

Take Heed Your Are Not Deceived (Norwegian)

by Derek Prince

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being vigilant, sober, and discerning to avoid deception, and to rely on God's word and the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Duration: 1:22:56

Scripture: John 16:13

Topics: "Spiritual Deception", "Discerning Truth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of staying vigilant against deception, particularly in the context of warnings in the New Testament. It highlights the prevalence of false prophets and the need to discern the truth by focusing on Jesus, the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit. Practical advice is given on how to avoid deception, including humility, simplicity, and a love for the truth.

Transcript

...is a prayer along that line spoken from Philippians chapter 1, verses 9 through 11. We just change the words to personalize it. This we pray, that our love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that we may approve the things that are excellent, that we may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Amen. Now I've already announced what I'm going to be speaking about. Be vigilant.

Be sober, be vigilant is taken from 1 Peter chapter 5, I think verse 8. This morning I spoke about sobriety in entering into spiritual warfare, being realistic. Not having vague or unrealistic attitudes or using language which is above the level of our experience. Tonight I'm talking on be vigilant, particularly in regard to the many warnings given in the New Testament against being deceived.

Almost every passage in the New Testament that relates to the end of the age contains some kind of warning against being deceived. I'm just going to take two passages from Matthew chapter 24 from the words of Jesus himself. He was asked, what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And when he began to answer, the first thing he did was warn his disciples against being deceived.

So he said in Matthew 24, 4 and 5, Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name saying, I am the Messiah, and will deceive many. Now Jesus is a true prophet.

And the Jewish encyclopedia records about 40 false messiahs who have come to the Jewish people since the time of Jesus. Perhaps the most famous was Bar Kokhba. And all of them have succeeded in deceiving some part of the Jewish people.

But the warning goes far beyond the Jewish people. And then in the same chapter, in verse 23 and following, Jesus says, Then if anyone says to you, Look, here is the Messiah, or there, do not believe him. For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders.

So as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Excuse me, it will get better after a while. See, I have told you beforehand.

So Jesus says, You can't say I didn't warn you. And he says there will arise false prophets and false messiahs and they will show great signs and wonders. So as to deceive, if possible, even the elect or the chosen ones.

There are two important lessons from that. First of all, that miraculous signs do not necessarily prove that a message is true. Because Jesus says they will show great signs and wonders, but they will be deceivers.

You cannot base your assessment of the truth of a message merely on the fact that there were supernatural signs and supernatural experiences. It is extremely dangerous to have that attitude. Secondly, Jesus said that even the elect would be deceived, if it were possible.

The elect is God's chosen ones. Why is it not possible that the elect would be deceived? The answer is because God chose them. Our safety is not in how clever we are or how spiritual we are, but the fact that God chose us.

That's our security. Now, in order to avoid deception, we have to be able to identify the truth. And in the examination by Pilate of Jesus, Jesus said for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I came forth, that I might bear witness to the truth.

And Pilate replied with a question, what is truth? We can't tell whether he was cynical, what is truth? Or whether he was genuinely puzzled, what is truth? There's no way we'll ever know. But he asked a question which his philosophers have never been able to answer satisfactorily. In 2,500 years of Western philosophy, no philosopher has come up with an answer that satisfies to the question, what is truth? We all think we know until we start to define it.

Then we find out we don't know. However, the Bible does give us a very clear answer to the question, what is truth? But it's not totally simple. Because the Bible presents truth in three aspects.

And in order to be sure we have the truth, we have to check on all three aspects. What I would call three coordinates of truth. And if you're going to be sure that you really have the truth, you have to check all three coordinates to see that they're all in place.

First of all, in John 14, verse 6, Jesus said, I am the truth. So the truth is Jesus. But in John 17, verse 17, Jesus was praying to the Father and he said, Your word is the truth.

So God's word is the truth, the Bible. But in 1 John 5, verse 6, John says, the Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus. And the Spirit is truth.

So you have truth in three related aspects. The truth is Jesus. The truth is the Bible.

And the truth is the Spirit. In order to know for sure that you really have the truth, you have to check all three coordinates. Jesus, the Bible, and the Spirit.

For instance, somebody may preach a whole lot about Jesus and it may sound very good. But when you check your Bible, it isn't what the Bible says about Jesus. Or somebody may preach a great deal about the Holy Spirit and work up an atmosphere of tremendous excitement and exhilaration.

But when you really check it, that person is not teaching the truth about Jesus. Or a person may lay great emphasis on the Bible and the Scripture, but have nothing of the Spirit. It's just dead letter.

So, in order to be sure that you have the Spirit, that you have the truth, you have to have three things in place. Is it true to Jesus? Is it true to the Bible? And does it have the witness of the Holy Spirit? When you can put those three things together, then you may be confident that you have the truth. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul warns the Corinthian Christians against being deceived.

