

2 CORINTHIANS, PART III

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY – 2 Cor. 11:1-15

TEXT:

- v. 1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me.
- v. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I gave you in marriage to one husband that I might present you to Christ as a pure virgin.
- v. 3 But I am fearing, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.
- v. 4 For if indeed one is coming and is preaching another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you are receiving a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you are putting up with it well enough (quite easily).
- v. 5 For I am considering myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.
- v. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speaking, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we made it evident to you in all thing.
- v. 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself in order that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?
- v. 8 I robbed other churches, having taken wages from them to serve you;
- v. 9 And when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and I will continue to do so.
- v. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting shall not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.
- v. 11 Why? Because I am not loving you? God is knowing I do.
- v. 12 But what I am doing, I will also continue to do, in order that I may cut off the opportunity of those who are desiring an opportunity in order that they may be found just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.
- v. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.
- v. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light.
- v. 15 Therefore it is not great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

The Accident

An old farmer named Clyde had a car accident. In court, the trucking company's fancy lawyer was questioning Clyde. Didn't you say at the scene of the accident, "I'm fine,"? asked the lawyer.

Clyde responded, "Well, I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule, Bessie, into the...."

"I didn't ask for any details," the lawyer interrupted. "Just answer the question. Did you not say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine!'"

Clyde said, "well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer and was driving down the road...."

The lawyer interrupted again and said, "Judge, I am trying to establish the fact that at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question."

This time, the Judge was fairly interested in Clyde's answer and said to the lawyer, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favorite mule, Bessie."

Clyde thanked the Judge and proceeded, "Well, as I was sayin', I had just loaded Bessie, my favorite mule, into the trailer and was drivin' her down the highway when this huge semi ran the stop sign and smacked my truck right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurtin' real bad and didn't want to move. However, I could hear ole Bessie moanin' and groanin'. I knew she was in terrible shape just by her groans. Real soon a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moanin' and groanin', too. So, he went over to her. After he looked at her, he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road, gun in hand, looked at me, and said.

"How are YOU feeling?"

"Now what would you say?"

(The Quest for Character by Charles R. Swindoll)

Jay Rathman is such a man. While hunting deer in the Tehema Wildlife Area near Red Bluff in northern California, he climbed to a ledge on the slope of a rocky gorge. As he raised his head to look over the ledge above, he sensed movement to the right of his face. A coiled rattled struck with lightning speed, just missing Rathman's right ear.

The four-foot snake's fang got snagged in the neck of Rathman's wool turtleneck sweater, and the force of the strike caused it to land on his left shoulder. It the coiled around his neck.

He grabbed it behind the head with his left hand and could feel the warm venom running down the skin of his neck, the rattles making a furious racket.

He fell backward and slid headfirst down the steep slope through brush and lava rocks, his rifle and binoculars bouncing beside him.

"As luck would have it," he said in describing the incident to a Department of Fish and Game official, "I ended up wedged between some rocks with my feet caught uphill from my head. I could barely move."

He got his right hand on his rifle and used it to disengage the fangs from his sweater, but the snake had enough leverage to strike again.

"He made about eight attempts and managed to hit me with his nose just below my eye about four times. I kept my face turned so he couldn't get a good angle with his fangs, but it was very close. This chap and I were eyeball to eyeball and I found out that snakes don't blink. He had fangs like darning needles...I had to choke him to death. It was the only way out. I was afraid that with all the blood rushing to my head I might pass out."

When he tried to toss the dead snake aside, he couldn't let go—"I had to pry my fingers from it neck."

Rathman, 45, who works for the Defense Department in San Jose, estimates his encounter with the snake lasted 20 minutes.

Warden Dave Smith says of meeting Rathman: "He walked toward me holding this string of rattles and said with a sort of grin on his face, 'I'd like to register a complaint about your wildlife here.'"

pp. 17-18

INTRODUCTION:

(Brought In by Guy H. King)

Napoleon used to say that you should never underrate the strength of your enemy; and never was that piece of advice more called for than in our dealings with the enemy of souls—"for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," Ephesians vi. 12. All the host of evil forces arrayed against us, and we against them, as they are under the command and control of their great generalissimo, Marshall Satan himself. We think of him in his Open warfare. "Your adversary the

devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,” I Peter v. 8. We hear his ugly utterance in the foul-mouthed people that, perhaps, we meet in life; or in the tongue of blasphemy, that is not silent in these days; or in the all-too-frequent blatherings of unbelievers. We see his powerful paw laying its deadly clutch upon the Lord’s day, the Lord’s book, the Lord’s house, the Lord’s name, the Lord’s law, the Lord’s work, and the Lord’s people. We detect his unwelcome presence in the place where we work, in the street where we walk, in the home where we live, even in the church where we worship. Everywhere he is at his warfare – not always in person, for, not having the omnipresence that belongs alone to Deity, he can be in only one place at a time; but in the movements of his troops.
pp. 62-63

C.S. Lovett in his book Dealing with the Devil says:

When I was in India it was common to see the snake charmers displaying their craft in the street. They’d spread out blankets and line up the baskets of deadly cobras. When a crowd would gather, they’d uncover their treacherous pets and sound their flutes. The serpents rose from their wicker closet, swaying to the chant of their handlers. Did those snake charmers take their eyes from the cobras? Never! They focused on them, ready to move out of range the instant a snake decided to strike. A Christian can no more afford to take his eyes from Satan than a snake charmer can from his cobra.
p. 84

Erich Sauer in his book The King of the Earth says:

The fact is that the devil is a spiritual being gifted with the highest intelligence, and though fallen, exceedingly powerful, whose existence cannot be in any way assailed by philosophy nor natural science. Since it is just in our world and in the universe immediately surrounding it that we observed disharmony, death and destruction, even a purely speculative contemplation of nature forces on us the conclusion that this world, and presumable the solar system connected with it, are the domain of this world-ruler and potentate.

