

Detecting The Deceiver And Understanding His Tactics - Pastor Mike Callis

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Ephesians 6:1-10

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

What are some examples of plainly visible evil that we tend to focus on?

Satan worshipers, occults, psychic hot lines, Ouija Boards, etc..

Do these pose a threat to God's way and to God's people?

Are they the most destructive types of evil?

Do you, or have you ever, struggled with an invisible enemy? *Addition, dark thoughts, ungodly thinking, uncontrollable urges?*

Have you ever experienced a change in your actions and thoughts, by being at certain places, listening to certain kinds of music, watching certain types of movies and TV programs, or by being around certain people; and that change was of a darker nature?

Let me ask you another question; what is your concept of spiritual warfare? Do you believe it is just like the movie "The Exorcist" with Linda Blair having an obvious demon possession, or do you think the greater and more effective spiritual warfare is that which takes place little by little?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Paul tells us 2 things must take place before the Lord returns:

1. A great falling away of believers - 1 Timothy 4:1-4
2. The man of perdition must come on the scene – Antichrist

How will the falling away take place? Spiritual Warfare Through Deception

Persecution - Matthew 24:9

False Teachers - Matthew 24:11

Temptation - Luke 8:23

Worldliness - 2 Timothy 4:4

Inadequate Knowledge - 1 John 2:19

Willful Disregard - Hebrews 6:4-6

Lack Of faithfulness - Hebrews 10:25-31

Unbelief - Hebrews 3:12

So we must learn how to detect deception, and we must learn how to avoid it and to defend ourselves from attack.

And we must always remember, it is not just an attack on you personally, but on the whole body of Christ.

Ephesians 6:10-20

Many say there are 6 vital components of God's Armor; I will have to say that there are 10.

1. Knowledge (of God's will) – v.14
2. Holiness – v.14
3. Willingness (to advance the gospel, service) – v.15
4. Trust (faith in God's sovereignty)– v.16
5. Assurance (knowing that the devil cannot destroy your soul) – v.17
6. Wisdom (having an understanding of scripture)– v.17
7. Prayer (for self, at all times with great urgency – being led by the Spirit)– v.18
8. Prayer (for the body, at all times with great urgency – being led by the Spirit) – v.18
9. Awareness (an unrelenting watching of situations and events) – v.18
10. Prayer (for ministers of the gospel) – v.19

So as Paul tells us, we are to expect 2 future events before the return of Jesus; and over the next few weeks we will focus on the one that directly relates to our personal relationship with our Savior.

The bible is plain that you and I are engaged in battle. This spiritual war will not be fought with conventional weapons, but the spilling of blood and death may still be a reality.

The rulers of darkness are real and present in our daily lives. For us to ignore these truths will bring us great harm. Remember that those who are unsaved are completely powerless to sustain a defense to this relentless attack on the mind and body; but the those who have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb have God's presence to empower them to withstand. (Romans 5:6)

Our first step in being able to withstand the attacks of the devil is to be able to detect the attacks of the devil.

This great falling away and any falling away from God is a direct result of being deceived in believing a lie over the truth. Whether it is from a personal desire to believe a lie so that person can self-justify there actions, or as a result of being ignorant of God's truth they are led astray; deception is serious business.

2 Corinthians 11:1-15 Paul warns of false teachers and leaders:

Paul compares the church's condition at Corinth to the that of Eve's encounter with the devil in the garden. Why? The devil *challenges* the truth of God's word and ultimately **challenges** His authority. These false teachers or "super apostles" were challenging Paul's authority and his teaching. (Matthew 4:5-7)

Just as the serpent wanted to convince Eve that the God who created her and sustained her, did not really know what was best or did not want the best for her, so too were the false teachers trying to do the same concerning Paul's leadership. Pride goeth before the fall. (Genesis 3:1-7; Proverbs 16:18; 1 John 2:15-17)

Would it be easier to deceive someone by completely presenting a whole new doctrine, or by just changing the present one little by little? The more Paul could be discredited, the easier it would be to change his teaching.

Do you think the devil would appear to you as a raging evil monster or as an angel of light? (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) Which is more effective in drawing you closer?

If the devil does it, why not his ministers? (Search the scriptures daily Acts 17:11)

These false teachers were great speakers and many were taken by them (a presidential campaign is a good example of speech without substance), but because many did not have a good understanding of God's word they were led astray. Ignorance of the truth's of God is the downfall of many Christians.

Ephesians 6:14 - says we are to be surrounded by God's truth - the NIV calls it a belt of truth - if you and I are unskilled in God's will for our life and are ignorant of His ways and thoughts, then we can be easily led astray.

Paul Compared: Many false teachers existed, but Paul stood out as different

2 Cor. 11:6 - did not speak as someone of importance

2 Cor. 11:7 - did not charge for his services, so they could not slander him

2 Cor. 11:8-9 - he was supported by other churches

2 Cor. 10:10 - came before them meek and humble and spoke plainly and without force

1 Cor. 2:15 - wanted all the focus to be on Christ

There is nothing wrong in being paid by the congregation; in fact the bible tells us we should do so freely and that double honor should be given to those who sacrificially serve. But being paid does not make you better or worse then another - The people should initiate the pay for the speaker/pastor, not the other way around.