And I suppose we'd all agree, if anybody was charismatic, they were. So being charismatic doesn't grant you an exemption. Paul says in verse 3 of 2 Corinthians 11, But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ.

For if he who comes, another preacher, preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, that is, which is not the Holy Spirit, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it. Isn't it amazing how ready people are to accept the false? And notice, if you have another Jesus, you'll have a different spirit and a different gospel. So any presentation of Jesus that is not scriptural, that is not in line with Scripture, will be accompanied by a different spirit, which is not the Holy Spirit.

And the result will be a gospel which is not the true gospel. There are currently in the church today various different versions of another Jesus. I'll just mention three.

There's Jesus the Marxist revolutionary who's going to go out with a machine gun and fight on behalf of the poor and liberate the poor from the oppressor. Now that's very popular in South America but also in other places. But that's not the Jesus of the Bible.

He is not like that. It's very praiseworthy to want to help the poor but not that way. That's not the believer's way to help the poor.

That is called liberation theology. Very acceptable in many parts of the world. Inside the church in Latin America there are many Catholics who've embraced liberation theology and sometimes align themselves with Marxist movements.

Then there's Jesus the Oriental guru. And people proudly trace him back to Buddha and Socrates and all that sort of thing. The kind of movement that does that is what we call today the New Age movement.

They kind of get Jesus lined up with a lot of other gurus. But he's not a guru. He's the Son of God.

He's the Savior. And that is a false gospel. And it is accompanied by another spirit.

And then there's Jesus, the kindly Father Christmas who wanders around patting everybody on the head and saying, there, there, don't worry. That is how I call the liberal church. It has a Jesus that doesn't speak about sin, never mentions judgment, and says all religions are different roads to the same God.

Here, there, there, don't worry. There's nothing to be afraid of. So those are three examples of contemporary teaching which introduce deception by bringing on another Jesus.

And I would say the number of people currently deceived by one or other of those numbers the millions. So it's not just a little fringe group somewhere. Now I would like to give you some thoughts on how deception enters.

And I believe there's only really one door that lets deception in. And that is pride. I believe behind all deception there is pride.

Pride is what opens us up to deception. The real pattern of that is Lucifer who was maybe the most beautiful and the wisest of all the angels. But he became proud of his beauty and his wisdom.

Turned in rebellion and ended in deception. And if that can happen to an archangel in heaven, as it did, how many of us could say it could never happen to me. One of the lures of many cults is the attraction that if you join them, you're going to join a super group.

I mean the real overcomers. The people who are going to get the job done. The church has messed around and not got the job done but now here we are, we're going to get the job done.

What does that appeal to? Pride, that's right. I mean, let's take the Manifested Sons teaching which some of you are probably familiar with. That was exactly their teaching but they went much further because they taught ultimately that you could achieve immortality if you did the right things.

It's remarkable how many cults teach that. The Mormons teach it. It thinks it's taught indirectly through Freemasonry and it all goes back to what the Bible calls the lie which was the first lie which Satan turned on the human race which was, you shall be as gods.

And every time really that he wants to deceive people he uses the same type of motivation. So beware when people tell you there's a super group that have gone further than others and they're usually rather critical of previous generations of Christians. But I'd have to say as far as I've seen they don't begin to produce the same kind of results that previous generations produced.

And I say to people if you ever join a group who tells you if you want to be right you've got to join us when you've joined them you'll know one thing you're wrong. Proverbs 29 verse 5 says He who flatters his neighbor with his mouth spreads a net for his feet. Beware of flattery.

I think this applies particularly to preachers. Preachers are very susceptible to flattery. And we can become embroiled in things because people give us flattering invitations and suggest that you'll align with us we'll open doors for you.

If you're not a preacher you probably don't realize how powerful that temptation is because most preachers in a way check their effectiveness by the number of invitations they have. I've heard more than one preacher admit that. That's not a very spiritual attitude but let's be honest we're not always very spiritual people.

Jesus has a chosen group but it's not super group. It's a different kind of people. Only Jesus would have chosen people like that.

It's stated in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 26 and following For you see your calling brethren or you see the kind of people that you've got yourself mixed up with not many wise according to the flesh not many mighty, not many noble are called but God has chosen and you remember God will protect those whom he has chosen now in order to be one of God's chosen you have to be in this list because God has chosen he's not going to change his mind he's not going to revise it's settled so as we go down this just see if you fit but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen and the things which

are not to bring to nothing the things that are that no flesh should glory in its presence see God has a motive to eliminate pride and so this is the list I mean just ask yourself do I fit he's chosen the foolish things he's chosen the weak things he's chosen the base or lowly things the things that are despised and the things that are not and the reason God has chosen that is that no one will ever be able to boast and say God chose me because I was so clever or so strong or so wise he needed me when I got saved by a kind of divine accident I was serving in the British Army in World War II I was a fellow of King's College Cambridge and had a distinguished academic record behind me and a future in the academic world and for a while I used to have the attitude God was pretty lucky to get me