Dwight Pentecost in his book Your Adversary the Devil says:

We need to be aware of a general misunderstanding. Looking at a gutter-bum, a derelict on skid row, we say, “Look at what Satan has done. There is Satan’s masterpiece.” I beg to differ with you. Satan is as nauseated and disgusted by that product as you are. Satan wants to wash his hands of that bum and have nothing to do with him, even though he belongs to him. Satan’s masterpiece is the good, upright, honest, honorable, respected individual in the community who feels that he does not need Jesus Christ, he does not need God, that he can work out his own salvation without God’s help. The man concerning whose character there is no question, against whose reputation there is no flaw but who leaves God out of his life is Satan’s delight. That is Satan’s masterpiece. Satan is trying to make his children as much like God as it is possible for them to be without their ever putting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour.

Satan is striving for perfection. He is seeking to produce a perfect man apart from Christ. Then he can say, "You are like God: by following me you can become like God." What is the goal of evolution? By natural processes and by control of environment and heredity, to produce a perfect specimen of humanity. Man is viewed as moving toward perfection by his own effort apart from the help of divine grace. Evolution is the theory that Satan propagate in order to accomplish his designed end of making men think they are as much like God without any actual knowledge of God or relationship to him whatsoever.

Pentecost says further:

Jesus Christ, when He came into the world, challenged Satan. He challenged Satan's right to be worshiped; He challenged Satan's right to be believed; He challenged Satan's control. When Jesus Christ went to the cross, He entered into combat with Satan and, by defeating Satan through the resurrection, He authenticated His authority. And God, by receiving Him up into glory, demonstrated that He was enthroning Jesus Christ in the place of authority and that men were obligated to obey Him, to believe Him, to trust Him, and no other.
p. 160

Pentecost says further:

On the authority of the Word of God, this is what Satan wants from you more than anything else. When Jesus Christ stood in the upper room a week after His resurrection, He showed the disciples His hands and His side and Thomas burst forth with the words, "My Lord and my God." Satan wants to hear those words from the lips addressed to himself more than anything in this world. He is willing to surrender any claim that he makes to this universe if he can get you to worship him and to submit to him, to obey him and to do his will. If you acknowledge Satan's right to be worshiped, you have conceded his right to be obeyed. Satan works upon your mind and upon your heart and upon your will to bring you to the place that you will listen to him and say, "Yes, my lord." When he has brought you to that place, he then looks up toward the face of God and says, "Here is one more who says that I am god, that I have the right to be obeyed, who recognizes my authority instead of yours."
p. 129

(The Seduction of Christianity by Dave Hunt & T.A. McMahon)

There can be no doubt that our generation has seen unique historic developments that are necessary preliminary events leading up to Armageddon. Yet impressive as these indications are, there is much more. For the first time in global history, humanity now has in its hands the terrifying weapons that make it possible to destroy all life on planet Earth. Without such weapons the biblical prophecies about Christ intervening to save the human race from extinction would be meaningless. We also have, for the first time in history, the mass-communication and data-processing systems necessary for controlling

the entire world economically, politically, and militarily. Thus for the first time there exists the means for the practical fulfillment of the prophecies in Revelation 13 concerning the Antichrist's control of the world. Moreover, this comes at the precise time that all the other necessary ingredients for Armageddon are in place.

Here in chapter 11 through chapter 12:10 the apostle continues his comparison of himself with the Judaizing teachers who oppose him in Corinth.

This is Plummer's further observation:

He has shown that, if any question of intrusion is raised, it is not he who has intruded into their proper area of activity, but they who have intruded into his. He goes on to show that in other respects he can say at least as much for himself in claiming to be an Apostle as these teachers can do. He has worked without payment, which he has not only not asked for but refused; his labours have been greater and his sufferings far greater than theirs; and he has received very special revelations and visitations from God.

- v. 1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me.

Plummer comments:

Forgive my foolish boasting, which is caused by anxious affection. I fear lest these self-asserting imposters should seduce you from Christ.

All this glorying about oneself is odious folly, and, seeing that he has just been maintaining that self-praise is no recommendation, it seems grossly inconsistent. But the boastings of his opponents have forced him to adopt this course; and, as the Corinthians have shown much toleration to them, he asks them to show a little to him, when he answers fools according to their folly.

He expresses a wish that they would bear with him and then affirms them that they are bearing with him in this little foolishness.

- v. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I gave you in marriage to one husband that I might present you to Christ as a pure virgin.

The reason they're going to need to be bearing with him in his little foolishness is stated in verse 2:

“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy;”

What kind of jealousy is a godly jealousy?

Exodus 20:5

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,

Exodus 34:14

Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Deuteronomy 4:24

For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Deuteronomy 5:9

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,

Deuteronomy 6:15

For the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you,

Joshua 24:19

Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.

Zechariah 1:14

Then the angel who was speaking to me said, “Proclaim this word: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion,

Zechariah 8:2

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.”

Psalms 78:58

They angered him with their high places;
They aroused his jealousy with their idols.

James 4:5

Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?

“FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH A GODLY JEALOUSY; FOR I GAVE YOU IN MARRIAGE TO ONE HUSBAND THAT I MIGHT PRESENT YOU TO CHRIST AS A PURE VIRGIN.”

The Living Bible paraphrases this verse:

I am anxious for you with the deep concern of God himself – anxious that your love should be for Christ alone, just as a pure maiden saves her love for one man only, for the one who will be her husband.

In Plummer's commentary we read this note from Denney:

“Two feelings are compounded all through this passage; an intense sympathy with the purpose of God that the Gospel should be preached to every creature; and an intense scorn for the spirit that sneaks and poaches on another's ground, and is more anxious that some men should be good sectarians than that all men should be good disciples.”

(Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians: Power Out of Weakness by Ray C. Stedman)

Paul likens his jealousy to that of a father who has betrothed his daughter to a young bridegroom. Every father (I speak from experience) longs to be able to present his daughter to her chosen young man as a chaste and lovely virgin. This may seem an ironic metaphor to use of these Corinthians, because Paul has already told us that some were adulterers, immoral people, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, robbers and cut-throats. “Such were some of you,” he said (1 Cor. 6:11). Yet now he says, “I have presented you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

That is a wonderful commentary on the reality of forgiveness of sins.
p. 187

I am jealous of you because I don't want you messing around with these false teachers and enter into intimate relationships with them and thus give away your virginity to them and become involved in their false teachings.

v. 3 But I am fearing, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Our verse begins with the word “BUT” which forms a contrast to that which he desires in verse 2, and it expresses a fear:

“I AM FEARING”

Paul fully understands what Satan is capable of doing.

1 Peter 5:8

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

“BUT I AM FEARING< LEST BE ANY MEANS,” These brethren have crawled into Corinth and have been used by Satan to deceive the brethren.

“LEST BY ANY MEANS, AS THE SERPENT” Back in Genesis 3 the serpent deceived Eve:

Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

“LEST BY ANY MEANS, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS,”

One of Satan’s major tools is deception.

What are some of the others?

- Discouragement
- Depression
- Desires
- Defeat
- Doctrinal deviation

All of these coupled with deception give us six of the tools in his kit to work on believers.

In Our Daily Bread for June 7 there was a reading titled “Beware!”

Some time ago an acquaintance of mine was “taken in” by a salesman who stopped at his place of business. Opening the trunk of his big, flashy car, he displayed

some attractive jewelry. He said he had purchased the merchandise at tremendous discount, and was passing on the low prices to anyone interested in making a few extra dollars. Taking out one of the boxes, he offered to sell him some very expensive-looking watches. The name on the dials appeared to be one of the most well-known in the field. My friend was greatly impressed and bought several of them. After the peddler left, however, he examined his “bargain” more carefully and was surprised to discover that the trademark was not that of a famous make after all. Two letters in the name were different, but the print was so small he hadn’t noticed it before. The watch straps were not genuine leather but “genuine lizard,” and on the back of the cases were the words “Swiss base metal.” An imprint on the dials seemed to indicate that these timepieces were electric, when actually they weren’t even “self-winding.”

The incident reminded me of what the Savior said in Luke 21:8, “Take heed that ye be not deceived.” Even as some in the business world cleverly pervert the facts and victimize their customers, there are also false teachers in the church who subtly distort the truth. They use scriptural terminology and appear to be orthodox. But beware! They are evil men who will lead you astray. Be firmly grounded on the Word of God and you won’t be “taken in” by deceptive error!

R.W.D.

O grant us grace, Almighty Lord,
To read and mark Thy holy Word,
It’s truth with meekness to receive,
Lest subtle error we believe.

--Anon.

Error is often plausibly dressed in the outer garb of truth.

(II Corinthians by H.A. Ironside)

So he says, “I am afraid lest by any means Satan should beguile you through subtlety.” That is how the devil works. Satan never says, “Good morning, I am the devil! I want to mislead you, I want to seduce you, I want to turn your heart away from God, I want to ruin you for time and eternity.” No, he comes with the fairest pretences and promises, and he endeavors to turn the heart away from Christ by deception. He deceived Eve. He has been deceiving mankind all down through the centuries.
pp. 230-31

(Be Encouraged by Warren W. Wiersbe)

The person behind the peril was Satan, pictured here as the serpent. The reference is to Genesis 3. It is worth noting that Paul had a great deal to say about our adversary, the devil, when he wrote this letter to the Corinthians. He warned that Satan had several devices for attacking believers. He can burden the consciences of believers who have sinned (2 Cor. 2:10-11), blind the minds of unbelievers (4:4) or beguile the minds of believers (11:3), and even buffet the bodies of God’s ministers (12:7).
p. 122

(Love For All Your Worth by Joseph C. Aldrich)

Our culture floods us with lies. The very word advertisement means to “advert,” to lure away our attention by means of attractive – and often deceptive – claims. It isn’t true that if you use a certain brand of toothpaste you will be cruising the Caribbean in a beautiful yacht. It isn’t true that you can sleep around with multiple partners and enjoy a “good” life. It isn’t true that you can walk around sipping a cool drink from morning to night and stay sober, build healthy relationships, and find satisfaction in life. It isn’t true that buying a new car or a new home will ease eternal heartaches. It isn’t true that you can relegate your faith to the corners of your life and be a satisfied, fulfilled, productive person.
p. 81

(Christian Child Rearing And Personality Development by Paul Meier)

The human body, soul, and spirit have a multitude of needs. Stan will usually tempt us through our natural physical and emotional needs. These needs include the need for air, food, water, stimulation, sex, love, self-worth, power, aggression, comfort, security, and relief from psychic tensions. Many Christians have been erroneously taught that living the Christian life means totally denying many of these natural needs. The Christian may be called upon by God to deny some of his wants, but God has already promised to supply all of our needs. There’s a difference. No wonder so many people are afraid to become Christians. They have been told that becoming a Christian means denying many natural needs.
p. 37

“BUT I AM FEARING, LEST BY ANY MEANS, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, YOUR MINDS SHOULD BE LED ASTRAY FROM THE SIMPLICITY AND PURITY OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST.”

The little phrase “YOUR MINDS SHOULD BE LED ASTRAY” is the key to Satanic attack. This is where the attack comes.

The key to handling this is to memorize and meditate on the Word of God.

(Keep The Fire Glowing by Pat and Jill Williams with Jerry Jenkins)

In a recent issue there was an article by Lorne Sanny, until recently the general director of The Navigators, called “Five Reasons Why I Memorize Scripture.” I want to share some of the highlights with you.

1. Deliverance from Sin. God’s Word protects me from sin when it’s hidden in my heart, making it available for the Holy Spirit to bring it to my mind.

