

# Deceitfulness of Sin

## SIN IS DECEITFUL ARE YOU BEING DECEIVED?

Don't Take the Bait Beloved!

**Note:** This is a long page which is the equivalent of an 80+ page booklet. Why is this so long? Because sin is so strong and subtle! Beloved we need to recognize the deceptive nature of sin which seeks to steal, kill and destroy the fruit of the Spirit in our Christian life! Lord, open our eyes to see wonderful truths in your word that set us free by Your Spirit so that we might be free indeed in Christ. Amen.

Let me make one recommendation if do not have time to read this page - Read or listen to C H Spurgeon's insightful, instructive sermon entitled [The Deceitfulness of Sin](#), or [you can also listen to it - it will be one hour you will not regret!](#)

Here is a simplistic definition which I use frequently to remind my children and myself of the meaning of **deceitfulness** -- In plain terms a person who is **deceived** by definition does not even know they are deceived! And this is the deadly effect of **sin** in our lives -- **sin** so alters our thinking that we do not even realize we are deceived when we sin!

Here is a compilation of more formal definitions of deceive, deceit, deception, and deceitful from a variety of sources. As you read this list think about how these definitions apply to our [invertebrate](#), [mortal](#) "adversary" Sin which is personified by Paul in Romans 6 (e.g., Ro 6:12ff-note)...

**Deceive** - to make a statement, carry out an act, or use some device intended to mislead; fraud; trick; the action or practice of deceiving someone by concealing or misrepresenting the truth; act of keeping the truth hidden, especially to gain some advantage

**Deceit** - concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading; the act of representing as true what is known to be false; a [stratagem](#); a trick; something that is done to mislead

**Deception** - the act of tricking someone by telling them something that is not true; when people hide the truth, especially to get an advantage; actions and/or schemes fabricated to mislead and/or delude someone into errantly believing a lie or inaccuracy.

**Deceitful** - guilty of or involving deceit; deceiving or misleading others, marked by deliberate deceptiveness, especially by pretending one set of feelings and acting under the influence of another.

The following article will deal with various aspects of the deceitful nature of sin using quotations from many wise men of the past and present.

So as we begin notice that the phrase **deceitfulness of sin** occurs only once in the Bible, but it's effects pervade virtually every page from Genesis to Revelation! The writer of Hebrews says..

**Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so \* that none \* of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**

For in depth commentary on this passage click [Hebrews 3:13 Commentary](#). There is some repetition of the discussion of the deceitful nature of sin.

As Spurgeon said "Sin slyly insinuates itself and by slow degrees prevails, therefore must we carefully guard against it."

Eve was correct when she said "The serpent **deceived** me and I ate" (Ge 3:13-note) . Indeed, he is the one who is "more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God" made (Ge 3:1-note, 2 Cor 11:3) and who continues to sow his deceptive seeds of temptation from beginning to end (of our life and of this present evil age). So fittingly John characterizes the Serpent in the last book of the Bible as the one who "is called the devil and Satan, and who **deceives** (present tense - continually) the whole world." (Rev 12:9-note) And now that sin has entered the world through Adam's sin (Ro 5:12-note), our basic propensity to fall prey to the deceitfulness of sin is in our own being, for as Jeremiah reminds us our "heart is **more deceitful** than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) Finally, Jesus described "the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things" (Mk 4:19) And so from Genesis 3 to Revelation we are destined daily to fight the good fight of faith

against the wiles of sin which continually seeks to deceive us through the vehicles of the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#).

**James Smith** echoes these thoughts writing "Let us beware, lest we should be mistaken. "Be not deceived," is a divine caution. Satan is a great deceiver. The heart is deceitful above all things. And we read, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." With a deceitful heart within us, a deceitful devil practicing upon us, and the deceitfulness of sin in action all around us — we may well exhort one another to beware! Especially when we consider what we have at stake!

**Matthew Henry** wrote that sin is deceitful because "It appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing."

Sin tricks us into wanting that which we know will destroy us.

**Adrian Rogers** once said "There are very few things that are more deceitful, more deceiving, than sin in the life of a Christian." [see note](#)

**Ray Pritchard** writes that "Sin deceives. If I could say anything that will be helpful in this message, let it be this one sentence. Sin always deceives. When I read this, my mind goes back to the Garden of Eden. You can see the deception of sin in the Garden of Eden from the very beginning. There are three ways in which sin deceives. **First, sin deceives us by promising what it can never deliver.** Sin says "go ahead, it will be fun." Sin says "Go ahead, you'll enjoy it!" Sin says "You'll feel better, you'll be more fulfilled. Life will be better for you. Go ahead and take it. Go ahead and tell the lie. Go ahead and say that dirty word. Go ahead and jump in bed with that person. Go ahead and read that magazine. Go ahead, you need this. It will bring you happiness." What was it the serpent said to Eve? "Eat this fruit and you shall be like God." Sin deceives us by promising what it can never deliver. **Second, sin deceives us by convincing us that what happens to others will never happen to us.** Let's say that we know that ten times out of ten, people get caught when they sin. Ten times out of ten, and yet sin convinces us that we are going to be the exception. We know that for 2000 years people who have done this sin have suffered for it. But sin says "Wait a minute. Are you kidding me? You're going to be different. You're going to get away with this!" And the serpent said to Eve, "You shall not die." **Third, sin deceives us by creating in us a desire for that which we know can only hurt us.** A little voice says, "Go ahead." And we stupidly go ahead even though we know we're going to suffer for it. When Eve looked at the fruit she saw that it was good to look at, good to touch and good to taste. So she took it and she ate it and we've been taking and eating ever since. We're no different even though we know that every time we take and eat it will hurt us. That's the deceitfulness of sin. (Whatever Became of Sin?)

The **Puritan Thomas Brooks** described the deceitful nature of sin...**Sin ...**

- **has its original from a deceitful subtle serpent,**
- **is the ground of all the deceit in the world,**
- **is the great deceiver of souls!**

**Spurgeon** cautions us calling us to "Notice very carefully that sin has a hardening power over the heart. How does that come about? Partly through our familiarity with sin. We may look at hateful sin till we love it. Familiarity with sin makes the conscience dull, and at length deadens sensibility. Security in wrongdoing leads also to this kind of hardening. A man has been dishonest; he is found out, and he suffers for it. I could almost thank God, for now he may cease from his evil course. But one of the greatest curses that can happen to a man is for him to do wrong with impunity. He will do it again, and again, and again, and he will proceed from bad to worse.

**Tony Evans** warns us to be careful lest we begin to travel on the road to **spiritual failure** one of the chief warnings signs of which is becoming **hardened** or developing **spiritual insensitivity** - **Insensitivity** sets in when Christ stops being real to you and you stop looking to Him for your life. When you stop looking to Christ, unbelief sets in. And when unbelief sets in, you become susceptible to the **deceitfulness of sin**. **Insensitivity** means you've lost your ability to feel. **How do you know when you're being spiritually insensitive?** Sin isn't as painful as it used to be. Before, when you sinned you were crushed. You had failed your Savior. You had the right heart attitude about your sin. **But when spiritual insensitivity sets in, sin isn't that painful anymore.** After all, everybody else is doing it. What hurts the heart of God doesn't hurt you the way it used to. This is a dangerous condition, which is why the author of Hebrews gives the Holy Spirit's warning, "Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness" (Heb 3:8). (Evans, A. T.. Totally Saved : Understanding, Experiencing, and Enjoying the Greatness of your Salvation. P 224. Chicago: Moody Press - See his book for all 4 warning signs and the ultimate consequences of spiritual failure) (Bolding added)

**John Butler** speaks of the powerful effect of encouragement in a believer's life - The product of the counselling (encouragement) is to keep people from being deceived by sin and thus keep them from being hardened in their heart by sin. That will stop the provoking of God because when the heart is hardened by sin, it will provoke God. (Analytical Bible Expositor - Hebrews).

**John Piper** - God has appointed a means by which he will enable us to hold our confidence firm to the end. It is this: Develop the kind of Christian relationships in which you help each other hold fast to the promises of God and escape the **deceitfulness of sin**. **Exhort one another day in and day out** to stand fast and put on the whole armor of God.

**Richard Phillips** - We little consider how threatened each of us is by sin, which is deceptive in its very character. Like climbers roped together on a steep mountain, like soldiers teamed together on a battlefield, we must keep track of one another. We must work together if we are to reach our objective safely.

One of the essential means by which Christ guides and protects his people is the active participation of other believers in their lives. The day of Christ's return is fast approaching, and it will be a day of judgment for all who fall away. Remembering this, let us give sober reflection not merely to our own affairs but to the spiritual concerns of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The verb **hardening** speaks of the destructive effect of the deceitful nature of sin. We cannot sin flagrantly and have a soft, tender heart toward Jehovah.

**Martin Luther** speaks to this deceiving, hardening effect of sin...

Again, how appropriately and properly he speaks when he mentions "**the deceitfulness of sin**"! For unbelief (cf Heb 3:12) arises in the following way: First one overlooks the Creator, takes pleasure in the creature, and clings to it as though it were good. Every man desires to know nature, but he does so in the wrong way. Next the habit of loving it is established, and thus the heart is hardened toward the Word of the Creator, who calls it back from affection for the creature. Then unbelief follows. Therefore he rightly calls this "**the deceitfulness of sin**," for it deceives under the appearance of being good. But this **deceitfulness of sin**" must be understood in a very general manner as including even one's own righteousness and wisdom. For one's own righteousness and wisdom deceives most of all and hinders faith in Christ, since we love the flesh and the sensations of the flesh, likewise property and riches, in a similar way. But we love nothing more passionately than our own feeling, judgment, purpose, and will, especially when they have the appearance of being good. Therefore Christ declared in John 5:44 that it is impossible for such people to believe. He says: "How can you believe who receive glory from one another?" Christ heals a sick man. Why are they not able to believe? Because "**the deceitfulness of sin**," that is, the love of their own righteousness, blinds and hardens them, since they consider it good to glory in and to be pleased with their own righteousnesses, although this is the worst of all vices, the very opposite of faith, which takes pleasure and glories only in the righteousness of God, that is, in Christ.

One should also note that here "**hardening**" means absolutely every thing that makes it difficult to believe. For just as the Hebrew language is wont to employ very beautiful metaphors, so "hardening" has the same meaning that "disinclination" or "ineptitude" has. The metaphor is taken from wax, which, when it is hard, does not take the figure of the seal but, when it is soft, is easily shaped into everything. Thus the heart of man stands at a place where four roads intersect. For when it clings to God, its nature melts through the Word, softens toward God, and hardens toward the creature. But when it clings to the creature, it hardens toward God and softens toward the creature. For continually the human heart is now hard, now soft with regard to different things. For this clinging is the very faith in the Word. Indeed, it is that tie of betrothal about which Hos. 2:20 says: "I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness," according to the wellknown statement in 1 Cor. 6:17: "He who clings to God is one spirit with Him." "The prisoner follows the lover."

It follows as a corollary that faith in Christ is every virtue and that unbelief is every vice, as is sufficiently clear from what has been said. For through faith a man becomes like the Word of God, but the Word is the Son of God. In this way, however, it comes about that everyone who believes in God is a child of God, as John 1:12 says, and for this reason is without any sin and full of every virtue. On the other hand, he who does not believe is of necessity full of every vice and evil, namely, a child of the devil and of iniquity. (Martin Luther Works, Volume 29 - Comments on Hebrews 3:13)

**Wiersbe** - Sin is deceitful. You think you are getting away with it, but all the while it is hardening your heart and robbing you of blessing.

**Hardened** (4645) (**skleruno** from **skleros** = dry, hard, rough) means first to make dry, stiff or hard. In the active **skleruno** means to harden and in the passive sense, to grow hard. The NT uses are only figurative (metaphorical) and mean to cause one to become unyielding, obstinate or stubborn (carried on in an unyielding or persistent manner) **Skleruno** was a medical technical term (first attested by Hippocrates) in Greek writings describing something becoming hardened or thickened. Our English word "hardening" of the arteries is known as "arteriosclerosis". This is a serious, potentially fatal physical condition, but here in Hebrews the danger is even more ominous, for spiritual hardening can lead to eternal death and damnation of one's soul, not just loss of their physical life!

From the uses of **skleruno** in **Exodus** (see below), one observes two important aspects of hardening: (1) Man can repeatedly harden his heart, until finally God does the hardening, with the implication that the latter is irrevocable. (2) One effect when one's heart is hardened is not listening to God. Regarding Ro 9:18-note note that in Exodus Moses speaks of **God's hardening Pharaoh's heart** (see Exodus 4:21; 7:3, 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10) and also records that **Pharaoh hardened his own heart** (see this "self produced" hardening in Ex 8:15, 32; Ex 9:34), the obstinate ruler confirming God's act of hardening by his own act of hardening. Such passages point out the humanly irreconcilable tension between God's sovereignty and man's free will. A similar tension is found with Esau who was rejected before he was born (and who later chose to reject the inheritance for a pot of stew). Judas Iscariot, in a similar way, before he was born, was appointed to betray Christ (Acts 1:16; John 6:70, 71). Both Esau and Judas chose to follow sin and unbelief.

**Spurgeon** - Watch over each other as well as over yourselves. Take heed lest sin hardens you before you are aware of it; even while you fancy that you have wiped it out by repentance, petrification will remain upon your heart **"through the deceitfulness of sin."**

**B H Carroll** - Sin is exceedingly deceitful, and whenever a man imagines that he is exempt from being imposed upon by sin he is apt to get into trouble. For instance, sin will tell a man: "You are a little out of the way, but not much—you can get back easily. I only ask you to step over here and walk in the shade instead of upon the hard, hot highway." He is beguiled and deceived—beguiled until finally his heart is hardened, and he is insensible to warning impression. Let us get that thought clearly before us. A lady once determined to get up early in the morning, and go bought an alarm clock. She set the alarm for exactly 6 o'clock, and when it rang she got up. The next time when she heard it ring she waited a little while before getting up. The next time she waited a little longer, and while waiting she fell asleep. After that it never disturbed her. Whoever disregards an alarm soon quits hearing it. If we go toward a light it gets brighter; if we go from it, it gets feebler. If we go toward a fire, we get more and more of its heat, while if we go away from it, we lose the power of its heat. Sin blunts the conscience. Take Nero, for instance. When a young man he would weep if he stepped on a worm and crushed it unthoughtedly, but after continual indulgence in sin and crime he could dance and make music over his mother whom he had murdered, and could actually enjoy driving between parallel lines of burning Christians. That is what is meant by hardening the heart. "Take heed, lest through the deceitfulness of sin, you shall be hardened in unbelief." Their unbelief was arising largely from the fact that Christ did not come when they thought he ought to come. It had been preached to them that he was coming, and they had fixed dates for his coming, but as date after date failed, they began to disbelieve the whole thing.

**R A Torrey** on **"hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"** Heb. 3:13.

INTRODUCTION.—There is not a more solemn warning in the Bible than this. There is not a more timely warning in the Bible than this. All around us we see men and women who are being **"hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."** Three times in this one chapter God pleads with men, **"Harden not your hearts."**

#### **I. Indications that one is Hardened.**

1. The truth does not move us as it once did.
2. Jest about sacred things or listen approvingly to others when they jest about them.
3. Not deeply moved by thoughts of God's love.

#### **II. Results of being Hardened.**

1. The first evil that results from a hardened heart is a corrupt life. The hardening of the heart against the truth and against Christ leads inevitably to sin.
2. Spiritual blindness.
3. Loss of joy.
4. Utter despair.
5. Eternal death. Ro 2:5-note. There is no hope in the life that now is, there is no hope in the life that is to come for the man whose heart is finally hardened against Christ.

**Thomas Watson** - A hard heart is a dwelling for Satan. As God has two places He dwells in—heaven and a humble heart; so the devil has two places he dwells in—hell and a hard heart. (From the recommended resource [Puritan Thomas Watson on Repentance](#))

**Spurgeon** - Watch over each other as well as over yourselves. Take heed lest sin hardens you before you are aware of it; even while you fancy that you have wiped it out by repentance, petrification will remain upon your heart "through the deceitfulness of sin."

**Matthew Henry** - If Christians do not exhort one another daily, they will be in danger of being hardened through the deceitfulness of

sin. Note, [1.] There is a great deal of deceitfulness in sin; it appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing. [2.] The deceitfulness of sin is of a hardening nature to the soul; one sin allowed prepares for another; every act of sin confirms the habit; sinning against conscience is the way to sear the conscience; and therefore it should be the great concern of every one to exhort himself and others to beware of sin.

**Warren Wiersbe** - You can't convince unsaved people that they are in bondage, because they think they are free. This is part of the deceitfulness of sin. Sin promises freedom but always brings slavery. Sin promises joy and ultimately brings pain. Sin promises success, but ultimately it brings failure. The prodigal son wanted to be free. He wanted to get away from his big brother and his father, so he went out into a far country. He thought he was free, but he discovered his freedom soon turned into bondage. Not only did he become a slave of a Gentile taskmaster, but he became a servant of the pigs....It's impossible to sin without being bound. One of the deceitful things about sin is that it promises freedom but only brings slavery. "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34, NKJV). "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Ro 6:16, NKJV) The cords of sin get stronger the more we sin, yet sin deceives us into thinking we're free and can quit sinning whenever we please. As the invisible chains of habit are forged, we discover to our horror that we don't have the strength to break them. Millions of people in our world today are in one kind of bondage or another and are seeking for deliverance, but the only One who can set them free is Jesus Christ. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36, NKJV).....Even the bondage that sin creates is deceitful, for the people who are bound actually think they are free! Too late they discover that they are prisoners of their own appetites and habits.

**Reformation Study Bible** - Sin promotes the illusion that disobedience is more secure (Ex. 17:3) or pleasurable (He 11:25, 26; Ex. 16:3) than the pilgrimage of faith.

**David's** ethical outrage in response to Nathan's parable (2Sa 12:6), while at the same time hiding his own sin, illustrates the deceitfulness of sin.

## THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

**To deceive** means to to cause to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid. To deceive implies the imposition of a false idea or belief that causes ignorance, bewilderment, or helplessness. Deceive means to mislead the mind (leading it astray from the truth), to cause to err from the truth, to cause to believe what is false, to cause to disbelieve what is true (!) or to delude (which implies deceiving so thoroughly as to obscure the truth).

### Sin is the ultimate "Master of Deceit"

**Vice** (sin) is a monster of such frightful mien (look, manner)

As to be hated needs but to be seen;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,

We first **endure**, then **pity**, then **embrace**!

--Alexander Pope

**Steven Cole** - **Sin** fools us into thinking that it will get us out of our current problems and will deliver what we want, and that obedience to God will deprive us of what we want. When David went over to the Philistines, Saul stopped pursuing him. (See 1Sa 27:1, 2, 3, 4) The Philistine king gave David his own city. Instead of living from cave to cave, David and his wives could settle down in a normal way of life. Sin always works that way. It fools us into thinking that we're getting what we want. But then the bills of sin come due! You're single and lonely. There haven't been any godly men calling you for a date. Satan comes along and says, "You'll never get what you want if you wait on God! Here's a nice unbeliever. Go out with him!" Or, you're having problems in your marriage. Your wife constantly nags you. She doesn't meet your needs sexually. Along comes a beautiful, sensitive, understanding woman who offers herself to you. Satan whispers, "She will meet your needs!" Sin, including unbelief, always deceives us. ([Hebrews 3:12-19 Persevering in Faith](#))

**Spurgeon** - If sin comes to us as sin, we are swift to hate it, and strong to repel it, by the grace of God. When we are walking with God, we only need to know that an action is forbidden, and we avoid it. We shun the evil thing when it is plainly evil. But sin puts on another dress, and comes to us speaking a language that is not its own. So even those who would avoid sin as sin may, by degrees, be tempted to evil, and deluded into wrong. The **deceitfulness of sin** will be seen in several points. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. Sin does not uncover all its hideousness, nor reveal its horrible consequences; but it comes to us in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Next, sin is deceitful in its object, for the object that it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or willfully cast off the authority of righteousness. We are not invited to do these things for their own sake. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some good will come of it. Sin is deceitful, next,



in the names it wears. It is very apt to change its title; it seldom cares for its own true description. Fine words are often used to cover foul deeds, yet names do not alter things. Call garlic perfume, and it remains a rank odor. Style the fiend an angel of light, and he is nonetheless a devil. Sin, call it by what names you may, is still evil, only evil, and that continually. Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments that it uses. Sin has often whispered in the vain minds of men, "This action might be very wrong for other people, but it will not be evil in you." Sin will also flatter a man with the notion that he can go just so far, and no farther, and retreat with ease. This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses that it frames afterwards. To screen the conscience from regret is one of the efforts of deceitful sin. The man says to himself, "I did wrong; but what can you expect of poor flesh and blood?" Sin will also add, "And, after all, though you were wrong, yet you were not so bad as you might have been. Considering the temptation, you may wonder at your own moderation in transgression. On the whole, you have behaved better than others would have done." Self-righteousness is poor stuff when it can be fashioned even out of our faults. Such is the deceivableness of sin that it makes itself out to be praiseworthy.

**John Blanchard** hits the proverbial nail on the head observing that "If sin was not such a pleasure it would not be such a problem (cp He 11:25-note)... Sin keeps us from knowing the true nature of sin... To understand the deceitfulness of sin, compare its promises and its payments. (**Source:** These quotes and several of the quotes in this section are from John Blanchard's book which is **highly recommended** as the single best compendium of Biblically sound quotations available - [The Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations](#))

**C S Lewis** makes an interesting point noting that "Nothing can deceive unless it bears a plausible resemblance to reality.

**Stephen Olford** - The most deadly sins do not leap upon us; they creep upon us.

**John Owen** - Sin is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet. (See his classic work [On the Nature, Power, Deceit, and Prevalence of Sin in Believers](#) [see also chap 8] - Owen's old English is sometimes difficult to wade through but is worth the effort!)

**Scott Richardson** - Let's not listen for a minute to the contemptible question, 'What harm is there in it?' There's nothing but harm if Christ is not in it.

**Richard C. Trench** - Sin may be clasped so close we cannot see its face.

**Glen Spencer** - we are warned about being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Once one refuses to believe what God says about a matter, not only does he lose his walk and fellowship with God, but the hardening of the heart begins to take place. Every time you say no to God it becomes easier to say no the next time!...Sin is a deceitful thing. You can get to the place of being so deceived that you continue on a course of departing from God, while all along thinking you're OK.

**Deceitfulness** (539) (**apate** from **apatao** = cheat, delude, deceive, beguile) describes that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence. It speaks of ethical enticement. It is spoken of anything which is **seducing** (a leading astray by persuasion or false promises). **Apate** is that which seduces someone by causing them to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth.

**Wuest** - The word **deceitfulness** is the translation of **apate** which refers to a trick, stratagem, or deceit rather than to the quality of deceitfulness. The recipients are warned against being hardened by a trick which their sin may play upon them. The definite article precedes the word "sin," identifying that sin with the one spoken of in the context, namely, the sin of apostasy. The deceit here would be the illusion of their past faithfulness to the ritual of the Levitical economy.

**Apate** - 7x in NT - Matt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Eph. 4:22; Col. 2:8; 2 Thess. 2:10; Heb. 3:13; 2 Pet. 2:13

Some scholars say **deception** comes from a word which means "to get you off the path" , that which leads you down a road that goes nowhere. Webster says this word implies imposition of a false idea or belief which results in ignorance, bewilderment, or helplessness.

The related word **enticement** (The Concise Oxford English Dictionary says it derives from O French enticier, probably from a base meaning 'set on fire') is that which to attracts and leads astray artfully or adroitly or by arousing hope or desire.