the more I knew about me the more I revised that opinion my opinion now is I can't think why ever God picked on me the truth was I'd been removed from my fellowship in Cambridge I was no longer wandering around in a gown in the sanctified courts of King's I was a local acting unpaid lance corporal and my salary was two shillings a day old shillings and that's when God got me thank God he got me so just be careful if anybody tries to convince you that you can be a special super kind of Christian if you join our group that's a sure warning to stay away from alright now I want to deal with some very nitty gritty practical issues I hope I'll offend nobody but if I do it's not through desiring to do so I want to say frankly how error can enter through prophecy prophecy has got a very high

sounding title and a lot of people just think if I ever refuse a prophecy I'll be in trouble but that's not what the New Testament teaches in 1 Corinthians 14 29 Paul says let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge and in 1 Thessalonians 5 19-21 Paul says this do not quench the spirit do not despise prophecies test all things hold fast what is good so we're not to despise any manifestation of the Holy Spirit but we are to test it and we're only to hold on to what is good and Paul says if people prophesy others are to judge them any prophet who's not willing to be judged should not prophesy there are prophets around who will tell you that if you judge my message God will judge you I'm not theorizing I mean I know my own attitude is if I don't judge their message God will

judge me because he told me to judge it so do not be afraid of prophesying thank God for it when it's right but never let it terrorize you or dictate to you prophets are not dictators what standard are we to judge by?

I'll give you an answer from Isaiah chapter 8 verse 19-20 and when they say to you seek those who are mediums and wizards who whisper and mutter should not a people seek their God? should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? that of course is a warning against seances and then the answer here is to the law and to the testimony if they do not speak according to this word it is because there is no light in them so the ultimate test is do they speak according to the law and the testimony of God's word? if they do

not there is no light in them so we judge them by the word of God now I'm going to go on in an area that is practical and perhaps a little delicate but I'm going to give some examples of misleading prophecies how people can be misled by prophecy the first instance I'll take

from Romans chapter 12 and verse 6 having them gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us let us use them if prophecy let us prophesy in proportion to our faith in other words, don't go beyond your faith when you prophesy it's rather heady to be prophesying it's a kind of exhilarating feeling and you can get so exhilarated that you depart from what the word of God and the Scripture and the Holy Spirit actually give you for instance, just to take a simple example somebody may get a true prophecy there is going to be a great revival that's true but he gets so excited that he adds on and it's going to start in our church now it might be true but it's very possible the first half was true the second half wasn't why? because he went beyond the proportion of faith that God had

allotted to him I was dealing with that this morning in connection with spiritual warfare stay within your allotted proportion of faith and then in Acts chapter 16 we get an example of what you could call a prophecy or a revelation that was true but not from God I think this is a tremendous temptation if the thing is true then it must be from God not so Acts 16 describes what happened when Paul and Silas arrived in the city of Philippi verse 16 and following now it happened as we went to prayer that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us what it says in Greek is a spirit of python the snake you know the snake that coils itself around people and crushes the life out of them and interestingly there is a well-known clairvoyant in Washington DC who wrote a book in

which she said that her gift came to her when a snake got in bed with her so she rather I think without realizing it revealed the source of her gift so there was a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination who brought her masters much profit by fortune telling this girl followed Paul and us and cried out saying these men are the servants of the most high God who proclaim to us the way of salvation now every word she said was true furthermore she was the first person in Philippi to know who they were but it wasn't the spirit of God that was speaking through her it was a divining fortune telling spirit and this is the end this she did for many days but Paul greatly distressed turned and said to the spirit I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and he

came out that very hour and after that she was no longer able to tell fortunes see fortune telling is a reality and it's amazing how many times fortune tellers can tell you the truth but it's not from God and ultimately there will always be a lie mixed in with it but the truth is the bait that gets you hooked to receive the lie I've sometimes commented on that girl in Philippi some modern missionaries would have made her a charter member of the church in Philippi and there she was bearing testimony to them the first, what a wonderful conduct we just were there on the streets and she began to tell this people you see the snares how subtle Satan is I'll give you some examples from my own personal acquaintance I have a friend who at that time some years back was the pastor of what we'd call

an old line denominational church in the United States and in order to raise funds for their church they held what they called a church bazaar or a church fete I think we call it in Britain and somehow the people organizing it said to the pastor listen it would be good if we did like they do in other fetes and we had a fortune teller so he didn't really want it he knew better but he didn't want to face the pressure so he said alright you can have a fortune teller so there she was sitting in a little tent and he went in to have his fortune told and the fortune teller looked him in the eye and said your wife is going to get cancer and my friend said his blood ran cold but his wife got cancer fortunately with the help of prayer and medicine she

