

BE NOT DECEIVED!

Joe Slater

Of all the ungodly things one might do to me, I consider deceiving me to be among the least tolerable. I simply detest being lied to! In Scripture, words like deceive, deceit, deceitful, etc., are used at least fifty times and mean to give a false impression, to misrepresent, to ensnare or trap, or to lead astray.

Revelation 12:9 speaks of Satan as the one who *“deceives the whole world.”* When we first see Satan in the Bible, he is lying to Eve about eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-5). No wonder Jesus said, *“When he (Satan) speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it”* (John 8:44).

Paul told the brethren in Corinth (and, by extension, told us) *“I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”* (2 Corinthians 11:3). Satan doesn't appear to us in physical form as he did to Eve, but he is still in business and has assistants galore! False teachers plagued the church at Corinth, and their spiritual descendants remain today. *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works”* (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Brethren, we are not immune from deception! Satan has had thousands of years to perfect his technique. Let us heed the Bible's repeated admonition, *“Be not deceived!”* (Luke 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9 & 15:33; Galatians 6:7). *“Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”* (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Trading Freedom For A Dorito

Doritos are a favorite of many people. These corn chips come in several strong flavors, and the crunchy snack is often eaten at cookouts or on road trips. But can you imagine giving up your freedom for a bag of those tasty chips?

That's what a huge pig in Highland, California recently did. The pig, which was described as being the same size as a mini-horse, got loose and was wandering the streets of that community. It seems that this pig has a way of doing that from time-to-time, so some of the local police are familiar with calls about this particular animal. Knowing that, one deputy had a bag of Doritos in her lunch bag, and simply made a small trail of the crunchy snacks, which the pig followed right back to its pen, where it was secured again.

This pig was free but gave it all up for a crunchy snack. We can laugh at that, or we can see a deeper picture about ourselves. How often do we trade so many great blessings in this life for things that are fun or enjoyable but of far less value to us? How many people trade a lifelong commitment with a spouse for a few moments of intimate pleasure with another? How many trade a reputation and integrity for a night of drinking and partying?

The Bible makes it clear that sin has pleasure attached to it (see Hebrews 11:25), but that the pleasure is only passing; it is only “for a season.” After the moments of enjoyment comes the entrapment of sin. The addictions. The damaged reputations. The harmed relationships. The wasted money. The time that is no longer available. Above all, the sting of a marred relationship with our heavenly Father.

When we think about it that way, that pig on the West Coast seems a little more like us. He got a few minutes of pleasure from those potato chips but ended up right back in the pigpen where he started.

Maybe it is time we start looking past the temporary excitement that seems to accompany sin and start looking at where it will lead us in this life and, ultimately, in eternity. When we do, we will not trade our freedom in Christ for something insignificant.

--Adam Faughn (via Bulletin Gold)

TWO ROADS

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14 NASB).

Picture two gates opening onto two roads. One gate is wide and the road beyond is smooth, straight, and flat. There is a brightly-flashing neon sign above it beckoning, "Take Me! The Way is Easy and Pleasant."

The other gate is narrow, and the road beyond isn't paved. There are steep hills to climb with deep, dark valleys to go through. The plain sign above that gate reads, "Though the Way is Rough, the Destination is Worth the Effort."

Some who take the narrow path are beguiled by the brilliantly lit, wide, smooth road running alongside, so they switch roads. Others on the wide road learn of the destination to which the narrow road leads ; they go back so that they can enter through the narrow gate.

The narrow gate (door) is Jesus (John 10:7), and He is the Way (John 14:6). Jesus doesn't promise a smooth way. He speaks of persecution, loss of family, and suffering. He does promise that He is with us all the Way and there will be joy, praise, and glory at the end.

The question is, which road are you traveling? Are you on the narrow way, or have you wandered onto the easier way? Make a course correction if needed. Then fix your eyes on Jesus and do not look away from your true Guide.

--Ed Witlif (Denver, CO)