

Dealing With Deception - Part 2

by Winkie Pratney

Winkie Pratney's sermon explores the nature of deception in faith, emphasizing the importance of obedience and a relationship with God over mere knowledge of Scripture.

Duration: 1:00:19

Scripture: Romans 1:21

Topics: "Spiritual Deception", "Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the progression of deception and spiritual downfall, starting from an independent spirit leading to a desire for power, a seared conscience, fantasy, emotional perversions, and ultimately personal, social, and spiritual destruction. It emphasizes the importance of humility, servant-heartedness, and reliance on God to avoid falling into the traps of pride and self-deception.

Transcript

We have looked in our last session, in this little block, on a lot of what people say about why people go off the rails has to do with maybe their families, or their needs, or something in the culture, or perhaps they got disappointed in the church. Those are all true things. People can go off the rails because of that.

But we're looking for something even more fundamental than that. We talked about how it's possible perhaps to try and do some encyclopedia of weirdness. The problem with that is it has to be an open-ended encyclopedia of weirdness because there's always another weirder way to do something than the weird people who did it before.

So we're looking rather at what is the core of a thing. How did it start? Where did it begin? And I've spent quite a block of time in the last thing looking at the way we are supposed to learn truth. And the way we're supposed to learn truth is actually mirrored in the languages that the Bible is written in.

Hebrew, and I know a little Hebrew. His name is Bob Weiner and he runs a wonderful ministry. Hebrew is a language that is not a great language for description, but a language of revelation and obedience.

If you want to say, go get a donkey, it's easy to say it in Hebrew. Donkey bring, you know, and then go get the donkey. Those two are tied together.

So revelation and obedience or action are tied together in the Hebrew language. But if you want to describe something in detail, illuminate something, Greek is a much better language. There's all these

hundreds of different flavors and ways of saying things.

So the scriptures start with Hebrew. God speaks, you do it, then moves to Greek. This is the explanation of those things.

Now, in the light of that, I'm going to come back and say that men like Charles Finney discovered this, that if you simply begin to try and explain everything to people before you challenge them to give their lives to the Lord, it will backfire in the long run. And in the tract, looking in some detail in this thing, said that if we make our whole life's work that, we will raise a generation that is fault-finding, nitpicking, critical, philosophically bent, that will question anything that doesn't seem to fit in with what they already know. In other words, we'll raise a generation that is faithless.

It doesn't actually trust God. It trusts its knowledge of God, which is something quite different. It doesn't trust Scripture.

It trusts its knowledge of Scripture, which is something quite different. Jesus said to the Pharisees, and I mentioned to you, they were the best of the best. And it would shock you to see how much the Pharisees are like many evangelical churches today.

Because they love Scripture. They memorized it. They tried to live lives that were utterly better than anybody around them and stuff.

One man who wrote a book, he was just doing a study of the Pharisees, and he said, I am a Pharisee, looking at what they were like. Jesus said, search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. See that, how loaded that is? You think you have eternal life.

But you will not come to me that you might have life. He's the life. The Scriptures, inspired, I said infinite mind gave us this, describes, God's law is a description, but it's never designed to be a motivation.

It's not the reason why you live. It describes the way real truth looks like. When you read God's law, the design of God's law is not to give you a set of rules by which you should live your life.

It is to describe for you what reality looks like. It tells you the consequences if you try to jump off a building without a parachute. In effect, when the Bible says, the soul that sins, it shall die, it's not just saying God will kill you if you do this.

It's saying what you are doing will kill you. So the whole heart of this is that we were never designed to live by a set of rules, but in a relationship with God. We say that all the time.

We say Christianity is not a religion. It is not a set of rules. We say that and it's true.

But we forget how close it is possible to know the rules and to assume that you knowing the rules is enough to make you a Christian. Which means if our discipleship training programs are simply religious education, it will no more save you than reading Penthouse. It's true.

It may improve your understanding of things, but it's not going to save your soul. So the heart of what we said is that all true teaching must begin in a revelation of God. And why I said that? You're reading the Bible sometimes and it lights up.

It's not a mystical thing. God speaks by His Word. And the living Word illuminates the written Word.

And they're called both. Jesus is called the Word of God, just like this is called the Word of God, because one describes the other. One is the Word.

One describes the Word. So they're both inspired. I mean, Jesus is God and the Bible is God's book.

But they're two different things. It is possible to know the data of the Bible and never be a disciple of Jesus at all. So with that in mind, we come back to this question.

Now here was my problem. My board said to me, we need a study on the cults. So what I do is the way I approach any kind of study.

I'm an exhorter. I'm an evangelist calling. I'm an exhorter by gifting.

