

The Depths of Deception

Many years ago, a study was done on the effects of television programming on adults. Most college students in the study agreed that a lot of TV viewing had negative effects on most people, but over 80% said it didn't affect *them, personally*.

Scientific American Magazine, Science times Magazine, Harvard University and many other respected institutions have published research showing numerous deleterious effects of too much TV time. Yet most people think it affects others, but not them. That's the way deception works - we usually think *others* are deceived, but not ourselves!

This article is not really about television, that is just one example. *There is only one passage of scripture that says Satan has one tool that affects the whole world: "deception."*

"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world..." Rev. 12:9.

We might notice that each one of us is part of "the whole world!" We like to imagine that we are above the fray, too educated and thoughtful to fall for Satan's deceptions. But in reality, that is nothing but arrogant... not that we are arrogant people in general, but that is an arrogant position. Part of Satan's deception is to convince us that we are above deception itself!

Dr. Benjamin T. Moore, III wrote a small but compelling book, *Let My People Think*. In this 132-page book, Dr. Moore plays off Moses' words to Pharaoh, "Let My people go!" Often mankind creates political, social, and financial freedom while still, unknowingly, being chained mentally and spiritually to the world's system of thinking. It happens to Christians also, even strong ones!

Seemingly small things like allowing anger to continue past the close of day, open up opportunities for Satan to come in and destroy a person personally and destroy his or her relationships. (See Ephesians 4:25-27.) in verse 25, Paul teaches us that the first step is to be "**ridding yourselves of falsehood,**" (NASB) and the precursor to that is put on a new self... in the "**holiness of truth,**" (verses 20-24).

Obviously, forming a new self in the holiness of truth is not an easy task. Why? Specifically, because Satan's deception is so... well... deceptive! Taking specific steps to allow scripture to form and/or refine my understanding of the world, of God and of myself, then taking practical steps to form the mind of Christ is an absolute requirement if we are to overcome the deceptions of Satan. Ephesians 4:17 reminds us that without God, we are doomed to walk in the futility of the mind.

Peter calls us to a high plane in I Peter 1:13: "**Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**"

We must be constantly vigilant to prepare our minds by using God's word to expose the deceptions of Satan in our culture and in our personal hearts and minds.

Ray Wallace