**Vine** rightly points out that "**Deceitfulness** is the characteristic element of **sin** (Ge 3:13; Ro 7:11-note, in which latter text sin is personified). This element tends to the hardening of the heart. Deceit induces a person to believe that what is false is true; it holds out as a benefit what actually proves to be an injury. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**See Spurgeon's sermon** - [Isaiah 44:20 The Deceived Heart](#)

**Richards** - **Deception** sometimes comes from within, as our desires impel us to deceive. But more often in the NT, deceit is error urged by external evil powers or by those locked into the world's way of thinking. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**Thomas Brooks** - Sin is of a very **deceitful** and bewitching nature. It will kiss the soul, and look enticing to the soul—and yet betray the soul forever! It will with Delilah smile upon us—that it may betray us into the hands of the devil—as she did Samson into the hands of the Philistines. Tell the bewitched soul that **sin** is a viper that will certainly kill; that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally—yet the bewitched soul cannot, and will not, cease from sin. A man bewitched with **sin**—had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul—than part with his sin! Oh, therefore, forever take heed of playing with or nibbling at Satan's golden baits! (Brooks "[Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices](#)")

**Thomas Watson** in [The Doctrine of Repentance](#) characterizes the *deceitfulness* of sin...

SIN is a mere cheat. While it pretends to *please* us, it *beguiles* us!

Sin does as *Jael* did. First she brought the milk and butter to Sisera—**then she pounded the tent peg through his head!** (Jdg 5:26).

Sin first **courts**—and then **kills!**

Sin is first a **fox**—and then a **lion!**

Those *locusts* in Revelation 9 are fit emblems of sin: "They had gold crowns on their *heads* ... They had *tails* that stung like scorpions, with power to torture people!"

Judas pleased himself with the thirty pieces of silver—but they proved *deceitful* riches. **Ask him now how he likes his bargain!**

**Thomas Brooks** describes the deceitfulness of sin...

Sin is of a penetrating nature. It pierces and winds itself into every corner and chink—into our thoughts, our words, and our works.

Sin will wind itself ... into our understandings to darken them, into our judgments to pervert them, into our wills to poison them, into our affections to disorder them, into our consciences to corrupt them, and into our lives to debase them.

Sin will wind itself into every duty—and every mercy; it will wind itself into every one of our enjoyments—and concerns. ([Apples of Gold](#))

**William Gouge** - All the devices of sin are as fair baits whereby dangerous hooks are covered over to entice silly fish to snap at them, so as they are taken and made a prey to the fisher (Quoted by A W Pink)

**William Sprague**...

How insidious is **sin**! From small and almost imperceptible beginnings, it gradually makes its way, until it reduces the whole man to its dominion, and brings into captivity every affection and faculty of the soul. Sin first throws out the bait of pleasure, and flatters its victim on to forbidden ground; then it makes him the sport of temptation; and does not give him over until he is fast bound in the chains of eternal death!

In its very nature, sin is deceitful; its very element is the region of false appearances, and lying promises, and fatal snares. When it addresses itself to the unwary youth, it puts on a smiling countenance, and makes fair pretensions, and takes care to conceal its hideous features, until, like a serpent, it has entwined him with its deadly coils, and rendered his escape impossible!

You may venture into the path of vice with that most foolish of all notions—that you shall retreat early enough to save your soul. Alas, I fear you have not yet learned the slippery and insidious nature of vice! As well might you think to take the deadly viper into your bosom, and render him harmless by flattering words; or as well might you drink down the fatal poison, and expect to stop its progress in your system, when the blood had curdled at your heart! ([Lectures to Young People](#))

**George Swinnock** on "The deceitfulness of sin"...

**Sin** goes in a **disguise**--and thence is welcome.

Like Judas, it **kisses**--and **kills!**

Like Joab, it **salutes**--and **slays!**

**A W Pink** - This deceitfulness of sin should serve as a strong inducement to make us doubly watchful against it, and that because of our foolish disposition and proneness of nature to yield to every temptation. Sin presents itself in another dress than its own. It

lyingly offers fair advantages. It insensibly bewitches our mind. It accommodates itself to each individual's particular temperament and circumstances. It clothes its hideousness by assuming an attractive garb. It deludes us into a false estimate of ourselves. One great reason why God has mercifully given us His Word is to expose the real character of sin. (Pink, A. W.. An Exposition of Hebrews).

**Solomon** writes (a truth he experienced when he married foreign wives!) that...

An evil man is held captive by his own sins. They are ropes that catch and hold him. (Pr 5:22note)

## **SIN IS LIKE A BOA CONSTRICTOR!**

Are you being deceived by sin and tolerating it like a **pet**? If you are, then you need to remember the fate of the man with the **pet boa constrictor** (Do a Google search - use the following three words in your search keeping the quotation marks as written >> "pet boa" killed). After 15 years of living with his owner, one day the "pet boa" would not let its "owner" out of its grip resulting in the owner's tragic death. Wild animals remain wild and so does **Sin**. Do not be deceived (Stop being deceived)!

**No Small Deviations in God's Economy!** - In St. Louis there is a railroad switchyard. One particular switch begins with just the thinnest piece of steel to direct a train away from one main track to another. If you were to follow those two tracks, however, you would find that one ends in San Francisco, the other in New York. Sin is like that. Just a small deviation from God's standards can place us far afield from our intended destination. Don't be deceived by the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil** who whisper "*It's no big deal!*" Wrong! Sin is a **VERY BIG DEAL!** (Sin seeks to rule over us and to kill us = Ps 19:13-note, [See also [Spurgeon's comments](#)] Ps 119:133-note, 1Jn 5:16)

**Entanglement by the Cords of one's own Sin** - Not long after a wealthy contractor had finished building the Tombs prison in New York, he was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to several years in the prison he had built! As he was escorted into a cell of his own making, the contractor said, "I never dreamed when I built this prison that I would be an inmate one day." (cp Nu 32:23, Pr 5:22 - See Captured by Iniquity and Held by Cords of one's own Sin - A Study)

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!  
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!  
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

**Sin** (266) (**hamartia [word study]**) in simple terms is missing the mark, specifically missing God's will for us, a will which is **good and acceptable and perfect** (Ro 12:2b-note). Sin is what you do when you obey your fallen **flesh**, instead of obeying the Holy Spirit (cp Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:17-note). The apostle John has a good "working" definition of sin writing that **sin is lawlessness** (anomia > a = without + nomos = law - behaving as if one had no supreme, divine law ruling their **flesh**, cp Jdg 21:25-note) (1John 3:4 = practices is present tense = as one's lifestyle - something a **truly born again** person cannot do habitually - 1Jn 3:9, 10). In Romans 5 and 6 Paul explains that **Sin** refers to the **inherent propensity to commit specific sins** a propensity that entered the human heart of Adam and as a result constituted or made him a sinner by nature. Adam then passed the inherent sinful nature (the "sin virus") he possessed to all of his offspring (which is every person ever born) (Ro 5:12-note, Ge 5:3 = "in his own likeness", not God's as in Ge 1:26!). This same "Adamic" nature which always seeks to satisfy **self will** (cp "lovers of self" -2Ti 3:2-note) rather than **God's will** is present in every person at the moment of conception when the "sin virus" is passed to the fertilized ovum (Ps 51:5-note, Ps 58:3-note, Job 25:4).

This **sin nature** which is still present in **believers** (some subtle, "snake-like" teachers falsely teach that the sin nature is no longer present in believers! Wrong!) is personified as an active power which continually seeks to seduce, deceive, delude and destroy (our fellowship with God).

**Sin** appears to be fair ("you deserve this little treat!"), but is in fact filthy. It appears pleasant ("it will make you feel so good"), but belies its pernicious character and finally it promises much pleasure ("you'll be better for having done this", cp "passing pleasures" He 11:25-note), but performs nothing good, in the end bringing only death (to our fellowship with God if we are believers, eternal death/separation if unbelievers).

**Paul** alluded to the crafty character of sin in Romans 7 writing that **'sin**, taking opportunity through the commandment, **deceived** me, and through it killed me. (see note Romans 7:11; James 1:14, 15-note, Jas 1:16-note ).

Paul speaking of the character and activity of the Antichrist in the end times declared that he will come...

with all the **deception of wickedness** for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved ([2Thes 2:10](#)) (Note that they perish not because they were deceived but because they made the conscious choice to refuse the truth of the gospel of salvation. And the divine punishment for their



rejection is that they will receive a deluding influence which causes them to believe what is false.)

**James** makes it clear that God never tempts one to do evil

"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (James 1:14, 15-note, Jas 1:16-note)

Some commentators have state that the definite article preceding the word "**sin**," identifies a specific sin which in context is the sin of apostasy or falling away from the truth of the gospel.

**Sin** promotes the illusion that disobedience is more secure (Ex 17:3) or pleasurable (see notes Hebrews 11:25; 26; Ex 16:3) than the life of faithful obedience.

The **terrible danger of sin** lies in the deceptive ease with which it slowly but surely hardens one's heart, ever gradually weakening one's will's power to resist evil temptations. Paul gives us a command that is good "preventative maintenance" which serves to minimize our vulnerability to the deceptive temptations of sin "Even so **consider** (present imperative = command to continually take spiritual inventory of what we have and we now are in Christ. Why? Because we are continually vulnerable/susceptible to being deceived if we let go of our grasp of the truth of this affirmation. Speaking this truth does not make it true, but it does remind us that it is true, so that this truth like a shield might be readily recalled in time of need!) yourselves to be dead to sin (separated from, no longer subject to the power of **Sin**), but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Ro 6:11-note)

**Alexander Maclaren**... in his sermon [What Sin Does to Men](#) (Isaiah 1:30, 31)...

Sin withers. We see the picture of a blasted tree in the woods, while all around are in full leaf, with tiny leaves half developed and all brown at the edges. The prophet draws another picture, that of a garden not irrigated, and therefore, in the burning East, given over to barrenness. Sin makes men fruitless and withered. It involves separation from God, the source of all fruitfulness (Ps. 1).

Think of how many pure desires and innocent susceptibilities die out of a sinful soul. Think of how many capacities for good disappear. Think of how dry and seared the heart becomes.

Think of how conscience is stifled. All sin, any sin, does this.

Not only gross, open transgressions, but any piece of godless living will do it.

Whatever a man does against his conscience—neglect of duty, habitual untruthfulness, idleness—in a word, his besetting sin withers him up.

And all the while the evil thing that is drawing his life-blood is growing like a poisonous, blotched fungus in a wine-cask. (Read full sermon - [Isaiah 1:30, 31 What Sin Does to Men](#))

**Spurgeon** writes that...

Sin slyly insinuates itself and by slow degrees prevails, therefore must we carefully guard against it.

**B H Carroll** on the **deceitfulness of sin** - This **deceitfulness** consists in misconstruing the grace of delay in punishment as immunity altogether, as saith the prophet: "Because sentence against an evil deed is not speedily executed, the heart of the sinner is fully set in him to do evil."

As someone has written...

[1.] There is a great deal of deceitfulness in sin; it appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing.

[2.] The deceitfulness of sin is of a hardening nature to the soul; one sin allowed prepares for another; every act of sin confirms the habit; sinning against conscience is the way to sear the conscience; and therefore it should be the great concern of every one to exhort himself and others to beware of sin.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF THE DECEITFUL CORRUPTING EFFECT OF SIN: What happened to the great city of Ephesus?** Often mentioned in the New Testament, it was one of the cultural and commercial centers of its day. Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, it was noted for its bustling harbors, its broad avenues, its gymnasiums, its baths, its huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana. **What happened to bring about its gradual decline until its harbor was no longer crowded with ships and the city was no longer a flourishing metropolis? Was it smitten by plagues, destroyed by enemies, or demolished by earthquakes?** No, silt was the reason for its downfall—silent and non-violent silt. Over the years, fine sedimentary

particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders. Little evil practices, little acts of disobedience may seem harmless. (Song 2:15) But let the silt of sin gradually accumulate, and we will find ourselves far from God. Life will become a spiritual ruin. In the book of Hebrews we are warned of the danger of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13). James said that the attractive pleasures of sin are really a mask covering death (Jas 1:15-note). God forbid that we let the "**silt of sin**" accumulate in our lives!

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## THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

One of the largest freshwater turtles is the alligator snapping turtle. Found primarily in the southeastern United States, these massive turtles have been known to weigh close to 250 pounds. They are carnivorous, and while their diet is primarily fish, they have been known to eat almost anything else they can find in the water—even in a few cases small alligators! The alligator snapping turtle relies on a uniquely deceitful method of foraging for fish.

The turtle will lie completely still on the floor of a lake or river with its mouth wide open. At the end of the turtle's tongue is a small, pink, worm-shaped appendage. The turtle wiggles the end of its tongue so that it looks like a worm moving through the water. When a fish comes to eat the worm, the turtle's jaws rapidly close, trapping the fish so that it cannot escape.

Similarly to the snapping turtle's lure, temptation comes in the guise of something desirable, but it always carries destruction with it in the end. If we could see the end result rather than the tempting part, it would be far easier to resist. But Satan knows this, so he cleverly disguises what is deadly in the guise of something pleasurable.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROGRESSIVE DECEITFUL AND ENTANGLING NATURE OF SIN** - In Brazil there grows a common plant which forest-dwellers call the [matador](#) or "murderer." Its slender stem creeps along the ground, but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree, than it sends out an entangling tentacle, which cleaves and climbs up the tree, at intervals sending out arm-like tendrils that further entangle the tree. As the "murderer" ascends, these ligatures grow larger and their clasp becomes tighter. Up and up the rogue vine climbs until the last loftiest spire is gained and fettered. Then, as if in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge, flowery head above the strangled summit, and there from the dead tree's crown, scatters its seed to begin its entangling work again. In a similar way everyday affairs can subtly entangle soldiers of Christ, in effect neutralizing their effectiveness in the ongoing spiritual war with the world, the flesh and the devil. John Piper says when a Christian soldier's "evenings and days off (begin to be) filled up with harmless, enjoyable diversions... the whole feel changes. The radical urgency fades. The wartime mentality shifts to a peacetime mentality. The lifestyle starts to get cushy. The all-consuming singleness of vision evaporates." Spurgeon adds that "Many of God's children are in this condition -- entangled, surrounded, captive, held fast!" Are there any "matador vines" in your life that need to be eradicated?

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**SIN, deceitfulness of** -- Gary Richmond, a former zoo keeper, had this to say: Raccoons go through a glandular change at about 24 months. After that they often attack their owners. Since a 30-pound raccoon can be equal to a 100-pound dog in a scrap, I felt compelled to mention the change coming to a pet raccoon owned by a young friend of mine, Julie. She listened politely as I explained the coming danger. I'll never forget her answer. "It will be different for me. . ." And she smiled as she added, "Bandit wouldn't hurt me. He just wouldn't." Three months later Julie underwent plastic surgery for facial lacerations sustained when her adult raccoon attacked her for no apparent reason. Bandit was released into the wild. Sin, too, often comes dressed in an adorable guise (cf Heb 11:25+), and as we play with it, how easy it is to say, "It will be different for me." The results are predictable. -- Gary Richmond, View From The Zoo.

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Not long after a wealthy contractor had finished building the Tombs prison in New York, he was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to several years in the prison he had built! As he was escorted into a cell of his own making, the contractor said, "I never dreamed when I built this prison that I would be an inmate one day." -- Today in the Word, July 12, 1993.

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Man, reading about an "eat-all-you-want" diet, to friend: "I knew there'd be a catch to it. You have to run seven hundred miles a day!" -- Hoest in Parade.

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The man huddled on the cabin floor was slowly freezing to death. It was high in the Rockies in southwestern Alberta, and outside a blizzard raged. John Elliott had logged miles that day through the deep snows of the mountain passes. As he checked for avalanches and as dusk and exhaustion overcame him he had decided to "hole-up." He made it wearily to his cabin but somewhat dazed with fatigue, he did not light a fire or remove his wet clothing. As the blizzard blasted through the cracks in the old cabin walls, the sleeping forest ranger sank into oblivion, paralyzed by the pleasure of the storm's icy caress. Suddenly, however, his dog sprang into action, and with unrelenting whines, finally managed to rouse his near-comatose friend. The dog was John's constant

companion, a St. Bernard, one of a long line of dogs famous for their heroics in times of crisis. "If that dog hadn't been with me, I'd be dead today," John Elliott says. "When you're freezing to death you actually feel warm all over, and don't wake up because it feels too good."

This moving story illustrates the spiritual condition of many people today. They are cold spiritually, and sadly are oblivious of their true condition. Thank God for all the ways in which He arouses such sleepers. He sends His messengers to nudge them awake. Sometimes the methods used to awaken them are drastic, but always for their good. Let us not imagine that because He shakes us, He therefore hates us. He awakens us from lethargy because He loves us, and wants to save us from an eternal death. When we were "ready to perish" (Isaiah 27:13), He was "ready to save" (Isaiah 38:20). Trust your life in His hand. -- The Prairie Overcomer.

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In 1982, "ABC Evening News" reported on an unusual work of modern art--a chair affixed to a shotgun. It was to be viewed by sitting in the chair and looking directly into the gun barrel. The gun was loaded and set on a timer to fire at an undetermined moment within the next hundred years. The amazing thing was that people waited in lines to sit and stare into the shell's path! They all knew the gun could go off at point-blank range at any moment, but they were gambling that the fatal blast wouldn't happen during their minute in the chair. Yes, it was foolhardy, yet many people who wouldn't dream of sitting in that chair live a lifetime gambling that they can get away with sin. Foolishly they ignore the risk until the inevitable self-destruction. --Wake Up Calls, Ron Hutchcraft, Moody, 1990, p.60.

## Spurgeon on Deceitfulness of sin

Oh, is it hard to make a sinner see that sin is his own property. It is the only thing we have. There is only one thing we created, and that is sin, and that is our own. If I permit anything that is evil, I must confess it is a child that has sprung from my own bowels, it hath its origin in myself.

Sin causes a madness which makes sick souls dream that they are in sound health.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"—hence it invents a thousand falsehoods. As the deceivableness of sin is very great, so that it adorns itself with the colours of righteousness, and makes men believe that they are pleasing God, when they are offending him, so is man himself an eager self-deceiver, and, like the fool in Solomon's Proverbs, he readily follows the flatterer.

Do you think one ungodly man in his senses would remain what he is and where he is while there is a hope of being renewed, if it were not for some strange enchantment which is exercised upon him by sin?

If sin were not so deceitful it would not be half so destructive as it is.

If man in his perfectness was so readily deceived by sin, what think you of yourself, fallen and inclined to evil as you are?

Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays, and silver slippers to wear in fine society. The paint-brush and the powder-box are much used upon the wrinkled countenance of sin, to make it look fair and beautiful. The fig-leaf is not only worn on the man's body; but sin itself puts on the apron. To hide the nakedness of sin is the great desire of Satan; for thus he hopes that even the better sort may fall in love with a decent evil, though they might have shunned an odious transgression. Alas, how sadly prone are men to call things by false names!

What others have done, however base and mean, we too are capable of doing. If we think we are not, it is our pride, and our pride alone, that makes us think so.

The disease of sin is everywhere in the realm of manhood, and it is all the more certainly proved to be everywhere because so many people can see it nowhere.

God saith it shall be bitterness; the sinner denies the bitterness, and affirms that it shall be sweetness.

Some, through the deceitfulness of sin, are always trying to see how near they can go to the edge, so as not to fall over—how near they can sail to the rock and not dash upon it; how much sin they can indulge in and yet remain respected church members. Shame on us, that any of us should be guilty of tampering with that accursed thing that slew the Lord of glory.

Do you believe that men would go on to sin as they do, if it were not that sin stultifies them, prevents their using their reason, drowns their conscience, and will not permit them really to judge accurately concerning things that differ? Why, can you imagine that a man would run the risk of everlasting misery for the sake of a few days of carnal delight, if he were not, by some means or other,

besotted, and made a fool of, by sin?

Christian, beware lest thou think lightly of sin. Take heed lest thou fall little by little. Sin a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the grapes? Doth not the tiny coral itself build a rock which wrecks a navy? Sin a little thing? It girded the Redeemer's head with thorns, and pierced His heart! Could you weigh the least sin in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent. Look upon a sin as that which crucified the Saviour, and you will see it to be exceeding sinful.

If we preach against hypocrisy, hypocrites say, "Admirable! Admirable!" If we deal out threatenings against secret sin, secret sinners feel a little twinge, but forget it all and say, "An excellent discourse." They have hardened their neck against God's Word, have made their brows like flints and their hearts like adamant stones, and now they might just as well stay away from the house of God as not, for their soul has become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And yet would I have them refrain from the means of grace? No, for with God nothing is impossible.

Man loves his own ruin. The cup is so sweet that though he knows it will poison him, yet he must drink it. And the harlot is so fair, that though he understands that her ways lead down to hell, yet like a bullock he follows to the slaughter till the dart goes through his liver. Man is fascinated and bewitched by sin

The deceitfulness of sin 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' Hebrews 3:13

Sin has a singular power to deceive. We have only to look back to the beginning of our race to be sure of this. Eve, in the garden, was pure, intelligent and filled with good dispositions: her faculties were well balanced, for no original sin or natural depravity had put her mind out of order. Yet that lovely woman, without a taint upon her heart or will, perfect as she came from her Maker's hand, was overcome by Satan, who embodied in himself the deceitfulness of sin. The serpent played his part right cunningly with the woman and soon withdrew her from her loyal obedience to the Lord God. She began to question, to parley, to argue with rebellious suggestions, and after a while she put forth her hand, took of the fruit which had been forbidden 'and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat.' If man in his perfectness was so readily deceived by sin, what think you of yourself, fallen and inclined to evil as you are? Will not sin soon deceive you? I will even go further back than the garden, for the serpent who was the instrument of evil in the garden, was once an angel of God. Lucifer, the light-bearer, son of the morning, once stood high in the hierarchy of spirits, but sin entered into his heart and the sublime angel became a loathsome fiend. Lucifer became Satan, as prompt for evil as once he had been swift for good. If sin overcame angels, can we fight with it? If sin entangled in its thrice-cursed net even the pure spirits of heaven, will you, sons and daughters of fallen parents, not soon be deceived by it, unless the grace of God shall make you 'wise unto salvation'? Since your hearts are deceitful and sin is deceitful, you are in peril indeed.

Watch over each other as well as over yourselves. Take heed lest sin hardens you before you are aware of it; even while you fancy that you have wiped it out by repentance, petrification will remain upon your heart "through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13)

If sin were to come to us labelled as sin, I trust we should reject it; but there is a deceitfulness of sin. It sometimes comes as a necessary action. We think that wisdom demands that we should sin a little sometimes to avoid some great evil; and in this way the soul gets hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Oh! if the devil would come in the shape of a devil, he would do little mischief, but he assumes the fashion of an angel of light, and there it is that he causes us so much sin and sorrow.

**The deception of sin** If sin comes to us as sin, we are swift to hate it, and strong to repel it, by the grace of God. When we are walking with God, we only need to know that an action is forbidden, and we avoid it. We shun the evil thing when it is plainly evil. But sin puts on another dress, and comes to us speaking a language that is not its own. So even those who would avoid sin as sin may, by degrees, be tempted to evil, and deluded into wrong. **The deceitfulness of sin** will be seen in several points. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. Sin does not uncover all its hideousness, nor reveal its horrible consequences; but it comes to us in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Next, sin is deceitful in its object, for the object that it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or willfully cast off the authority of righteousness. We are not invited to do these things for their own sake. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some good will come of it. Sin is deceitful, next, in the names it wears. It is very apt to change its title; it seldom cares for its own true description. Fine words are often used to cover foul deeds, yet names do not alter things. Call garlic perfume, and it remains a rank odor. Style the fiend an angel of light, and he is nonetheless a devil. Sin, call it by what names you may, is still evil, only evil, and that continually. Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments that it uses. Sin has often whispered in the vain minds of men, "This action might be very wrong for other people, but it will not be evil in you." Sin will also flatter a man with the notion that he can go just so far, and no farther, and retreat with ease. This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses that it frames afterwards. To screen the conscience from regret is one of the efforts of deceitful sin. The man says to himself, "I did wrong; but what can you expect of poor flesh and blood?" Sin will also add, "And, after all, though you were wrong, yet you were not so bad as you might have been. Considering the temptation, you may wonder at your own moderation in transgression. On the whole, you have behaved better than

others would have done." Self-righteousness is poor stuff when it can be fashioned even out of our faults. Such is the deceivableness of sin that it makes itself out to be praiseworthy.

