

SELF DECEPTION

(PART 1 of 3)
JULY 4, 2022

GALATIANS 6:3 NKJV – (3) For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

One of the greatest problems that we face is that of self-deception. Our friends and family can see the road we took to deceive ourselves, but we cannot. Of all forms of deception, self-deception is the most deadly. Of all deceived people, the self-deceived are the least likely to discover the fraud! When we are deceived by another, we are deceived against our will. Since we expect our foe to take advantage of us, we are watchful and quick to suspect trickery.

With the self-deceived it is quite different. We are our own enemy and are working a fraud upon ourselves. We want to believe the lie and are psychologically conditioned to do so. We do not resist the deceit, but collaborate with it against ourselves. There is no struggle, because the victim surrenders before the fight begins. We enjoy being deceived. Have you ever met a person who admitted to being self-deceived? The very nature of self-deception is that there is no conscious awareness of believing lies. It is altogether possible to practice fraud upon our own souls and go deceived to judgment.

In the above verse, the Apostle Paul is explaining to Christians how to live together as people in Christ. He has just written that we must help carry each other's burdens (**Galatians 6:1-2**). What causes us not to practice this? Pride. We see ourselves as self-reliant, not needing anyone else's help to carry our load, even when it gets too heavy for us. Or perhaps we are simply too proud to do the work of carrying another's burden.

The problem with that failure is that it makes ourselves the focus of our own love and attention. It means believing our own lie: that we are more significant or stronger than other believers. In truth, only Christ is strong enough to meet all of our needs, and all of our strength comes from God's Spirit. We must not fall into the trap of seeing ourselves as the source of our own ability to follow Jesus. That will hurt us, as well as hurting the Christians around us.

We live in a world full of lies, and deceit comes from many sources. There are lying spirits who lead astray (**1 Timothy 4:1**); there are "evildoers and impostors" looking for dupes (**2 Timothy 3:13**); and, perhaps most insidious, we have ourselves to deal with. Self-deception is common in our fallen world.

Next week, we look at 3 of the spiritual damage red flags that self-deception causes when not put in check.

SCRIPTURE READING: JEREMIAH 5:31

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: The greatest deception men suffer is from their own opinions.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"