2. Victory over Satan. Three times Jesus used this weapon to gain victory over Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-10). We, too, can have victory if we are equipped. Scripture memory puts the sword in the hand where we can use it.
3. Spiritual Prosperity. The Word is our food, and Scripture memory puts the food in our minds where it can nourish us.
4. Personal Guidance. Because I memorize Scripture, verses often come to my mind, giving me practical guidance on what to do.
5. Helping Others. God gives us His Word as a tool for helping others, and memorizing it puts it immediately at hand so that we can make the best use of it.

We don't always have our Bible with us when we need deliverance, victory, guidance, or a truth to help others. But Scripture memory puts the Word in our hearts, food in our minds, a light on our path, a weapon in one hand, and a tool in the other.
pp. 63-64

Phillips translates this third verse saying:

I am afraid that your minds may be seduced from a single-hearted devotion to him by the same subtle means that the serpent used towards Eve. For apparently you cheerfully accept a man who comes to you preaching a different Jesus.

The Living Bible says:

But I am frightened, fearing that in some way you will be led away from your pure and simple devotion to our Lord, just as Eve was deceived by Satan in the Garden of Eden. You seem so gullible:

“BUT I AM FEARING, LEST...YOUR MINDS SHOULD BE LED ASTRAY FROM THE SIMPLICITY AND PURITY OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST.”

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Our great defense for our minds is to memorize and meditate on the Word of God.

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man
 who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stands in the way of sinners
 or sit in the seat of mockers.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 And on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the
renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is
good and acceptable and perfect.

Philippians 2:5

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any
excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

2 Corinthians 10:5

...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

1 Peter 1:13

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope
completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

“....LESTYOUR MINDS SHOULD BE LED ASTRAY FROM THE SIMPLICITY
AND PURITY OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST.”

This is Satan's greatest desire to lead us astray from:

1. THE SIMPLICITY
2. THE PURITY OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST

More than anything in the whole world Satan wants that devotion for himself.

(Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians: Power Out of Weakness by Ray C. Stedman)

The old medieval saint, Thomas a Kempis, has expressed this same idea: “By two
wings man is lifted from the things of the earth --- simplicity and purity.”

p. 188

Karl Barth, who has gained a reputation as a great theologian was once asked, “What is the greatest theological thought that has ever crossed your mind?” Some very complicated answer was expected, but his answer was: “Jesus love me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” This is the simplicity of Christ.
p. 189

(Be Encouraged by Warren W. Wiersbe)

The word translated simplicity in 2 Corinthians 11:3 means “sincerity, singleness of devotion.” A divided heart leads to a defiled life and a destroyed relationship.
p. 121

(Choosing Plan A in a Plan B World by Jerry White)

I John 2:16 categorizes three lusts: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” Lust of the flesh refers to that which the body craves – sex, food, ease. The lust of the eyes is a desire to possess what one sees – material possessions, a home, a car, clothing. The boastful pride of life is lust for position, power, and even an excessive desire for a healthy body or spiritual experience.
p. 59

(The Disciplines of Life by V. Raymond Edman)

The enemy emphasizes the past, with its mistakes and heartaches; the Comforter exalts the present help of our Lord (Ps. 46:1). The devil delights in taunting us with our weaknesses, and the Lord reminds us of the wealth of His riches in grace. Condemnation concerns itself with our failures; conviction shows us the faithfulness of God. The tempter teases us with immediate gain, at any cost; the Trustworthy One tells us of eternal gain, and reminds us of Passion and Patience in Bunyan's House of the Interpreter. The hopelessness, impossibility, and pain; the God of all grace reminds us of the promises, whereby we can hope against hope; for “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed” (Rom. 5:3-5). Thus we know that pain can mean gain.
p. 170

(The Seduction of Christianity by Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon)

The Bible never says that God made a god, or that He promised man that he could become a god. That was Satan's seductive promise to Eve, and it would have been meaningless if Adam and Eve had been created gods. Genesis 3:22, 23 says: “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ – therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden.” God would not perpetuate man in his fallen state of “godhood.”

Genesis 3 teaches the following: 1) Man was not created as a god; 2) he became a “god” through disobedience; 3) whatever that meant, it was something that God didn’t want to occur and it was not good; 4) it caused man’s expulsion from the Garden, because it apparently destroyed man as God had intended him to be. God would not allow Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of life and thereby perpetuate themselves in their fallen “godlike” condition. In Psalm 82 God’s judgment was pronounced against the rulers of Israel because they were acting like gods who were a law unto themselves. In verses 6 and 7 God stated: “I said, ‘You are god....Nevertheless you will die like men.’”

It would be well to remember that in Germany of the 1930s even evangelical Christians were taken in by Hitler for a long time. He only seemed like a candidate for Antichrist when it was too late to escape the consequences. His publicly stated goals included a restoration of “Positive Christianity” to Germany. He brought law and order, took a strong stand against homosexuality, pornography, prostitution, encouraged prayer in the schools, and brought peace and prosperity to a nation that had been trembling on the brink of disaster.

(Love For All Your Worth by Joseph C. Aldrich)

Peter’s “I never will” says it all. You never will? Watch and pray that you won’t. Chances are more than slight that you might. When the fires of temptation or trial are burning hot, resolution and good intentions are prone to go up in smoke. Talk is cheap and overconfidence is dangerous. When opposed by the flesh, determined but ill-advised spirits often sound retreat...and the rooster crows.
p. 64

(Rx for Addiction by W. Robert Gehring, M.D.)

I remember thinking to myself, “Is this all there is?” I had come from a wheat farm in North Dakota and was now a big-city doctor at one of the finest hospitals in the country. I had money, lots of money. I had sex. I had status. All the things I’d ever wanted. Why wasn’t I happy?

Look to the future again, I decided. When I got married, I’d be happy. I had found “my person”; I was in love with Carolyn. Why wait any longer? Marriage would solve all my problems.