## **I. SIN HAS A SINGULAR POWER TO DECEIVE.**

1. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. It comes in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Intellectually, it comes with a question, or an inquiry. Ought we not to question and to inquire? Are we to receive everything implicitly? The question is, however, full often the thin end of the wedge, which Satan drives home in the form of carnal wisdom, doubt, infidelity, and practical atheism. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God's Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul! Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion, or an imagination; an airy thing, spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. The thought fascinates, and then the spell of evil begins its deadly work; thought condenses into desire, and desire grows to purpose, and purpose ripens into act. I have known a sin insinuate itself by the way of the repulsion of another sin. A man will fly from pride to meanness, from moroseness to jollity, from obstinacy to laxity. Thus the shutting of one gate may open another, and one sin may crawl in as another creeps out.
2. Sin is deceitful in its object, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or wilfully cast off the authority of righteousness. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present good will come of it. Thus are we lured and bird-limed like the silly fowls of the air. The object set before us is delusive: the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold, and yet as gold it thrusts itself upon our erring judgment.
3. Sin is deceitful, next, in the name it wears. It is very apt to change its title: it seldom cares for its own true description. Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays, and silver slippers to wear in fine society.
4. Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments which it uses with men. Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, "Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one?" The point of the rapier is small, and for that reason the more deadly. Then will sin raise the question, and say, "Is this really wrong? May we not be too precise? Are not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command?" Sin is great at raising difficult points of casuistry. He that wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself.
5. This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses which it frames afterwards.
6. The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises; for we shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies unto us.
7. Sin is deceitful in the influence which it carries with it. When yielded to, it tries to shut off the door of repentance.

## **II. THIS DECEITFULNESS HAS A HARDENING POWER OVER THE HEART.**

1. Partly through our familiarity with sin. We may look at hateful sin till we love it.
2. Then there follows on the back of this insensibility to sin an insensibility to the gospel.

## **III. THIS DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, AND THIS TENDENCY TO BECOME HARDENED, NEED TO BE FOUGHT AGAINST.**

1. The way to keep from hardness of heart, and from the deceitfulness of sin, is to believe. You shall find that, just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled.
2. If you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin confess it honestly before God. Pray that sin may appear sin: it cannot appear in a worse light. Thus thou shalt not so readily be caught in its traps and lures.
3. Cultivate great tenderness of heart. Do not believe that to grieve over sin is lowering to manhood; indulge thyself largely in sweet repentance.

### **Related Resources:**

- See also [The Deceitfulness of Sin](#) - Spurgeon
  - Sermon on Hebrews 3:13 or [listen to the 1:06 hour audio](#) - Spurgeon
  - [A Warning Against Hardness of Heart](#) - Spurgeon
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**Wikipedia on Deception** - Deception is the act of propagating a belief that is not true, or is not the whole truth (as in half-truths or omission). Deception can involve dissimulation, propaganda, and sleight of hand, as well as distraction, camouflage, or concealment. There is also self-deception, as in bad faith. It can also be called, with varying subjective implications, beguilement, deceit, bluff, mystification, ruse, or subterfuge. Deception is a major relational transgression that often leads to feelings of betrayal and distrust between relational partners. Deception violates relational rules and is considered to be a negative violation of expectations. Most people expect friends, relational partners, and even strangers to be truthful most of the time. If people expected most conversations to be untruthful, talking and communicating with others would require distraction and misdirection to acquire reliable information. A significant amount of deception occurs between some romantic and relational partners. ([Wikipedia](#))

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**Spurgeon** - There once was a lady who wanted to hire a driver. When three applied, she had them in one by one. "Well," said she to the first, "How near can you drive to danger?" "Madam," said he, "I believe I could drive within a foot without fear." "You will not do for me," said she. To the second she said, "How near could you drive to danger?" "Within a hair's breadth, Madam," said he, "and yet, you would be perfectly safe." "You will not suit me," said she. The third came in, and when asked the same question, "How near could you drive to danger?" he said, "Madam, I never tried; I always drive as far off as I can." Such should the Christian act. Some, through the deceitfulness of sin, are always trying to see how near they can go to the edge, so as not to fall over—how near they can sail to the rock and not dash upon it; how much sin they can indulge in and yet remain respected church members. Shame on us, that any of us should be guilty of tampering with that accursed thing that slew the Lord of glory.

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**Barnhouse on "Deceitfulness of Sin"** - The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit. Among the things of the Spirit to which the natural man is most averse is God's estimate of sin, which is difficult even for a Christian to accept and appreciate. This is why believers are to exhort each other daily, "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Now if sin can deceive a believer, how much more deceitful is it to an unbeliever? If a man with 20-20 vision cannot discern an object at which he is gazing, how shall one born blind see it? Because of the deceitful nature of sin, the unregenerate world cannot comprehend it. Sin originated in Lucifer who became Satan, and in his fall his very nature became deceit. The Lord Jesus Christ said to the unbelievers of His day, "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). We understand, therefore, that sin is deceitful because it proceeds from the devil, the father of lies, who uses falsehood to suit his purpose and even teaches that he does not exist. Thus his dominion can more easily be extended, and sin can be cloaked by the claim that it is unreal, an error of mortal mind. (Barnhouse Romans - Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans As a Point of Departure – Volume 6: God's Freedom)

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#### **Deceitfulness of sin**

1. It assumes false names.
  2. It prefers false claims.
  3. It offers false excuses.
  4. It makes false resolutions. (J. Burns.)
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#### **The dangerous deceitfulness of sin** D. Wilcox.

##### **I. HOW SIN IS TO BE TAKEN AS SAID TO BE DECEITFUL, AND WHEREIN ITS DECEITFULNESS LIES.**

1. With reference to the external object and act about it, sin's deceitfulness lies in false appearances and delusive promises.
2. As to indwelling corruption, who can tell the many ways it has to deceive and destroy? Sin here is the man sinful, proving a tempter to himself.
  - (1) In enticing to it: What pains does the shiner take to justify or extenuate the evil he is bent upon? desirous by a deceitful varnish to take off from its horrid appearance, that it may give as little disturbance to conscience as possible. All endeavours are used, not only to colour the object, but to corrupt the eye by a disguising tincture, that the sight of things may not be according to truth, but according to his desire.
  - (2) In confirming in it; drawing on its servants even to final obduracy and destruction. To this end false principles are admitted, or perverse inference drawn from true ones: the Scriptures are wrested, precious promises, instances of grace abounding to the chief of sinners, &c., and arguments fetched from all, whereby sinners encourage themselves to add sin to sin.

##### **II. THE POWER AND PREVALENCY OF THE DECEITFULNESS THAT BELONGS TO SIN.**

1. How strangely powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, with reference to the many who love and live therein, though they are told of its present deceit and destructive issue?
2. How powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, that can persuade men that are made for another world, to look no farther than this; and so seek for happiness where it is never to be found, or call that so, that is bounded by sense and time, as if they had nothing

higher to mind.

3. How powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, as to the numbers over whom it still reigns, though all its servants sooner or later confess the delusion?

### III. WHAT HARDNESS THIS TENDS TO AS MATTER OF FEAR AND FLIGHT.

1. Habitual. This is the result of repeated acts of sin, strengthening the natural depravity, and confirming in it. Hereby the sinner is emboldened in his way, and becomes a stranger to much of that shame and sorrow, reluctancy and remorse, which he was sometimes-wont to feel.

2. Judicial, or inflicted from heaven.

Lessons:

1. Hence learn the reason of that mighty storm that is ordinarily felt in the breasts of true penitents upon their first becoming such.  
2. How adorable is the grace of God, as to all that get safe to heaven; what joy will there be upon their arrival!  
3. It need not seem strange that holy men are afraid of nothing so much as sin, and cannot allow themselves to follow a multitude to do evil Ex 23:2), it being too dear a compliment to be paid to any, to run the hazard of being hardened first, and so of perishing for company.

4. How dangerous is their mistake, who whilst under the power of sin, think their case good, because their consciences are quiet? And with how many is it thus?

5. How great is our advantage in having the Bible and living under the gospel? By which we are warned of sin's deceitfulness and armed against it.

6. How desirable is the state of such as are in covenant with God, having chosen Him in Christ for theirs, and given up themselves unto Him. They are hereby become His special charge, as well as His peculiar delight.

7. Is the case so sad of being hardened in sin? Let the dread of this awaken a present and perpetual opposition to it in every one that would be safe.

(1) Begin at the root: see that corruption, as to its power and reign, be mortified within. Get by faith into union with Christ.

(2) Let conscience be instructed from the Word of God, and charge it to be faithful, and hearken to its voice.

(3) Beware of running upon temptation in a vain presumption you may come off safe. Your strength lies not in yourselves, but must come from heaven; and you have no promise of protection out of God's way.

(4) Keep the cross of Christ as much as possible in view, and remember it was sin that nailed Him to it.

(5) Solemnly renew your covenant with God, and often reflect upon it with approbation; that whenever tempted to sin, you may be able readily to answer, I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back Jdg 11:35). Thy vows are upon me, O God (Psa 56:12).

(6) Live under an awful sense of God's presence with you, and plead it with yourselves, that you may act accordingly.

(7) Frequently call yourselves to account. The beginnings of sin may be most hopefully resisted; but like a slight disease, may prove dangerous in the neglect, and threaten death.

(8) Use yourselves to a life of self-denial as to the flesh and the world.

(9) Keep up lively apprehensions of death and judgment approaching.

(10) Make your constant, serious application to heaven, for wisdom to discern, and grace to withstand the deceitfulness of sin. (D. Wilcox.)

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### The deceitfulness of sin E. Blencowe, M. A.

I. WHAT IS SIN. TO love God and to love our fellow-creatures with a pure heart fervently is the gospel law, and our own conscience witnesses that it is holy, just, and good. Whatever is the contrary to, whatever comes short of this law is sin. Now, if we trace up sin to its fountain, then we call it birth sin--derived from our first father Adam. But, if we trace sin to the streams that flow from this unclean fountain, then we call it actual sin, done by our own will. Then sin is everything we do which we ought not to do, and everything we leave undone which we ought to do. If we trace it to its different kinds we find some sins done against God only, others against God and man too. There are sins of the thought, sins of the heart, sins of the tongue, sins of the hand, sins of the whole body.

### II. THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

1. Sin draws us away from the thought of God and of His grace; of what He has done for us, and of what we owe to Him.

2. Then unbelief slips in; unbelief of God's Word. So Satan tempted Eve.

3. If only we disbelieve God's Word, then we are ready to be caught with the bait which sin offers, fair and tempting to the sight, hiding under it danger and death.

4. Be not misled by the deceitfulness of sin, to go on without repentance, without conversion of heart to God. Is not delay the devil's favourite word?

5. Nor let sin beguile you to misuse the doctrine of the grace of God.

**The deceitfulness of sin** B. Whichcote, D. D.

I. MY BUSINESS SHALL BE TO SHOW YOU THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN AND HOW MUCH THEREBY WE ARE IN DANGER.

1. Evil takes another name though it doth always retain its nature. Covetousness passeth for a thrifty temper and good husbandry. Prodigality for being generous. Vanity is reputed necessary remission of mind, and foolish talking to be affable conversation. Lavish expense of time goes for exercise and recreation due to the body. Finding fault with others is reckoned to be reproof of sin. Sharpness and severity to be strictness of conscience. Backbiting is accounted an endeavour for reformation. Jealousy and suspicion to be care for right and truth. Busy meddling with other men's affairs, lives, and judgments, is said to be activity for the advancement of religion. And to control others' liberty, a care for their souls. Presumption is thought to be faith in God. Curious determinations beyond Scripture, to be the improvement of faith, and inconsiderate dulness to be the denial of our reason. Malcontent to be sorrow for sin. Excessive use of the creatures, to be Christian liberty. Sometimes evil suggesteth to us pleasure and delight, and sometimes gain and profit.

2. Evil holds us in hand that it is a matter of our right, and that which we may do in the use of our liberty. Whereas it is not power to be able to do that which is not fit to be done, this is not liberty, but licentiousness.

3. Evil covers itself with some probable notion or circumstance. Nothing in this vain world is more usual than colours, pretences, representations, excuses, appearances contrary to reality and truth.

4. Evil warrants itself sometimes by the difference of time and place, sometimes by measure and degree, sometimes by mode and manner.

5. Evil pleads sometimes the necessity of the ease, and that it is unavoidable.

6. When evil hath once entangled us there is another evil (and it may be a greater) though necessary to hide or extenuate it. For evil, if it be looked into, will be ashamed of itself. Upon this account it is that men are ashamed to own it, and sometimes with a lie deny it. Cain, Gehazi, Ananias, and Sapphira.

7. Evil justifies itself by prescription and general practice. So it was formerly, and so it is still. And this is taken for a justification.

8. I shall observe in the last place that which is most dangerous of all others, and that is this: when the first motion towards repentance and conversion is looked upon as if it were the sovereign remedy of repentance itself. As if sorrow for sin were the whole product of repentance, whereas, indeed, that which is true repentance must be accompanied with the forsaking of sin and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness.

II. HOW GREAT REASON WE HAVE, ACCORDING TO THE ADVICE OF THE APOSTLE, TO TAKE HEED THAT WE ARE NOT DECEIVED.

1. Because in this state we run all manner of hazards and dangers.

2. Our several faculties have different inclinations, and some of them are not at all capable of reason, therefore not to be governed by any moral considerations, which make it a very hard province that we are to act in.

3. Things without us, and round about us, presented with their several advantages, do many times provoke and allure us, and are hardly to be denied.

4. That which should be for our security, viz., company and converse, often becomes a snare to us.

5. He that is officious to bring us into his condemnation, he is forward to fit us with suitable objects that shall raise our apprehensions and draw us into evil.

6. There are many things impure and contrary to religion to which we are tempted that the world do not reckon among the greatest crimes.

7. Man is such a compound that heaven and earth, as it were, meet in him, terms that are extremely distant. Man in respect of his mind is qualified to converse with angels and to attend upon God. And in respect of these noble faculties he is liable to be tempted to insolency, arrogancy, and great presumption, and self-exaltation.

8. If we do not use self-government, and moderate our powers by subduing the inferior to the superior, we fail in that which is our proper work and province.

9. If God be not understood and acknowledged in our worldly enjoyments and recommended to us by them; if He be not intended in all our actions, then do we not comply with the relation we stand in to God, nor act according to our highest principles, nor answer our capacity, nor are true to our own interest. For our highest faculties are God's peculiar, God's reserve, made for God, and fit to attend upon Him, and to receive from Him. Since, therefore, there is this danger

(1) Let us act with caution and with good advice, by conversation with the best and wisest men. For it is an easy matter to be deceived without great care and diligence.

(2) But chiefly let us make application to God, by meditation and prayer, who will not be wanting to us. Let us carefully avoid all presumption, pride, arrogancy, and self-assuming. Do not on the sudden, but see before you do; and understand well before you act. (B. Whichcote, D. D.)

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## **On the danger and deceitfulness of sin** Archbishop Tillotson

I. First, I shall endeavour to represent to you THE GROWING DANGER OF SIN, and by what steps and degrees bad habits do insensibly gain upon men and harden them in an evil course. All the actions of men which are not natural, but proceed from deliberation and choice, have something of difficulty in them when we first practise them, because, at first, we are exercised in that way; but after we have practised them awhile they become more easy, and when they are easy, we begin to take pleasure in them; and when they please us we do them frequently, and think we cannot repeat them too often; and, by frequency of acts a thing grows into a habit, and a confirmed habit is a second kind of nature: and so far as anything is natural, so far it is necessary, and we can hardly do otherwise; nay, we do it many times when we do not think of it.

1. Men begin with lesser sins. No man is perfectly wicked on the sudden.

2. After men have been sometime initiated in these lesser sins they are prepared for greater; such as lay waste the conscience and offer more violence to the light and reason of their minds.

3. When a man hath proceeded thus far he begins to put off shame, one of the greatest restraints from sin which God hath laid upon human nature. And when this curb once fails off, there is then but little left to restrain and hold us in.

4. After this it is possible men may come to approve their vices. For if men's judgments do not command their wills and restrain their lusts, it is great odds, in process of time, the vicious inclinations of their wills will put a false bias upon their judgments; and then it is no wonder, if men come to boast of their sins and to glory in their vices, when they are half persuaded that they are generous and commendable qualities.

5. From this pitch of wickedness, men commonly proceed to draw in others, and to make proselytes to their vices. But that which renders the condition of such persons much more deplorable is, that all this while God is withdrawing His grace from them. For every degree of sin causeth the Holy Spirit of God with all His blessed assistances to retire farther from them. And thus, by passing from one degree of sin to another, the sinner becomes hardened in his wickedness. For the mind of man, after it hath long been accustomed to evil, and is once grown old in vice, is almost as hard to be rectified as it is to recover a body bowed down with age to its first straightness.

II. I shall, from this consideration, take occasion to show WHAT GREAT REASON AND NEED THERE IS TO WARN MEN OF THIS DANGER, and to endeavour to rescue them out of it. If we believe the threatening of God which we declare to others, if we have any sense of our own duty and safety, we cannot but be earnest with sinners to break off their sins, and to give glory to God by repentance before darkness come.

III. I apply myself to this work of EXHORTATION--the duty commanded here in the text.

1. To persuade those who are yet in some measure innocent, to resist the beginnings of sin, lest it gain upon them by degrees. Vice may easily be discouraged at first. It is like a slight disease, which is easy to be cured, but dangerous to be neglected. As there is a connection of one virtue with another, so vices are linked together, and one sin draws many after it. When the devil tempts a man to commit any wickedness, he does as it were lay a long train of sins, and if the first temptation take, they give fire to one another.

2. To persuade those who are already engaged in a wicked course, to make haste out of this dangerous state. And there is no other way to get out of it but by repentance; that is, by a real change and reformation of our lives. (Archbishop Tillotson.)

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## **The deceitfulness of sin** J. Witherspoon.

Who is it that is deceived? It is the sinner himself. Does he need to be deceived? Is there not in us all a strong enough direct inclination to that which is evil? There is also a deceit which over-reaches and ensnares us into the commission of what, but for that mistake, we would have avoided or abhorred. Again, if the sinner is deceived, who is it, or what is it that deceives him? Here we must observe that when we speak of sin's being deceitful, it is not so much anything without us, taking the advantage of our weakness, but it is the corruption within, which makes us see things in a wrong light, and draw unjust and pernicious consequences from them.

I. I shall endeavour to open a little the CHIEF BRANCHES OF THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

1. Its disguising itself and wholly concealing its nature.

2. Its forming excuses for itself, and thereby extenuating its guilt.

3. Its insinuating itself by degrees, and leading men on from the voluntary commission of some sins to the necessity of committing more.

II. I proceed now to consider THE DUTY WHICH IS FOUNDED BY THE APOSTLE ON THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, viz., mutual exhortation.

1. As to the persons who are obliged to exhort others. It seems in this passage to be laid upon Christians in general, without any exception. This is perfectly consonant to the spirit of true religion, and to our relation one to another. There is also a particular obligation upon superiors of all sorts, whether in office, as magistrates; in station, as persons of wealth and opulence; in years, as

those whom time and experience should have enriched with solid wisdom; in relation, as parents and masters of families. But it is also plainly a part of Christian friendship, even for equals to exhort one another, and kindly to communicate their mutual experience in the spiritual life. We all stand in need of it; we may all be the better for it. I do not remember anything recorded more truly glorious for a monarch than what we are told of Philip of Macedon, that he heard reproofs not only with patience, but with pleasure; and I am sure there is nothing more like a Christian than to profit, not only by the admonitions of friends, but by the reproaches of enemies. If they are just, reform what is amiss; if they are probable, abstain from the appearance of evil; if they are neither the one nor the other, submit to them with patience, as a part of the will of God.

2. The season in which the duty of mutual exhortation is to be performed. Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; by which we are to understand that it is to be done frequently; and without delay.

3. The manner in which this exhortation must be given, if we hope to do it with success.

(1) You ought not to reprove at an uncertainty, upon bare rumour and suspicion.

(2) It ought not to be done when the offending person is in an ill temper to receive it.

(3) We are not to reprove those whom we have reason to believe to be such desperate wretches, that they would be but the more exasperated, and sin in the more daring manner, on account of the reproof (Pro 9:7; Mat 7:6).

On the other hand, positively, when reproof or exhortation are administered

(1) It should be made appear, as much as possible, to flow from love and affection as its principle.

(2) As it ought to flow from love as the principle, so it ought to be conducted with meekness in the manner; no railing or reviling expressions, which will look like the wounds of an enemy to destroy, and not the balm of a physician to cure.

(3) Reproof should be given with some degree of zeal as well as meekness; we should avoid the extreme of remissness as well as severity. A slight careless reproof is often worse than none; for it is ready to make the offender think lightly of his own offence. I shall give an instance of this. Swearing, and taking the name of God in vain, is sometimes ridiculed, instead of being reproofed. This seldom has a good effect. It ought, indeed, to be despised for its folly; but, at the same time, it ought to be deeply abhorred for its guilt.

(4) In admonishing one another for particular sins, we should still keep in view the source of all sin, a polluted nature, and the great danger of the sinner, as in a sinful state.

(5) Let those who would acquit themselves of this duty in a proper manner be particularly watchful and circumspect in their own conduct. Lessons:

1. From what has been said, you may see the great corruption and depravity of our nature.

2. From what has been said, let us be led to strictness and frequency in self-examination. If sin is so deceitful, it may easily lurk unobserved. Self-knowledge is a study of as great difficulty as importance.

3. From what hath been said, let me beseech all, but especially young persons, to beware of the beginnings of sin.

4. I shall close the subject, by addressing an exhortation to those who have been long and hardened sinners; who have many habits of vice cleaving to them; who have hitherto despised the gospel, and even sat in the seat of the scornful. Why will you longer continue at enmity with Him, while He is offering you mercy? (J. Witherspoon.)

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## The deceitfulness of sin - W. Jarbo, D. D.

I. THE CAUTION. In the text sin is, by a bold figure of speech, personified, as it is in several other parts of Scripture. But we are not to suppose that there is a being called sin; but an evil principle that is at work in the world and in all our hearts. We will now notice some of the means adopted by sin to deceive the ungodly.

**1. It assumes to itself soft and specious names.** Sin, notwithstanding the exalted place it holds in the affections of men, is an abominable thing. Professors of religion, be you aware that you endeavour not to lessen the enormity of sin.

**2. Sin deceives by promising pleasure, while it conceals the evils connected with it.** It promises pleasures it can never give. Absalom listened to sin, and was stimulated in his rebellion by the hope of raising himself to his father's throne. The event showed he was deceived, and lost his life beside. David listened to sin, when he thought of the pleasure of Bathsheba's company, and thought, "No eye will see, no one would know." He, too, was deceived, for his sin became patent to all Israel, and peace fled from his house for ever. There is one case recorded in Scripture which shows how sin deceives, and hardens, and finally damns the soul--Judas.

**3. Sin deceives by misrepresenting the revelations of God's Word.** Instructed by that Word, we are taught to think of God as a being of infinite perfection, and that all His attributes being perfect, they cannot clash one with another--that all are holy, wise and good. But sin suggests to man's mind a God all mercy: it puts out of sight the fact that God is a God of holiness. Again, sin leads men to reason thus: God is too lofty to behold the things done upon earth; it is inconceivable that He will take knowledge of men's actions; He has worlds to guide and direct.

**4. Sin deceives, by persuading the man that there is time yet to seek pardon, and persuades him to defer the season of repentance till a later period of life.** Now, there is no want of good intention on the part of many. Sinners are deceived by sin, and flatter themselves that because they know what is right, there must be some good in them, though they practise it not. They comfort themselves, that though at this particular moment they do not put their good resolutions into effect, they intend to do it, and they



think there is some virtue in that.