I'm not actually a teacher. You'll discover that. I don't enjoy, whoa, this is so cool, studying all this stuff.

My chemistry background has given me an epistemology of approach to things. Because in chemistry, especially analytical chemistry, what you're supposed to do is come to the bottom line on something. You're trying to find out.

Somebody gives you something to analyze. And I say, what is this? You run tests on it. And then only after you've checked everything out do you take a sip of it and go, yeah, I think that's water.

Ah, and you made a mistake somewhere along the line. But my calling is excitation. What I want to do is build faith in people to trust God.

If they're Christians, that's called revival. If they're not, it's called salvation. I want people to trust God.

The way I want them to trust God is to learn to do what he says when he speaks. I want to teach them, not just in a Greek way. We can't help being Greek in the Western world.

We all learn that way. You go to school. You get the data.

You decide out of all the hundreds of things you've learned, this is what I'm going to go with. And then you shape your life on it. But when you're following God, the real God, you've got to listen to what he says to you.

And you've got to do what he says to you. And the reason why some people don't grow in their Christian lives is because there is not an equivalent obedience to what they've learned. You understand why God will not teach you more if you're not doing what he's already showing you to do.

Because knowledge equals responsibility. And if you learn a huge amount of stuff that you're not doing, it damns you more deeply than you were before. And that's frightening.

Brethren, be not many masters. Don't try to be the hot shot teacher because that can only increase your guilt if you're not doing what you say. So if we were to look at a graph, let's say this was information or knowledge of some sort, or let's change it to its base, revelation, this one here.

And then the bottom part of this graph is sort of like an obedience graph, you know, what you do. A perfect Christian life should be a 45. If you come up here, you should obey this much.

If you come up here, you should obey this much. So you've got a 45 degree angle from that base. Then you've got a big solid square of Christian life.

What if you continually increase the knowledge but the obedience is this much? That's called instability. You try to build a tower that's 400 feet high that has no foundation and no thickness to it, it's going to fall. And I think because we have these scary tools given to us now of being able to get as much data as possible, we can be confused into thinking that our religious knowledge is the same as a deep Christian life.

And all it is is setting you up for deception. Now in the light of that, here's my problem. I always, my studies, because they're based on real life situations, I get scores of emails from kids and some of them ask serious questions.

And if I haven't got anything to say about that thing, I ask the Lord. So what do I say? Especially if I get a whole bunch of these that are all coming in. I say to the Lord, I don't have anything on this.

I don't know what they're talking about to start with. I don't know how to answer that. Then I go to the Scriptures and I usually, because it's a practical thing, I do topicals.

I just go through the Bible and I try to find every verse, everything connected with that subject. And I ask God to help me to see in this search what is significant. So I did this on the word deceived or words like that.

Any word I could find connected with deceived and counseling about deception and lies and all that thing. So at the end of it, I had these sheets of Scriptures and I looked and I said, I don't even know. I've read all this.

I still haven't got a clue. Here it says, warn them. Here it says, don't even get near them.

You know, it seems it's all a strange thing. So the Lord, this is what he said to me. Not a boy.

He said to me, what is the first deception? And I said, Adam and Eve in the garden. He said, no. I said, whoops, yeah.

There was deception right there. He said, Lucifer. So I'm going to read you now the passage.

We're all going to have a look at it. If you've got Bibles, it's one of the best things to study the Bible. It's a Bible.

And this, we've never done this in print. But it does exist. It just needs to be done.

I want you to look at Isaiah, the book of Isaiah, chapter 14, and verses 13 to 17. Now, I believe, and most people believe, that this description of this king is actually speaking about Satan, because nobody else fits the bill. Isaiah 14, verses 13 to 17.

So what we're looking at now is not content of what a deception believes. That gives you the encyclopedia that's unending. We're looking at how a perfect being can fall.

Now, remember this. Satan is a church kid. Not just any church kid.

The church kid. Okay? When we read the descriptions of Lucifer and some of these other passages, Ezekiel passages and others there, he's a marvelous being. He certainly doesn't have horns and pitchfork and red pajamas and stuff.

People say, why did God make the devil? He didn't make the devil. He made a beautiful angel called Lucifer. And by the way, I don't think he's an archangel.

Never says he is. It calls him a cherub, which is the higher, the ones around the throne, the ones that are closest to God. Cherub, the cherub that covers.

That is a serious position of responsibility. So if we put it like this, Satan is a church kid. He's not an atheist.

He's not a pagan. He believes in God. See that? What we believe this passage describes is how he fell.

So Isaiah 14, verses 13 to 17. And the thing I want you... I'm going to go through these steps, but the context of this is not what cults believe, what the devil believed, or what we believe. It has to do with two things.