“BUT I AM FEARING, LEST BY ANY MEANS, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, YOUR MINDS SHOULD BE LED ASTRAY FROM THE SIMPLICITY AND PURITY OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST.”

(Blessing Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)

In the days of the First World War, in London, a regiment of soldier was about to go out to France. In those days war was slaughter, and before they went, they were entertained at a concert in a theater in London by a group of people who wished them well. When the concert, which was given very well, we ended, the captain in charge of

the regiment stood up, thanked the people for their kindness, and then with a broken voice said, "Ladies and gentlemen, is there anybody here who can tell us how to die?"

There was a moment's embarrassed silence until one lady, an artist in the concert, a Christian, came forward, stood up before the whole regiment of men and sang, "Oh, rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him." There were few dry eyes that night.

In what you say to other people, have you so lost your way in theological argument that you can no longer tell people how to die? For the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ is to rest in the Lord like a little child rests in the arms of a mother. Are you there?
p. 190

Plummer translates this last phrase:

So your thoughts should be corrupted and led astray from the single-minded devotion and pure fidelity which should be observed towards Christ.

- v. 4 For if indeed one is coming and is preaching another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you are receiving a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you are putting up with it well enough (quite easily).

"FOR IF INDEED ONE IS COMING AND IS PREACHING ANOTHER JESUS"

There is every reason to believe that such is the case in Corinth.

Satan has a Jesus, a spirit, and a gospel according to this verse.

Galatians 1:6-9

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from Heaven, should preach to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

The three things that are mentioned here in this fourth verse are:

1. Jesus
 2. Spirit
 3. Gospel
-
1. "If indeed one is coming and is preaching another JESUS whom we have not preached"
 2. "you are receiving a different SPIRIT which you have not received"
 3. "a different GOSPEL which you have not accepted"

Paul makes a pretty strong remark in the latter part of verse 4:

“YOU ARE PUTTING UP WITH IT WELL ENOUGH (QUITE EASILY).”

You sure are going along without saying anything. No one is taking a stand and straightening things out.

There are no Martin Luthers in Corinth at this time.

Ezekiel 22:30

I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.

(Spiritual Awakening by Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor)

In procuring slaves on the coast of Africa, many children are stolen privately. Wars are also encouraged amongst the Negroes, but all is at a great distance. Many groans arise from dying men, which we hear not. Many cries are uttered by widows and fatherless children, which reach not our ears. Many cheeks are wet with tears, and faces sad with unutterable grief, which we see not.

Cruel tyranny is encouraged. The hands of robbers are strengthened, and thousands reduced to the most abject slavery who never injured us. Were we for the term of one year only to be an eyewitness to what passeth in getting these slaves; was the blood which is there shed to be sprinkled on our garments; were the poor captives bound with thongs to pass before our eyes on their way to the sea; were their bitter lamentations day after day to ring in our ears, and their mournful cries in the night to hinder us from sleeping; were we to hear the sound of the tumult when the slaves on board the ships attempt to kill the English, and behold the issue of those bloody conflicts – what pious man could be a witness to these things, and see a trade carried on in this manner, without being deeply affected with sorrow?

--John Woolman

pp. 56-57

Phillips says:

For apparently you cheerfully accept a man who comes to you preaching a different Jesus

The Living Bible uses two phrases:

You seem so gullible;
You swallow it all.

Plummer puts it this way:

Then you bear with a person of this kind with quite beautiful toleration!

Nobody wants to make any waves so they're just going along with the program that is being perpetrated on the church at Corinth by the Evil One and his servants.

v. 5 For I am considering myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.

The apostle certainly does not have any self-image problems. He does not consider himself in the least inferior to the most eminent. This could be translated "SUPER-FINE." ...to the "super-fine" apostles.

(Acceptance: Loosing the Webs of Personal Insecurity by Don Baker)

I really don't know when I went into hiding. I do know that at some time and for some reason not completely known to me, I began spinning a web --- a web consisting of the strangest notions --- neurotic little notion of

Inferiority

Inadequacy

Guilt

Rejection

Unworthiness

Insecurity

Tentativeness

Ambivalence---

Notions that caused me to be guarded and withdrawn, to feel unloving and unloved.

(No More Mr. Nice Guy! By Stephen Brown)

There is the realization that we were created in the image of God, and...

...whenever we become less than what He meant us to be,

...whenever we allow ourselves to be manipulated,

...whenever we engage in mindless submission either to the world or to other Christians,

...whenever we universalize someone else's experience and try to make it our own,

...whenever we refuse to laugh or to speak or to weep because we are afraid of what "they" will say,

...whenever we allow guilt or fear or worry to be the primary motivating factors in our lives,

...whenever we define humility, love, or servanthood in a way other than God's way,

...whenever we quit thinking and feeling,

...whenever we bow to any other God than the One who created us...

We have somehow betrayed that image.

pp. 224-25

- v. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speaking, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we made it evident to you in all things.

The apostle is saying he doesn't wow them on the platform, but he has the right stuff.

As far as knowledge was concerned, he is certainly in no way unskilled.

He uses a positive and negative here:

Positively – "I am unskilled in speaking"

Negatively – "I am not so in knowledge"

I may be a poor speaker, but I know what I'm talking about.

The Living Bible puts it this way:

If I am a poor speaker, at least I know what I am talking about, as I think you realize by now, for we have proved it again and again.

Phillips puts it this way:

Perhaps I am not a polished speaker, but I do know what I am talking about,

- v. 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself in order that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

Paul raises a very pointed question here in the 7th verse, wondering from them if he committed a sin in humbling himself. His purpose for that is: "in order that you might be exalted;" and the reason given: "because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge."

(Acceptance: Loosing the Webs of Personal Insecurity by Don Baker)

David Seamands described low self-esteem as Satan's deadliest weapon --- a weapon of the enemy that
paralyzes my potential,
destroys my dreams,
ruins my relationships, and
sabotages my Christian service.