## II. THE MEANS PRESCRIBED.

"Exhort one another." Those who undertake to give advice should themselves be endued with wisdom and understanding. An ignorant or presumptuous person will be likely to do more harm than good. That wisdom which is gained by experience is most likely to prove useful to others. Intimate friends may exhort and counsel one another, and admonish one another of their faults. But even here a caution is needful. Some do this in such a censorious sort of way, such a "Stand by, I am holier than thou" sort of air, that the advice they give, however good, is certain to be rejected. Men are never to be scolded into doing that which is right. In reference to this part of our subject I would say, never engage in this duty except with much prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and then between your exhortation and example there must be a consistency. If not, it will render any effort altogether vain.

**III. THE TIME when this duty is to be performed--"Daily, while it is called to-day."**The present may be the only opportunity. Christians are daily going astray; every day they need exhorting. By way of application, I would entreat you all to watch well your heart, and resist the beginnings of sin, lest it should end in ruin. A spark is easily put out, but how difficult to extinguish a conflagration! Resist the unholy thought before it becomes the unholy deed, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. I will illustrate by an anecdote what sin does. There was a little boat floating near the hank in the river a few miles above the falls of Niagara; a mother was working in a field near by. She had cautioned her little daughter not to go to the water; but thither the child strolled. She saw the boat, jumped into it, which moved with her weight. She was pleased with the feeling. The boat slipped from its moorings, and began softly to float down the stream. More and more pleased was the child. The sun glittered on the tiny waves; everything was pleasant and delightful to the child. Quicker, and more quick, but yet softly and silently, that vessel shot down the river with its unconscious and joyous freight. The mother looked, and saw her child carried quickly to the current towards the fall. She screamed and ran--she plunged into the water; she ventured far, and failed. The boat is caught in the foaming rapids; it is carried over the precipice; the child is lost. Something like this may be seen daily. We warn you. (W. Jarbo, D. D.)

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Sin - It appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing. (M. Henry.)

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## **SIN—Deceitfulness (Sources - excellent resource "Complete Gathered Gold - John Blanchard)**

Evil enters like a needle and spreads like an oak tree. - Anon.

If sin was not such a pleasure it would not be such a problem. - John Blanchard

No sin is to be regarded as small, because the God who forbids all sin is so great. - John Blanchard

Sin keeps us from knowing the true nature of sin. - John Blanchard

To understand the deceitfulness of sin, compare its promises and its payments. - John Blanchard

The least sin is infinitely evil. - David Clarkson

If there is anything worse than our sins, it is our infinite capacity to rationalize it away. - Charles Colson

Nothing can deceive unless it bears a plausible resemblance to reality. - C. S. Lewis

No wickedness proceeds on any grounds of reason. - Livy

The most deadly sins do not leap upon us; they creep upon us. - Stephen Olford

Sin is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet. - John Owen

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien As to be hated needs but to be seen; Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace. - Alexander Pope

Let's not listen for a minute to the contemptible question, 'What harm is there in it?' There's nothing but harm if Christ is not in it. - Scott Richardson

Though Satan's apples may have a fair skin, yet they certainly have a bitter core. - William Secker

A sin is two sins when it is defended. - Henry Smith

All sin is folly; all sinners are fools. - C. H. Spurgeon

Sin may open bright as the morning, but it will end dark as night. - Thomas de Witt Talmage

'Evil' is Hebrew for a fool. - John Trapp

Sin may be clasped so close we cannot see its face. - Richard C. Trench

A man can no more extract blessedness out of sin than he can suck health out of poison. - Thomas Watson

The most stupendous blunder a man ever made was to think that anything could be made out of sinning. -

Frederick P. Wood

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### **The deceitfulness of sin** W. M. Punshon, D. D.

There was an abbot who desired a piece of ground that lay conveniently for him. The owner refused to sell it, yet, with much persuasion, was contented to let it. The abbot hired it for his rent, and covenanted only to farm it for one crop. He had his bargain, and sowed it with acorns, a crop that lasted three hundred years. Thus, Satan begs but for the first crop: let him sow thy youth with acorns, they will grow up with thy years to sturdy oaks, so big-bulked and deep rooted, that they shall last all thy life. Sin hath a shrewd title when it can plead prescription, and Satan thinks his evidence as good as eleven points at law when he hath once got possession. Let him be sure of thy youth, he will be confident of thy age.

The change sin works in the conscience

Soft sponges become flints oftentimes by a peculiar process. There are in sponges particles of flint or siliceous matter; these are ever attracting particles to themselves, until in process of time the whole mass is an aggregate of siliceous matter, and the softness of the sponge has disappeared. It is exactly thus with your conscience: its sensibilities are gradually giving way to the hardening particles that are introduced by every sin you commit.

The fatal chain

Professor Drummond tells of an over-laden coal barge which stood in the river: "A sailor reported to the captain that the water was gaining upon the vessel. The captain drove him away with scoffs. Twice, thrice, the warning was repeated. Each time the warning voice was unheeded. At last the barge began to give evidence of sinking. The captain ordered the men to the boats. They took their places. He then said: 'I told you there was plenty of time.' Then he took out his knife to cut the cable which bound the boat to the barge. He fell back with a cry of horror. The cable was an iron chain!" The eleventh hour is an hour of haste and danger and disappointment. The thread becomes a cord, the cord a cable, the cable a chain. The time to get clear of a sinking craft is now.

The accelerating progress of an ungodly course

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### **Deceptive nature of sin**

I heard a minister not long since, while preaching on the nature and deceptive influence of sin, make use of the following illustration:- "Suppose," said the preacher, "an individual should go to a blacksmith and say to him, 'Sir, I wish you to make me a very long and heavy chain; here are the dimensions. Have it done at such a time, and I will pay you the cash for it.' The blacksmith is pressed with other and more important work, but for the sake of the money he commences the chain, and after toiling hard many days, finishes it. The individual calls. 'Have you made that chain?' 'Yes, sir; here it is.' 'That is very well done. A good chain; but it is not long enough.' 'Not long enough! Why, it is just the length you told me to make it.' 'Oh yes, yes; but I have concluded to have it much longer than at first; work on it another week. I will then call and pay you for it.' And thus, flattered with praise and encouraged with the promise of full reward for his labour, he toils on, adding link to link, till the appointed time when his employer calls again, and, as before, praises his work; but still he insists that 'the chain is too short.' 'But,' says the blacksmith, 'I can do no more. My iron is expended, and so is my strength. I need the pay for what I have done, and can do no more till I have it!' 'Oh, never mind; I think you have the means of adding a few links more; the chain will then answer the purpose for which it is intended, and you shall be fully rewarded for all your labour.' With his remaining strength and a few scraps of iron, he adds the last link of which he is capable; then says the man to him,

The chain is a good one; you have toiled long and hard to make it. I see that you can do no more, and now you shall have your reward.' But, instead of paying the money, he takes the chain, binds the labourer hand and foot, and casts him into a furnace of fire. 'Such,' " said the preacher " is a course of sin. It promises much, but its reward is death." (C. Field.)

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#### Habits

Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single flake added to the pile produces a sensible change--no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character; but as the tempest hurls the avalanche down the mountain, and overwhelms the inhabitant and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief which pernicious habits have brought together by imperceptible accumulation, may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

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#### **I. THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN,** (George Brooks excerpt from sermon The Spiritual Value Of The Body 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything." Paul wanted his readers to know just how deceitful sin is. Sin is deceitful because it seems to offer what it does not. Sin seems to be giving people something of great value. But Paul would have us to know that sin is not profitable. Paul said, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable." He was saying that he was free to do whatever he pleased but what he did was not necessarily of value to him. The word "profitable" (sumphero) means helpful, worthwhile, beneficial or advantageous. Paul was suggesting that saints are free and no longer under the penalty of the law. However, sin is never profitable. It is never advantageous. Sin seeks to become our master. Despite our freedom in Jesus, we should not allow anything to become our master. The word "mastered" (exousiazō) means to have power or authority. It suggests exercising authority. It speaks of having full and complete authority over the body. It has reference to holding the body subject to one's will. Paul was challenging his readers not to allow any sin to control their bodies. He was challenging them not to become enslaved to any habit or sin. Paul was aware of the fact that sin has to be resisted. If sin is not resisted, it will grow. Saints need to be sure that we control our own bodies. Paul told the Romans to live in the Spirit and to put to death the works of the body (Romans 8:13). Whenever our desires and passions tell us what to do, we are not to obey. Sin is never profitable. It is deceitful

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#### **The deceitfulness of sin**

There was an abbot who desired a piece of ground that lay conveniently for him. The owner refused to sell it, yet, with much persuasion, was contented to let it. The abbot hired it for his rent, and covenanted only to farm it for one crop. He had his bargain, and sowed it with acorns, a crop that lasted three hundred years. Thus, Satan begs but for the first crop: let him sow thy youth with acorns, they will grow up with thy years to sturdy oaks, so big-bulked and deep rooted, that they shall last all thy life. Sin hath a shrewd title when it can plead prescription, and Satan thinks his evidence as good as eleven points at law when he hath once got possession. Let him be sure of thy youth, he will be confident of thy age.

The change sin works in the conscience

Soft sponges become flints oftentimes by a peculiar process. There are in sponges particles of flint or silex; these are ever attracting particles to themselves, until in process of time the whole mass is an aggregate of silicious matter, and the softness of the sponge has disappeared. It is exactly thus with your conscience: its sensibilities are gradually giving way to the hardening particles that are introduced by every sin you commit.

The fatal chain

Professor Drummond tells of an over-laden coal barge which stood in the river: "A sailor reported to the captain that the water was gaining upon the vessel. The captain drove him away with scoffs. Twice, thrice, the warning was repeated. Each time the warning voice was unheeded. At last the barge began to give evidence of sinking. The captain ordered the men to the boats. They took their places. He then said: 'I told you there was plenty of time.' Then he took out his knife to cut the cable which bound the boat to the barge. He fell back with a cry of horror. The cable was an iron chain!" The eleventh hour is an hour of haste and danger and disappointment. The thread becomes a cord, the cord a cable, the cable a chain. The time to get clear of a sinking craft is now.

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## THE PURPOSE IN THE ENCOURAGING

"Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." One of the purposes of encouraging one another is to keep from the work of sin in our lives. I recall a new convert in our church in Chicago mentioning the fact that he needed the midweek prayer service for it buoyed up his faith. A week without the midweek prayer service was a week without spiritual help. Sin is so sneaky, it can get into our lives and wreck our testimony if we are not careful. We note two things about sin in this last sentence.

- The conquering of sin. "Lest any of you." Satan may have lost you because you are saved, but he does not give up and would try to conquer you via sin to ruin your testimony and the joy of salvation.
  - The character of sin. "Hardened ... deceitfulness of sin. Two things about sin are stated here. First, it deadens. "Hardened" your senses so you will tolerate sin. You are not sensitive to sin. Second, it deceives. "Deceitfulness." Sin is so deceptive. It looks good but it is very evil and wicked and ruins.
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## The Daily Care Of Each Other - Lehman Strauss

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). The writer to the Hebrews presents one of the most successful ways of keeping ourselves from falling prey to the deceitfulness of sin. He told the Christians to exercise a daily care for one another. It is grievous to hear of one of God's dear children yielding to temptation or answering to the appeal of the world or even submitting to the subtlety of Satan. This is bad enough in itself, yet we find that we must contend with Christians critically discussing the sins of weaker and less fortunate brethren. It ever has been the ambition of Satan to enlist Christians in aiding him to carry out his evil work of "accusing the brethren." When the "scandalizer" and "gossiper" yields to the desire to discuss the sins of another, he himself may become hardened through the deceitfulness of his own sin.

In Galatians 6:1, the Spirit cites an example of a child of God overtaken in a fault. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The word "overtaken" connotes surprise. The Christian hurriedly carried into sin is oftentimes surprised by the fact of the fault itself. The need for him becomes a matter of restoration, and God is demanding that other Christians shall be the instruments in divine hands to restore him to the place of confession to and fellowship with God. To "restore" means "to reconcile factions, to set broken bones or a dislocation."

When a Christian sins, he is not in correct relationship to his Head and to the rest of his body. He, though still a member of the body, is a dislocated joint, and needs very urgent attention. When an arm or a leg becomes dislocated, it demands immediate medical care. If nothing is done to reset the limb, the pain becomes more severe. So it is with the sinning Christian. He dare not remain in sin, for this only makes his misery greater and his restoration more difficult and bitter. Do you not see how important it is that our love one for the other be without "dissimulation" or "hypocrisy"? The Apostle Peter said that our love for each other should be "unfeigned" (1 Pet. 1:22). This means "undisguised" or "without pretense." Let us then exhort, or draw near to one another so that the ministry be not blamed and we ourselves are not overtaken through the deceitfulness of sin.

It is the daily life that makes us an influence in the world as witnesses of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each Christian has his own responsibility in the daily service of his Lord. Therefore, there should be an intensity of purpose in the daily effort, for a Christlike life in the every day walk will convince those around us that the Gospel has power, not only to save, but to deliver daily from temptations within and without.

Beloved, we beseech you, do not miss the importance and the purpose of your calling. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1, 2). Begin now! The world waits for a daily demonstration of the Christ who lives in you

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## Deceitfulness of sin

1. It assumes false names.
2. It prefers false claims.
3. It offers false excuses.

### **A Stern Caution**

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:12-13) Here Paul continues to warn us concerning unbelief. He solemnly and sternly and warns us about an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God and about the possibility of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. In these verses Paul warns about the Cause, Course and Callousness of unbelief.

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### **The deceitfulness of sin**

#### **I. SIN HAS A SINGULAR POWER TO DECEIVE.**

1. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. It comes in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Intellectually, it comes with a question, or an inquiry. Ought we not to question and to inquire? Are we to receive everything implicitly? The question is, however, full often the thin end of the wedge, which Satan drives home in the form of carnal wisdom, doubt, infidelity, and practical atheism. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God's Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul! Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion, or an imagination; an airy thing, spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. The thought fascinates, and then the spell of evil begins its deadly work; thought condenses into desire, and desire grows to purpose, and purpose ripens into act. I have known a sin insinuate itself by the way of the repulsion of another sin. A man will fly from pride to meanness, from moroseness to jollity, from obstinacy to laxity. Thus the shutting of one gate may open another, and one sin may crawl in as another creeps out.

2. Sin is deceitful in its object, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or wilfully cast off the authority of righteousness. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present good will come of it. Thus are we lured and bird-limed like the silly fowls of the air. The object set before us is delusive: the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold, and yet as gold it thrusts itself upon our erring judgment.

3. Sin is deceitful, next, in the name it wears. It is very apt to change its title: it seldom cares for its own true description. Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays, and silver slippers to wear in fine society.

4. Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments which it uses with men. Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, "Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one?" The point of the rapier is small, and for that reason the more deadly. Then will sin raise the question, and say, "Is this really wrong? May we not be too precise? Are not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command?" Sin is great at raising difficult points of casuistry. He that wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself.

5. This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses which it frames afterwards.

6. The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises; for we shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies unto us.

7. Sin is deceitful in the influence which it carries with it. When yielded to, it tries to shut off the door of repentance.

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### **The devices by which sin beguiles**

1. One of the most obvious ways in which it works this mischief is, by diverting the attention from that to which it ought to be directed. Man's power of attention is limited; it cannot be directed to all things at the same time; it must take them in succession. Neither should it bestow itself equally upon all things, but graduate its time and earnestness according to circumstance. Of this feature of our constitution sin, taking advantage, so fills the mind with other things, that no room is left for the things of religion. A man is thus made to forget God, by the simple obtrusion of other things upon his attention.

2. Sin deceives also by the false and captivating colours in which it decks out things forbidden. Their beauty was not their own. They wore a mask. It is no very uncommon thing for certain visions and appearances to pass before the mind, under the influence of disease, which wear all the lineaments of persons and things with which we are familiar, and yet possess no reality whatever. But not to take so violent a case for illustration; let us simply reflect how depression or hilarity of animal spirits affects all our views of things. The one will hang the brightest heaven with mourning; the other will shed an air of cheerfulness over the deepest gloom. Now it is somewhat in this way that sin deludes. It causes things to appear in unreal colours.

3. A third way, in which sin deceives, is by making us miscalculate time. What is our life? It is compared to a "watch in the night," to a "tale that is told," to a "vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," to a "race that is run," to a "battle that is fought," to the "labour of the day," to the dimensions of a "span." Yet, notwithstanding, may I not with all confidence ask whether his own feelings have not often virtually given the lie to these statements? Thus does sin deceive the young. To say nothing of the uncertainty of life, they are in error in regard to the length of it.

4. This property, which is specially named in the text, arises from our being creatures of habit. By the law of habit, the doing of a thing once, makes it easier to do it again, and creates an inclination towards the repetition of the act. Notice the manner in which the



spider endeavours to secure the unwary insect, which has fallen into its web, and you have a pretty accurate representation of the process. One attenuated thread after another is woven round it, each easily broken, each in itself too trifling to be regarded or felt, but all, in their united strength, beyond its ability to break. There the victim lies, making mighty efforts to escape, but more and more hopelessly each successive moment. Thus it is, that sinful habit insensibly weaves around us its meshes. (W. Sparrow, LL. D.)

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### **Deceptive nature of sin**

I heard a minister not long since, while preaching on the nature and deceptive influence of sin, make use of the following illustration:- "Suppose," said the preacher, "an individual should go to a blacksmith and say to him, 'Sir, I wish you to make me a very long and heavy chain; here are the dimensions. Have it done at such a time, and I will pay you the cash for it.' The blacksmith is pressed with other and more important work, but for the sake of the money he commences the chain, and after toiling hard many days, finishes it. The individual calls. 'Have you made that chain?' 'Yes, sir; here it is.' 'That is very well done. A good chain; but it is not long enough.' 'Not long enough! Why, it is just the length you told me to make it.' 'Oh yes, yes; but I have concluded to have it much longer than at first; work on it another week. I will then call and pay you for it.' And thus, flattered with praise and encouraged with the promise of full reward for his labour, he toils on, adding link to link, till the appointed time when his employer calls again, and, as before, praises his work; but still he insists that 'the chain is too short.' 'But,' says the blacksmith, 'I can do no more. My iron is expended, and so is my strength. I need the pay for what I have done, and can do no more till I have it!' 'Oh, never mind; I think you have the means of adding a few links more; the chain will then answer the purpose for which it is intended, and you shall be fully rewarded for all your labour.' With his remaining strength and a few scraps of iron, he adds the last link of which he is capable; then says the man to him, 'The chain is a good one; you have toiled long and hard to make it. I see that you can do no more, and now you shall have your reward.' But, instead of paying the money, he takes the chain, binds the labourer hand and foot, and casts him into a furnace of fire. 'Such,' said the preacher "is a course of sin. It promises much, but its reward is death." (C. Field.)

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### **The dangerous deceitfulness of sin**

#### **I. HOW SIN IS TO BE TAKEN AS SAID TO BE DECEITFUL, AND WHEREIN ITS DECEITFULNESS LIES.**

1. With reference to the external object and act about it, sin's deceitfulness lies in false appearances and delusive promises.
2. As to indwelling corruption, who can tell the many ways it has to deceive and destroy? Sin here is the man sinful, proving a tempter to himself.
  - (1) In enticing to it: What pains does the shiner take to justify or extenuate the evil he is bent upon? desirous by a deceitful varnish to take off from its horrid appearance, that it may give as little disturbance to conscience as possible. All endeavours are used, not only to colour the object, but to corrupt the eye by a disguising tincture, that the sight of things may not be according to truth, but according to his desire.
  - (2) In confirming in it; drawing on its servants even to final obduracy and destruction. To this end false principles are admitted, or perverse inference drawn from true ones: the Scriptures are wrested, precious promises, instances of grace abounding to the chief of sinners, &c., and arguments fetched from all, whereby sinners encourage themselves to add sin to sin.

#### **II. THE POWER AND PREVALENCY OF THE DECEITFULNESS THAT BELONGS TO SIN.**

1. How strangely powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, with reference to the many who love and live therein, though they are told of its present deceit and destructive issue?
2. How powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, that can persuade men that are made for another world, to look no farther than this; and so seek for happiness where it is never to be found, or call that so, that is bounded by sense and time, as if they had nothing higher to mind.
3. How powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, as to the numbers over whom it still reigns, though all its servants sooner or later confess the delusion?

#### **III. WHAT HARDNESS THIS TENDS TO AS MATTER OF FEAR AND FLIGHT.**

1. Habitual. This is the result of repeated acts of sin, strengthening the natural depravity, and confirming in it. Hereby the sinner is emboldened in his way, and becomes a stranger to much of that shame and sorrow, reluctance and remorse, which he was sometimes-wont to feel.
2. Judicial, or inflicted from heaven.

#### **Lessons:**

1. Hence learn the reason of that mighty storm that is ordinarily felt in the breasts of true penitents upon their first becoming such.
2. How adorable is the grace of God, as to all that get safe to heaven; what joy will there be upon their arrival!
3. It need not seem strange that holy men are afraid of nothing so much as sin, and cannot allow themselves to follow a multitude to do evil Ex 23:2), it being too dear a compliment to be paid to any, to run the hazard of being hardened first, and so of perishing for company.
4. How dangerous is their mistake, who whilst under the power of sin, think their case good, because their consciences are quiet?

And with how many is it thus?

5. How great is our advantage in having the Bible and living under the gospel? By which we are warned of sin's deceitfulness and armed against it.

6. How desirable is the state of such as are in covenant with God, having chosen Him in Christ for theirs, and given up themselves unto Him. They are hereby become His special charge, as well as His peculiar delight.

7. Is the case so sad of being hardened in sin? Let the dread of this awaken a present and perpetual opposition to it in every one that would be safe.

(1) Begin at the root: see that corruption, as to its power and reign, be mortified within. Get by faith into union with Christ.

(2) Let conscience be instructed from the Word of God, and charge it to be faithful, and hearken to its voice.

(3) Beware of running upon temptation in a vain presumption you may come off safe. Your strength lies not in yourselves, but must come from heaven; and you have no promise of protection out of God's way.

(4) Keep the cross of Christ as much as possible in view, and remember it was sin that nailed Him to it.

(5) Solemnly renew your covenant with God, and often reflect upon it with approbation; that whenever tempted to sin, you may be able readily to answer, I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back Jdg 11:35). Thy vows are upon me, O God (Psa 56:12).

(6) Live under an awful sense of God's presence with you, and plead it with yourselves, that you may act accordingly.

(7) Frequently call yourselves to account. The beginnings of sin may be most hopefully resisted; but like a slight disease, may prove dangerous in the neglect, and threaten death.

(8) Use yourselves to a life of self-denial as to the flesh and the world.

(9) Keep up lively apprehensions of death and judgment approaching.

(10) Make your constant, serious application to heaven, for wisdom to discern, and grace to withstand the deceitfulness of sin. (D. Wilcox.)

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### **The lies of the temptress - A. Maclaren, D. D.**

There is a possible reference here, in this personification of sin, as leading men away by lies, to the story of the First Temptation. There, the weapons of the Tempter were falsehoods.

I. FIRST, THEN, MY TEXT SUGGESTS TO ME SIN'S LIES ABOUT THE BAIT. The old story is typical, and may stand as a welldeveloped specimen of the whole set of evil deeds. Either for the sake of winning a desirable object, or for the sake of avoiding some undesirable issue; we never do the wrong thing, and go away from God, except under a delusion that we shall be better and happier when we have got the desired thing than we should be without it. Now I do not mean to say that there is not a very solid reality in the pleasurable results of a great many wrong things. If a man chooses to sin to gratify sense, he does get the sensuous enjoyment out of it. But there is another question to be asked. You have got the thing you wanted; have you,--what then? Are you much the better for it? Are you satisfied with it? Was it as good as it looked when it was not yours? Is not the giant painted on the canvas outside the caravan a great deal bigger than the reality inside, when you go in to look at him? Is there anything that we have got by doing wrong for it, howsoever it may have satisfied the immediate impulse in obedience to whose tyrannous requirements we were stirred up to grasp it, which is worth, in solid enjoyment, what we gave for it? Having attained the desire, do we not find that it satisfies not us, but only some small part of us? If I might so say, we are like those men that old stories used to tell about that had swallowed some loathly worm. We feed the foul creeping thing within us, but ourselves continue hungry. Besides, sin's pleasures are false, because along with them all comes an after tang that takes the sweetness out of them. There is only one thing that promises less than it performs, and which can satisfy a man's soul; and that is cleaving to God.