One, the attitude of the person that falls. And two, the character that happens of the person that falls. We're starting first, I'll call it spirit, attitude.

The tie-in with the revelation of the Holy Spirit is this. You ought to be able to see deception on contact with somebody, even if you're a young Christian. If your spirit is right with God and you have a clean conscience.

If you're not screwed up yourself, you ought to be able to say there's something wrong here. Straight away. You don't have to eat the fruit to find out whether it's going to kill you or not.

It's enough that God says stay away. And I believe there are warnings that He gives us when you have no understanding at all of the situation. And if Christians start living by faith rather than, remember what Jesus' words were? Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find the faith on the earth? Not just faith, the faith.

Will He find people really trusting Him, really learning from Him? Will He find, in other words, a gospel that really transforms people? That holds Jesus where He's supposed to be. Now, somebody wants to read this. If you want to read Isaiah, yo, we, yes.

You mean there? Oh, sorry, yes, that's my snarly cheek. Do we have a mic for somebody to read it? We'll have Andy on that. Okay.

Somebody, you want to read it? You'll post this to the mic. 13 through 17, and this is the American Standard Bible. We'll take NISB anytime.

Very good. But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High. Nevertheless, you will be thrust down into shale through the recesses of the pit.

Those who see you will gaze at you. They will ponder over you, saying, is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home? That's cool. Now, whether this king is just a human king, we have in Scripture the account of somebody who fell in a specific way, and that is why this desire to be like God, we feel this is also a description, if not the original description, this king who was maybe a real king, a human king, is following the pattern of the one who wanted to be the king when there already was one.

So, whether we think this person is a human king who actually did all these, destroyed the world, or it's actually speaking about the one behind those kinds of things, we have here a pattern of fall. And the thing I hope to show you is this. We are looking at the development of a deception.

So, I'm going to give you a simple chart. The chart has six steps to it. So, if you've got a page, put an open page for this.

There will be six blocks to it, and on one side, left-hand side, you'll put at the top six steps of spiritual deception, and on the other side, another column if you like, just two columns, boom, boom, on the other column, put satanic pattern. And that's what we're looking at. I believe by using this, we will see first how deception begins, and then why people get deeper into deception and into trouble, and where they will move to next if they are not freed from it.

The first one then is going to show the pattern of deception, and I believe this is based on the fall of Satan. When the Lord said to me, Lucifer, I thought, well, all of the reasons why people say they're not going to church anymore because of, he didn't have any of those excuses. If I said, why aren't you going to church anymore? Why aren't you hanging out with God's people? Oh, full of hypocrites.

They're all hypocrites. Or the pastor ran off with the secretary to Bermuda, took the collection, spent it. Or pastor just, you know, his sermons lacked content.

And then if all else fails, the music sucked, okay? It was terrible music. So all of these reasons, you know, the church was boring, pastor's sermons were terrible, you know that thing? How could, couldn't use any of those. You couldn't say the church was full of hypocrites.

There weren't any hypocrites in the universe. They're all perfect. Some finitely so and some, one infinitely so.

You couldn't say God's messages were boring. You could never say God is boring. Just looking at his creation, you can't say that.

If I was God and I was going to make fish and people were going to eat it, I'd make them all cod, you know, just cut the top off, cut the tail, cut the eyes off so they're not looking at you when you eat it. Just cut the eyes off, cut the tail off, cook the meat and eat it. That's it, okay? Simple.

When he makes fish, he speaks to the waters and it brings forth. There's all of these millions and millions of variations. Some of them, have you seen those weird little ones in aquariums that aren't going to last in the plastic bag until you get home? But they're amazing.

They're rainbow colored and they've got all this stuff. Would you ever come up with a hammerhead shark? In your wildest imagination. God just does stuff.

He makes, and all he just goes, let the waters bring forth. That one creative word goes, when an infinite mind expresses himself finitely, it always comes out different. It's never boring.

Barry McGuire used to say, when you walk with the Lord, you don't get bored. You can get bored in religious stuff, but that's not the same as him. He is the most awesome, wonderful, creative, terrifying, funny, scary, safe.

All of those things and many, many more in one person. Nobody ever got bored. And nobody ever said, oh man, Jesus' sermons are so long.

I mean, they're just boring. Nobody ever said that. They were just blown away.

They said, go out and capture him. And they all came back. They go, where is he? Never heard anybody talk like that before.

That was never boring. You couldn't say that it lacked content. You know, he lacked content.

Sometimes people go, that was profound. By that they mean, I haven't got a clue what he was talking about. It must have been really significant.

Can't say that the God whose Hebrew word for glory literally means heavy, as distinct from just cotton candy. You know, he's real and solid and lasting. Everything he says is full of weight and substance.