was eventually healed you see she spoke the

truth but it wasn't from God I was in a situation I must not reveal where it was where I heard about a case in which a young married woman who was I think a kind of Christian went to a fortune teller she ought have known better and the fortune teller said you're soon going to be a widow your husband will be killed and in a very unusual freak accident less than two years later her husband was killed and you know what happened to that poor woman she was tormented with guilt did I open the way for that to happen to my husband by going to that fortune teller I'll relate a personal experience some years back I was on the pastoral staff of a church in the United States and I was doing a lot of deliverance and a lady came to me told me that she'd been a spiritist but she had repented and she

wanted deliverance well I didn't have any witness that she'd really repented so I said I'm not convinced go back, go away and come back when you really have repented so I think a week or two later she came back she said I've repented well it's very hard to deny that a person's repented because you don't want to eliminate such a possibility I still didn't feel good about her but I said okay let's pray we were praying up at the front of the church where there was a platform for the speakers but we were below the platform and I was really struggling trying to help this woman get her delivered it was hard work and after a while I wanted to take a rest so I just leaned back against the platform and she said I see you in a car and it's wrecked against a tree and thank God I was on my guard I

said you divining spirit I'm not going to be in any car that's going to be wrecked against a tree I don't accept that but I'm inclined to believe that if I had accepted it it would have happened it was Satan's destiny for me and just as you can receive God's destiny by opening up to what he says you can receive Satan's destiny by opening up to what he says well thank God years have passed I've never been in a car wrecked against a tree but what a warning to me I thought dear Lord I'm so grateful that I was on the watch I could have easily said oh isn't that terrible I'm going to be in a car see I read the testimony of a businessman in Australia in the full gospel businessman's voice from Australia and he described how he'd got into the occult and then he went on to tell how God had got

him out but this is how he got into the occult he was in his office phoning long distance a long way away to a lady in another city and she was telling him that she could tell him things that he didn't know and I feel like that sometimes too particularly when I cough so we are all on the same level that's right, relax anyhow she was persuading him that she knew things by supernatural means so he said to her tell me what's behind me right now in my office and she said a camel well camels are hardly heard of in Australia they hardly know what a camel is but he had a big picture of a camel right behind him in his office well that convinced him this woman's got the truth and he became involved in the occult and only the mercy of God delivered him see how we have to be on the watch now we come

to the most difficult and in a sense painful of all these situations and I'm afraid what I excuse me I'm afraid what I'm going to say may shock some of you but the most difficult people to deal with are people who have two kinds of spirit one is the Holy Spirit and the other is not now people will tell you that the Holy Spirit wouldn't dwell in an unclean vessel that's wrong the Holy Spirit does dwell in unclean vessels if he didn't we'd have no hope some people take the attitude the Holy Spirit will only come in when you're completely pure but the Holy Spirit comes in to make us pure without him we cannot be purified so we need him it's like if a professor at a university would say to his class now when you've passed your exams I'll teach you and they'd say but professor we need you to

teach us to pass our exams after all David committed adultery and murder and prayed take not thy Holy Spirit from me and God didn't so if anything defiles adultery and murder do but the Holy Spirit did not leave David that was the grace and mercy of God aren't you glad that the Holy Spirit doesn't leave you every time you do something wrong you know Jesus in Mark 7 lists 13 things that defile a man and one of them is pride and one of them is foolishness dear Lord how many spirit-filled Christians would there be left if every time we got proud or foolish the Holy Spirit left us so the Holy Spirit does dwell in vessels that are not totally pure and sometimes he's willing to share that vessel with another spirit from another source I do not appeal to experience but I've had to say that I've

dealt with dozens of cases and the hardest thing for a poor pastor is to deal with people like that the lady who gets interpretation and sometimes it's right on and sometimes it's right off you've never been in those situations you haven't lived on and moved in the circles that I've moved in I remember when I was pastoring in London years ago and this happened I really was at my wits end I didn't know what to do I remember a man who came to me he said get this demon out of me I said you don't have a demon I've heard you speak in tongues I was wrong and he was right and I never really helped him because I couldn't acknowledge his problem he died later prematurely an unhappy man and I have to say my theology kept me from helping him well I've changed my theology I've changed it to fit in

with reality but I think you'll agree as you go through your spiritual experience one of the most difficult people to deal with is the one who sometimes has the right spirit and sometimes another spirit and I'm going to say something which in a way is painful but I've prayed much about this I think God wants me to say it Pentecostals of whom I am one have a kind of awe of William Branham how many of you have heard of William Branham? that's most of you William Branham was a man of God with a most remarkable and dramatic gift from God but I happen to have been friends with a Bible teacher whose name I will not give who worked very closely with William Branham for several years and he gave us once a personal sharing and he said I had to come to the conclusion that there were two spirits in