II. AGAIN, NOTE THE LIES ABOUT THE HOOK. "Ye shall not surely die." I suppose that if any man had clear before him at the moment of any temptation, howsoever fiery and strong, the whole sweep of the consequences that are certainly involved in his yielding to it, he would pause on the edge, and durst not do it. But sin suppresses facts; and here are a few of the barbed points that she hides. She does not tell you anything about outward consequences. Every year there come into Manchester young men who fancy they can play the game and not pay the stakes. She suppresses the action of conscience. There is nothing more awful than the occasional swiftness and completeness of the revulsion of feeling between the moment before and the moment after. She suppresses the action of sin upon character. You cannot do a wrong thing, "departing from the living God," without thereby leaving an indelible mark upon your whole spiritual and moral nature. Loftier aspirations die out of you, the incapacity for better actions is confirmed, and that awful mysterious thing that we call "habit" comes in to ensure that once done, twice will be probable, and twice done, thrice and innumerable times will be almost certain. There is nothing more mystical and solemn about our lives than the way in which unthought of and trifling deeds harden themselves into habits, and dominate us, whether we will or no. And so the sin which once stood in front of us with a smile and tempted us, because it was desirable, afterwards comes behind us with a frown, and is a taskmaster with a whip. The flowery fetters become iron, and the thing once done gets to be our master, and we are held and bound in the chain of our sins. And more than that, there is the necessity for perpetual increase, heavier doses, more pungent forms of evil,

in order to titillate the increasing insensitiveness of the nature. You take a tiger cub into your house when it is little; it is prettily striped, graceful in its motions, playful and affectionate; and it grows up, and when it is big, it is the master of you, if it is not the murderer of you! Do not you take the little sin into your hearts. It will grow, and its claws will grow, and its ferocity will grow. And now all these consequences suggest the last of sin's suppressions that I would specify. They all make a future retribution a probable thing. And that future retribution is a plain and necessary inference from any belief at all in a God, and in a future life. But the tempting sin has nothing to say about that future judgment, or if it has, has only this to say: "Ye shall not die." You are like sailors that get into the spirit room in a ship when she is driving on the rocks, and, as long as you can get the momentary indulgence, never mind about what is coming.

III. THEN NOTICE AGAIN, THE LIES AS TO THE CRIMINALITY OF THE DEED, "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat?" is the insinuated suggestion that creeps into most men's minds. Just as housebreakers carry some drugged meat for the house-dogs, when they intend to break into some lonely farmhouse, so we are all adepts in applying gentle phrases to our own evil, while, if the same thing is done by anybody else, we shall flame up in indignation, as David did when Nathan told him about the man and his one ewe lamb. Therefore, it comes to this--do not you trust to instinctive utterances of inclination calling itself conscience. Remember that you can bribe conscience to say anything but that it is right to do wrong. You will get it to say anything that you teach it about what is wrong and what is not. And therefore you must find a better guide than conscience. You bare to enlighten it and educate it and check it, and keep it wakeful and suspicious, as the price of purity. The same set of lies about the criminality of our actions operates with still greater effect after the commission. I was speaking a moment or two ago about the sudden waking of conscience when the deed is done. But there is a worse thing than that, and that is when conscience does not wake.

IV. THE LAST WORD THAT! WISH TO SAY IS IN REFERENCE TO THE FALSEHOODS OF SIN IN REGARD TO THE DELIVERANCE THEREFROM. These other lies, like bubbles, sometimes burst. The first of them, about the pleasures, generally bursts as soon as the thing is done. The others about the pains and the criminality often disappear, when pricked by some thought of God and contact with Him. But the repertory of the deceiver is not empty yet. And she can turn her haled and bring out another set of lies, in order to retain her dominion. For the sin that said to you before you did it: "There is no harm in it; you do not need to do it again; it is only just once and it will be done with," says to you, after you have done it, when you begin to feel that it was wrong, and try to shake off its guilt and power: "You have done it how! You never can get away any more. The thing is past, and neither in regard of its consequences nor in regard of its power will you ever escape from it. What you have written you have written. You are mine!" And so she lays her iron claw upon the man and holds him. So sin lies to us just as she lied before. And I have to crone with the message that, of all her falsehoods none is more false and fatal than the falsehood that a sinful man cannot turn from his evil; conquer all his transgression; begin a new happy, clean life; and be sure of forgiveness from his Father in heaven. "Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness," has died that it may be possible to bring to us pure and true promises of lasting and satisfying blessedness, and to avert from each of us, if we will trust in the power of His blood, the worst and penal consequences of our transgression, and, if we will trust in the power of His imparted Spirit, to make our future altogether unlike our past, and deliver us from the habit and entail of our sins.

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#### **The deceitfulness of sin - Bp. S. Wilberforce**

Sin, we must remember, has, properly speaking, no separate independent being of its own. It is the spiritual and moral quality either of some act, or of the habitual inward tone of mind and spirit, of a moral agent; and it is a diseased and unnatural quality and state in such an agent which is described. But to this horrible work of sin men are, as the apostle's word imply, lured on by the deceitfulness of sin. What then is this? Sin being that disordered acting of the spiritual nature in which the will chooses that which is against the will of God, the deceitfulness of sin must mean that there is a tendency in this disease to conceal its own presence, and so to shut out from the sight of him in whom it is acting the evil which is being accomplished within him. That there is this attribute about it the very smallest acquaintance with our nature and its actings may easily convince us. For what else are all those fair names for evil, those easy judgments concerning it, which are everywhere conventionally current, but the working of this its deceitful power? Why is it that the fondness of lust is termed gallantry or pleasure? Why is it that the cold and heedless selfishness of debauchery is talked about as spirit and gaiety, but because sin's common working is thus utterly deceitful and untrue? But above all, this deceitfulness of sin may be seen in the false estimate which it leads men to form of their own moral and spiritual condition. And this in all ways. For, first, how does it blind men's eyes to their own actual condition. Most men would be marvellously startled if they suddenly learned what was the clear view which their daily intimates possessed of their weaknesses and faults. And why? Surely for no other reason than because they habitually judge themselves so partially, and shut their eyes so weakly to their own besetting sins. And as this first deceit as to the actual presence of evil in their characters is thus practised upon most men, so too plainly are they deceived also as to its growth within themselves! How little do men who give themselves up to it perceive the increase of sin within themselves. And this must be so. For every allowance of evil weakens in its own degree that special power of conscience by which it passes sentence on our actions. But once more, it is not only the actual presence of the evil, or the increase of the work of evil within them, which is hidden from those on whom it is passing, but they perceive nothing whatever of its deep spiritual significance. It is altogether altering their relation to the unseen world around them, and they know not of it. The adopting love of

Christ had gathered them into His family: His heart yearned over them; for His sake the Eternal Spirit wrought in them. He was ever beside them. But the deceitfulness of sin veils to them all these blessings. The heavenly world seems to withdraw itself. Nor is it only peace and joy that this man thus loses. This, again, increases in another way his own inability to see the evil of the sin which possesses him. For only under Christ's Cross, only in the full sight of His love and holiness, and bitter agony for us, can we see anything of the true evil and hatefulness of sin; and so its deceitfulness, which prevents his seeing those, deludes him wholly till it robs him of his soul. If these things are happening around, and it may be among us, what practical lessons should they enforce on us?

1. Surely, the need of a resolute watchfulness against these seductions. They who would walk safely amidst the deceitful whispers of an enchanted land, or hold on their course in spite of sounds so falsely sweet that they have lured every listener to destruction, find no escape save in stopping their ears to the voice of the enchanter. And so must it be now with those who would escape from the deceitfulness of sin within them. They must "watch and be sober."

2. But farther, this should be a time not only for self-searching, but for beginning resolutely in some par titular actions a course of more earnest service of God. And this course of more earnest service should not be any new way devised for ourselves, but the doing more completely and conscientiously, and as to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, our own appointed duty.

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### **The deceitfulness of sin - Dean Alford**

Our vital energy finds issue in three great regions: those of thought, of word, of deed. In each one of these there is duty, and there is fault. In each of them there is the voice of God speaking in our consciences, there is the written law of God guiding, confirming, furthering, that inward voice; in each of them there is in us the constant disposition to set conscience and to set God aside, and to become our own guides, our own masters. Let us then take each one of there in turn, and show in each how manifold sin is, how deceitful.

I. Sons of THOUGHT. Nothing is so deceitful as the taking account of our own thoughts and feelings. Memory cannot copy faithfully the picture which has faded away, but overlays and tricks it out with fresh and unreal colours. Still, there is no question that our real thoughts can be got at, and their liability to sin justly measured, if we will spend time and trouble over it. We may venture to say that the great burden of our sins of thought will be found to consist in a want of honest, conscientious adoption and following of what we know to be real and true. When selfish views spread before us in all their attractiveness, the fertile plains of Sodom tempting us to dwell in them, does the course of self-denial to which we are pledged instantly assert its claim? When the temper is roused by insult, when the pride is stung by contumely, when the self-opinion is buffeted by designed slight, and the tyrant fiend of revenge springs to his feet in a moment,—do our eyes see, or do they refuse to see, the Spirit of the Lord lifting His standard against him?

II. Sins of WORD. And here I shall not speak of bad and unholy and impure words, of evil speaking, lying, and slandering: these are manifest: if we fall into these, we know it, we repent of it; but I shall speak of sins of word more beneath the surface, into which when we fall, we do not know it, of which, when we have fallen into them, we are little accustomed to repent. And I believe such sins will mainly be found, as regards our dealings with men, in stating or not stating the very truth of our sentiments and feelings and beliefs. I am not now speaking of hypocrisy, nor of any wilful and conscious disingenuousness, hut of a general want of clear and fearless truthfulness. When will men come to feel that the blessed gospel of Christ never was and never can be the gainer by any false statement, any equivocation, any shrinking from dangerous truth or unwelcome fact? If again the effect of this timid untruthful religion be bad on a man's self, much more is it hurtful and fatal on others.

III. Sins of ACT AND DEED: doing what we ought not to do, leaving undone what we ought to do. Oh that there were in any of us the habit of referring our questioning thoughts at once to His verdict whom we profess to serve; of guiding our actions simply, humbly, fearlessly, by His precept and His example! If we were earnest like Him, humble like Him, wise like Him, we should recommend and adorn our unflinching course of Christian duty by quietness, by unobtrusiveness, by consideration for others, by knowledge what to say, and when, and to whom. It is not the busy protester against what other men do, it is not the man who is ever found up in arms against the usages of society, who does the good; but he who is gifted with sound judgment enough to overlook things indifferent, to join in practices which he himself would perchance not have chosen, it by so doing he may cheer, and bless, and hallow, and leaven, the society in which God has cast his lot. An unsocial, uncomplying, individualising life may be very flattering to pride; may serve as a salve to the conscience, and make a man fancy himself very good and pure; but there can be no doubt that such a course is a life-long sin, bringing dishonour on the blessed gospel of Christ, and hardening men's hearts against its influence.

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### **THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.**

The fishing frog, as described by Professor Forbes, is a most deceitful creature. This artful dodger lives to deceive and to destroy. On the top of its head it has two long, moveable, bony filaments, one of which has a silvery lustre; this is waved to and fro to tempt the little fish, which is attracted by it, expecting something to eat, while the monster, with its horrible mouth, lies half buried in the sand or mud beneath. Beneath every sin lies the hungry jaws of death. Sin has often the appearance of a silvery delight, and there may be a momentary pleasure in it, but "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

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J Knap writes that...

All know how this hardening takes place. It begins by permitting sin, in particular the secret sin, to which we cleave so closely with all the senses of our heart. If this sin be not opposed bravely in God's power, we will sink away in it deeper and deeper, while our conscience will register less and less opposition to it on a daily basis. In sin there is a numbing power, that makes even the conscience to be senseless, so that even she no longer raises her warning voice as loudly,—it is as if a thief creeps into our home and cuts first the cable of our alarm to disable any warning signal beforehand. And, of course, once the protesting inward voice has been brought to silence, the surrender to the sin becomes easier by the day and it even loses its humiliating character of evil to our soul's sense, it can even get so far, that we enjoy it. (!!!)

Oh, it is such a slow but certain process with the hardening of the heart,—a steadily callousing of the once so tender hand, or, like someone said strikingly, the freezing over of a water surface, that initially is covered with a skin thin layer that is even punctured by a needle falling upon it, but soon hardens to a heavy floor of ice, upon which we can travel with clanging sleighs.

This progress in hardening is, according to Scripture, to be blamed on the **deceitfulness of sin**. Sin acts in these rebellious ones like a seducer. She knows how to allure and how to whisper with a flattering voice, to convince us to make the present day of grace to pass by aimlessly. Only once more to enjoy,—and then we shall convert ourselves. To day we shall still sin,—and to morrow we shall become a saint. After all, God is good, He forgives manifoldly, is it not written in Scripture that He is of infinite mercy,—behold the language of the sly and unholy seducer.

Away with such **deceitful language**, and with such **pretentious piety**, and with such **sly prostitution** of the Scriptures! Rather let every one be exhorted, yes admonished daily, to be alert for the initial hardening, to listen respectfully to the callings of God to hear His voice presently, and to guard the tenderness of the conscience. (The Loins Girded. Ontario, Canada: Martien C. Vanderspek)

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In his book [The Vanishing Conscience](#) (which I highly recommend - click the link and read the reviews - all gave it 5/5 stars!) **John MacArthur** observed in a chapter entitled "Hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin" that...

The most ominous aspect of our culture's moral slide is that the problem tends to feed itself. Sin denied dulls the conscience. The writer of Hebrews warned about the danger of being "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13). Sin defies and deceives the human conscience, and thereby hardens the human heart. A sin-hardened heart grows ever more susceptible to temptation, pride, and every kind of evil. Unconfessed sin therefore becomes a cycle that desensitizes and corrupts the conscience and drags people deeper and deeper into bondage.

On the cultural level, for example, we can see that as **conviction of sin is silenced** and the **community conscience vanishes**, society becomes more corrupt and more tolerant of worse debauchery. The rapid erosion of social standards regarding obscenity and moral propriety provides abundant evidence of this phenomenon. What was shocking and unacceptable only a decade ago is now standard fare on network television. Lewd humor that would have been judged inappropriate outside the locker room not so long ago is now the main attraction in children's entertainment. And things are steadily growing worse. Just when "The Simpsons" seemed to be plumbing the depths of moral nihilism in animated cartoons, MTV introduced a couple of characters who make Bart Simpson look like a choirboy. Beavis, and his friend whose name is too crude to mention, epitomize the degeneracy of modern culture (**Ed**: Remember this book was published in 1996! Beavis is now the "choirboy" relative to the trash talk that pollutes not just shows during the "family hours" but even crude, off color, sexual innuendo-laden commercials not just for beer but even for candy and burgers!). **Everything that is vulgar, disrespectful, or illegal, they consider "cool"—and all that is good or sacred, they ridicule.** Beavis and his buddy are the heroes of the next generation. That is an appalling thought. How low can the culture sink? Evidence of serious moral decline is all around. ([MacArthur, J., F., Jr. The Vanishing Conscience. pp 57–58. Dallas: Word Pub](#)) (Bolding added)

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C H Spurgeon...

**THE PRICK OF A PIN AND A HEAVY BLOW** - "The prick of a pin maketh a man start, but a heavy blow stunneth him. David, when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, his heart smote him; but when he fell into adultery and blood, he was like one in a swoon."

Thus it is that a slight departure from right will startle the unsophisticated conscience, while a gross sin may stun it into a horrible insensibility. Much serious thought is suggested by this most striking simile. Among other things it teaches us to dread a benumbed or swooning conscience, for it may have been brought into that condition by a terrible sin. Better far to be morbidly sensitive, and condemn one's self needlessly, than to be hardened through the **deceitfulness of sin**. A quick and tender conscience is among the best gifts of grace; let those who have it guard its delicacy with jealous care.

Lord, let my conscience be as tender as the apple of my eye. As well-balanced scales are tremulous at the fall of a single grain of dust, so let the minutest sin set me on the move. Never, I beseech thee, permit me to become heavy with the intoxication caused by a deep draught of evil: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." (Flowers from a Puritan's garden, distilled and dispensed).

Sin slyly insinuates itself and by slow degrees prevails,  
Therefore must we carefully guard against it.  
--Spurgeon

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#### John Owen...

There are three false notions whereby the **deceitfulness of sin** deludes the souls of men:

**1. That it is one sin alone wherein alone they would be indulged** Let them be spared in this one thing, and in all others they will be exact enough...

One sin willingly lived in is as able to destroy a man's soul as a thousand.

**2. They judge that although they cannot shake off their sin, yet they will continue still to love God and abound in the duties of His worship...**

Where God is not loved above all, He is not loved at all.

**3. They determine that at such or such a season or time, after such satisfaction given unto their lusts or pleasures, they will utterly give over, so as that iniquity shall not be their ruin...**

He that will not now give over, say what he will and pretend what he will,  
never intends to give over, nor is it probable, in an ordinary way, that ever he will do so.

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#### Puritan Thomas Watson (from his excellent treatise on [Repentance](#))...

Sin is like oil, and God's wrath is like fire. As long as the damned continue sinning—so long will the fire continue scorching! "They cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they refused to repent of all their evil deeds!" Revelation 16:11 But men question the truth of this, and are like impious Devanax who, being threatened with hell for his villainies, mocked at it and said, "I will believe there is a hell when I come there—and not before!" We cannot make hell enter into men—until they enter into hell. If, for all this, men will persist in sin and are resolved upon a voyage to hell—who can hinder their damnation? They have been told what a soul-damning rock sin is—but if they will voluntarily run upon it and damn themselves—their blood is upon their own head!...

Sin is a mere cheat. While it pretends to please us, it beguiles us! Sin does as Jael did. First she brought the milk and butter to Sisera, then she pounded the tent peg through his head! (Jdg 5:26). Sin first courts, and then kills! It is first a fox—and then a lion. Whoever sin betrays—it kills! Those locusts in Revelation are fit emblems of sin: "They had gold crowns on their heads ... They had tails that stung like scorpions, with power to torture people" (Revelation 9:7, 8, 9, 10). Judas pleased himself with the thirty pieces of silver—but they proved deceitful riches (Mk 4:19, Pr23:5; Eccl 5:13; Lk 18:24; 1Ti 6:9,10,17; cp Acts 5:1-10). Ask him now how he likes his bargain!...

Sin is worse than hell. Torment has its epitome in hell—yet nothing in hell is as bad as sin. Hell is of God's making—but sin is not of God's making. Sin is the devil's creature. The torments of hell are a burden only to the sinner—but sin is a burden to God. In the torments of hell, there is something which is good, namely, the execution of divine justice. There is justice to be found in hell—but sin is a piece of the highest injustice. Sin would rob God of his glory, Christ of his purchase, the soul of its happiness. Sin is the most hateful thing—for it is worse than the torments of hell...

"The wicked know no shame." Zephaniah 3:5 - Many have sinned away shame. It is a great shame, not to be ashamed. "Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush!" (Je 6:15). The devil has stolen shame from men. When men have hearts of stone and foreheads of brass—it is a sign that the devil has taken full possession of them!

There is no creature capable of shame but man. The brute beasts are capable of fear and pain—but not of shame. You cannot make a beast blush. Those who cannot blush for sin, do too much resemble the beasts. There are some so far from this holy blushing, that they are proud of their sins. They are so far from being ashamed of sin, that they glory in their sins! They look on sin as a piece of gallantry. The swearer thinks his speech most graceful when it is interlarded with oaths. The drunkard counts it a glory that he is mighty to drink. But when men shall be cast into the fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter by the breath of the Almighty—then let them boast of sin! (From the recommended resource [Puritan Thomas Watson on Repentance](#))

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Alexander Maclaren addresses "**How Men May Deceive Themselves About Their Condition**" noting first that this could also be entitled...

**the self-illusions and compromises of sin.** These convictions will never, by themselves, keep a man from evil, but they may lead men to try to compromise, just as Balaam did. He would go, but he would not, for the life of him, curse; and he evidently thought that he was a hero in firmness and a martyr to duty.

He would not curse in words, but he did it in another way, by means of Baal-peer.

So we find men making compromises between duty and inclination; keeping the letter and breaking the spirit; obeying in some respects and indemnifying themselves for their obedience by their disobedience in others; very devout, attentive to all religious observances, and yet sinning on. And we find such men playing tricks upon themselves, and really deluding themselves into the idea that they are very good men!

This is the great characteristic of sin, its deceitfulness. It always comes as an 'angel of light,' like some of those weird stories in which we read about a strange guest at a banquet who discloses a skeleton below the wedding garment!

'Father of lies.' 'Nihil imbecillius denudate diabolo.' **The more one sins, the less capable he becomes of discerning evil.** Conscience becomes "*sophisticated*", and it is always possible to refine away its judgments.

'By reason of use have their senses exercised to discern.' 'Take heed lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' (See Maclaren's full sermon = **Numbers 22:6 "Balaam"**)

In another sermon **Maclaren** writes that...

The **deceitfulness of sin** tells **lies** about the bait:—**lies** about the hook that it hides; **lies** about the criminality of the act to which she would draw us; and, lastly, **lies** about the possibilities of deliverance. Let me touch on each of these in order. (I highly recommend reading Maclaren's excellent exposition entitled **The Lies of the Temptress**)

In his article "**Pastoral Counseling: Biblical Foundations and Framework**" Noel Due writes...

The noetic (= relating to mental activity or the intellect) effects of sin are real. Not only must hearts and minds be illuminated by the Holy Spirit to give entrance to God's Word, but even once the process of new birth is accomplished, sin's abiding presence affects the heart and mind until the end. As long as we are in this body we will suffer from the inbuilt **deceitfulness of sin**. We will be tempted, seduced, led astray and willingly subject to the wiles of world, flesh and devil. (Footnote #10 = The **deceitfulness of sin** is well recognized in the case of ministerial adultery, where pastors who have been caught up in such a sin will often declare that the love they have for the other person is so deep, and the return of affection so fulfilling that it patently must be God's will for this relationship to exist.)

Sin is anemia, irrational and unpredictable. It is not subject to reason or controlled by our mere willpower. Indeed the doctrines of original sin and total depravity indicate that every function of a person's mind and heart is affected by sin. The mind, emotions, will and conscience are alike subject to the deleterious affects of sin. Minds must be informed, with patient instruction and much love, and shaped according to the renewal of the Spirit through the Word. Emotions must be disciplined by faith to refuse the contemporary axiom, "I feel, therefore I am," and wills must be aligned to the command of God rather than the demands of the world. Consciences must be aligned to the gospel and (in rarer cases these days) be liberated from legalism to the



The devices by which sin [beguiles](#)

1. One of the most obvious ways in which it works this mischief is, by diverting the attention from that to which it ought to be directed. Man's power of attention is limited; it cannot be directed to all things at the same time; it must take them in succession. Neither should it bestow itself equally upon all things, but graduate its time and earnestness according to circumstance. Of this feature of our constitution sin, taking advantage, so fills the mind with other things, that no room is left for the things of religion. A man is thus made to forget God, by the simple obtrusion of other things upon his attention.

2. Sin deceives also by the false and captivating colours in which it decks out things forbidden. Their beauty was not their own. They wore a mask. It is no very uncommon thing for certain visions and appearances to pass before the mind, under the influence of disease, which wear all the lineaments of persons and things with which we are familiar, and yet possess no reality whatever. But not to take so violent a case for illustration; let us simply reflect how depression or hilarity of animal spirits affects all our views of things. The one will hang the brightest heaven with mourning; the other will shed an air of cheerfulness over the deepest gloom. Now it is somewhat in this way that sin deludes. It causes things to appear in unreal colours.

