but must emerge to victory actively. Force must be used against force. The deceiver may suggest this is mere "self-effort" and deceive the believer into taking a passive attitude and thus cease resistance. Don't fall for that lie!

Here are some tactics of your own.

- Keep claiming the power of the blood. Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." This is claiming your rights and power related to your position in Christ as a born again believer.
- Pray for the truth and be prepared to deal with the past and the deception. Seek the light and be prepared to face what it reveals. You may not like what you see, but unless you face it you will never be free from it.
- Resist the devil in your spirit. Maintain your spiritual relationship with your Father in heaven. Remained filled with the spirit—walking by means of the Spirit. There is safety in that and more importantly power in it.
- Never give up hope. If you want the truth, it will be given to you but you have to want it.
- Avoid self-introspection. Resist the lies they will throw at you to convince you that you are wrong.
- Live and pray for others, and keep your spirit in full aggressive and resisting power. Try to focus on your Christian walk for others, especially in intercessory prayer.
- Seek the safety of other believers. They can be your support group to pray for you and encourage you. Romans 6:11 as the footing upon which to stand. Rom. 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. "Reckon" is our old friend logizomai *log-id'-zom-ah-ee* and is the accounting term, meaning to count yourself or credit yourself. By counting yourself dead to sin you are recognizing the fact that your position in Christ has placed you in a position to have victory over sin and evil spirits. Sin and Satan no longer have power over the believer, *except that which he may grant to their sin natures and to Satan*. It is all about free will. The believer has the power to resist Satan and find victory from his lies, but he must exercise that power by a free will decision to use it.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the

readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all... “Put on” is in the Greek imperative, meaning it is our responsibility.

... to stand firm. Stand therefore... Plant your feet like a Roman soldier in battle.

Having fastened on the belt of truth... the Roman soldier’s belt was essential to his function. His weapons hung from it. It guarded his middle against sword thrusts.

...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness... God’s own righteousness imputed to our human spirit and the spiritual life well lived.

...and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace... refers to a believer’s stability or surefootedness from the gospel which gives him peace so he can stand in the battle.

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one... a Roman soldier’s shield was made of wood and about 2 1/2’ wide and 4’ long. It was overlaid with linen and leather, to absorb fiery arrows. Our faith in God is our shield.

...and take the helmet of salvation... A helmet, being hot and uncomfortable, would be put on by a soldier only when he faced impending danger. Having one’s head guarded by a helmet gives a sense of safety, so the helmet of salvation refers to present safety from the devil’s attacks and to a future deliverance.

...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... The Roman soldier would take in hand his sword, his only offensive weapon. “Of the Spirit” refers to the source or origin of the sword; hence it is “the sword given by the Spirit.” “The sword of the Spirit” is specified as the Word of God.

... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. Suggests the thoroughness and intensity of prayer. Note that effective prayer is “in the Spirit,” meaning we are in right relationship of faith with God.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints... And like good soldiers, they are to continually be alert, literally, “in all

persistence”. Their requests are to be for all the saints because of Satan’s spiritual warfare against Christ and the church. “All” literally means “in all times” or “every time”.

Victory In the Angelic Conflict

We have learned some of the devices of the enemy during the course of this study. Satan’s objective is to destroy your testimony as a believer against him.

What exactly is your testimony?

It is the transformation of your life (your old self) into newness of life, where God, through the indwelling HS, the intake of Biblical truths as faith for application, and spiritual production (good works that are divinely inspired and enabled production of spiritual fruit). This is the very life of Christ in us and it is produced in the believer when he submits his will to the guidance of God and trusts in that leadership and enablement. That is what God expects from His children. That is what He wants for us. And there is where we will find fulfillment and happiness as believers.

And that is exactly what Satan wants to prevent from happening!

As obedient productive believers, “Christ-likeness” is not superficial piety as taught in some denominations. It is a lifestyle that resembles the life that Christ lived while here on earth. It looks like Galatians 5:22-23. It is personified in the commandment to love one another, but this love is not a superficial and sappy personal emotional feeling for another human being. This love is treating others exactly as you would want them to treat you. It is a love based not on the loveliness of the other person, but rather it is based on personal integrity in the soul of the one doing the loving, and that comes only from spiritual growth and the indwelling Spirit of God. We had **outflow** (faith), **inflow** (the spiritual life vitally alive produced by the HS, and now we have **overflow**, that Christ-life overflowing out to others.