William Branham one was the spirit of God and one was not and you see the sad thing is and I say this with real sadness in spite of his marvelous gifts and the way God used him his end was either pathetic or tragic according to how you view it he was killed as a result of a motor accident in which his car was struck by a drunk driver and he left behind a little group of fanatics who were worshippers of William Branham and who are some of the saddest people you'll ever meet in a Christian association why did that happen? because if you mix two spirits and don't eliminate the wrong one ultimately it will corrupt the work of the good one let me read just a passage which applies I believe in Deuteronomy 22 this is one of those passages which are like you must not muzzle the ox that treads out

the grain has an application then but it has another application now in Deuteronomy 22 verses 9 and 11 you shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled and then it says you shall not wear a garment of different sorts such as wool and linen mixed together the principle is serving the Lord don't mix two different kinds of things sow your vineyard with mixed seed you'll get a crop that God does not accept as holy wearing partly linen and partly wool you're in two different spiritual worlds because linen is a type of spiritual purity wool is a type of human effort that generates sweat so you, we, you and I and the church we have to examine ourselves are we sowing with mixed seed? is there the

good and also the false? am I wearing a mixed garment? partly the righteousness of Jesus and partly my own fleshly nature because ultimately the blessing of God will not remain on that which is pure and impure

mixed let me just review that because I think it's important different ways in which error can enter deception people prophesy beyond the proportion of their faith they start in faith and then go because they get puffed up they go beyond their faith various different kinds of fortune telling see people pay a lot of money to fortune tellers you know that people don't pay for nothing in Germany today West Germany which is now the western half of Germany in West Germany most German businessmen will consult a fortune teller before they do a business deal they never think of going to a

church or a minister now businessmen don't spend money for nothing it doesn't mean that what they get is right but part of it is right and they can probably quote you instances in which they marvelously help I think perhaps the classic example is that the previous president of the United States his wife was in continual contact with a fortune teller, an astrologist and much of his official calendar was dictated by that lady including the meetings with Gorbachev and so on this is not something from another age it's right in our midst and then I want to warn you again don't accept Satan's destiny for your life it may be some of you here have been to a fortune teller it would be very unusual if some of you hadn't you really need to get clear of every involvement in this book of mine which I

held up I speak of a case when I was in a prayer meeting with a young man, I'd never met him before and we were just chatting together and I said, have you received the Holy Spirit? and he said, yes but well anytime anybody says yes but to that question you know what the but is but I don't speak with tongues so I commented, another trunkless elephant and I didn't argue with him about that I simply said, did you I know I said this by inspiration did you ever go to a fortune teller? and he thought of it, yes he said once when I was about 15 but I only did it as a joke I didn't mean anything by it but I said you did go and you did have your fortune told so he rather reluctantly said yes so I said would you be willing to confess that to God as a sin and ask him to release you from the

consequences so he said yes I think just really to you know, get me off his back so I led him in a little simple prayer Lord I confess as a sin that I went to a fortune teller and I had my fortune told and I repent and I ask you to release me from all the consequences I didn't say anything more put my hand on his shoulder prayed for him and he immediately began to speak fluently in a tongue you see the invisible barrier had been removed there was a shadow over his life that had to be lifted many many many people are being tricked into the occult today I have to say there is a type of what I call charismatic fortune telling which I regard with great suspicion sometimes it will be true and sometimes it won't but you see people who get the desire to get a word from God from a prophet are in

dangerous ground not that it couldn't happen but to have that desire is to expose yourself to a lot of risks I want to give you now just a list of some people who are candidates for deception and as I go through this list I invite you to check with yourself it's not a complete list but at least it gives you some idea here they are candidates for deception those who rely only on subjective impressions well when that brother prophesied over me that I felt so good I know that must have been from God you don't know and it's very dangerous to assume you do there are a lot of other tests you have to apply second lot those who look only to human leaders if a certain man says it they believe it that's very dangerous there are no infallible human leaders and I'm not one I don't want people

believing it because I say it I think those of you that know me I'm always careful to direct people to Scripture and not to my subjective impressions third category those who accept supernatural signs as a guarantee of truth Jesus himself said that false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders but they're false prophets so the mere fact that something supernatural takes place is not by itself a sufficient

guarantee that the person who produces it is a true prophet the next category are those who through personal ambitions are susceptible to flattery because you know what I said about flattery the one who flatters his neighbor with his mouth spreads a net for his feet not being preachers most of you you don't know how preachers like to be appreciated and that's reasonable