3. A third way, in which sin deceives, is by making us miscalculate time. What is our life? It is compared to a "watch in the night," to a "tale that is told," to a "vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," to a "race that is run," to a "battle that is fought," to the "labour of the day," to the dimensions of a "span." Yet, notwithstanding, may I not with all confidence ask whether his own feelings have not often virtually given the lie to these statements? Thus does sin deceive the young. To say nothing of the uncertainty of life, they are in error in regard to the length of it.

4. This property, which is specially named in the text, arises from our being creatures of habit. By the law of habit, the doing of a thing once, makes it easier to do it again, and creates an inclination towards the repetition of the act. Notice the manner in which the spider endeavours to secure the unwary insect, which has fallen into its web, and you have a pretty accurate representation of the process. One attenuated thread after another is woven round it, each easily broken, each in itself too trifling to be regarded or felt, but all, in their united strength, beyond its ability to break. There the victim lies, making mighty efforts to escape, but more and more hopelessly each successive moment. Thus it is, that sinful habit insensibly weaves around us its meshes. (W. Sparrow, LL. D.)

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## **C H Spurgeon - The deceitfulness of sin**

### **I. SIN HAS A SINGULAR POWER TO DECEIVE.**

1. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. It comes in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Intellectually, it comes with a question, or an inquiry. Ought we not to question and to inquire? Are we to receive everything implicitly? The question is, however, full often the thin end of the wedge, which Satan drives home in the form of carnal wisdom, doubt, infidelity, and practical atheism. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God's Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul! Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion, or an imagination; an airy thing, spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. The thought fascinates, and then the spell of evil begins its deadly work; thought condenses into desire, and desire grows to purpose, and purpose ripens into act. I have known a sin insinuate itself by the way of the repulsion of another sin. A man will fly from pride to meanness, from moroseness to jollity, from obstinacy to laxity. Thus the shutting of one gate may open another, and one sin may crawl in as another creeps out.

2. Sin is deceitful in its object, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or wilfully cast off the authority of righteousness. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present good will come of it. Thus are we lured and bird-limed like the silly fowls of the air. The object set before us is delusive: the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold, and yet as gold it thrusts itself upon our erring judgment.

3. Sin is deceitful, next, in the name it wears. It is very apt to change its title: it seldom cares for its own true description. Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays, and silver slippers to wear in fine society.

4. Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments which it uses with men. Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, "Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one?" The point of the rapier is small, and for that reason the more deadly. Then will sin raise the question, and say, "Is this really wrong? May we not be too precise? Are not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command?" Sin is great at raising difficult points of casuistry. He that wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself.

5. This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses which it frames afterwards.

6. The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises; for we shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies unto us.

7. Sin is deceitful in the influence which it carries with it. When yielded to, it tries to shut off the door of repentance.

### **II. THIS DECEITFULNESS HAS A HARDENING POWER OVER THE HEART.**

1. Partly through our familiarity with sin. We may look at hateful sin till we love it.

2. Then there follows on the back of this insensibility to sin an insensibility to the gospel.

### III. THIS DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, AND THIS TENDENCY TO BECOME HARDENED, NEED TO BE FOUGHT AGAINST.

1. The way to keep from hardness of heart, and from the deceitfulness of sin, is to believe. You shall find that, just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled.

2. If you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin confess it honestly before God. Pray that sin may appear sin: it cannot appear in a worse light. Thus thou shalt not so readily be caught in its traps and lures.

3. Cultivate great tenderness of heart. Do not believe that to grieve over sin is lowering to manhood; indulge thyself largely in sweet repentance. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

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## Peccatum est Deicidium

Thomas Brooks

"The deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13

Sin ...

- has its original from a deceitful subtle serpent,
- is the ground of all the deceit in the world,
- is the great deceiver of souls.

Sin ...

- debases the soul of man,
- defiles and pollutes the soul of man,
- renders the soul most unlike to God,
- who is the best and greatest;
- renders the soul most like to Satan,
- who is a very sea and sink of sin!

Sin robs the soul of ...

- the image of God,
- the holiness of God,
- the beauty of God,
- the glory of God,
- the righteousness of God.

**Sin is peccatum est Deicidium—a killing of God!**

"But they kept shouting—Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Luke 23:21

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To summarize, the readers are warned against being hardened by a trick which their **sin nature** may play on them. Mark it down that **sin** is always a **deceitful** thing, in that it promises to do that which it cannot do. Sin is always a lie. Any man who sins, who does the forbidden thing or who takes the forbidden thing, does so because he thinks that he will be happier for doing or taking that thing. Sin deceives him into thinking so. But the plain fact of experience is that an act or a possession which is the result of sin never brought happiness to any man. Long ago, Epicurus, with his strictly utilitarian morality, pointed out that sin can never bring happiness, because, apart from anything else, it leaves a man with the constant fear of being found out! Good logic from an unregenerate Gentile!

**Achan** is a classic example of one deceived by sin. As **Charles Simeon** says...

Achan at first contemplated only the satisfaction he should feel in possessing the Babylonish garment, and the comforts which the gold and silver would procure for him. The ideas of shame and remorse and misery were hid from him; or, if they glanced through his mind, they appeared as visionary, and unworthy of any serious attention. But O! with what different thoughts did he contemplate his gains, when inquisition was made to discover the offender! ([Simeon, C. Horae Homileticae Vol. 2: Numbers to Joshua Page 394](#))

Spurgeon...

If we preach against hypocrisy, hypocrites say, "Admirable! Admirable!" If we deal out threatenings against secret sin, secret sinners feel a little twinge, but forget it all and say, "An excellent discourse." They have hardened their neck against God's Word, have made their brows like flints and their hearts like adamant stones, and now they might just as well stay away from the house of God as not, for their soul has become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And yet would I have them refrain from the means of grace? No, for with God nothing is impossible...

Man loves his own ruin. The cup is so sweet that though he knows it will poison him, yet he must drink it. And the harlot is so fair, that though he understands that her ways lead down to hell, yet like a bullock he follows to the slaughter till the dart goes through his liver. Man is fascinated and bewitched by sin.

## The Deceitfulness of Sin

### C H Spurgeon

Read [The Deceitfulness of Sin](#), or [you can also listen to it - it will be one hour you will not regret](#)

SIN is the greatest evil in the universe. It is the parent of all other ills. All manner of evils draw their bitterness from this fount of wormwood and gall. If a man had every possession mortal could desire, sin could turn every blessing into a curse; and, on the other hand, if a man had nothing for his inheritance but suffering, but stood clear from all sin, his afflictions, his losses, his deprivations might each one be a gain to him. We ought not to pray so much against sickness, or trial, or temptation, or even against death itself, as against sin. Satan himself cannot hurt us, except as he is armed with the poisoned arrows of sin. Lord, keep us from sin. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." There is no evil like the evil of sin: deliver us from it, O Lord!

Alas! we are sadly prone to sin, and evil has great influence over us. When I say this, I refer not only to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins," in whom sin is the great reigning power, for they are the servants of sin; but I refer also to the people of God. Even we that have been born again, and are, in a measure, sanctified by the Spirit of God; even we, I say, have a fleshly nature (see flesh), whose tendencies are evil, whose desires draw towards sin. How soon we slip! How much we need to be held up! How ought we daily to cry for grace, lest we also should be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"!

... If sin comes to us as sin, we are swift to hate it, and strong to repel it, by the grace of God. When we are walking with God, we only need to know that an action is forbidden, and straightway we avoid it; we shun the evil thing when it is plainly evil.

But sin puts on another dress, and comes to us speaking a language which is not its own; and so, even those who would avoid sin as sin, may, by degrees, be tempted to evil, and deluded into wrong. It is well when sin carries its black flag at the mast-head; for then we know what we are dealing with.

The deceitfulness of sin is most ruinous. We have grave cause to watch and pray against secret sins, veiled sins, popular sins, fascinating sins, deceitful sins. May God grant that the words which I may now utter may set us on our watch-tower, and excite all our faculties to enquire diligently, lest we be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

### SIN'S DECEIVING POWER

... **Sin Has A Singular Power To Deceive.** We have only to look back to the beginning of our race to be sure of this. Eve, in the garden, was pure, intelligent, and filled with good dispositions: her faculties were well balanced, for no original sin or natural depravity had put her mind out of order. Yet that lovely woman, without a taint upon her heart or will, perfect as she came from her Maker's hand, was overcome by Satan, who embodied in himself the deceitfulness of sin. The serpent played his part right cunningly with the woman, and soon withdrew her from her loyal obedience to the Lord God. She began to question, to parley, to argue with rebellious suggestions, and after a while she put forth her hand, and she took of the fruit which had been forbidden, and she gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat. If man in his perfectness was so readily deceived by sin, what think you of yourself, fallen and inclined to evil as you are? Will not sin soon deceive you? I will even go further back than the garden; for the serpent who was the instrument of evil in the garden, was once an angel of God. Lucifer, the light-bearer, son of the morning, once stood high in the hierarchy of spirits; but sin entered into his heart, and the sublime angel became a loathsome fiend. Lucifer became Satan, as prompt for evil as once he had been swift for good. If sin overcame angels, can we fight with it? If sin

entangled in its thrice-cursed net even the pure spirits of heaven, what, think ye, sons and daughters of fallen parents, will not ye soon be deceived by it, unless the grace of God shall make you wise unto salvation? Since your hearts are deceitful, and sin is deceitful, you are in peril indeed.

The deceitfulness of sin will be seen in several points, to which I call your attention.

**Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us.** Sin does not uncover all its hideousness, nor reveal its horrible consequences; but it comes to us in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Intellectually, it comes with a question, or an inquiry. Ought we not to question and to enquire? Are we to receive everything implicitly? The question is, however, full often the thin end of the wedge, which Satan drives home in the form of carnal wisdom, doubt, infidelity, and practical atheism. The practice of sin may be encouraged by a doubt as to its penalty. "Yea, hath God said?" is the speculative question which is meant to undermine the foundations of godly fear in the heart. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God's Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul!

Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion, or an imagination; an airy thing, spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. You do not think of committing the fault, nor even of talking of it; but you think of it pleasantly, and view it as a thing bright and lustrous to the imagination. The thought fascinates, and then the spell of evil begins its deadly work: thought condenses into desire, and desire grows to purpose, and purpose ripens into act. So slyly doth sin come into the soul, that it is there before we are aware of it.

I have known a sin insinuate itself by the way of the repulsion of another sin. A man has wasted his substance in profligacy; and by way of repentance, in after days he becomes a miser — greedy, wretched, living only for himself and his hoard. So have I seen the publican reform and develop a Pharisee. The pendulum went sadly far in this direction, and now, to make amends, it swings too far the other way. The shivering fit follows upon the burning heat — it is but the same fever of sin in diverse phases. A man will fly from pride to meanness, from moroseness to jollity, from obstinacy to laxity. Thus the shutting of one gate may open another, and one sin may crawl in as another creeps out. You set all your guards to keep the northern border, and the enemies come up from the south, taking you at unawares. You pursue a virtue till you hurry into a vice, and shun one evil so much that you fall into a worse.

**Sin has a way of adapting itself to us and to our circumstances.** One man is of a sanguine temperament, and he is tempted to speculate, to gamble, and ultimately to become dishonest. Another man is of a sober frame of mind, and he is tempted to be melancholy, disputatious, peevish, rebellious against God. To the young man sin will come with fire for passions, which are all too ready to blaze; to the old man sin will come with the chill frost of parsimony, or the frost of sloth, or the canker of care. Sin's quiver has an arrow for the rich, and a dart for the poor: it has one form of poison for the prosperous, and another for the unsuccessful. This master fisherman in the sea of life does not use the same bait for all sorts of fish; but he knows the creatures he would capture. If sin find thee poor as an owlet, it will tempt thee to envy, or to steal, or to doubt God, or to follow crooked ways of gain. If sin find thee abounding in riches, it will follow quite another tack, and lure thee on to self-indulgence, or to pride, or worldly fashion. Satan knows more about us than we know about ourselves: he knows our raw places, and our weak points, and in what joint there was a breakage in our youth. Sin, like the north wind, finds out every cranny in the house of manhood, and comes whistling in where we fondly dreamed that we were quite screened from its intrusion. Sin creeps towards us as a lion stealthily draws near to his prey, or as the Red Indian creeps towards his victim without sound of foot or stir of twig. Beware of the sin which, like Agag, comes delicately. Watch well against the temptation whose words are smoother than butter, but inwardly they are drawn swords.

**Next, sin is deceitful in its object, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result.** We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or wilfully cast off the authority of righteousness. We are not invited to do these things for their own sake. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present good will come of it. The man thinks, when he yields to sin, that he shall enjoy an additional pleasure, or shall gain an extra profit, or at least shall avoid a measure of evil, and escape from something which he dreads. He does the wrong for the sake of what he hopes will come of it. In brief, he does evil that good may come. Thus, the seeming good is dangled before the short-sighted creature, man, as the bait before the fish. In every case, this object is a piece of deceit. Evil does not lead to good, nor sin promote our real profit: we are fooled if we think so. Yet, in most cases, the man does not commit the sin with the design of breaking the law of God, and defying his Maker, but because he fancies that something is to be gained; and, in his judgment, he better understands what is good for him even than the Lord God, by whose wisdom he ought to be guided. Just as in the case of the old serpent, the argument is — God refuses you that which would be for your advantage, and

you will be wise to take it. The arch-deceiver insinuated that God knew that if Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit their eyes would be opened, and they would be as gods; and therefore, to keep them under subjection, he denied them the charming fruit. Perhaps Milton's idea is right. "See what this fruit has done for me," says the serpent; "I, a mere reptile, am now able to speak and argue like a man. Go, take the fruit, and you, as men, will rise to the rank of God." Thus are we lured and bird-limed like the silly fowls of the air. The object set before us is delusive: the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold, and yet as gold it thrusts itself upon our erring judgment. This deceitfulness of sin is everywhere present: the street, the house, the private room, all come to be enchanted ground unless we dwell in God. Are we not often caused to think that we could make at least a little gain, or do a measure of extra good, if we might just to a small degree quit the strait and narrow way? This is falsehood, base as hell.

**Sin is deceitful, next, in the names it wears.** It is very apt to change its title: it seldom cares for its own true description. Fine words are often used to cover foul deeds. We read, at times, in the newspapers, of gentlemen who have an alias, or possibly half-a-dozen: in such cases, there is always a reason for it. Sin has many names by which it would disguise its real character. In his "Holy War," Mr. Bunyan tells us that Covetousness called himself by the name of Prudent-thrifty; Lasciviousness was named Harmless-mirth; and Anger was known as Good-zeal. Nowadays, anger is known as "proper spirit," and infidelity is "Advanced Theology." Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays, and silver slippers to wear in fine society. The paint-brush and the powder-box are much used upon the wrinkled countenance of sin, to make it look fair and beautiful. The fig-leaf is not only worn on the man's body; but sin itself puts on the apron. To hide the nakedness of sin is the great desire of Satan; for thus he hopes that even the better sort may fall in love with a decent evil, though they might have shunned an odious transgression. Alas, how sadly prone are men to call things by false names! Even those who profess to be godly men, when they are indulging sin, will speak of it as though it were no raven, black as night, but a dove, with its wings covered with silver. I knew one who often drank to excess; but he spoke of himself as obliged to "take a little for his health." He was not drunk, but excited; and if he shouted uproariously, it was caused by his convivial temperament. This dear innocent only took "a glass" or a "drop"; and yet one might not be further off the truth if he described him as taking a barrel or a hogshead. Diminutives are names of endearment, and men would not talk of their sins as such little things, unless they loved them dearly. To-day, "worldliness" is "being abreast of the age"; false doctrine is described as "advanced thought." Indifference to truth is liberality, heresy is breadth of view. Yet, names do not alter things. Call garlic perfume, and it remains a rank odour. Style the fiend an angel of light, and he is none the less a devil. Sin, call it by what names you may, is still evil, only evil, and that continually. Hear how our God cries concerning it: "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate"! Lord, save us from the wolf in the sheep's clothing! May we have grace to see through the mask of sin, detect its loathsome face, and turn from it with full purpose of heart!

**Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the argument which it uses with men.** Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, "Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one? There is no need to boggle over so small a matter as this. It is not right, but still it is a mere trifle, unworthy of notice. Do it! do it!" My friends, can there be such a thing as a small sin? The point of the rapier is small, and for that reason the more deadly. That which grieves the Lord cannot be a little evil. To pluck the fruit from the forbidden tree was of all actions the simplest, yet brought it death into the world, with all its train of woe; and that which seems most trifling may have infinite consequences following in its track.

**Then will sin raise the question, and say, "Is this really wrong?"** May we not be too precise? Are not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command? "Sin is great at raising difficult points of casuistry." Are there not some points of view in which this act may be allowable, though from more usual points of view it must certainly be regarded as an unhallowed thing?" He that wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself. He that has begun to seek an excuse is on the border-land of the enemy. He that is loyal to the core and true to his King in everything, makes short work of questions; for when he is not sure that a thing is right he lets it alone.

**The deceitfulness of sin creates in the mind a tendency to do evil because others have done so** We have known people so eager to excuse sin that they cry, "Look at Noah, at David, at Peter," and so on; as if the fault of others were an excuse for them. It is true that these men went wrong, and were restored; but yet they suffered greatly. That is a vile mind which eats up the sins of God's people as men eat bread. Arguing for the indulgence of sin because of the failings of good men, is not only folly, but wickedness. What if a man was saved who had taken poison, shall I therefore drink the deadly draught? Some time ago, a person sought to blow out his brains with a pistol; he still lives; and shall I therefore put a revolver to my forehead? Yet such

detestable arguments often suffice to mislead men, through the deceitfulness of sin. Beware of the witchery of sin!

With feeble minds the argument is, "Beware lest you be singular. As well be out of the world as out of the fashion. When you are at Rome you must do as Rome does." Weak minds are plentiful, and to these, to be thought singular and odd, is a thing to be dreaded and shunned: they must be in the swim, though the water should be of the foulest. To them it would be next door to a crime or a calamity to be out of the fashion. To some of us this is no temptation, for we prefer to quit the crowd and walk alone; but to the bulk of people this is a mighty argument, and yet a most deceitful one. He who has God on his side is in the majority; and if all the world go with us on the wrong road it is not a whit the safer.

**Sin has often whispered in the vain minds of men, "This action might be very wrong for other people, but it will not be evil in you.** Under your present circumstances, you may take leave to overlook the command of God. True, you would severely condemn such a sin in another; but in yourself it is quite another matter. Things must be left to your superior discretion. You who do so much that is good, and are such a remarkable person, you may venture where others should not." Sin will also plead with you that your circumstances are such that they furnish you with an excellent justification: you cannot do otherwise than make an exception to the general rule, under the singular conditions in which you are now placed. It tempts you to put forth your hand unto iniquity, arguing that it is the quick way, and the only way, out of your present difficulties. This is specious reasoning: yet are men foolish enough to be swayed by it.

**Sin will also flatter a man with the notion that he can go just so far, and no farther, and retreat with ease.** He can tread the verge of grime, and yet be innocent. Another person would be in great danger; but this self-satisfied fool thinks that he has such power over himself, and that he is so intelligent, and so experienced, that he can stop at a safe point. This moth can play with the candle, and not singe its wings. This child can put its finger between the bars, and yet never burn himself. I know you, my self-contained friend, and I know your boast that you can stand on the edge of a cliff, and look down upon the foaming sea, and while other people's heads grow giddy, your brain is clear, and your foot is firm. You may try the experiment once too often. The deceivableness of sin is such that it makes those most secure who are most in peril. Oh, for grace to watch and pray, lest we also become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"!

**This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses which it frames afterwards.** It needs a great general to cover a retreat, and conduct it to a safe conclusion. Sin knows how to furnish a rear-guard for itself, lest it be assailed by the troops of repentance. To screen the conscience from regret is one of the efforts of deceitful sin. "Ah!" says the man to himself, "I did wrong; but what can you expect of poor flesh and blood?" To hear him talk, you would think him a pitiable victim, rather than a blameworthy offender. With a sham tear in his eye, he lays this flattering unction to his soul — that he is weak, but not wicked; he was compelled to do wrong; he would not have thought of it had there not been a necessity. Beware of aptness in the making of an excuse, and above all, beware of casting the blame of sin on providence, or on God.

**Sin will also add, "And, after all, though you were wrong, yet you were not so bad as you might have been; and, considering the temptation, you may wonder at your own moderation in transgression.** On the whole, you have behaved better than others would have done." Thus the sinner will weave a garment out of the cobwebs of his sins. Self-righteousness is poor stuff when it can be fashioned even out of our faults. Such is the deceivableness of sin, that it makes itself out to be praiseworthy.

**Then sin will suggest, "Well, you can soon make up for lost time. Live nearer to God, and be more useful! and then your little divergence will soon be made up."** It even ventures coarsely to propose a price for pardon. "Give something extra to the good cause, and make amends for offenses." The old Popish idea of purchasing pardon by some extra piece of religion comes up in many forms.

"Ah!" you say, "surely nobody hears such deceitful talk!" Has sin never whispered all this to you? If it has not, then it has taken another way of deceiving you; but deceive you it will, unless Almighty grace shall keep you ever on the watch against its devices.

**The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises;** for we shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies unto us. It promises liberty, and the man who yields to it becomes the veriest slave. It promises light, and the man gives up the old faith to go after the new light, and before long the darkness thickens about him into sevenfold midnight. Sin promises elevation of mind and spirit, and before long the wretch is worldly, pleasure-loving, grovelling, superstitious. Sin keeps none of its promises, save only to the ear. Holiness is truth; but sin is a lie. Sin is false through and through: it promises pleasure, and it leads to

misery; it feigns a heaven, but inflicts a real hell.

**Once more, sin is deceitful in the influence which it carries with it.** At first sin cultivates a free and easy bearing, and it says to the sinner, "Don't think. Leave consideration to older heads."

**'I count it one of the wisest things  
To drive dull care away.'**

The guilty one goes on day after day without looking to his way. His happiness lies in carelessness. He hurries downward to destruction, and it is enough to him that the road is easy. With a laugh and a joke, he puts off serious things till to-morrow. He is a free-thinker, and, to a large extent, a free actor, too: those who are near him often find him making too free. Yes, but he is being deceived, and by-and-by, when conscience wakes up, he will find it so. Out of his own mouth will come the death-warrant of his jollity. In those more serious days, what does sin say? — "You have provoked the Spirit of God, and there is no mercy for you. Do not listen to the preacher of the gospel, it is impossible that you should be forgiven. Your case is hopeless; you are finally condemned, and there is no changing the verdict. As for the promises of God, they are not for such a sinner as you are; you are given up to despair, and you will, without doubt, perish everlastingly." This is the opposite pole of sin's deceiving: for, though it has changed sides, it is still deceiving. Despair is as much a sin as profanity: to doubt God is as truly a crime as to take pleasure in uncleanness. Thus will sin, by any means, by all means, endeavor to keep men under its tyranny, so as to work their ruin. Let no man in this place think that he cannot be deceived; he is already deluded by his pride. Let no woman dream that she has come to such a state of perfection that she cannot be deluded by sin: she is even now in imminent peril. We have a cunning enemy, and we have no wit of our own wherewith to match the subtlety of the old serpent, and the deceitfulness of sin. Unless we call in the help of him who is "the Wisdom of God," we shall be led as an ox to the slaughter, and perish in our folly.

### **SIN'S HARDENING POWER**

I want you, in the second place, to notice very carefully that This Deceitfulness Has A Hardening Power Over The Heart: "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

#### **How does that come about?**

**Partly through our familiarity with sin.** We may look at hateful sin till we love it. It has the eye of a basilisk, and its gaze is fascinating. At first you are shocked by sin; but if you see it every day it will cease to distress you. Persons who have never heard profane language are greatly grieved as they go down the streets of London; and yet even good people who live in certain localities come to hear it without horror. This is one of the sad influences of sin, it makes the heart horny by contact with it. The lion in the fable alarmed the fox when first he saw him, but soon he ceased to tremble at him, and at last made him his companion. Familiarity with sin makes the conscience dull, and at length deadens sensibility.