So what about the church? What about the choir? Perhaps the choir was bad. No, they all sang like angels. Because they all were angels.

But we don't even know if they sang. But anyway, somebody was singing. They were all worshiping God.

Did the devil have bad teaching? Was there something wrong with him? Did he have like a devilish gene or something in him that when he was first made, there was this little weird runaway thing that took over him. None of those, none of the excuses people have for sinning or anything else fit him. There was no reason at all except one thing.

And that word appears five times there, I will. Something went wrong with his choices. I think that's the only way you and I are like God.

He made us in his image. The one thing most like God in the personality he gave us as human is the ability to do something that has never been done before. And it's interesting because the word *barach* for create, the word that means to bring into existence out of nothing or out of you is actually used once in the Bible, only once, for human choices.

So we ask the question, well how does sin get into the world? How does evil begin in the world? And we assume that there has to be some substance, spirit, gene, genealogy, culture, bad music behind that makes that person do that. Can't explain this guy. Can't explain Adam and Eve either.

They didn't have something wrong with them. Matter of fact, God uses this sometimes as an illustration. He says, I planted you wholly a great vine.

What happened to you? He takes Jeremiah down to the potter's house and he says to him, watch this guy. So he's watching him and he's trying to make this thing and it's beautiful. Now there's something in the

clay there, I don't know whether it's not squeezed properly or anything, it's just something goes wrong with it.

And then he doesn't go, I'm giving pottery up, now I'm taking out bowling and throw it out. He does what every potter does, he takes it off the wheel and then he puts more water onto it and then he works it with his fingers and if you apply, you're going, ah! Like this is pretty scary getting squeezed and thumped and then he puts it back on the wheel and he does it again. And he builds something beautiful.

And then as he's watching, it's really astonishing to watch a potter work on a wheel. Just an amazing, beautiful thing. As he's looking at it, God says, don't you think I can do that? I can do that.

When something goes wrong, it's not like, you know, you were a bad clay, it doesn't, he, I can make something beautiful when before it was deformed. The only thing that'll stop you from doing that is if it's baked and hard and can no longer change. So I don't care what people have done, I don't care what their backgrounds are like, you put your life, your human clay into his hands and you don't get hard and get stuck the way you are and you're willing to let him remould you.

He can make something beautiful out of it. Something beautiful, something good. That's what he can do.

He beautifies what he touches and he makes everything he touches beautiful. Because that's what he's like. The only thing you can't afford to do is get thoroughly mixed up and set, baked hard.

So what happened to the devil? I think human beings and Satan, remember this, angels are moral beings. They're not wind-up toys, they're not robots, they're not programmed androids. That's why the Bible calls them the angels which kept, not their first estate.

Why it calls them holy angels, not neutral angels or android angels. They are beings that have choices, different from humans. Sometimes when I look at guys like Darter on Star Trek and him trying to figure out what it's like to have emotions and having an emotion ship and freaking out.

Human beings have more than angels. But angels have choices, real choices. And I believe the one thing that explains the presence of evil in the world is where you take freedom and use it wrongly.

It's as simple as that. Something comes into the world that God never originated. What else could that possibly be except choices? Where does your choice come from? Answer from you.

It's as simple as that. Always in Scripture, it comes back to your responsibility. When God meets Adam and Eve after they've sinned, he asks the strangest question.

They've already screwed up. They're afraid, they run away, get a fig leaf. I don't know what kind of great jockstrap that would make, but I tell you it's not going to be very comfortable and it's not going to last very long.

But he comes to them and here's the question he asks. He doesn't say, he doesn't say, why did you do that? He doesn't say, did you do that? He says, what did you do? When I was a little kid, I'd seen a movie on the whirling dervishes. I thought they were cool.

There was a Middle Eastern dance that men have using veils. They make all these, kind of like those worship ribbons that people use in services today. They swirled around with these things.

So I wanted to be a whirling dervish for a short time. That was the beginning and end of my dancing career. I think it was toilet paper or something.

But I got something and it was whirling around and there was a vase on the mantelpiece. I think it belonged to Aunt Agatha who was filthy rich and it was an ugly vase. You had to keep it there in case she came or she'd cut you out of the whirl.

I was whirling dervishing around and somehow, it may have been demonic toilet paper. It may have had a gene of deception. I don't know what it was.

But somehow, Aunt Agatha's vase went off straight, hit the marble. It shattered into a million bits that Humpty Dumpty's men could not put together again. My parents who were in the next room heard this mash and ran in.

I was standing there, toilet paper in hand and my dad said, did you do that? Now, I was small but I understood a simple thing that if I did, I would die right there. So strictly speaking, I did not do it. It was the toilet paper.

