

Do not be deceived!

I. Introduction

- A. Text is II Timothy 3:13 “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”
- B. Paul’s final letter, a letter to his son in the faith Timothy, is full of emotional appeals. In chapter 3, the appeal is based upon the factual statement that the end times will not be good. In fact, in the last days, “evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse.” The key to this decay is deception.
- C. This is not an isolated warning. Throughout the scripture, we are warned about deception.
 - 1. The devil is working very hard to deceive the nations (Revelation 12:9).
 - 2. He has used the message of false Christs (Matthew 24:5), false prophets (Matthew 24:11) and false teachers (II Peter 2:15; I John 2:26).
 - 3. People have also fallen prey to false signs and sorcery (Revelation 13:14; 18:23; 19:20).
 - 4. The great deceiver will be destroyed in the end (Revelation 20:10).
- D. What should we do?
 - 1. We know...
 - a. That there is grave danger.
 - b. That “the nations” have been deceived having fallen prey to false “signs” and “sorceries, and the message of false teachers
 - 2. Let’s look at three passages from the hand of Paul where he commands his readers, “do not be deceived.” These three commands are given to help protect us from the real danger of being deceived.

II. Moral Standards Matter (forever)- I Corinthians 6:9-11

- A. Introducing this issue
 - 1. By moral standard we mean the definition of what is right and wrong.
 - 2. Let’s compare the nature of the world’s standards and the nature of God’s standards:
 - a. The Moral Standards of the World-
 - i. World- change with time
 - ii. World- fluctuate culturally
 - iii. World- derived from human wisdom
 - b. The moral standards of God
 - i. God- Never change
 - ii. God- Never fluctuate because of culture
 - iii. God- Derived from the wisdom of the creator
 - c. In these ways, and many others, the moral standards of the world are different from the moral standards of God
 - 3. To hold to God’s standard and stand against certain sin in our day is often seen in a negative light. We might be seen as old fashioned by some,

simple minded by others, and even prejudiced by a few. The social pressure to accept sin is growing stronger in our country all of the time. In this time, we need to remember the teaching of Paul!

4. Two examples of his teaching on this point are I Corinthians 6:9-11 and Ephesians 5:3-7. Let's focus our attention for a moment on I Corinthians 6...

B. I Corinthians 6

1. The immediate problem in this passage- going to law against the brethren to solve their disputes.
2. The general point Paul makes is that you should not be depending on people who live by the world's standards to solve problems for people who are supposed to be living by God's standards! The earthly judges are not equipped to rightly judge the issues. To emphasize this point we read verses 9-11.

3. I Corinthians 6:9-11

- a. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,^[a] nor sodomites,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
- b. "Do you not know?"
 - i. Examples of this question throughout the book of I Corinthians- 3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 15, 16, 19.
 - ii. This truth should have been commonly known and accepted among them.
- c. "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?"
 - i. The unrighteous- Those living lives in rebellion to God's standards
 - ii. To inherit the kingdom of God- To be saved on the last day
 - iii. Those who are living lives in rebellion to God's standards will not be saved on the last day.
- d. The 10 sins listed by Paul briefly defined
 - i. Fornicators- Sexual relations between two people not married to each other
 - ii. Idolaters- false worship of false gods
 - iii. Adulterers- Sexual relations with someone who is married to someone else
 - iv. Homosexuals and Sodomites- Homosexual relations
 - v. Thieves- Those that steal
 - vi. Covetous- Driven by desire for things
 - vii. Drunkards- Lives controlled by intoxicated substances
 - viii. Revilers- Those guilty of vilifying others

ix. Extortioners- Robbers

C. What's the point?

1. These behaviors are wrong because God says so. It does not matter what anyone else says or thinks. God says these are wrong.
2. These behaviors, although accepted in the world, should never be known or accepted by God's people.
3. These behaviors will have eternal consequences for all...unless they are forgiven through Christ.
4. To emphasize this point, remember the similar and chilling words of **Revelation 21:8** *"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

D. The moral standards you live by matter forever. If we choose to tolerate one of these sins in our lives, we will be forever sorry. Do not be deceived, moral standards matter forever!