**Security in wrong-doing leads also to this kind of hardening.** A man has been dishonest: he is found out, and he suffers for it. I could almost thank God, for now he may cease from his evil course. But one of the greatest curses that can happen to a man is for him to do wrong with impunity: he will do it again, and again, and again, and he will proceed from bad to worse. I am always glad when I hear of a young gambler whose pocket is cleaned out at his first venture: if he has any wit he will quit the way of destruction; at least, we hope he will. But if he gains at first he will stake more and more, and become a confirmed gamester. It is just so with sin: its deceitfulness is assisted by a man's being able to go a little further and a little further without any great hurt appearing to come of it: for the heart grows used to the increasing heat, and is hardened to it, till he can live in a furnace heated seven times hotter by sin. Sinners descend by an inclined plane till they find themselves far down in the abyss, and think it impossible to rise out of it.

**Then there follows on the back of this insensibility to sin an insensibility to the gospel.** I think I could mention some who come here who once trembled under the Word; but they do not tremble now. They come still, because they like to pick out the few smart bits the preacher may say, or the witty anecdotes that he may let fall; but nothing touches their conscience or arouses their fears now. If there be a sermon that is likely to disturb them, they play the part of the adder, which will not hear. I think with sadness of one, who, in reply to the remark, "What a terrible sermon we had this morning!" answered, "I never pay any attention to that kind of thing. I only listen to him when he is comforting us." Hypocrites get into such a condition at last, that if all the apostles were to preach to them, and Jesus himself were to denounce the judgments of God, they would simply make an observation upon the style of the address, or remark that it was a very searching discourse; but as for being themselves moved, they are so "past feeling" that nothing comes home to them. The devils



believe and tremble; but these profess to believe every truth, but trembling is not for them.

**In time comes in the help of unbelief** When a man begins to doubt his Bible, to doubt the atonement, to doubt the wrath to come, and so on, there is generally a cause for it; and that cause is not always intellectual, but moral and spiritual. "There is something rotten in the state of Denmark"; I mean something rotten in the heart, and this makes something rotten in the head. Very naturally a man does not like that truth which does not like him. That which condemns him he tries to condemn. A truth makes him uneasy, and so he tries to doubt it, and the tone of society soon helps him to discover a stale objection which will answer his turn, and enable him to set up in business as an unbeliever. Then he ceases to feel the preaching; for, as a rule, we only feel under the gospel in proportion as we believe it to be true; and if we persuade ourselves that it is all a myth, or a fiction, we have made a pillow for our guilty heads.

**One of the worst points about hardening in sin is companionship in it** Evil men seek other evil men to be their associates. Oh, how many are ruined by company! We do not wonder that they get no good on Sundays, when we know where they spend their week evenings. Who are their chosen companions when they take their pleasure? Many a man will do, when connected with others, what he himself would never have thought of doing. Inasmuch as others are of the same mind, he joins hand in hand with them, and encourages himself in evil. The daring, the looseness, the profanity, the infidelity of abler persons tempt the weak-minded to venture where else they would have been afraid to go. So the deceitfulness of sin which led the man to seek evil company leads to the further hardening of his heart by that company.

O sirs! your hearts are every day either softening or hardening. **The sun that shines with vehement heat melts the wax, but it, at the same time, hardens the clay.** The effect of the gospel is always present in some degree: it is a savor of life unto life, or also a savor of death unto death, to all who hear it. You cannot listen to my plain rebukes and earnest warnings without growing worse, if you do not grow better.

Pray God to give you a lively conscience; and when you have it, do nothing to deaden it. It is much better even to be morbidly sensitive, and fear that you are wrong when you are right, than to grow careless as to whether you are right or wrong, and so to go on blindly till you fall into the ditch of open sin. "Do professing Christians ever do this?" Do they not do it? Is not this the heart-break of pastors, the dishonor of the church, the crucifying of our Lord afresh? O Lord, preserve us from it, lest any one of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!

### **FIGHTING SIN'S DECEITFULNESS**

Now I conclude by a practical observation, that This Deceitfulness Of Sin, And This Tendency To Become Hardened, Need To Be Fought Against. How is it to be done? I will not keep to my text just now, but enlarge the scope of my discourse by taking in the context.

The way to keep from hardness of heart, and from the deceitfulness of sin, is to believe. We read, "To whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Believe! — faith has saved you. Believe! faith will save you! Believe! — faith has brought you to Christ. Believe! — it will keep you to Christ. Believe against the present temptation. Believe against all future deceitfulness of sin.

You shall find that, just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled. Under the strong light of a living faith you see through the sinful imposture, and you no longer put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; but under the half light, the twilight, the darkness of a questioning, half-hearted faith, you cannot see the true color of an act, and you are easily deceived.

Believe thou in the living God, and in His righteousness, and in thy obligation to serve Him — then sin will appear exceeding sinful.

Believe in Christ, Who took thy sin, and bare it in His own body on the tree — then sin will be seen in its black colors.

Believe in the Holy Ghost, by Whose power thou canst be delivered from the deceitfulness of sin; and as thou believest, so shall it be unto thee, and thou shalt stand fast where the half-believer slides.

The next advice I would give is this — if you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin confess it honestly before God. It is necessary to lay bare your heart before the living God. Though sin call itself by another name, do thou call it by its right name. When thou hast sinned, make no excuses for thyself; but with weeping and

lamentation cry, "Lord, I have sinned."

Tell the Lord all the evil connected with your transgression, and try therein to spy out and humbly learn the villany of thy heart, the falseness of thy nature, the crookedness of thy disposition, the loathsomeness of thy corruptions.

Pray that sin may appear sin: it cannot appear in a worse light. Thus thou shalt not so readily be caught in its traps and lures. It lays its snares in the darkness: keep thine eyes open. It digs its pits, and covers them most cunningly: look before thou puttest thy foot down. Tread very cautiously; for thy way is full of pitfalls.

When thou hast sinned, then confess the great evil of thy wickedness; for this humble penitence will be not only thy way to pardon, but to future purity. Oh, that the Spirit of God may teach thee this!

Again, cultivate great tenderness of heart. Do not believe that to grieve over sin is lowering to manhood; indulge thyself largely in sweet repentance. Do not think that to yield to the power of the Word, and to be greatly affected by it, shows thee to be weak; think rather that this is an infirmity in which thy strength lies.

As for myself, I would be swayed by the Word of God as the ripe corn is swayed by the summer wind. I would be by God's Spirit as readily moved as the leaves of the aspen by the breeze. I would be sensitive to the gentlest breath of my Lord. God grant that we may have a conscience quick as the apple of an eye! A conscience seared as with a hot iron is the sure prelude of destruction. God save us from a heart over which sin has cast a coat of callous insensibility! ([The Deceitfulness of Sin](#)) (or [you can also listen to it - it will be one hour you will not regret!](#))

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### **The slippery and insidious nature of vice!** by William Sprague from "[Lectures to Young People](#)

"The deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13

How insidious is sin! From small and almost imperceptible beginnings, it gradually makes its way, until it reduces the whole man to its dominion, and brings into captivity every affection and faculty of the soul. Sin first throws out the bait of pleasure, and flatters its victim on to forbidden ground; then it makes him the sport of temptation; and does not give him over until he is fast bound in the chains of eternal death!

In its very nature, sin is deceitful; its very element is the region of false appearances, and lying promises, and fatal snares. When it addresses itself to the unwary youth, it puts on a smiling countenance, and makes fair pretensions, and takes care to conceal its hideous features, until, like a serpent, it has entwined him with its deadly coils, and rendered his escape impossible!

You may venture into the path of vice with that most foolish of all notions--that you shall retreat early enough to save your soul. Alas, I fear you have not yet learned the slippery and insidious nature of vice! As well might you think to take the deadly viper into your bosom, and render him harmless by flattering words; or as well might you drink down the fatal poison, and expect to stop its progress in your system, when the blood had curdled at your heart!

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**Rod Mattoon - deceitfulness of sin illustrated by "floating pumpkins"** - Satan will use the same type of tactics that hunters use in Africa. The story is told of a certain African tribe that learned an easy way to capture ducks in a river. Catching their agile and wary dinner would be a feat indeed, so these hunters formulated a plan.

The tribesmen learned to go upstream, place a pumpkin in the river, and let it slowly float down into the flock of ducks. At first, the cautious fowl would quack and fly away. After all, it wasn't ordinary for pumpkins to float down the river! But the persistent tribesmen would subsequently float another pumpkin into the re-gathered ducks. Again they would scatter, only to return after the strange sphere had passed. Again, the hungry hunters would float another pumpkin. This time the ducks would remain, with a cautious eye on the pumpkin, and with each successive passing, the ducks would become more comfortable, until they finally accepted the pumpkins as a normal part of life.

When the natives saw that the pumpkins no longer bothered the ducks, they hollowed out pumpkins, put them over their heads, and walked into the river. Meandering into the midst of the tolerant fowl, they pulled them down one at a time. Roast duck was on the menu for evening supper.

In the same manner, we can be deceived by tolerating pumpkins of perversity in our own lives. We get use to them day after day. We may even conclude that these sins will not harm or hurt us at all, and before we know it, we are drowning in destruction. Liquor, drugs, sensuality, or sexual immorality may not seem like a big deal after a while when these things are tolerated or when you participate in them. Sooner or later, however, they pull you under the water and destroy you. Beware of being deceitful and being deceived. May we heed Paul's warnings.

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**Steven Cole** - Sin fools us into thinking that it will get us out of our current problems and will deliver what we want, and that obedience to God will deprive us of what we want.

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#### **Rod Mattoon** on deceitfulness of sin -

Burt Hunter, a newspaper reporter and photographer in Long Beach, California, found himself on a strange mission one foggy morning. He was scheduled to interview and take pictures of a woman snake charmer. When Burt visited the woman's home, he was surprised to find that she lived in a very nice, upper-class neighborhood. The woman herself didn't look like someone who played with snakes. Burt couldn't help mentioning that fact to her. "I don't understand why a wealthy, attractive woman such as yourself, is engaged in this kind of business," he said. "It seems awfully dangerous to me."

The woman smiled and said, "Oh, I don't do it because I have to. It's a fascinating hobby. I really like the element of danger involved. Someday soon I plan to give it up and spend more time with my flowers. I can quit this any time I want to." While Burt set up his equipment, the woman brought in baskets containing cobras. She confidently lifted some of the deadly snakes as he snapped pictures of her handling them.

After replacing the snakes in their baskets, she cautioned, "Be especially quiet now and don't make any quick moves. I'm going to take out my newest snake. It isn't completely used to me yet."

The woman lifted the new snake out of its basket, then suddenly stiffened. "Something's wrong," she whispered to the photographer. "I'm going to have to put him back." She opened the basket slowly and began to lower the snake into it.

With a lightning-fast jab, the cobra buried its fangs into the woman's wrist. The woman forced the snake into the basket and clutched her arm. She spoke calmly to Burt, "Go quickly to my medicine chest and bring the snake serum. Hurry!"

Trembling, Burt ran to the restroom and returned with the precious vial. The woman instructed him to take out the syringe and fit the needle on. Then she told him how to withdraw the serum. Burt struggled with the unfamiliar task, his hands shaking badly. He braced his arm against the table as he tried desperately to get the needle into the vial. Suddenly he gasped. His clumsy fingers had crushed the tiny bottle. The serum, now useless, dripped through his fingers and onto the floor.

"Tell me," he urged. "Where can I get another?" In a quiet voice she responded, "That was my last one." The woman's agony ended when she died a few hours later. Burt's agony, however, continued for the rest of his life. He often recalled what the woman had said that day: "I can quit this anytime I want to." Such a statement is made by someone who is arrogant.

Beloved, we all know people who are involved in behavior that is just as dangerous as playing with poisonous snakes. There are people who say, "I can quit this any time I want to," but for some reason, they never do until it's too late. Do not underestimate the venom of sinful living. If you are engaged in sinful habits and living, stop before it's too late. Don't let your arrogance deceive you into thinking that living in sin will not hurt you or you can kick some bad habit any time you wish.

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#### **Richard Phillips - A Remedy for Unbelief**

Surely, Israel's example alone is enough to alarm us with regard to the matter of unbelief. It is with this in mind that, with perhaps a new earnestness and sense of urgency, we turn to the remedy for unbelief contained in this passage. This remedy comes in the form of two exhortations, one that relates to ourselves and one that relates to others. First, the writer warns, "Take care, brothers," a command that is rightly taken as "Watch out" (Heb. 3:12). To this he adds, "Exhort one another every day" (Heb. 3:13).

This is an excellent instruction for us today. We are to exert a watchful guard over our own hearts and come alongside others in the church to exhort them to do likewise. John Calvin explains why this is so needful:

As by nature we are prone to fall into evil, we have need of various helps to help us in the fear of God. Unless our faith is repeatedly encouraged, it lies dormant; unless it is warmed, it grows cold; unless it is aroused, it gets numb. [The writer of Hebrews] therefore wishes them to stimulate one another by mutual encouragement, so that Satan will not steal into their hearts and by his falsehoods lead them away from God.

The Greek word for "exhort" is *parakaleō*. The prefix *para* means "to come alongside," and the verb *kaleō* means "to call out." The picture, then, is that we are to come alongside one another daily, exhorting one another in the practice of Christian faith.

Christianity is not an individual but a team endeavor. So if we do not know the nature of our fellow believers' struggles, and if we do not share ours with them, then we will never be able to follow through with this command. The result, in that case, will be that people among us will fall prey to sin. Therefore we are commanded to be watchful for just these things in the body of Christ, thereby ensuring that none of us falls away because of sin's deceitfulness. As long as it is "today"—that is, this present age of testing, with opportunities and dangers like the ones the Israelites faced—we must watch out and exhort one another daily in the things of the

faith.

Specifically, we must watch for the "deceitfulness" of sin. The Bible attaches this label to a number of things. It speaks often of false teachers who would lead us astray by their deceit. Paul warns against them, saying, "For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve" (Rom. 16:18). Colossians 2:8 says the same thing about worldly philosophies, and Proverbs 12:5 tells us that "the counsels of the wicked are deceitful." Certainly, then, we must exert a watchful care against enticing but misleading teachings that deceive the mind.

But it gets worse, for the Bible goes on to say that our very hearts are deceitful. Jeremiah 17:9 is the most famous verse to this effect: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" In Ephesians 4:22, Paul tells us that our very human nature, apart from God's saving work, is "corrupt through deceitful desires." That gets quite a bit closer to home—I cannot even trust my heart, the Bible says. My desires are not trustworthy. And the wise man comes to realize that this is so—that the things we long for are often foolish and vain, if not outright idolatrous— and therefore he seeks the scrutiny and exhortation of brothers and sisters in the Lord.

More threatening still is the presence of a personal deceiver loose in the world. The Bible tells us that the devil is a great deceiver who beguiles men and women into folly and unbelief, as he beguiled Eve in the garden. He even masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). And then there is sin itself, which has as one of its main qualities that it is deceitful. We must not toy with sin, or we will be drawn in and ensnared.

Consider the case of a man who is tempted to leave his wife and children for another woman. The sin seems so alluring; she is so much more wonderful than the plain old wife he has grown tired of. And she admires him so; she plays to his ego where his wife only nags him. She would be better for him despite the broken taboos; he will be better off and happier with the adulteress. People will understand; they will get over it; his children will ultimately be glad for him.

It is all, however, a great deceit. It will not be more wonderful, for the problem with his marriage is his own heart, and he will soon get tired of his new lover as well. She admires him now but will think less of him when he loses his job, his reputation, his money, and his self-respect. His children will not get over it, but will bear scars and brokenness all the days of their lives. Sin says it will be better and he will be happy, but it is a deceit. He is stepping forward into misery and ruin, bringing disgrace upon himself and, if he is a Christian, scandal upon the church and even the name of Jesus Christ.

Sin advertises pleasure but delivers pain. The problem is that our hearts are so willing to be deceived. Combine this with the reality that sin is deceitful in its very nature, and you see why we have so great a need of godly fellowship, of exhortation, and of warning at the very first stages of temptation. We need help being watchful over the spiritually dangerous circumstances that we face—jobs or family ties or relationships or specific temptations that by their very nature are hostile to Christian faith. Therefore, we must exhort one another, lest some of us should fall prey to sin's deception, even to the hardening of our hearts against God.

We must realize that sin is not merely something we do. Sin is a power, an enemy army, like a pack of wolves surrounding the flock and darting in to pick off likely targets. Therefore, as Simon Kistemaker writes, "Believers have a corporate and an individual responsibility to care for the spiritual well-being of their fellow men. They must consider this responsibility a holy obligation and exhibit utter faithfulness."

From deception grows hardness of heart—such was the fate of the Israelites who came under God's wrath. Christian fellowship, including prayer, Bible study, and meaningful friendship, is a great bulwark against sin's deception; in such company the arguments of sin lose their force, and we are strengthened in faith and obedience. Our goal is to persevere to the end and enter into God's rest, and our strategy is mutual watchfulness. What a worthy cause that is! It is worth inconvenience. It is worth giving up some leisure time. It is worth real sacrifice and will repay the dividends of eternal life.

**In his great allegory of the Christian life, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan shows his understanding of the importance of godly fellowship.** At one point in the journey to the Celestial City, Bunyan's hero—a man named Christian—finds companionship with a fellow believer named Hopeful. Bunyan writes, "They entered a brotherly covenant and agreed to be companions." What a wonderful statement! It is reminiscent of the description of the godly men of King Asa's generation, as told in 2 Chronicles 15:12, "They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul."

In such fashion Christian and Hopeful journeyed together, and their companionship was very profitable. Soon they came across another traveler, a man named By-ends from the town of Fair-speech. Pooling their discernment, Christian and Hopeful realized that this was a man to avoid. Next, they encountered a group led by Mr. Hold-the-world, who tried to tempt them into seeking dishonest gain, and together they reprovved him. Next came Demas who called to them to depart from the way, promising a place filled with riches of the world. This time, Hopeful was deceived and wanted to go take a look. But Christian warned him, "I have heard of this place.... **The treasure is a snare to those that seek it.**" He exhorted Hopeful, "Let us not go a step closer. Let us keep on our way," and the two companions went forward safely on the pilgrimage. Later, they came to Doubting Castle, where they were thrown into a

terrible dungeon. Here it was Christian who faltered, falling prey to the Giant Despair's temptation to kill himself as the only escape. This time it was Hopeful who kept his faith, recalling God's commandments. With his help, Christian found the key, called Promise, that opened the door to let them escape Doubting Castle. This is the kind of help we are to give one another, each of us in our weakness and doubt being helped by the strength and faith of our brother, each helping the other in turn so that together we may endure. (Hebrews Commentary)

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**J Johnston** - The deceitfulness of sin. Sin deceiveth by general invectives. By delays. By coming plumed in the feathers of profit, or pleasure, or honours, or preferments. By presenting herself in a coat of many colours, especially in making her address in all the charms of sensual pleasures. She attacks the soul in Jacob's voice, and in an angel's form. Sin, by continuance, increases upon the soul. In hardened sinners, vice prompts men to presume upon impunity.

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Popular evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman told of a preacher friend who delivered a powerful sermon on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers confronted the minister in his study and offered what he thought was some needed counsel. "Pastor," he said, "we don't want you to talk as openly as you do about man's guilt and corruption. If our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject, they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you want to, but do not speak so plainly about sin." The pastor removed a small bottle from a shelf behind his desk. Showing it to the man, he said, "You see this label? It says 'Strychnine,' and underneath in bold, red letters is the word 'POISON.' What you are asking me to do would be like changing this label. Suppose I write over it 'Essence of Peppermint.' Someone who doesn't know the danger might use it and become very ill. The milder the label, the more dangerous the poison!"

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**Let's Go Higher!** - Author Ragnar Arlander tells about the time he and some friends scaled Mt. Rainier. When they reached a plateau, the group decided they had gone far enough.

Arlander, however, continued the climb to find a person who had traveled on ahead. Eventually he found him resting, gazing at a beautiful glacier. The man was ready to go back, but when he saw Arlander approaching, he jumped up and exclaimed, "Since you've come, let's go higher!"

This experience makes me think of the events described in Acts 28. As the apostle Paul was traveling to Rome, he met some fellow believers, and "when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15).

What better compliment could be offered us than to have someone say, "Talking to you has encouraged me to continue on in my spiritual walk." The world is filled with troubled and discouraged souls who are struggling along in the Christian life. Battle weary, they are almost ready to give up. When they see you, what influence do you have on them? Do you inspire them to more noble lives of service? Or does your example tend to drag them down?

May we influence others in such a way that they will take heart and say, "I want to go higher!" —Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Oh, I would be to others  
A cheering ray of light,  
Inspiring them with courage  
To climb some new-found height!  
—Bosch

**The human spirit soars with hope  
when lifted by an encouraging word.**

## ILLUSTRATIONS REGARDING THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

**The Deceitful Appearance of Poisonous Mushrooms** - There are a thousand or more varieties of mushrooms that are good to eat... The most dreaded of the poisonous mushrooms are two members of the [Amanita](#) group. One is the [death cap](#), and the other is the [fly amanita](#). The [death cap](#) grows in the woods from June until fall. Its poison acts like the venom of a rattlesnake, as it separates the corpuscles in the blood from the serum. No antidote is known for the poison of the [death cap](#). The only hope for

anyone who has eaten it is to clean out his stomach promptly with a stomach pump. It is small wonder that one variety is known as the [destroying angel](#). The [death cap](#) has often been mistaken for the common mushroom. A person should not make this mistake if he observes carefully. The poisonous plant has white [gills](#) ([picture](#)), white spores, and the fatal poison cap around the stem. The plant that is safe to eat has pink gills, brown spores, and no cap. Many of the mistakes come from picking it in the button stage, for it does not show all these differences until it has grown larger. Sin is most dangerous when it is in the button stage!

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**Charles Hodges' Outline** dealing with the Deceitfulness of Sin...

Either the latter, **sin**, qualifies the former, a being deceived, which is sinful, i.e., for which we are guilty; or, the first word qualifies the second, sin that is deceitful. Compare the expressions, deceitfulness of riches, of unrighteousness, of lusts. The latter is the better sense. The subject for consideration is the characteristic of sin as deceitful.

**I. Sin is not an act but a power**, a principle, something innate, indwelling, permanent and active, an enemy of the most dangerous kind, not only because it is within and ever on the alert and powerful, and has so many allies, but also because it is so treacherous.

## **II. How is sin deceitful?**

1. It deceives us as to what is sinful, as in the case of Adam. So also in the case of thousands.
2. It deceives us as to its demands. It promises to be satisfied with a limited indulgence. So the slothful, the negligent, the sensual, the avaricious. It is the first step that costs.
3. It deceives as to the pleasure it promises. Adam expected to be like God.
4. It deceives us as to the true motives which determine our conduct. Ministers, missionaries, as well as others are thus deceived.
5. It deceives us as to its effects and to the degree of impunity with which it can be indulged.

## **III. The effects of sin as thus deceitful.**

1. It hardens. That is,
  - a. as to the will it renders it stiff and fixed. It becomes settled in evil.
  - b. As to the feelings it renders them obdurate. Motives cease to affect, the conscience to warn or reprove, and the result is a reprobate mind.
2. It slays or destroys the soul.
  - a. In destroying its sensibility.
  - b. In destroying desire and hope of amendment.
  - c. In bringing it fully under the power of the law.

## **IV. Means. The preliminary conditions are;**

1. A sense of danger.
2. A sense of weakness. The means are;
  - a. Committing ourselves to Christ and his Spirit. To be guided by his wisdom. To regard nothing as innocent or harmless which he condemns.
  - b. To resist the beginning and first suggestions.
  - c. In doubtful cases always to go against what may be evil.