The toilet paper did it. He asked, why did you do that? Now, you learn another thing. You learn early to lie.

No, I didn't do it. It was something else. Or, second one you learn is justification for what you did.

If you give a good enough reason, you will not die. So the questions we would ask, did you do that? Or, why did you do that? Both teach us to lie and to justify ourselves. God doesn't ask those questions.

He addresses the conscience. He says, what did you do? It wasn't like he was out building a star system and he missed it. He's not asking the question to find out what they did.

He's asking the question so they can see what did you do? And when you say, that is the hardest thing in the world. It's easy to get the toilet paper or the other thing or your mother goes, you really hurt me when you do things like that. Oh, I'm sorry mom.

I'm sorry too. It's easy to do all of that and still not repent. What is repentance is when you start taking responsibility for what you did.

And that's what he says. What did you do? And he had to say, why does God ask us to confess our sins? Is it that he missed it? He wants you to take responsibility. So all the words used for sin in scripture overwhelmingly show personal responsibility.

Even the simplest word for sin, to miss the mark, doesn't mean the mark is far too high and nobody can even get to it. That's how we run missing the mark. Oh, it's impossible to hit that thing.

What's the point of calling it sin if you can't ever do the opposite of it? If I said to you, fly around the room and you just couldn't and I'll kill you if you don't do it. That'll add some excitement to the equation. What is the point of that? We don't need to have to justify God.

He's fine. He made a beautiful world. It's not his problem.

It's our problem. Even the word reconcile in the Bible. There's words to reconcile.

Two people are bitter enemies. They hate each other and they come together in counsel and then there's a mutual reconciliation. That's not the word used by God for reconciliation.

It's one person. The other one's fine. God is fine.

We're the ones with the problem. Adam and Eve were loved as much by God after they sinned as before they sinned. His love never changed.

His intentions for them never changed. What happened is that something came into the world that God did not make and my best bet for that is a choice. A creative thing that came from you not from anybody else and it comes all the way back to you when the consequences of that are seen.

And this is what Satan said. He said, I will. Now, I've got 20 minutes or 15? 25 minutes is good.

What I'm going to show you here could be amplified a lot. I'm just going to take a little bit of what that is. But I'd like you to write under the first column on your left hand side under six steps of spiritual deception write this word.

Independent spirit. Write that. Independent spirit.

An independent spirit. And on the other side on your right hand column write this word, this line. Failure to have a servant's heart.

He said, I will mount up to the heavens. Now, here's a very strange thing. God wants you to be like him.

God wants you to be like God. The devil's temptation to Adam and Eve is he knows you're going to be like him. The devil wants to be like God.

So what is the difference between God wanting you to be like God and the devil wanting him to be like God? The difference is aspiration to be like God in an ungodly way. You can't be like God in an ungodly way. Everyone wants power and they want this but God, he's character based.

Not just power based. Another big thing. Every religion in the world has a power base to it.

God's his character. Everybody wants character. Everyone wants power.

They don't want character. Wanting power without character is like wanting a million volts without any insulation or a switch to turn it. It's fine.

It's really powerful but it'll kill you. So the failure to be a servant's heart this I will mount up into the heavens. I'm going to get there.

I'm going up to the top. This is my goal. It is not wrong to want to be like God but it is wrong to be like God want to be like God in a way that God is not authorized with a spirit that God does not have and with an attitude that God does not live by.

You can't be like God in an ungodly way. And the thing is this is an assumption of being responsible to nobody but ourselves. That's what it's called pride.

And the old, you know, when people talked about the most deadly of the sins they always came back this one, pride. It's not humility and how I achieved it with 101 glorious color, you know, pictures of myself and

then my second book is a hundred famous people and you meet. That is not what pride is.

Pride is simply an independent spirit. It is like nobody tells me what to do. Nobody.

See that thing? Yes, it's arrogant. Yes, it's a proud looking thing. But the bottom line of this is independence.

I want nobody running my life. I'm going to run it myself. I'm going to be up there in the heavens.

Yeah. So let's call it this. It is an attitude.

You can put this on your left hand side an attitude of disloyalty to God and denial of our need for him. Now look, there are two thirds of the angels that never sinned but they need God. They haven't sinned at all.

They don't need him for salvation. They are not, they don't even need to get saved. They never sinned but they still need him and they still acknowledge him and they still do not, you know, they're loyal to him.

But Satan's thing is a disloyalty. I was watching for my devotions. What was that movie I was watching for my devotions about the guy that got killed? Yeah, what is it called? Yeah, Ghost Town where this guy had come out of the anaesthetic and then he was alive again but all the ghosts that were still hanging around could see him.

