

**THE FIVE WAYS OF DECEPTION
PART ONE
THE DECEPTION OF OUR CONSCIENCE**

Galatians 6:7 (NKJV)

⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

- *“Do not be deceived” - The Bible contains many warnings for believers about being deceived.*

Matthew 24:5 (NKJV)

⁵For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

Matthew 24:11 (NKJV)

¹¹Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Matthew 24:24 (NKJV)

²⁴For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

- *Jesus warned that in the end times many will be deceived by false christs, false prophets, and false miracles, so that even some believers will become confused and deceived.*
- *The greatest problem about being deceived is that we do not know that we are deceived. If we knew we were deceived, we would not be deceived.*
- *We can be struggling with sin, but that is not deception.*
- *When we no longer recognize something as sinful is an illustration of one type of deception.*
- *Being spiritually asleep is another aspect of deception, because a sleeping person does not perceive that they are sleeping.*
- *Another interesting aspect about deception is that even though a deceived person does not know that he or she is deceived, that person will spread that deception to others, much like someone who has a virus will infect others.*

- *There are at least eight different Greek words that can be translated as “deceive” and their meanings can include “to deceive, mislead, cause to go astray from the right path.”*
- *There is one specific Greek word that we will study in regards to deception; it is the word ἐξαπατάω (exapataō.)*
- *The root word of ἐξαπατάω (exapataō) is απατάω (apataō) and it means, “to cause someone to have a misleading or erroneous view concerning the truth and thus to deceive.”*
- *The prefix ἐξ (ex) intensifies the meaning of the word that it is appended to and can add the idea of “exceedingly; abundantly above; of completion,” so while the Greek word απατάω (apataō) means “to deceive, beguile or seduce” the Greek word ἐξαπατάω (exapataō) takes on the meaning “to wholly, completely or thoroughly deceive.”*
- *The word ἐξαπατάω (exapataō) is used only five times in the New Testament and each conveys a different type of deception.*
- *To study these five types of deception it is useful to study them in terms of our five senses and in terms of our triune created nature of spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thessalonians 5:23).*
- *Just as we have five physical senses to allow us to perceive the world around us which make us “world conscious” we have five soul senses to make us “self-conscious.” They make us conscious of our own souls, and we have five spirit senses to make us “God-conscious” or conscious of God and to perceive what He is doing and saying to us.*
- *The triplet of our spirit, soul, and body senses that we are going to study in regards to deception this week is hearing, conscience, and faith.*
- *Hearing is the physical sense that allows us to hear the sounds of the world around us and even more importantly to perceive and understand the words spoken to us so we can communicate with others.*

Romans 2:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)

- *Our conscience bears witness to us and either accuses us when we are doing something wrong, or excuses us when we are doing what is right.*
- *Our conscience speaks to us to help us to know the condition of our soul.*

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- *Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.*
- *Our faith grows by hearing God's Word, and by faith we are able to hear God speaking to us.*
- *As we read and meditate on His Word, by faith we hear what God is saying to us. His will and purposes become clear to us.*
- *We can see how hearing, conscience, and faith interact.*
- *The first type of deception that we are going to study is the one that affects our conscience. Our conscience can be deceived in a number of ways.*

Romans 7:4–11 (NKJV)

⁴Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

- *When Paul said, “you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another,” he was speaking about the Mosaic Law and all the ordinances and rituals contained in it that reveal our inability to become righteous by our own self-effort or good works.*
- *Through Christ's death we have become dead to the Mosaic Law, so we could be married and joined to another--to Jesus Christ our Bridegroom and Saviour.*
- *Christ not only died for our sins but “was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” Although we are now dead to the Mosaic Law we are not lawless, but we are now alive to the moral and spiritual laws through Jesus Christ's life in us, so we can bring forth fruit to the glory of God.*

⁵For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

- *When we were living according to our natural man, the Law did not empower us to live a righteous life. It actually awakened our sinful desires and we became weaker to resist temptation and sin with the result that it produced death in us.*

⁶But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

- *How is it that “we were held” by the Law?*
- *The Law demands perfection and we were unable to appease the Law because of our own weakness and sinful state, so it held us in the grip of condemnation and guilt by revealing our sinful condition.*
- *Through our new life in Jesus Christ through our re-born spirit we are freed from the bondage of the Law, so we can serve God “in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter of the Law”.*
- *We are to serve God, no longer “by the oldness of the letter of the Law” but in the newness of the Spirit, the moral law that the Mosaic Law pointed to.*

⁷What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”

- *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary,” Some Christians misunderstand Paul’s teaching about the Mosaic Law and contend that the Law was bad and speak about the Law in a derogatory or disparaging way.*
- *“I would not have known sin except through the law” - The Law is good and something God Himself ordained. Sometimes people misunderstand the purpose of the Law, because the Law was not meant to show us how we are to live to be righteous. It showed us we are unrighteous and unable to live righteously and we require a Redeemer to save us.*