Your testimony is a resounding denouncement of the “world” that Satan offers in favor of what God offers. Satan wants you to be diverted from that divine goal, and he wants the believer in a passive and non-productive state with his mind in neutral and, in effect, under the influence of Satan and the doctrines of demons, blindly following what many believers believe is the guidance and leading of God. All of his energies go into that effort—deceive and distract the believer into systems of disobedience or religion and human good. The sin nature has two tendencies: One is toward lasciviousness and the other is toward asceticism. Each person will have a tendency to lean toward one or the other. Satan will play to whichever is your weakness.

Satan’s methods consist mainly of tempting you to his way of thinking. Deception is a key tactic he uses to keep the temptations hidden from view. He is not generally going to make this easy for you. Instead he will take the lie and wrap it in the truth, and the believer will bite on the truth and swallow a lie. The believer can take the deception,

tasting only the truth wrapping and swallow it completely before he realizes he has been deceived. Some never do realize what has happened. Their entire Christian lives are a mockery of what God wants for them, as they go through motions of what they *think* is right. As long as the believer is deceived, he is not a threat to Satan or a testimony against him, because he is NOT doing the work God has for him, NOT producing divine fruit as God intends, and NOT living God's plan for his life. He is a casualty in the angelic conflict.

In reality, victory must be learned through experience with the understanding that all "temptations" are not easily recognized. Many believers recognize the nature of an attack only when it is visibly and overtly evil, but temptations often come under the guise of good. That which comes to them as light may indeed be darkness—the lie wrapped in the truth.

When the church is characterized by ignorance of Biblical truths as it is today, it is common that truth will be called evil and evil will be called truth. Believers usually don't realize it, but we are called to make decisions on good and evil day-by-day and moment-by-moment. How can we do that successfully if we have no understanding of the difference between the truth and the lie? The only way you will ever know that difference is through study of God's Word. And testing against God's Word everything presented to you by others, including by me.

There are various kinds of temptations, visible and invisible, soulish and bodily, direct and indirect, recognized and unrecognized. But what is your defense if they are unknown? The answer: Prayer to bring the unknown and unrecognized to light. Prayer is a problem solving device. Prayer is the active acknowledgment and pronouncement to all, both God and Satan, that you want no part of what Satan is offering, and you desire instead to understand Satan's lies and God's truth. Prayer is the active pronouncement that you reject Satan. This is a refusal of the temptation. Prayer is a weapon wielded against Satan and his wiles. Proverbs 1:17 "In vein the net is spread in sight of the bird." The first defense against the temptation is an appreciation of its nature, and when you don't know, prayer is the only answer, prayer that it be revealed.

There is a difference between temptation and an attack. Temptation is a scheme or a plot to cause the tempted to do evil whether consciously or unconsciously. An attack is an onslaught against a believer, whether his person, his character, or circumstances. The end result of the attack may be to tempt the person attacked into reacting in some negative manner.

Temptation is not the same as "wile" as seen in Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." How can you stand against a "wile" if you don't know what it is? Temptation is the objective. Paul did not say, "stand against the temptations of the devil." A wile is the way they scheme to tempt. "Wile" is the Greek word is *methodia* from which we get our modern English word "method". The Greek implies deception. It describes the underlying workings, call them "schemings" of the devil. Temptation is the objective of that scheming.

And temptation is not sin as long as it is not given into.

Paul's argument is if the "wiles" can be detected and stood against, then their objective can be frustrated or destroyed. The objective will be deception, but the "wile" will be counterfeits of the truth. They are liars, but how do they succeed into influencing the believer? They need the "wile" to get the believer to accept the lie. These wiles are countless in number and each is perfectly selected to be suited to the particular weakness of each believer.

Satan isn't stupid. His emissaries know you, often better than you know yourselves, and they will tailor the temptation to suit your weakness. They will build the temptation around an area that you are most likely to be ignorant of or receptive to. A spiritual believer needs discernment and the full use of his mind to "examine" all spirits and what is offered to him.