And I won't spoil the movie for you because it's quite wonderful but the end of it there's the guy who was trying to give him counsel was actually the, her husband is, this girl that he really likes was her husband. He was the one that was killed and he doesn't know why he's still here. That's the heart of the thing.

He doesn't know why he's still here. He can't leave, go to hell or heaven or whatever. He doesn't tell you where he actually went but he can't leave.

He's still hanging around and the real heart of it is that his wife had found out he was cheating on her just before he was killed. So in the funeral, she loved him, still had strong feelings for him but had a deep, deep grief and he had never said he was sorry. And one of the things that was cool is the woman said to this man who could see these ghosts and talk to them why she said the word disloyal.

He was disloyal to me. She said why wasn't I enough? It's a really core thing. Why isn't he enough? That's what he says.

I gave you all of this. When you read God and you see this word jealousy, we think that's a bad thing. Not if the person that you are jealous over is your rightful bride, the one you love, the one you... Jealousy is part of your desire not to see her hurt.

And if a man has or a woman or something has somebody taken away from them, threatened by somebody who threatens the very fundamental base of love and protection and safety and all those things, jealousy is not a sin. It is right. You'll see many times I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God.

I'm not going to let you play with these other things. These things that aren't God that will hurt you and kill you. And that the grief of God over the sin of the world is something we're going to have to relearn.

An independent spirit is a deviation from Christ. When people start getting away from Jesus and their folk... How will you know when somebody's getting away from Jesus? They're not talking about him

anymore. How do I know when somebody's into baseball? When I talk to them, a baseball comes out.

Wow, did you see that? Wow, I could... You give me a banana. It looked like a baseball bat I had this... You give me an orange. That's just like a baseball.

You know, everything's baseball. Baseball, baseball. Cracking, cracking.

When their whole life centers around something, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So when I'm talking to a person who's not saved, how am I going to know what God they have in their life instead of Jesus? Easy, just listen. They will tell me out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

So if you find a church and their whole center is Jesus and they love Jesus and they hope... That's a good church to start with. The moment they move off and go to something else. This is what our church is built on.

This doctrine, this understanding, this revelation, this... It's Him. I said, you know, and it's all about me. It's all about me.

We think, what kind of hymn is that? Hymn. It's a hymn, not a U. Let's all sing our U's together. The scripture calls in Jude 16, they vaunt their self.

1 Corinthians 13.4 Vaunts not itself. It's not puffed up. Okay.

So part one, an independent spirit is really a failure to have a servant's heart. How will you know whether somebody that you want to work with or minister to or marry or any of those things is worth staying with? The answer is simple. Do they have a servant heart? When trying to find a bride for Isaac, remember that thing he sent the servant out? Go find somebody.

So here's my rule for whether or not you're going to marry somebody. He's looking for something. Comes out and when she sees that his camels are thirsting, she gets water.

So here's my first rule. Can she water camels? That's my first rule for dating. And the bottom line is, do they have a servant heart? If they haven't, you're already in trouble.

If you get a person with an independent spirit, it doesn't matter how talented, gifted, beautiful, or anything else, right at the heart, there is a worm in the apple or the PC or whichever thing you have. So how will we know an independent spirit? I think it sticks out. I mean, if I could literally say our spirit sticks out bigger than our body, like, you know, it molds us.

It's bigger than us. So if somebody comes up behind you, you can feel them even if you don't hear them. If we have an independent spirit, it sticks out.

It's just like that. And it's like an attitude that comes up. I remember when I was speaking to William about this many years ago in Australia, and I have a friend who's a major rock star guy, and he'd got saved and he was singing in this group.

Kids come up, hallelujah, praise God, and they're all singing their thing. And they came up and they knew who he was, and they said, hey, come sing with us. You know, we're a Christian group and we'd like you to come and minister to us and hang out with us a couple of days.

And I said, how many years have you been in and named the cult? And the guy freaked out. And he said, how did you know I was with? And I said, because you have a spirit about you. And he said, what kind of spirit is that? I said, it's not a good one.

The independent spirit sticks out. It's like, what is in this for me? That's where all deception begins. It's not bad doctrine yet.

It's not even bad actions yet. It's just an attitude of disloyalty and not servant-hearted. Now, I'm only going to amplify this for a couple of minutes because we do have a time limit on what we're doing.

But let me show you the signs of an independent spirit because if there's only one core thing, pride is obvious, a self-centered attitude, not trusting Jesus, laziness or sloth, like the world owes me a living. I don't have to work. See that? See? Neglect of scripture.

These are all scriptures. There's tons of them here. I'm saying, when I found this pattern, all of this, all these different things, all dropped into place.