Acts 13:38–39 (NKJV)

³⁸Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;

³⁹and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

- *Through the deeds of the Mosaic Law we could not be justified, but through Jesus Christ we have received the forgiveness of sins by faith in Him resulting in righteousness. (Romans 3:28; 4:6).*

1 Timothy 1:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,

⁹knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

- *“We know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully” – How is the Law to be used lawfully? To use the Law lawfully means to use it for its intended purpose.*
- *“The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate.” The Law’s purpose was not meant to reveal our righteousness, but to reveal our sinful and lost state.*

Romans 3:20-22 (NKJV)

²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

²¹But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

²²even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

- *“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight” – The theme “that no one is justified by the deeds of the Law” is repeated over and over again throughout the New Testament, and especially in Romans.*
- *There are two main purposes of the Law which are revealed in Romans 3:20-21.*
- *“for by the law is the knowledge of sin” – The first purpose of the Law is to reveal our lost and sinful state.*

- “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets” – *The second and equally important purpose of the Law, as well as the Prophets, is to reveal that righteousness, right standing with God, does not come by keeping the Law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ.*

Romans 7

⁸But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

- “Sin, taking opportunity by the commandment” - *The Law didn’t cause us to be more righteous. It exposes the true condition of our hearts and sin actually used the Law as a springboard to make us transgress the Law even more.*
- “For apart from the law sin was dead” – *The Law revealed the hidden things that lay dormant in our souls, so they could be exposed and dealt with so we could be set free from sin and become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.*

⁹I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

¹⁰And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.

The commandment resulted in death in at least three ways:

- *The Law revealed the true nature of sin and that we were sinners.*
- *The Law then judged and condemned those who were lawbreakers—sinners.*
- *The Law also caused the sin within us to actually rebel even more against the commandments of God and so our sins were multiplied.*

¹¹For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

- “For sin, taking occasion by the commandment” – *The Greek word for “occasion” means “a set of circumstances favourable for a particular activity or endeavour” and so sin actually used the Law to launch a full scale attack against us.*
- *What better way to stir up a sinful reaction then to say to rebellious mankind, “thou shalt not ...”*

- *The attack by sins was fully successful for sin not only “deceived me” but “it killed me.”*
- *However, God’s plan of salvation took into account the full impact that sin would have on mankind. What the enemy meant for evil by causing us to transgress the commandments of God, Christ came and took the full weight of our sins and transgressions upon Himself, so we could be set free from the judgment and condemnation that the Law brings upon sinners. (Romans 8:28).*

¹¹For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

- *How did sin use the commandment to deceive us?*
- *Our conscience deals with our relationship with what is right and wrong.*
- *Sin uses the commandments to deceive our conscience in a number of ways, but for each way God has a solution.*
- *We are going to look at the six different types or conditions of the conscience to understand the different ways our conscience is deceived by sin and the solution for each.*
- *The first type of conscience is a bad conscience and it occurs when we become aware of our sins.*
- *God created our conscience so we could know the difference between good and evil; right and wrong, and to deal with sin in a righteous way.*
- *Satan causes the sense of guilt that we experience when we have sinned to be misinterpreted to instill fear and shame, and causes us to flee from God in an attempt to hide our guilt.*

Genesis 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

1 John 1:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves” – *When we try to deny our sins it means we are conscious of them but we, like Adam, think if we run away from them, we can escape their consequences.***
- **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” – *However, unlike the deceptive lie that God is here to condemn us, God’s purpose for our conscience is to reveal our sins. Then we can come to Him, confess our sins, and be forgiven and cleansed so we can live righteous fruitful lives free from shame and guilt.***
- ***Sin deceives our conscience by changing the voice of our conscience from conviction to condemnation and turning out conscience into a bad conscience that causes us to flee from God.***
- ***The second type of conscience is a defiled conscience and it occurs when we become desensitized to our sin.***

Titus 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

- ***The Greek word for “defiled” means “to stain, to paint in a colour.” If we fail to confess our sins so our consciences are cleansed, they slowly become more and more stained. Instead of being white they take on varying hues from off-white to very dark and sinister colours.***
- ***If we picture our conscience as a perfectly white cloth, we could then compare the colours of different things to determine if they are truly white.***
- ***Picture that same cloth not being kept clean and white, but through neglect, it slowly becomes dirtier and increasingly stained.***
- ***When the cloth, which is now stained is compared to other objects that are also stained, the stained objects no longer appear to be discoloured.***
- ***Christians who allow their consciences to become defiled, will find themselves living in compromise and doing things they previously would never have imagined they would be engaged in.***