that's perfectly fair but the problem is that sometimes we look for appreciation in the wrong place and by desiring to be appreciated we get ourselves hooked on something we shouldn't be involved in the next category is those who are unwilling to face the possibility of suffering or persecution sooner or later they are bound to be deceived because the Bible warns us so clearly we must expect to face suffering and persecution Peter says in his first epistle chapter 4 verses 1 and 2 because Christ suffered in the flesh arm yourselves with the same mind in other words be prepared for suffering my comment on that is that a large number of God's people today are being sent out unarmed they haven't seen this fact that suffering happens it's part of the Christian life it's part of God's way of

dealing with us and anybody who only promises good I could say without qualification is a false prophet and then finally those who are ignorant of Scripture now there are people in remote countries or persecuted situations where they don't have a Bible they just have a word God will be merciful to them but for you and me who have the whole Bible easily available if we don't study our Bibles we are candidates for deception we deserve to be deceived let me give you that list again without comment number one those who rely on subjective impressions number two those who look only to human leaders number three those who accept supernatural signs as a guarantee of truth number four those who through personal ambition are susceptible to flattery number five those who are unwilling to face the

possibility of suffering and persecution and number six those who are ignorant of Scripture now we come to what I call the positive part of this message how to be free from deception and I have nine recommendations I think we're doing all right for time I hope so so this is the positive part I've given you some of the negatives some of the warnings some of the examples of people who didn't escape from deception now I want to give you what I believe are nine principles number one it's only by God's mercy that we can be faithful I was impressed years ago by a statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 25 he said I give my opinion as one who has obtained mercy of the Lord to be found faithful and I realized then and I think I've never forgotten it that it's only through the mercy of

the Lord that we can be found faithful it's not our cleverness it's not our spirituality it's not the number of verses of Scripture that we can quote we are dependent on the mercy of the Lord and as long as we live that way He will not withhold His mercy from us but when we become arrogant and self-confident and think we can do without God's mercy we are in terrible danger second we need to cultivate humility and the fear of the Lord and I'll read one of my favorite passages from Psalm 25 Psalm 25 verses 8 and 9 good and upright is the Lord therefore He teaches sinners in the way the humble He guides in justice and the humble He teaches His way what kind of person does God teach?

I didn't hear you humble, that's right so if we ever cease to be humble we are in danger of passing out from under God's protection and then it says in verse 12 and 14 who is the man that fears the Lord? him shall the Lord teach in the way He chooses the secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him and He will show them His covenant so what's the condition there for receiving truth from God? the fear of the Lord in other words humility and the fear of the Lord are our protection and I quoted this morning but some of you weren't here two passages about wisdom and knowledge I was talking with Ruth and we were praying and I said I really would like some way to know what is true wisdom and what is true knowledge and out of my

mouth came a prayer which I realized was God's answer and I said

all true wisdom and all true knowledge proceed out of the fear of the Lord anything that does not come out of the fear of the Lord is not true wisdom and is not true knowledge and the scriptures that God gave me were Psalm 110 verse 11 the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom the first part, the foundation of wisdom and Proverbs 1 verse 7 the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge so anything that does not begin in the fear of the Lord is neither true wisdom nor true knowledge we had a prophetic utterance that said God was teaching His people to walk in the fear of the Lord and I have to say that He's teaching me I would be afraid not to be in the fear of the Lord if you ever want a blessing get a concordance and look through all the promises in the Bible attached to the

fear of the Lord and I think you'll find that there is nothing to which God attaches more promises of blessing than the fear of the Lord by humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life he who has the fear of the Lord will abide in satisfaction he will not be visited with evil what more could you ask for than that? all right, number three base everything on the scriptures first general revelation which is in the scriptures then we can seek for personal revelation now the Bible doesn't tell me that I'm to go as a missionary to India if that is to be true I have to get a personal revelation but I'm not entitled to expect personal revelation if I'm not living in the general revelation which is true for all Christians see that's laziness I would say this a person has no

right to go to a prophet for a word from God if he's not living in the revealed truth of scripture if you live according to the general revelation then you can expect personal revelation when you need it but if you ignore the general I think you're almost insulting God to say God give me a special word God say why don't you read my Bible I've written this a Christian who ignores his Bible has no right to hear from God and many times when he thinks he's hearing from God he isn't all right, number four very, very important focus on Jesus Revelation 19 verse 10 tells us the essential nature of prophecy and it's in a very short, succinct verse Revelation 19 verse 10 the revelatory angel said to John worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy all true prophecy in one way

or another points us to Jesus that's true of every biblical prophecy in the Old Testament and it should be true of every kind of prophecy given by the Holy Spirit in the church it should point us to Jesus and exalt Jesus and Jesus said in John 16 verses 13 and 14 however, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come He will guide you into all truth for He will not speak on His own authority but whatever He says whatever He hears He will speak and He will tell you things to come that's legitimate but it goes on He will glorify Me, Jesus for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you the supreme function of the Holy Spirit in the church is to glorify Jesus that's what He comes to do and I'll tell you as a little secret for meetings if you want the anointing and blessing of the Holy Spirit

