

## Let No Man Deceive Himself

The apostle wrote, *“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise”* (1 Corinthians 3:18). Deception is one of the greatest tragedies in our world today. In fact we have grown accustomed to being deceived. We have almost arrived at the point where if we are not deceived a couple of times a day we are disappointed. Many of our elected officials use deception for their good.

The “selling” game is one of deception. When I represented a major copier manufacturer, I was sent to school in Atlanta to “hone” my selling skills. I remember one of the sessions dealt with ways to deceive (or lie to) the receptionist in order to get an audience with the decision maker of a company. You understand deception in marketing. The good tomatoes, apples, etc. are always showing in the package. Do you ever see the “not so pretty” on the top? Whether or not this is a deliberate attempt to deceive or not, it is still a form of deception. Have you ever received a product in the mail that you did not order, only to find out what you thought was free is billed to you the next month? I have been deceived many times by people who claim to be in need. As a preacher, I found it strange that practically every one who comes by the office has the same story. In fact, after thirty-plus years of experience, I can almost tell them their story. These people practice deception. The real tragedy is that we become somewhat calloused and begin to doubt those with genuine needs.

However of all the types of deception, “self deception” is the worst. The apostle Paul warned, *“Let no man deceive himself...”*! Yet it is occurring day after day. How do men deceive themselves? One way is by minimizing their sins. Listen to the beloved John, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8). Sometime we deceive ourselves by diminishing our sins and enlarging the sins of others. Jesus addressed this, *“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”* (Matthew 7:3). Sometimes the deception is thinking that we know more than God. The Bible is ignored and replaced with our thoughts and ideas. Where do you suppose all the innovations in worship have come from? The Bible is silent concerning mechanical instruments of music in worship. God must tell us before we can know what He wants. Some say the Lord’s Supper only needs to be observed two or three times a year. Obviously some have perceived they know more than God. Even the plan of salvation has not been spared. Many are deceiving themselves in thinking prayer can be substituted for baptism and the results will be the same.

Self deception can have tragic consequences. *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Proverbs 14:12).

Bill Dedmon – 12/10/2006

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