Dr. James Dobson listed ten sources of depression in marriage. Among these ten was low self-esteem. Fifty percent of the respondents rated it as problem number one. Eighty percent of the respondents listed it among the top three on their lists.

Humility speaks to this need. It tells me that if I want an objective, honest answer to who and what I am and why, then I must ACCEPT ALL THAT GOD SAYS ABOUT ME WITHOUT ARGUMENT.

p. 67

In Our Daily Bread booklet for August 31, there was the following reading: “Preachers Who Pray for Pay”

Can you imagine Jesus or Peter or Paul promising to pray for people in return for money? Do you suppose they told their audiences that they’d intercede for them on the condition that a contribution be made to their “ministries”? Certainly not! Paul, for example, could say to the Corinthians, “I have preached to you the gospel of God freely.” He had in mind the proclamation of the Word, but the principle of serving with pure motives applies to any spiritual endeavor.

How different from the preacher described in the following news item: “You can now by blessings on the installment plan... An evangelist and faith healer who often lectures in this area is now offering 12 monthly blessings for \$84. Under his...plan, those wanting [him] to pray for them can fill out a coupon and mail \$7 each month for 1 year to post office boxes in the United States and Canada. ‘Write us every month and tell us what you need from God’ says [the evangelist’s] promotional material... [He] promises to pray for those who pay and hints that his prayers have brought others financial rewards. With the first installment comes a blessings certificate to ‘hang on your wall.’ With the second comes an ‘anointed billfold’ that...he has prayed over for prosperity. There is no money-back guarantee.”

Friend, beware of anyone who places so much emphasis on money in connection with spiritual service. James 5:16 says, “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” And I don’t think a righteous man would ever insist on receiving pay to pray!

--R.W.D.

When a preacher shemes and hollers
Just to raise a few more dollars,
He’s betrayed his holly calling—
Don’t you find such means appalling?
--D.J.D.

He who serves God only for money is spiritually bankrupt.

v. 8 I robbed other churches, having taken wages from them to serve you;

Paul makes it clear that funds were given to him from other churches in his ministry in order to sustain the ministry which he had in Corinth.

We also know that while he was in Corinth, he worked with Priscilla and Aquila at tent making in order to sustain himself financially.

v. 9 And when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for the brethren came from Macedonia they supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and I will continue to do so.

The Living Bible translates that last phrase:

I have never yet asked you for one cent, and I never will.

Paul had a wonderful association with the churches in Macedonia which involved Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and the epistles tell us of gifts which were sent by some of these folks to the apostle.

Back in chapter 8 the apostle used the Macedonian churches as the great example of sacrificial giving in giving themselves first to the Lord and then their resources.

I would assume that the “BRETHREN” here are Timothy and Silas who are left behind at Berea when Paul first came down to Athens and then had begun the ministry in Corinth when they caught up with him.

Paul makes reference to the Philippian church’s gift that was given on one occasion for his ministry in Philippians 4 beginning at verse 10:

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

Philippians 4:15-16

And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

(Be Encouraged by Warren W. Wiersbe)

The word chargeable in 2 Corinthians 11:9 is worth considering in a special way. (See also 12:13-14.) In the Greek, it literally means “to grow numb.” The word comes from the image of the electric eel numbing its victim with its shock. A numbed part of the body would be a burden to the victim.
p. 125

v. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting shall not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.

Achaia is the surrounding regions where Corinth is located.

The apostle spoke of knowledge back in verse 6, and now he speaks of the truth of Christ, and he says:

This “TRUTH OF CHRIST IS IN ME,”

and then he says:

“THIS BOASTING”

which takes us back to verse 9:

“in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you,

“THIS BOASTING SHALL NOT BE STOPPED IN THE REGIONS OF ACHAIA.”

I’m going to constantly remind everybody “in the regions of Achaia,” the price that I paid for the ministry there and that I charged you nothing.

Phillip’s translates this phrase:

By the truth of Christ within me, no one shall stop my being proud of this independence through all Achaia!

The Living Bible says:

I promise this with every ounce of truth I possess—that I will tell everyone in Greece about it!

v. 11 Why? Because I am not loving you? God is knowing I do.

The apostle has two more questions here in this eleventh verse. The first question was back in verse 7:

1. “...DID I COMMIT A SIN IN HUMBLING MYSELF IN ORDER THAT YOU MIGHT BE EXALTED, BECAUSE I PREACHED THE GOSPEL OF GOD TO YOU WITHOUT CHARGE?”

Now he raises the question:

2. “Why,” am I boasting about not being a burden?

And then he answers it with another question:

3. “BECAUSE I AM NOT LOVING YOU?”

And then he answers it, bringing God as his witness:

“GOD IS KNOWING I DO.”

2 Corinthians 2:4

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears not in order that you may be made to grieve but in order that you might know the love which I am having especially for you.

- v. 12 But what I am doing, I will also continue to do, in order that I may cut off the opportunity of those who are desiring an opportunity in order that they may be found just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

The apostle is really tough here when he says what he is doing, he will “CONTINUE TO DO” in the future, and his purpose is stated as twofold here in the rest of this verse:

1. “IN ORDER THAT I MAY CUT OFF THE OPPORTUNITY OF THOSE WHO ARE DESIRING AN OPPORTUNITY”

These leeches are looking for opportunities where other have labored.

You will often find that cults and devious teachings spend all their time preying on new converts or those who have no or little discernment.

The second purpose is:

2. “IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY BE FOUND JUST AS WE ARE IN THE MATTER ABOUT WHICH THEY ARE BOASTING.”

Phillip’s translates this verse:

I am determined to maintain this boast, so as to cut the ground from under the feet of those who profess to be God’s messengers on the same terms as I am.

The Living Bible puts it this way:

But I will do it to cut out the ground from under the feet of those who boast that they are doing God’s work in just the same way we are.