concentrate on glorifying Jesus and the Holy Spirit will be happy to be there but anything that diverts people's attention from Jesus and turns them off into secondary issues and does not give glory to Jesus is not from the Holy Spirit that's a pretty sure test now I've been a Pentecostal for 49 years I've been amongst Pentecostals God blessed them who made all sorts of strange statements and wild noises and said it was the Holy Spirit but Jesus got no glory from it at all they were deceived, poor people but they're not the only ones we've got now a smarter set of people called charismatics and they get deceived too the next suggestion I have is leave the initiative with God don't worry God for revelation sit there quietly and let God give it to you as and when He pleases Jesus said my

judgment is true because I do not judge of myself but as I hear I judge try and follow that pattern hear and then judge don't pre-empt God don't worry God with your problems especially theological problems there's a beautiful scripture that I love in Psalm 131 Psalm 131 I'll read just two verses David of course Lord my heart is not haughty nor my eyes lofty notice what he's guarding himself against in one word pride neither do I concern myself with great matters nor with things too profound for me beware of being concerned with things that are too profound for you there are lots of things you couldn't understand if God told you them let God keep them to Himself now this is the scripture surely I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with his mother like a weaned child is my

soul within me this became very vivid to me years ago when I used to preach to Africans in Kenya and if there was a congregation say the size of this middle section the front three rows would probably be taken up by mothers nursing their babies and every time a baby squealed the mother would take out the breast and give it the breast and I got used to directing my eyes beyond the third row but you see that's an unweaned child every time it wants something it squeals but a weaned child waits for mother to prepare the appropriate food at the appropriate time so don't go to God squealing like an unweaned child be weaned accept God's meals when He provides be disciplined see that alright the next warning I would give is beware of fantasy there is a spirit of fantasy and it's taking millions

of people over mainly through television and honestly a lot of young people today don't know whether what they're seeing is real or fantasy now I'm going to give a little personal illustration I hope I can make it vivid because I've been doing a lot of thinking about this for some time and I have a very vivid imagination I think it's part of my gifting as a writer and my imagination easily takes over I can hear something and my imagination goes into high gear and I'm off and I can be miles away in a few seconds now there is a good side to that but it's very dangerous and one day I was kind of meditating on the greatness of God and on all that He's done and on His calling and I felt like I was at the top of a very rugged, beautiful mountain peak and I could look out in different directions

and see glorious vistas and I was getting carried away with the beauty and the exhilaration and then I looked one other way and I saw a very steep precipice going down sheer hundreds of feet and I wasn't far from it and I was really gripped with fear I felt the fear in the pit of my stomach and I thought, God where's the guardrail and I got this answer the guardrail is the scriptures as long as you stay inside them, you're safe but if you get outside you're headed for disaster so if you have a vivid imagination yield it to the Holy Spirit you see this is a terrible thing to say but if I wanted to be a false prophet which God forbid I would be a very successful one can you understand what I'm saying?

I know I have the gifts that could fascinate people you know what the word fascinate comes from a Latin word, it means to bewitch that's exactly what it means so anything that's fascinating in a certain sense is potentially bewitching so use your vivid imagination, let God give you glorious vistas but my dearly beloved brothers and sisters, stay inside the guardrail why should you be another casualty, there are plenty before you never go outside the scriptures, you're safe the next one is keep it simple and plain don't be super spiritual don't use a lot of high-flown language stick with simplicity, I always like the thing that dear Corrie Ten Boom used to say I'm sure some of you've heard of it KISS, K-I-S-S keep it simple, skip it I, believe me, I take that to heart, if I ever get

outside the simplicity, I get nervous Paul wrote two things to the Corinthians in 2nd Corinthians 2nd Corinthians 3 I'm in 1st Corinthians that's why it confused me 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 verses 12 and 13 therefore, since we have such hope we use great boldness of speech, but the other translation is we use

great plainness of speech and unlike Moses who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away so the Old Testament was veiled, it had truth in signs and types and allegories it wasn't fully unfolded but in the New Testament that's not the way we present truth, we use great plainness of speech I tell people when they want in a deliverance meeting you want to be delivered number one, be humble number two, be honest

and you won't be honest unless you're humble and I say call your problem by the right name, if it's lust, call it lust don't use some fancy psycho analytic term and I believe in plainness, I believe that's part of the New Testament ministry we call things by simple terms we call a spade a spade, and not an agricultural implement and then Paul goes on in the same epistle chapter 11, part of which I've already read he says to the church in verse 2, for I am jealous for you with godly jealousy for I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ that's an astonishing statement when you think what kind of people the Corinthian Christians had been, homosexuals prostitutes, drunkards every nasty thing that you can think of and Paul says I want to betroth