It's an order of deception. It gets worse. And when you put them in the right place, these are the signs when it starts.

This is the next step and the signs that are attached to it. So the counsel and the ministry at each level will be that. Not listening to godly counsel and not wanting anybody else.

Leadership. You know, I want to be the boss of this. Nobody else is going to do that.

And here's the key one. Ingratitude. An attitude of ingratitude.

Why? Who can an atheist thank? He can't say, thank God. He's got to thank genes, genealogy, and Darwin, or something. Why does God, at the end of an entire list in the opening chapters of Romans, when he's talking about these terrible things, you know, he's talking about every sin under the heavens, and then he adds at the end, and they weren't thankful either.

What is that? Why do we say, thanks? Is it to preserve us from Montezuma's revenge when we go speak in Mexico, Delhi, Bali, and India? Why do we say thanks? What is the whole point of that? It is a simple reminder of gratitude to God. And everybody's cup of gratitude is empty. I look at Dan, I think, how much he's been working.

It is so easy to take for granted what people do. But an independent spirit does that all the time. It's like, I am the boss here, I deserve this, everything revolves around me, so why should I say thank you? I have a close friend who did that.

We had a big video shoot up, and at the very end of it I was putting together a list of people to thank. And there were some friends of ours that had come in, I had known them for at least 25, 30 years, and they filled in for a group of people that couldn't get their act together because it was nearly Easter and they just couldn't get all the equipment. They stepped in at the last moment and shot 16 hours of video standing in two days.

It's eight hours a day just standing, he and his son. A massive job. They had to do setups every day, teardowns every day, and we paid them for it because it was a commercial shoot.

But I said, we specially need to thank these two people. And my friend said to me, oh, we don't need to thank them, we paid them. The fact that he wouldn't even understand was a total shock to me.

I said, what do you mean? Shouldn't we, so we should only thank them if they didn't get paid? What is that? It's an independent spirit, is what it is. The sign of the other side, the heart of a servant, would be humility, the willingness to rely on the power of God, not on your own strength, always giving God the glory, really depending on God, be a thankful-hearted person, be diligent in your study of scriptures, to give yourself to real study of God's nature and character, to be involved in Him. So that's point one.

Now I've got, what, ten minutes to do, ten minutes to do the other five, so I'll go fast. That one, I'll give any of that a little more detail than that one, but all of these have those same kind of details on it. Second one is a desire for power.

And at the top, put on your thing, selfish choices. First it's just a spirit, it's an attitude. Then you make the decision, I'm going to live like this.

So the second one, selfish choices. Underneath, instead of devotion for Christ, put desire for power. And then over on your other column, the biblical base, this person exalts their own importance.

And here's the actual biblical statement, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. That's what that... Now here's the word throne in scripture. The throne in the Bible represents a position of authority, dignity, and rulership.

When you say the throne, you're talking about the dignity of the person, the authority of that person, and the rulership of that person. What Satan says, I will exalt myself. He actually uses this phrase, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

Okay. So what they're doing is exalting their own importance, their own significance, their own value. Making that the number one thing that everybody ought to work for.

So we'll call it taking a false position of dignity and authority to rule over God's servants. This person is in just the early stages of deception. But once you're deceived, all of those things are true.

It's not like these front ones go away. They all become true, and then you add another level to it. So on one side you've got selfish choices, desire for power.

On the second column, exalts one's own importance. And then put under, on column one, which is number two of column one, put legalistic motivations for religious achievement. Legalistic motivations for achievement.

Which means fear of punishment and hope of reward. This person is legal, and their decisions will be made legally. What's in this for me? Or what will happen to me if somebody finds this out? It's not relational, it's legal.

It's based on rules. And the rules are based on you being number one. The first thing you do when you get saved is give up your selfishness.

The Bible said it, and Jesus says, if any man come after me and deny himself, and take up his cross, he's not talking about put something on your ear like an old Madonna video. He's talking about die to your self-centeredness. There's only one God, and you're not him.

Got that? Now, three. Gotta work really fast. Good thing this was a PowerPoint, I could just hold it down, and you'd all absorb it digitally.

But you wouldn't practice it, so you'd still go to hell, which would be very bad. So we gotta work through it. Third would be a seared conscience.

Third, seared conscience. And put underneath that in brackets, it's denial of absolutes. When you're starting to do wrong things, then you've got to take war on what is right and what is wrong.

So, Satan's statement is this. You reinterpret the scripture, and you suppress the dealings of the Holy Spirit. And this is a strange phrase that was read at the start.

I will sit on the mount of the congregation on the recesses of the north. Now, what in the fat is that all about? I'll sit in the mount of the congregation. Here's what those two words are.