Plummer gives us some insight on the verse:

But I shall persist in acting just as I am acting now about this, in order to cut the ground from under those who desire to have a ground for hoping that in the apostolate which they boastfully claim they may be found working on the same terms as we do, both of us accepting maintenance.

It is obviously the purpose of these false teachers to come into Corinth and to lead the people astray from Christ and also to make some money in the process by seeking maintenance for their ministry.

It is Paul's intent and purpose to cut off any opportunity for either of these desires of the false teachers to be successful.

- v. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

Now the apostle gets more specific about these opponents that he is facing in Corinth. He characterizes them in two ways:

1. they are "FALSE APOSTLES"
2. they are "DECEITFUL WORKERS"

We learned back in verse 3 that the apostle was:

"fearing, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness,"

and here we find these:

"false apostles" and "deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ."

Isaiah 14:14

I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."

2 Corinthians 2:11

In order that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

DECEIVING AND DISGUIISING ARE THE DEVIL'S DIRTY DEEDS.

- v. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light.

We had the word in verse 13:

"DISGUIISING themselves as apostles of Christ"

and in verse 14, their father:

"Satan, is DISGUIISING himself as an angel of light."

This again takes us back to the “SERPENT” in verse 3 who “deceived Eve by his craftiness,” and from this act the Corinthians “minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

- v. 15 Therefore it is not great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Back in verse 13 they are:

“disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”

In verse 14:

“Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light,”

and in verse 15:

Satan’s “servants are disguising themselves as servants or righteousness.”

The apostle then says:

“WHOSE END SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.”

Phillip’s translates that:

they will get their deserts one day.

The Living Bible says:

In the end they will get every bit of punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

And Plummer says:

Their doom will be in accordance with their acts.

In Our Daily Bread for February 6 there is a reading called “The Deceptive Chameleon.”

The chameleon is a little animal capable of altering its appearance by changing its color. It can blend into its surroundings so well that it escapes detection. This usual creature illustrates in part the deceptive powers of the devil who can assume different disguises. The apostle Paul says that the evil one often hides his diabolical nature and wicked plans by posing as an “angel of light.” Working through those who falsely claim to be the Lord’s messengers, he leads people away from the truth. The Bible declares that if we are ignorant of Satan’s devices, he will quickly get “an advantage of us” (2 Cor. 2:11).

The adversary also fools men with his chameleon-like tactics by making them think he doesn't exist. I am reminded of an atheist who was attending an open-air Gospel meeting where a preacher was speaking about "the king of liars" and his fraudulent enticements. Suddenly the infidel shouted, "Hey, Mister, why don't you save your breath and go home! Nobody believes in that old stuff from the dark ages. The devil is dead!" Remembering Jesus' words in John 8:44 about the belligerent rebels being of their "father, the devil," the minister replied, "Seeing that you refuse to become one of God's children and also claim that Satan is dead, I can only conclude that you are a poor, lost orphan!" The heckler said no more.

Friend, the devil is very much alive and is still actively engaged in beguiling the unwary. Don't ever let him trick you into thinking he doesn't exist. Beware of that "deceptive chameleon"!

--H.G.B.

They say that the devil's been voted out,
That the ancient deceiver is gone;
But humble believers would like to know,
"Who carries his business on?"

--Anon.

Satan is to be avoided as a lion, dreaded as a serpent, and most to be feared as an angel of light!

(Blessings Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)

There were very few things that could make Paul cry like a child. He had the Roman scourge upon his bare back, but he ignored it and was glad that he was counted worthy to suffer for Jesus. He could be in the midst of a Mediterranean storm, driven to shipwreck, but he praised God and believed Him for deliverance. He could have the executioner's sword raised above him, about to behead him, and he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, and kept the faith." Ah, but there was one thing that made him sob, that broke his heart—it was when he saw men take the gospel of the grace of God and make it an excuse for sin, saying, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound!" for such, Paul says, "...I tell you even weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame..." (Philippians 3:18, 19).

p. 197

(The Trauma of Transparency by J. Grant Howard)

Because we all have this capacity for hypocrisy, we can fake both maturity and unity. The infant in us, under the pressure of pride, can be made to act like a grownup. The disunity among us, under the same pressure, can be made to appear as harmony.

Satan is a great deceiver—the master hypocrite (Revelation 12:9). He came "disguise himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). He worked his wiles on Eve. She did the same things to Adam (1 Timothy 2:14; Genesis 3:1-6). It has been

going on ever since. The scribes and Pharisees did it (Matthew 23:1-39). Judas did it (John 12:4-6; 13:18-30). Peter did it (Galatians 2 :11-14). Ananias and Sapphira did it, and paid a terrible price (Acts 5:1-11).

Deceitful hypocrisy moves in many areas. It can be used to disguise the true nature of our giving, our praying and our fasting (Matthew 6:1-18). We can pretend in the key areas of faith and love (Romans 12:9; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:5). For some people, hypocrisy is difficult. Their sins are too conspicuous to hide. Others hide them so well that it takes time to uncover their misdeeds. (1 Timothy 5:24). On the other hand, it is hard to hide one's good qualities very long (1 Timothy 5:25). Righteousness filters through the façade.

pp. 203-4

it is also possible for us to make believe we are all one in the Spirit, when we are not. We can act like we are friendly and in agreement, when in fact we are hiding some things that need to be shared. Behind this tranquil scene some clandestine clobbering of one another may also be going on. Believers can be surreptitiously stabbing one another, while giving the outward appearance of unity and harmony. We vote for it, but we have unexpressed reservations. We are involved in the same project, but we aren't on the same team. We serve together, but we think apart. We act friendly, but we feel hostile. We are masters at masking our mediocrity and our mutiny.

p. 205

("Think It Over...Fakes," Chuck Swindoll's newsletter)

A friend of mine ate dog food one evening. No, he wasn't at a fraternity initiation nor a hobo party...he was actually at an elegant student-reception gathering in a physician's home near Miami. The dog food was served on delicate little crackers with a wedge of imported cheese, bacon chips, an olive, and a sliver of pimento on top. That's right, friends and neighbors, it was hors d'oeuvres a la Alpo.