you as a chaste virgin to Christ that's the miracle of salvation that the most impure can become the purest but you see he used the word betrothed, betrothed is not marriage in the biblical culture a betrothal was binding but it was not marriage you couldn't consummate the relationship but it was as authoritative and legal as marriage now the church today is betrothed to Jesus but the marriage supper of the lamb hasn't come and we are being tested what's the test? it's very simple will we be loyal to Jesus or will we abandon our commitment to him the church that is loyal to Jesus will be the bride the church that abandons loyalty to Jesus will be the harlot, the prostitute they're both very clearly formed already in the world we're not going to see that emerge, it has already begun to

emerge, there is a false church today very important to remember that and it's a false church because it's betrayed Jesus and then Paul goes on and comes back to the issue now but I fear lest somehow as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ stay simple don't try to be too clever in my opinion stay away from theology well, I'm not a critic of theology but I think theology has brought much more damage to church than it has done good I don't think we're required to make a system out of the Bible we're required to find out what it teaches and live that way you know why we make theology? because it's too simple we have to find a way round explaining the simple commandments of the Bible like if anyone slaps you

on one cheek, slap it and turn your other cheek anybody asks your coat, give him your cloak do good to those who hate you bless those who persecute you that's not difficult to understand but it's pretty difficult to do there's no complication in the message the complication comes in our crooked human nature all right I'm getting near the end the next thing is exercise your senses for discernment Hebrews chapter 5 verse 12 for though by this time you ought to be teachers you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God and you've come to need milk and not solid food for everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness for he is a babe we have a lot of overgrown babies in the church today but solid food belongs to those who are of

full age or mature that is those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil so in order to have discernment you have to exercise your senses you have to practice every time you confront anything you need to subject it to your discernment learn to discern between that which is true and that which is false between that which is spiritual and that which is soulish because they're completely different what appeals to your emotions may not touch your spirit at all we have a lot of worship

in the church today which is soulish people worship God in order to have a good time wonderful worship service they say the purpose of worship is not for us to have a good time it's for us to worship God and we have to come to the place where we're sensitive to the

difference between the spiritual and the soulish and that will only come as we practice always have your discernment antennae out pick up what's in a meeting pick up what's in a message then you won't be so easily fooled when the crisis comes finally this is the last cultivate the love of the truth 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 2 Thessalonians 2 beginning at verse 9 it's speaking about the antichrist 2 Thessalonians 2.9 the coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs and lying wonders notice Satan can come out with very powerful signs and wonders but it's still Satan and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved why do they perish? because they didn't receive the

love of the truth if you refuse the love of the truth you are bound to perish the love is a strong word there it's not a weak word it's not tolerating the truth it's not letting somebody come and present the truth to you it's finding out the truth for yourself it's searching and seeking the truth those are the people who will not be deceived the others will why? because they didn't receive the love of the truth I would like to urge you cultivate the love of the truth give time to finding out what is the truth take time with your Bible in the presence of the Lord now I'm going to read those nine recommendations and I'm going to close first of all it's only by God's mercy that we'll be faithful second we need to cultivate humility and the fear of the Lord third we need to base everything on

the scriptures first general revelation before special revelation fourth we need to focus on Jesus the testimony of Jesus is the essence of prophecy fifth we need to leave the initiative with God be weaned sixth we need to beware of fantasy, stay within the guardrail of the scriptures seventh keep it simple and plain, don't become too complicated don't become, don't use too long words you'll find out most of the important statements in the Bible are made in words of one syllable number eight exercise your senses cultivate discernment and number nine cultivate the love of the truth now I would like to pray for all of us to close this message I think it would be good if we were all to stand you've been sitting a long while and I invite you to join with me in this prayer it's a prayer for

the mercy of God that we need I need it brothers and sisters I need it just as much as anybody else here because with the influence I have if I went wrong I'd leave a lot of other people wrong and I'm always conscious of that so let's bear in mind we need the mercy of God and let's tell God we want the truth we want to cultivate the love of the truth Heavenly Father we come to you tonight in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our wonderful Savior and our Lord and we thank you for this so great salvation which you have purchased for us through the blood of your Son and Lord we are reverent we are appreciative we do not take it lightly we move in the fear of the Lord we thank you for the guard rail that you've put around us the scriptures we want to stay within that guard rail we humble

ourselves before you and acknowledge our total dependence upon you that it's only by your faithfulness that we will be preserved by your mercy and so Lord we commit ourselves to you we want to renounce any area in which deception may have gained some control over us we want to turn against it drive it from us loosen ourselves from it in the name of Jesus and we want to embrace the truth that is Jesus that is the scripture and that is the Holy Spirit we open our hearts and minds tonight to that truth and ask you to fill us with the truth of God in Jesus name Amen Amen

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