III. Friends Matter- I Corinthians 15:33

A. Where does this statement come from?

1. Adam Clarke says, "There are many sayings like this among the Greek poets; but this of the apostle, and which according to the best MSS. makes an Iambic verse, is generally supposed to have been taken from Menander's lost comedy of Thais:
2. Menander was a Greek playwright, un-inspired writer who learned this truth by observing and writing about human interaction.

B. Menander is not the first person to learn this truth. Look at the agreement from the book of Proverbs. Friends always have mattered!

1. Proverbs 12:26- The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.
2. Proverbs 13:20- He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.
3. Proverbs 14:7- Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.
4. Proverbs 22:24-25- Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.
5. Proverbs 28:7- Whoever keeps the law is a discerning son, But a companion of gluttons shames his father.

C. Who should my friends be?

1. We should be best friends with Jesus
 - a. John 15:13-15- 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called

you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

- b. Jesus did His part by giving up His life to open the door for us to eternal life. No one has ever or will ever do more to help you than Jesus.
 - c. We do our part in this friendship by obeying His teachings.
2. In addition to Jesus, who should my friends be?
- a. People who won't harm your friendship with Jesus.
 - b. Others who have Jesus as their best friend would be a logical group of people to be friends with.
 - c. Sometimes we are places where there are no other faithful Christians. However, even in these settings, we can find good people who will not encourage you to abandon your relationship with Jesus. In my high school, the only other Christian was my younger brother. From the other students, some were going to be good influences on me and some were not. Some of my friends from younger grades changed and became interested in things that were not good. I had to change friends or those friends would have changed me. I learned that I could find new friends who would not encourage me to abandon my faith.
 - d. Also remember that we are to be evangelistic. Often we find in friendships an opportunity to help others come to know Jesus as their best friend. We should pray for these kinds of opportunities and that we are wise when these doors open (Colossians 4:2-6). We have to reach out, but we also have to make sure the influence is headed the right direction or else we are helping no one and hurting everyone.
3. A final word of warning about this point. No one should pretend that they are above being carried away by bad friendships
- a. We typically talk about the subject of friendship with young people in mind.
 - b. Yet, no one is above this law. Older people can be led away by bad friendships too. Remember the example of Peter and Barnabas in Galatians 2. Ultimately, Paul had to confront both of them for falling prey to the negative influences of Jewish false teachers.
4. Speaking of Galatians...

IV. Consequences Matter- Galatians 6:7

- A. A few notes about this passage
 - 1. The context focuses on earthly consequences, not eternal consequences.
 - 2. It is also focuses primarily on how we treat others.
 - 3. God is not mocked- This emphasizes the fact that no one can escape this rule! No matter who it is or what they believe, no one will escape the rule that we reap what we sow.

4. Generally speaking, this passage teaches...
 - a. Bad decisions lead to bad consequences.
 - b. Good decisions lead to good consequences.
- B. Illustration #1- The story of David illustrates the fact that bad decisions lead to bad consequences. Tell the story of David and Bathsheba and the negative consequences that follow. Notice that sin can always be forgiven, but that does not always mean that consequences go away. The negative consequences never went away for David even though he repented and was forgiven of his sin.
- C. Illustration #2- The Story of Joseph illustrates the fact that good decisions lead to good consequences. Joseph led a good life not matter what circumstance he was in and no matter what anyone else was doing. Many people let Joseph down at various times in his life including his father, his brothers, Potiphar's wife, Potiphar, and the Butler. When these people let him down, it often resulted in personal suffering for Joseph. But what did he do? He kept making good decisions. And what were the final results for him? Very good!
- D. Simply put, don't be deceived:
 1. Bad decisions → bad consequences
 2. Good decisions → good consequences

V. Conclusion

- A. The fact is that being deception is common in the last days (II Timothy 3:13).
- B. We don't want to be deceived as we serve God because we know that deception leads to damnation.
- C. Thankfully we are well equipped to avoid the deception so common in these last days through Paul's teaching.
- D. In conclusion, in order to avoid being deceived, we need to remember the basic truths:
 1. Moral standards matter
 2. Friends matter
 3. Consequences matter

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