

The Course of this world – Lesson #7



Psalm 119:59 – “I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.”

Proverbs 23:7 Thoughts --drive our words, our beliefs, and our actions. “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...” This is a favorite stomping ground for “think it, do it” sermons.

The point usually made from this is that you can become whatever you believe yourself to be.

While the Bible DOES --encourage a positive outlook on life, deriving such conclusions from this text is rather out of place.

Therefore, let us do some deductive reasoning. First, we need to look at some scriptures to guide us.

2nd Corinthians 4:4 “In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. “who is the god of this world _____?”

Ephesians 2:2 "In which in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience."

John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do, and a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him, when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

From these scriptures, what do we learn?

We can be certain of the following premise. Because Satan is the god of this world, we learn:

- That Satan influences the course of this world.
- That there is no truth in him!
- That he is a liar, and the father of lies.

Therefore, the fallen and sinful world that we live in --is fundamentally broken, and deceitful, and the infection rate is 100%!

To elaborate further, the world is full of lies, not just a few here and there, but a fundamental deception that pervades all human affairs and yet is rarely perceived.

The one sin --that Christians engage in, unaware that they're doing it, is called **SELF-DECEPTION**.

This deception is subtle and cunning, just like the one portrayed in **Genesis 3:1-8**.

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the **LORD** God had made, and the **serpent said** to **EVE**, the woman.

Has God indeed said, notice carefully the deception "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden" v2 and **EVE** said to the serpent, "we may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; v3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said,

'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die" v4 then the serpent said to EVE, "You will not surely die, v5 for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" v6 so when EVE saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, she also gave to her husband (Adam) with her, and he ate, v7 then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings, v8 and they heard the sound of the LORD walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and ADAM and his wife EVE hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Ever since the fall --of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan has become the god of this world and put the human race on a course of lies and deception, and eternal separation!

- We see, as a result, human philosophy and false religions.
- The wisdom of this world, its evolution, and sin that, by nature, spiraling downward, getting worse over time.
- Probably the most deceitful of all are church traditions; it looks so good, feels so right, but is cunningly deceptive, which leads many away from God and His Word.

Here's what Jesus said,

Mark 7:13 "You have made the Word of God of no effect through ____your traditions."

The only truth, or reality, comes from the Bible, the Word of God.

How we think and learn should be informed by God's Word.

- This requires that we read, pray, meditate, and seek understanding.
- The Bible changes our minds (repent), turning to align with how God views things.

Psalms 19:7-8 "The law of the **LORD** is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the **LORD** is sure, making wise the simple, the statutes of the **LORD** are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the **LORD** is pure, enlightening the eyes."

As Christians, we want to chart a different course for ourselves. How would you suggest we do this? **First, recognize the Need for change.**" You cannot change what you are unwilling to acknowledge. When Paul described the change that takes place at salvation, he said: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

But Paul knew that after salvation, all Christians have many thoughts and actions they still need to release and let go of, and many they need to take on. There needs to be a massive shift in thinking in many areas. Jesus faced the same challenge with the disciples.

B. Bruce says of the disciples, "At the time of their being called, they were exceedingly ignorant, narrow-minded, superstitious, full of Jewish prejudices, misconceptions, and animosities."¹

Notice, these wrong ideas did not leave them at once. Peter, for example, after Jesus's ascension to heaven, had to be jolted into realizing that Gentiles too could be saved through a vision and accompanying experiences.

Jesus's method of effecting change in the disciples' thinking is helpful and instructive to us. In Ephesians 4, Paul tells the Ephesian Christians to put off the things that characterized their former life and to put on the things that characterize the Christian life.

Among the things to put off are their "manner of life" and their "desires" (4:22). And they are to "put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (4:24).

This comprehensive change does not occur automatically right after conversion. If we do not address these areas, there could be disastrous consequences. History is loaded with shameful examples of "born-again" Christians who have behaved wrongly and corruptly