

Lesson 4:

Tearing Down a Stronghold of Self-Deception (Part 1)

There are things in our lives over which we have no control; things we didn't cause to happen. However, there is a great deal that we bring on ourselves, and the way to get free is to face the truth about ourselves and take responsibility.

I. What is self-deception?

- A. I John 1:8 We deceive ourselves about ourselves.
- B. Our perception of reality is warped. Our view of ourselves has been distorted by sin – our own and the sins committed against us.
- C. Truth: Yes, we sin, but we have great worth and value.
 - Genesis 1:27 We are made in the image of God.
 - Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
 - John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

II. John 5:1-9 A study of the Paralytic examines types of self-deception.

A. We deceive ourselves when we see ourselves as innocent victims.

- *“My unhappiness is someone else’s fault.”*

Truth: *No one can interfere with God’s will for my life except me.*

- *“I am not responsible for my problems.”*

Truth: *I am the common denominator in all of my problems.*

B. We deceive ourselves through self-pity.

“Because of the pain in my life, no one should hold me accountable.”

Truth: *We all have painful circumstances in our lives. That does not justify our sin. We are justified by the Blood of Christ alone.*

John 5:14 In the story of the paralytic, Jesus was holding him accountable. He didn’t give the paralytic pity because he didn’t need pity – he needed the truth.

III. Pride is a major source of self-deception.

“I’m right, and I know what’s best.”

Truth: *Our need to be right is destroying our relationships.*

This Week’s Memorization Verse: Jer.17:9-10a

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

‘I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind...’

Personal Reflection

Take time alone to reflect and answer the following:

1. Do you really trust the Lord? We always behave consistently with what we believe. What does your pattern of behavior over the years reveal about your ability to trust God? Will you write out a prayer, asking Him to enable you?
2. I must admit that I blamed ALL my unhappiness on my husband. Who have you blamed for your “anguish of soul”? Try to be as specific as you can, as to what destructive emotions you have struggled with, and the person you blamed for them.
3. Do you want to get well? Or are you spiritually “stuck” and want to blame others for your unhappiness? Is the Lord confronting you right now about the part you have played in your problems? What is He showing you? (Don’t be afraid to hear Him - He wants to set you free).