The mount of the congregation is a phrase used to describe the place of God's judgment. The recesses of the north is the place from which God rules. So when somebody says, I am going to do this, you are taking the place of God as ruler, and taking the place of God's judgment.

Now your rules are the rules of the world. So part three, by the way, we're not even up to what they believe yet. We're still looking at choices and the way the character is developing.

On the other side then, on your right hand side, Colin put this, takes the place of God of judgment in judgment of others according to their own ideas. Now that person's beginning to judge everybody by their own value system. If you believe what I believe, then that's fine.

If you're going to do the way things are, then you're good. Otherwise you're bad. Now we come to what everybody thinks is the core of cult.

It's actually four. It's not even three or two. Certainly not one.

Number four goes like this. I will be like the Most High. The phrase Most High in Scripture is the word Elyon.

It is used of God as the one who possesses the earth and the heavens. Now can you see? This is a development. It's getting worse and it's getting more grandiose and let me add this one.

It's getting more stupid. I will, I will what? I am the one who possesses the earth and the heavens. That's stupid.

If I see some guy walking down the street with a white robe on and a plug-in halo and he goes, I am God. Kiss my foot. I own the earth and the heavens.

You put a guy in a loony bin. You don't call him dear idiot. You call him real genuine idiot.

So we call this fantasy. Intellectual deception is the fourth word. Deception of self and others.

You can't deceive people until you've deceived yourself. You're not good enough at deceiving other people unless you're becoming convinced, I am God. Look at that.

It's wonderful. So fourth is deception of self and others. Falsely applying scripture to yourself or to places or events with which God was connected.

Now you're the subject of prophecy. Now you are the coming Messiah and Jesus was just a forerunner for you. Now heaven is right here in Toledo, Ohio or wherever you want to be or Waco, Texas.

We're talking fantasy here. A person is building castles. We can call this building castles in the air.

What basis do you have of saying you own the heavens and the earth? It's religious rationalization on your other column. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. Now, beginning to build castles in the air, you're beginning to indulge in fantasy over yourself.

You're starting to retreat from material or actual reality. You're becoming crazy. You're now insane.

Okay, last two. Last one on the I will line goes like this. I will be like the Most High.

And the Most High is where you are starting to live out your own fantasies. You're really acting like you possess the earth and nobody will kill you and, you know, I'm eternal, everlasting, whatever. And the one on the left-hand side you'd call that emotional perversion.

It's a drive for possession. You become covetous for either economic, you want money out of your people or whatever, political, you want to rule the world, religious, I am the Messiah, kiss my foot, or sexual control. Those are all emotional perversions.

And that's what this person does now. Justifying lusts. Begin to live out your own fantasies and act as if you possess the earth.

Okay? We've got three minutes to finish this. God finishes it much faster. There are five I wills there and five in the Bible is a number of grace and mercy.

Five. But there are six on this chart. And the last I will is not Satan's, it's God's.

This is what he says. But you will be brought down to hell to the sides of the pit. On your left-hand side put personal, social, and spiritual destruction.

Disruption, destruction. Division of disciples, you can put underneath that. All the crowd that clustered around you thinking you were God will see your sticky feet of clay as your empire falls around your ears.

And it isn't done by you, it's done by God. He is the one who brings the judgment. At this point you're denying present or future punishment or judgment.

You may get into some form of annihilationism. We will all die the way we are, beautiful, and kill yourselves. Or you'll say, if you kill me, I will rise again.

But you're not just crazy here. You deny the reality of death. You deny the reality of judgment, especially to you.

And you think you can do anything and you'll come back. Why would a whole church kill themselves? Not because they hated themselves, because they thought, doesn't matter, we are on a new plane. We're going to a whole new arena with our leader.

So on the side, right-hand side, divine judgment, total destruction of power, credibility, reputation, control over others, and loss of those under his or her bondage. And that is one scary chart. I'm prepared to say this.

Whenever you see deception in anybody's life, in any group's life, it will follow that pattern. And the most dangerous thing you can do is get an independent spirit. Repentance begins at the start.

All the way along, those five things, you can still be saved. But it's in the last ones, when God says, don't even get near them. It's like standing near a metal pole in a thunderstorm.

I am going to judge this. Just get out. Get out as soon as you can.

Okay, that's it. But that is one scary chart. And all of the strange little different things all dropped in.

Come and have a look at it afterwards. Father, we thank you tonight for your wonderful word. We thank you for Jesus.

And we thank you for your Holy Spirit has come to lead us into truth. We ask simply that we'll stay serving you. That our hearts will be fascinated with Christ.

That we will be Christians in a very real sense. We want to be like you in a way that pleases you. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/3aqLJshdL68.mp4>

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