Review – Salt and Light

We should expect supernatural leading and input from the Holy Spirit internally in the form of burdens and providentially in our daily life as God manages circumstances in our life that open or close doors, bring people into our lives that we are to interact with for some reason, all part of God's plan for the world and for us. BUT we can also be led by evil forces and many are unknowingly. We must guard against that possibility.

There are three possible reactions to supernatural input:

1. We can assume it is true.
2. We can doubt it—maybe it is maybe it isn't.
3. Or we can know it is true.

There are three responses we can have to supernatural input.

1. NEVER ASSUME.
2. If in doubt take the neutral position until sure.
3. When sure act on it in faith.

How do we know? Use your brain and your intellect—don't operate blindly—and test everything against Scripture and the essence of God. Satan wants to bring you to a point where you are not thinking or testing but only blindly trusting.

God wants you to use your free will, use your intellect, test against Scripture, and make a choice, a free will decision, to do His will as he reveals it. The believer is never called to anything resembling a passive state. We are always called to use our free wills to decide for God and His plan as revealed to us. God desires the surrender to His will by active choice to do His will. God requires for His working cooperation with His Spirit and the complete use of every faculty of the whole person.

Through the yielding of man's will to God's will and faith in God, believers experience the same life, same relationship with the Father, same empowerment that Christ experienced during His earthly ministry. Faith is **output** toward the object of our faith, Christ in heaven, and in return we receive (**input**) all that Christ had and has to offer by way of Grace and divine enablement. The medium of exchange, the vehicle that makes this possible is the creation or formation of our human spirit at salvation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We are called to "abide in Christ". This word "abiding" is not just a physical presence, rather it is a relationship presence, and that is the way this should be understood. Christ does not physically indwell the believer, but the Life of Christ, His influence and energy does. In that sense we are indeed indwelt by Christ.

Satan will seek to produce the counterfeit presence of God, and that counterfeit is always sensuous. It should be recognized as false whenever the experience is in the physical realm. The true indwelling of God is in the spiritual realm only, and the soul and the body of the believer are merely vehicles for the expression of Christ.

For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit... (Heb. 4:12). The human spirit must be freed from dominance by either the soul or the body and freed to its rightful position of leadership. This is accomplished by the intake of God's Word and applying it.

This true spirit realm indwelling looks like this – **Holy Spirit > human spirit > soul or personality/intellect > body**. This is what the functioning of a true instrument of God looks like. In the counterfeit the human spirit is bypassed. This is passivity of the human spirit, where it is non-functional. In the counterfeit the experiences are all emotional and physical. Beware of allowing you emotions to control your spirit. Your emotions should be only a responder to spiritual things.

We are in the middle of a spiritual war.

It is being waged all around us every minute of the day. We are not only in the middle of it but we are the subject of that war. Each and every believer is (or should be) an active soldier in this war. Some are not. They are deceived and are combat casualties. As born again believers, each of us will be tempted and attacked numerous times during the course of your spiritual lives. Every one of us is subject to failing under the conditions described in this study. Do not think yourselves immune from deception. Some of us will be deceived and fall for the "wiles of the Devil". Some of us will have learned something from this study and will be aware of what these deceptions look like. Those will advance and take the high ground of spiritual maturity to become witnesses against Satan in his appeal trial.

Charles Stanley was teaching on the subject of salt and light, believers as preservative and spiritual light in the midst of spiritual darkness. He said one of the most influential men in his life was Oswald Chambers, author of *Our Utmost for His Highest*, a book I quote from often. In the book Chambers dwells on one absolute subject, a never changing truth, or as Stanley puts it, “The most important thing in your life is your on-going relationship with Christ”—your week by week, day by day, moment by moment walk in the Spirit. Everything else in life stems from that relationship, and Satan will do all he can to disrupt and destroy it, so you will lose your saltiness and your light will become dim.

The powers of darkness flee from the light. Jesus said, “I am come a **light** into the world...” (Joh 12:46), but He is not currently in this world—WE ARE! And He is to shine into the darkness through us, as Paul said in Romans, “... confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a **light** of them which are in **darkness**” (Ro. 2:19).