- *Christians who have a defiled conscience no longer feel the sting of conviction when doing things they once knew were wrong.*
- *Repeatedly walking in sin causes our conscience to become more and more defiled until those actions no longer bother our conscience.*
- *Christians whose consciences are defiled will say things like, “What is really wrong with that, marriage is just a piece of paper; God made marijuana too; don’t judge me. I am not under condemnation.”*
- *Another aspect of a defiled conscience is believing we are living a righteous life when we are really living a self-righteous hypocritical life.*

Luke 18:10–14 (NKJV)

¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- *“God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers or even this tax collector” - The Pharisee was deceived by sin and he failed to see the true condition of his heart.*
- *The Pharisee failed to see a number of things: the true repentant heart of the tax collector and the truly defiled condition of his own heart.*

Romans 2:1 (NKJV)

¹Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

- *A defiled conscience can make us aware of the failures of others, but blind to our own faults and failures.*

- “for you who judge practice the same things” - *A good test to find blind spots in ourselves is to recognize those things that bother us about others and then realize that something ugly in us is reacting to them.*

1 John 3:7 (NKJV)

⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

- *When our consciences become defiled we need to get back to the basic truths of the Bible and begin to acknowledge, confess, and repent of those things we have done and embraced that are sinful and contrary to sound doctrine.*

Hebrews 10:22 (NKJV)

²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- *If we have a defiled conscience we need to seek God to have Him cleanse our evil conscience with the pure water of the Word.*
- *The third type of conscience is a weak conscience and it is when we believe things are sinful when they are not.*

Romans 14:1–2 (NKJV)

¹Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

²For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

- *Those who have a weak conscience place restrictions on themselves that the Bible does not place on them.*
- *A weak conscience is a sign we are suffering from some of the effects of legalism.*

Romans 14:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

- *We are not to force our convictions on fellow believers, but we are to study the Word of God and “Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”*
- *However, the more we grow in our faith and understanding in the finished work of Christ and His righteousness, the greater the freedom we will have to embrace the imputed righteousness of Christ we have in our re-born spirits. Then we can truly live a righteous life free from man-made traditions.*
- *The fourth type of conscience is an oversensitive conscience and it is when we don’t feel forgiven even after we have confessed our sins and repented.*
- *When a person struggles with an oversensitive conscience it is because they still somehow believe that forgiveness is not that easy and they need to suffer for their sins before they can be truly forgiven.*
- *Without realizing it, when we have an oversensitive conscience, the enemy has deceived us into believing that Jesus’ suffering on the cross is not totally sufficient, and that we must suffer at least a little bit before God can truly forgive us.*
- *A person with an oversensitive conscience, after failing, recognizing it, and confessing their sins may still have the concept that “this is a two dayer.” In others words “before I can fully feel forgiven I must feel terrible and vex myself for two days.”*

1 John 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

- *The way we deal with an oversensitive conscience is by declaring in faith that what Jesus has done for us on the cross is sufficient and that as soon as we confess our sins, our Heavenly Father has fully forgiven us.*
- *“If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.” – If we have an oversensitive conscience it is because we are serving our conscience more than we are serving God. We are trying to please our conscience above trying to please God.*
- *A person with an oversensitive conscience tries to appease their conscience and is willing to suffer until they feel forgiven.*

- *We must learn to please God instead of our oversensitive conscience. What pleases God is our faith in the finished work of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection.*

The steps to retraining an oversensitive conscience are:

- *Confessing our sins.*
- *Asking for forgiveness.*
- *By faith receiving forgiveness and joyfully and heartily give thanks for His forgiveness because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for our sins.*
- *To the carnal mind to rejoice after we have confessed our sins may seem wrong but to the spiritual mind it is the proper thing to do. It is an act of faith in God's love and mercy through Jesus' sacrifice.*
- *By choosing to believe God's Word that promises forgiveness and ignoring our oversensitive conscience will cause our conscience to change to one that acts according to faith and not feelings.*
- *The fifth type of conscience is a seared conscience and it is someone who knows what he is doing is wrong, but it has no effect on him. He has no sense of conscience.*

1 Timothy 4:2 (NKJV)

²speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

- *Another way to describe a person with a seared conscience is a sociopath or psychopath.*
- *It is a person who can do terrible things without the slightest sense of shame, regret, or guilt.*
- *The solution to a seared conscience is to surrender one's life to Christ and allow Him through the new birth to give us a new heart.*
- *The sixth type of conscience is a good conscience; one surrendered to the will of God and which has full faith in Jesus and has allowed the blood of Jesus to cleanse and heal our conscience.*

1 Timothy 1:5 (NKJV)

⁵Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,

- *How to develop a good conscience.*
- *Accept fully what Christ has done for us at the cross of Calvary.*
- *Don't cherry pick certain Bible verses to live by, but embrace the whole counsel of God.*
- *Be correctible. Don't allow pride to hinder you from being fully transparent with the person to whom you are accountable.*
- *Above all, pursue God with your entire being and love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.*