The hostess is a first-class nut! You gotta know her to appreciate the story. She had just graduated from a gourmet cooking course, and so she decided it was time to put her skill to the ultimate test. Did she ever! After doctoring up those miserable morsels and putting them on a couple of silver trays, with a sly grin she watched them disappear. One guy (my friend) couldn't get enough. He kept coming back for more. I don't recall exactly how they broke the news to him...but when he found out the truth, he probably barked and bit her on the leg! He certainly must have gagged a little.

Ever since hearing that story—it is actually the truth—I've thought about how perfectly it illustrates something that transpires daily in another realm. I'm referring to religious fakes...professional charlatans...frauds...counterfeit Christians who market their wares on shiny platters decorated with tasty persuasion and impressive appearance. Being masters of deceit, they serve up delectable dishes camouflaged by logical-sounding phrases.

Hey, that's smart! If you want to make a counterfeit dollar bill, you don't use yellow construction paper, but it in the shape of a triangle, put Batman's picture in the center, and stamp "3" on each corner. That deceives nobody. Deception comes in convincing fashion, wearing the garb of authenticity, popularity, even a touch of class. By the millions, gullible gluttons are duped into swallowing lies, thinking all the while they are digesting the truth. In reality they are underscoring the well-worn words of Phineas Taylor Barnum:

There's a sucker born every minute.

But that isn't funny, it's tragic. Fakery draws its fuel from the pit. That's what God tells us.

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...(2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

A glance at the silver platter and everything looks delicious: "apostles of Christ ... angels of light...servants of righteousness." Through the genius of disguise, they not only look good, they feel good, they smell good! The media serves them under your nose.

Testimonies abound! Listen to some. "This is new...it has changed my life!" Others say, "I did what he said...and now God speaks to me directly. I see visions. I can feel God." Over two million freely shout "Eternity is now...materialism is godly. Getting rich is a sign of spirituality." A larger band of followers claim, "We own nothing. Everything goes to the guru." You find them everywhere. On streetcorners with little magazines, looking ever so dedicated to God. Staring up at the stars, discovering the future. Sitting in small groups on hillsides, eating canary mix, refusing to shace or bathe lest they interrupt their "communion with God." The platter is filled with variety! You find some attending religious pep rallies led by flamboyant cheerleaders in \$800 orange suits and diamond-studded shoes. On the opposite extreme are mystical dreamers who prefer seclusion as they squat in silence.

They may have a "new" look, feel and taste like the real thing—but they are not. As Screwtape once quoted to Wormwood their father's couplet:

Old error in new dress
Is ever error nonetheless,

which is another way of saying, dog food is dog food, no matter how you decorate it. Or, as Paul put it so pointedly, "They are false...deceitful...disguising themselves as apostles of Christ." They may not look like it, but they are as phony as a yellow three-dollar bill.

Unfortunately, as long as there are hands to pick from the platter, there will be good-looking, sweet-smelling tidbits available. But some day, some dreadful day, the final Judge will determine and declare truth from error. There will be a lot of gagging and choking...and it will no longer taste good.

Nothing tastes good in hell.

The apostle concludes with the words:

“WHOSE END SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.”

Revelation 20:11-15

And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Deceiving and disguising are the devil's dirty deeds.

LESSON #2: Satan is just as active today as he was in the Garden of Eden.

LESSON #3: It is Satan's desire to lead us astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

LESSON #4: Paul fully understands what Satan is capable of doing.

LESSON #5: Memorizing and meditating on the Word of God is our greatest protection from the onslaughts of the wicked one.

LESSON #6: Satan has a Jesus, a spirit, a gospel, and a kingdom.

LESSON #7: No one in Corinth was taking a stand and straightening things out.

LESSON #8: Paul may be a poor speaker, but he knows what he's talking about.

LESSON #9: In everything Paul kept himself from being a burden to the Corinthians.

LESSON #10: The truth of Christ resided in the apostle Paul.

LESSON #11: Satan has false apostles and deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ.

LESSON #12: Satan has servants who are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness.

LESSON #13: The dirty D's of Satan's arsenal are:

DECEPTION
DISCOURAGEMENT
DEPRESSION
DESIRES
DEFEAT
DOCTRINAL DEVIATION
DISGUISE

LESSON #14: Satan's servants will be judged and condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment.

(Honey for a Child's Heart by Gladys Hunt)

In a scene from The Magician's Nephew Lewis's characters explore dimensions of love and temptation and loyalty. Aslan, the golden-maned Lion (who is no ordinary lion), sends Digory and Polly, two children, to a faraway garden to get an apple to plant in the land of Narnia as a tree of protection. When they finally arrive at the place and Digory gets into the garden to pick the golden apple, he is confronted by a witch. She tells him that the apple gives youth and health to whoever eats it, and she encourages him to take one for himself and eat it. He is hungry, isn't he? Digory refuses, but he does remember his mother who is dying, and the witch urges him to take the apple to her. Aslan need never know. "Soon she will be quite well again. All will be well again. Your home will be happy again." Digory gasps as if he has been hurt and puts his hand to his head, for he knows that the most terrible choice lies before him. The witch also suggests he leave Polly behind. At once all that the witch has been saying to him sounds false and hollow. He remembers the shining tears in Aslan's eyes and the promise he had made to Aslan. He returns to Narnia and walks straight up to Aslan, hands him the apple, and says, "I've brought you the apple you wanted, sir." "Well done," says Aslan in a voice that makes the earth shake.

Suddenly anything other than obedience and loyalty seems incredibly stupid. We have never read this story without feeling a profound longing to keep our promises and to do what is right—not because we have heard a sermon but because of the action and decisions of the characters in the story.

pp. 55-56