(Hodge, C. Sermon Outlines: Taken from Princeton Sermons Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation)

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**ILLUSTRATION OF THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN** - There is an insect that has a very close resemblance to the bumblebee, but which is a terrible enemy to it. Because of its likeness, it sometimes finds its way in a fraudulent manner into the bee's nest, and there deposits its eggs. But when these eggs are hatched the larvae devour those of the bee. It comes in as a friend and helper, but turns out to be a devouring enemy. Such is the secret sin harbored in the heart. It eats away the vitals of the spiritual life, and effectually destroys the power of growth and usefulness. It is all the more dangerous when it comes in the likeness of a friend and

## DECEITFULNESS OF SIN by Archibald Alexander

All sin takes its origin from false views of things. Our first parents would never have sinned--had they not been deceived by the tempter. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was beautiful, and she was persuaded also good for food, that is, pleasant to the taste and nutritious. Here was a deception. This fruit was never intended for nourishment, whatever might have been its flavor. It was intended for trial, and not for food.

But the greatest deception practiced on our first mother by the arch deceiver was, that the eating of this food would make her wise to know good and evil, even as it is known to God. The deceitful words of the tempter wrought this unfounded persuasion in her mind. The desire of knowledge is natural, a part of man's original constitution, as well as the appetite for food; but these natural propensities are not to be indulged by every means, and gratified on all occasions, but should be kept under the government of reason and conscience. The brutes were made to be governed by appetite and instinct; but man is the subject of law, and he cannot but feel the binding obligation of law. He is a moral agent, and may properly be subjected to a trial whether he will obey the law of his Creator.

How widely different does sin appear after it is committed--from what it did before. Passion or craving appetite creates a false medium by which the unwary soul is deceived, and led into transgression. After our first parents sinned, "their eyes were opened." A sense of guilt unknown before now seized them, and this was like a new vision—not of beauty, but odious deformity. Innocence was lost. Shame and confusion take the place of peace and purity. Unhappy change! The guilty pair are now sensible of their great mistake, of their guilty act, of their disgraceful condition, of their ruined state. Their whole race is ruined! What will they do when their Creator shall make his usual visit—heretofore so delightful and instructive? Hark, he comes—his voice is heard in the garden. The wretched culprits are seized with terror and consternation. Guilt causes them to flee from the presence of the best and kindest of fathers. They try to hide themselves. They run into the densest thickets of the trees of the garden. But they cannot conceal themselves from the eye of Omniscience. They cannot escape from the arm of the Almighty, much less resist his power.

Behold, the Creator not finding his creature man in his proper place, sends forth a voice, which must have been like the most terrible thunder, when the awful sound penetrated his ear, and resounded through his whole soul: "Adam, where are you?" Trembling, the guilty pair come forth to meet the frowns of a displeased and righteous Judge. We need pursue the interesting history no farther at present.

From this first transgression, by which sin entered into the world, we may form some idea of its deceitful nature. This first sin is a sort of example of all other sins. As they flow from this as streams from a fountain, they all partake of the poison of their origin. In all sin there is some bait—some apparent good—some expectation of pleasure or profit from unlawful indulgence. In all sin the mind is under a delusive influence. Right thoughts and motives are for the moment forgotten or overborne; the attention, like the eye of a beguiled bird, is fixed on a point from which it cannot be withdrawn. The enticement prevails, and guilt is contracted

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**Sin Is Like An Insect!** - It was reported recently that an enormous pine tree in the mountains of Colorado had fallen victim to a pine beetle and died. According to locals, up to that point the tree was thought to be indestructible. It had survived fourteen lightning strikes and many years of Colorado winters, including avalanches and fires. But it was eventually brought down from within by a tiny insect that did its work silently. That's the way it is with sin in a person's life, be they a Christian or a non-Christian. Watch over your heart with all diligence. Pr 4:23-**notes**

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**William Newell** - in Ro 2:13, the great fact, (true of Jews or Gentiles), that the possession of Divine truth can avail nothing with God apart from subjection and obedience thereto. There is no form of the "**deceitfulness of sin**" more insidious and more prevalent (because of its subtle power over the self-righteous heart) than that of settling down into false peace because of merely knowing God's truth.

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**Warren Wiersbe** - 2 Ki 18:31–32 illustrate the deceitfulness of sin; (The King of Assyria) promised them peace and plenty **until** they were taken away into captivity. There is always an "**until**" to disobedience.

In comments on 2 Peter 2:19-20 - Balaam not only followed the ways of sin, but he encouraged other people to sin! He told Balak how to seduce the nation Israel and his plan almost succeeded. Lot lost his family, but Balaam lost his life. Beware of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Sin always promises freedom but in the end brings bondage. It promises life but instead brings death. Sin has a way of gradually binding a person until there is no way of escape, apart from the gracious intervention of the Lord. Even the bondage that sin creates is deceitful, for the people who are bound actually think they are free! Too late they discover that they are prisoners of their own appetites and habits.



In comments on Ps 36 - Sin deceives us (Rom. 7:11) and flatters us (10:3; Deut. 29:18–19), giving us the false assurance that our rebellion will go unpunished (Gen. 3:1–5). "Listen to your heart!" the world tells us, forgetting that "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9, NASB).

The Bible gives us many pictures of sin because the Lord wants us to know that sin is more than a word in a book; it's a horrible force that deceives and destroys. God compares sin to defilement, for David prayed, "Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. 51:2). What dirt is to the body, sin is to the soul. Sin is also pictured as darkness. The apostle John warns us that we cannot have fellowship with the Lord or his people if we "walk in darkness" and disobey him (1 John 1:5–7). Sin is a form of bondage: "The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast" (Prov. 5:22). Sin is a burden: "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear" (Ps. 38:4). Jesus compared sin to sickness and presented himself as the only physician who could heal sinners (Luke 5:29–31). He also pictured sin as "lostness," for sinners are like lost sheep that can't find their way home (Luke 15:1–7). "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). "Our own way" is the beginning of trouble.

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**Bob Dewaay** - I once was asked to visit the dying father of a Christian lady. She told me that he had spent nearly all of the years since World War II slowly drinking himself to death. He was now in the Veterans Hospital, having nearly succeeded in killing himself with alcohol. I went to his bedside and shared the gospel. He responded, "I know about that, my daughter has spoken to me many times. However, I am doing better today and might get out of here." He did not want to repent that day, in case he recovered and got to go home to drink some more! That illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. Sin deceives sinners into thinking things are better than they are. Even when the consequences weigh heavily upon them, sinners hope for a "better day" when they can sin and not die. The gradual and inevitable effect of the process is "hardening." They might become so hardened that even the sting of demonized scorpions would not get them to quit. If you hear God's voice (the inner call of the gospel) you have your opportunity to repent. Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow will only bring a harder, more calloused, cavalier heart that wonders why one ever worried about such things as an eternal soul facing judgement. ". . . and they did not repent." Dear Lord, by your grace may that not apply to us as we consider your words.

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**Spurgeon** - If we preach against hypocrisy, hypocrites say, "Admirable! Admirable!" If we deal out threatenings against secret sin, secret sinners feel a little twinge, but forget it all and say, "An excellent discourse." They have hardened their neck against God's Word, have made their brows like flints and their hearts like adamant stones, and now they might just as well stay away from the house of God as not, for their soul has become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And yet would I have them refrain from the means of grace? No, for with God nothing is impossible.

Man loves his own ruin. **The cup is so sweet that though he knows it will poison him, yet he must drink it.** (READ THAT SENTENCE AGAIN...VERY SLOWLY AND THOUGHTFULLY! WOE!) And the harlot is so fair, that though he understands that her ways lead down to hell, yet like a bullock he follows to the slaughter till the dart goes through his liver. Man is fascinated and bewitched by sin. (WOE IS ME!)

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**Rod Mattoon** on **Deceitfulness of Sin and Drifting Spiritually** -

- **Jerry White** said, "No one is so empty as the man who has stopped walking with God and doesn't know it."
- **Theodore H. Epp** said, "Backsliding starts in such a subtle way that most of us are not aware of it, and many of us may be backslidden and may not realize it."
- **Oswald Sanders** put it this way, "We must not just take it for granted that we are in touch with God. Joseph and Mary lost a whole day of fellowship with Jesus because they supposed him to be in the company. They took for granted something of which they should have made sure. Samson made this mistake. The Bible says that he wist not that the Lord had departed from him (Judges 16:20). He was out of touch with God and did not know it."
- **F. W. Boreham** stated, "The captain gives earnest heed to the charts lest he drift unconsciously shorewards!"

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**James Smith - THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN** - The fishing frog, as described by Professor Forbes, is a most deceitful creature. This artful dodger lives to deceive and to destroy. On the top of its head it has two long, moveable, bony filaments, one of which has a silvery lustre; this is waved to and fro to tempt the little fish, which is attracted by it, expecting something to eat, while the monster, with its horrible mouth, lies half buried in the sand or mud beneath. **Beneath every sin lies the hungry jaws of death. Sin has often the appearance of a silvery delight, and there may be a momentary pleasure in it, but "sin, when it is finished,**

bringeth forth death."

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## Bud Marten - [THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN](#)

The truth will always expose sin for what it is

### I SIN IS DECEITFUL IN ITS PROMISES

- A. Sin couldn't keep it's first promise
- B. Sin never has kept one of it's promises
- C. Sin never will keep one of it's promises

### II SIN IS DECEITFUL AS TO ITS PURPOSE

- A. Sins Purpose is Death not Life
- B. Sin takes instead of gives
- C. Sin Burdens instead of Blesses

### III SIN IS DECEITFUL AS TO ITS POWER

- A. Before you sin - Sin will first make you think that you can stop it anytime you want to stop
  - B. After you sin - Sin will make you think that you can never stop what you're doing once you're started
  - C. Both of these are a Lie and part of the deceitfulness of sin
    - 1. If you can stop anytime you want, then stop before you get started
    - 2. Jesus broke the power of sin (1 Jn 3:8)(Heb.2:14-15)(1 Cor 15:55-57)
    - 3. You don't have to live under the power of sin (Ro.6:12-14)
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**Rod Mattoon** - In 1996, Disney came out with the movie 101 Dalmatians, and it was a box-office success. Many viewers fell in love with the cute spotted puppies on the big screen and decided to get one for themselves. When they brought those adorable little puppies home, however, they found that living with a Dalmatian is an entirely different experience from watching one on the movie screen. Soon, according to the Associated Press, all over the United States dog shelters saw a dramatic increase in the number of Dalmatians being abandoned by their owners. A Florida organization called Dalmatian Rescue took in 130 Dalmatians in the first nine months of 1997; usually they get that many dogs in two and a half years. Dalmatians can be a challenge to own for several reasons. Dalmatians grow to be big dogs, weighing as much as seventy pounds. They are rambunctious and require a lot of exercise. They can be moody, becoming restless and even destructive if they don't get enough activity. They shed year-round, and 10 percent of Dalmatians are born deaf. Tracey Carson, a spokeswoman for the Wisconsin Humane Society, says, "Although Dalmatians are beautiful puppies, and can be wonderful dogs, **you have to know what you're getting into.**" Whether with pets or with people, infatuation with someone's appearance is a poor foundation for a relationship. This is exactly how Satan works. He endeavors to infatuate us with sinful temptations in order to entangle us into sin. Once, we get involved in wickedness, we realize the consequences of our choices are not so great at all. They are not liberating, but shackling. Many who have become entangled in sexual sin have shirked their responsibility when a pregnancy occurs. Some women murder their babies in abortion clinics. Many men have dumped the woman they impregnated like a Dalmatian, leaving her stranded in rearing a baby by herself. If you want to be faithful under fire, be aware of the **deceitfulness of sin** and the destructiveness of corruption.

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## John Piper - Colossians 3:5 Practical Steps to Kill Sin

November 9, 1987 | by John Piper | Topic: Indwelling Sin

Relief: All true believers have sin remaining in them in this life. Romans 7:23 - "I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

Therefore we are commanded to constantly kill this sin (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5).

How Is This to Be Done?

1) Take heart from the truth that the old sinful you is decisively already dead (Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:3; Galatians 5:24). This means three things:

the mortal blow to our “old man” has been struck;

he will not succeed in domination now;

his final obliteration is certain.

2) Consciously reckon the old man dead; that is, believe the truth of Scripture about the old man’s death, and seek to live in that freedom (Romans 6:11).

3) Cultivate enmity with sin! You don’t kill friends (Romans 8:13). Ponder how it killed your best friend, dishonors your Father, and aims to destroy you for ever.

4) Rebel against sin’s coup. Refuse to be bullied by his deceits and manipulations (Romans 6:12). Fight your sinful impulses with all your might like a boxer fights an opponent and like a marathon runner fights fatigue (1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Timothy 4:8).

5) Declare radical allegiance to the other side—God—and consciously put all your mind and heart and body at his disposal for righteousness and purity (Romans 6:13).

6) Don’t make any plans that open the door for sin’s entry (Romans 13:14). Don’t prove your purity in a pornography shop.

7) Develop mental habits that continually renew the mind in God-centeredness (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 4:16). Fix attention daily on “the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5), “things that are above” (Colossians 3:2), “whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, praiseworthy” (Philippians 4:8).

8) Admit failure and confess all known sin every day (1 John 1:9). Ask for forgiveness (Matthew 6:12).

9) Ask for the Spirit’s help and power in all these things (Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:17, 22; Ezekiel 36:27; Isaiah 26:12).

10) Be part of a larger and smaller fellowship where you are exhorted often to beware of the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).

11) Beware of “works of law”; but let all your warfare be “the work of faith” (2 Thessalonians 1:11). That is, let your fight against sin spring from your confidence in the superior pleasures of closeness to Christ.

Pastor John

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## **Rod Mattoon - Why does a person get hard-hearted in the first place?**

### **1. The Deceitfulness of your Sin**

\* Hebrews 3:13 — But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

### **2. Dignity or Pride**

\* Daniel 5:20 — But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:.

### **3. Defiance toward God's Word**

\* Zechariah 7:12 — Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

### **4. Doubt, Disbelief, and Forgetfulness of God's Power**

\* Mark 6:52 — For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

### **5. Dependence or Trusting in Yourself**

\* Isaiah 47:10-11 — For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. [11] Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

### **6. A Depletion of Gratefulness**

When you become ungrateful for what God or others have done for you, you get hard-hearted and become distant from God.

\* Romans 1:21 — Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Don't lose a thankful heart. Learn to count your blessings and be thankful for everything that God has done for you.

### Hebrews 3:7-19 TODAY IN THE WORD

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. - Hebrews 3:7-8

What one national park worker calls ""a false sense of security"" continues to lead visitors of national parks to ignore warnings and to take dangerous chances. Despite clear warnings, for example, people still try to pose with the bears, to get too close to other wild animals, or to enter waters that are not safe for swimming. This park worker suggests that perhaps the word ""park"" itself helps to lull people into feeling safe when they are actually in a potentially dangerous environment.

It seems to be part of our human nature to ignore warning signs. The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews had a very clear warning posted before them of the tragic consequences of allowing their hearts to be hardened through unbelief. But the writer was afraid these believers were about to crash through the warning sign and commit the same error that a previous generation of God's people had committed.

These verses are part of an ongoing series of warnings directed at a group of people who were wavering in their commitment to Christ. They were reminded that the generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt under Moses never reached God's promised rest in Canaan, although it was waiting to be claimed.

The problem was the people's hardness of heart, which led them to test God, to doubt His provision, and to rebel against His will for them. These Israelites provoked God to anger, and He ""declared on oath"" (Heb 3:11) that their bones would bleach in the desert until the entire generation died out (Heb 3:17).

We also need to take this warning to heart. Unbelief always displeases God. The solution to this problem is to keep our hearts tender toward Him, something believers need to help one another do every day (Heb 3:13).

The urgency of doing this today is obvious from the fact that sin is very deceitful. If we ignore it, sin will harden our spirits as surely as cement hardens once it has been poured. We need the same kind of faithfulness the writer of Hebrews urged his readers to maintain (Heb 3:14).

Just to make sure the point wasn't missed, the writer returned to the example of Moses' unbelieving generation (Heb 3:15- 19). It's a warning we can't hear too often. God honors faith, whereas unbelief invites His judgment.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - This very day is one of the ""todays"" that the author of Hebrews urges us to take advantage of as we encourage one another. Through today's study, we have attempted to encourage you to walk faithfully with Christ. Do you know someone you can encourage in his or her walk? It might be a family member or a friend who is experiencing doubt or a trial. Ask God to lead you to someone who needs an encouraging word this week.

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**Adrian Rogers** on the deceitfulness of sin...

### I. The Deceitfulness of Sin in the Life of a Christian

Now, let's think for just a moment about the deceitfulness of sin in the life of a Christian. There are very few things that are more deceitful, more deceiving, than sin in the life of a Christian. I want you to see, as we look here in 1 John chapter 1—notice verse 6: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). Just underscore that phrase—"if we say." Now, skip down, if you will, to verse 8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8)—the same phrase. Now, skip down to verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and [the truth] is not in us" (1 John 1:10). Three times we read this statement: "If we say," "if we say," "if we say ..." And, three times what we say is connected with lying and deceitfulness. So, you can see why I'm calling this point the deceitfulness of sin in the Christian.

Let me tell you what happens when a Christian lets sin get into his life.

### A. Lying to Others

If he's not careful, the first thing he'll do is lie to others. Look in verse 6: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). The first thing that we do when we get out of fellowship with God—we still come to church; we still paste a smile on our face; we still carry a Bible; we still nod and say, "Amen," when the choir sings, when the preacher preaches. And, we go through a little show, and we want everybody to think we're in fellowship with God. In our hearts we know we're not, but we're sitting there in church—and oh, we look so holy, and we look so pious, you know, and so forth. I'm looking

out at you right now, and oh my, how holy you all look, you know. You're sitting here this morning just radiant, but some of you are playing a game—some are playing a game. In your heart you don't have fellowship with God. Look at it again: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). And so, you're just kind of living a lie. That's the first step: lying to others.

## **B. Lying to Yourself**

Now, let me tell you what that leads to: it leads to lying to yourself. Look in verse 8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Now, after a while, we stop deceiving others, and we start deceiving ourselves. Maybe we continue to deceive others, and we start to deceive ourselves. You know, you can act a certain way long enough until you think that's the way you're supposed to act. There are some people who make peace with their sin, and they go through just a little bit of acting or roleplaying until suddenly they just settle down with it; and they don't call it sin any more. They say, "Well, this is normal. That's the way I'm supposed to be," and they lie to themselves. They start ... they get into a game of self-deception.

## **C Lying to God**

All right. But now, let's see where it goes to. First of all, we start lying to others; in other words, we start acting the way we're not. And then, secondly, we start believing the way we're acting. And thirdly, it ends up lying to God. We lie to others. Then we lie to ourselves. We end up lying to God. Look, if you will, in verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10). Now, what we do—actually, we think that we can take issue with God. And, God says that we've sinned, but we say, "Oh no, God. You're wrong. I haven't really sinned." You're not telling the truth. Now, of course, it's those of us who are not telling the truth. If we say that we've not sinned, we are really lying to God.

Now, how do we—how do we—get around this? Well, we just take sin, and we put new labels on it. Rather than calling it a sin, we call it a "mistake." You know, rather than calling it a sin, we call it an "error in judgment." Or, rather than calling it a sin, we just call it a "bad temper." Or, we call it a "glandular malfunction." Or, we just say it was the result of environment, you see. We don't want to really admit our sinfulness. You know, it's amazing what modern society has done to explain away sin. Today, men are no longer evil; they're "ill." They're no longer sinful; they're "sick." They're no longer wicked; they're "underprivileged." And really, it's not our fault any more what we do because we're like a computer that's been programmed wrong. And, if we smack our little sister in the mouth, it's because our mother wouldn't let us push our mush off the highchair when we were a kid, you know, and somehow our psyche got warped. You'd be surprised how this philosophy has gone through life.

I tell you, they used to have something on television and on the radio—used to irk me every time I would hear it. It was a little statement that went like this: "Take your keys out of your car, and don't help a good boy to go wrong ... or don't cause a good boy to go wrong." You ever hear that? "Take your keys out of your car; don't cause a good boy to go wrong." Friend, you take your keys out of your car so some punk won't steal it, you hear? I mean, you see, the thought is that if you leave your keys in your car, you'll cause him to steal. Now, my goodness, if your car gets stolen, they ought to put you in jail. Think what you did to that kid. I mean, that's the philosophy, see? Dear friend, a child, or a boy, or a man is not a thief because he steals; he steals because he's a thief. People are not liars because they tell lies; they tell lies because they're liars.

But, we have a cute little way of telling lies about our own sin. First of all, we start saying, "Well, you know ..." We just start living it. We come to church, and we look like we're in fellowship. We look so holy, and we sing so well, and so forth. Inside we know we're not right with God. Then, after a while, we start believing we're all right. And then, after a while, we take issue with God. "If we say [we've] not sinned, we make him a liar, and his [truth] is not in us" (1 John 1:10). Oh, the deceitfulness of sin in the life of a Christian! I wonder if there are not some in this class this morning who are playing the game—playing the game. You'll never have joy in your Christian life until you stop playing that game and telling those lies: "If we say," "if we say," "if we say ..."

## **II. The Destructiveness of Sin in the Life of a Christian**

Secondly, I want you to see not only the deceitfulness of sin in the life of a Christian, but I want you to see the destructiveness of sin in the life of a Christian. Look at verse 4: "these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4). That is, no one can have joy as a Christian when there is the deceitfulness of sin in his heart and in his life. Sin always causes a loss of joy.

If you were here last week, you remember we studied together Psalm 51, where David prayed, "[LORD,] restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12). He did not pray, "Lord, restore unto me Thy salvation." He never lost his salvation; he lost the joy of his salvation. Now, I want you to learn this: the most miserable man on earth is not an unsaved man. There are a lot of unsaved people in the city of Memphis, Tennessee, who are having a big time. They're living it up, and they almost feel sorry for you today because you're in church. I mean, they're living high, wide, and handsome. They're boozing it up, running around, kicking up their heels, laughing and joking. And, don't tell these people they're not having a good time, 'cause they won't believe you; they know they are.

You say, "Brother Rogers, you ought not to talk that way." Well, the Bible talks that way. The Bible speaks of "the pleasures of sin"

(Hebrews 11:25). You see, the devil's too smart to go fishing without any bait on his hook. "The pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25), the Bible mentions. But, the Bible says that "the pleasures of sin [are only] for a season" (Hebrews 11:25) and the "bread of deceit is sweet ... but [afterward a man's] mouth shall be filled with gravel" (Proverbs 20:17). But, don't make the mistake of saying that the happiest people in town are the Christians and the unhappiest people in town are the unsaved. I want to tell you, dear friend, that the most miserable man in town is not a lost man; the most miserable man in town is a saved man out of fellowship with God. Mark it down: a Christian out of fellowship with God is absolutely miserable—more miserable than the lost man who is enjoying the pleasures of sin. A lost man can enjoy the pleasures of sin without the Holy Spirit in him tearing him up, but the unsaved man cannot. You see, there are some of you ... have just enough salvation to make you miserable in the world and just enough of the world to make you miserable in your salvation, and you're unhappy wherever you go.

Now, now, John here says, "These things [have I written] unto you, that your joy may be full"—"that you might have fullness of joy" (1 John 3:4). Sin takes away your joy. Now, how does it do it? Well, the Bible says in Proverbs chapter 28 and verse 13: "[Whoso] covereth his [sin] shall not prosper"—now, what that means is if you fail to confess your sins, nothing will work out right. As a Christian, you're engineered that way; God's made you that way. The unsaved person can just sail along, but not the Christian—"He that covereth his [sin] shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Now, when it says, "You will not prosper," that just simply means nothing is going to work out right until you stop covering your sin—until you stop saying, "If we say, if we say, if we say ..." or stop saying what you say when you say what John meant when he said, "If we say ..." All right. Now, let me tell you some things that will not work out right. Let me tell you why you can't have any joy.

### **A. Loss of Health**

First of all, there's going to be the loss of health. We mentioned this last week. Remember the scripture in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 30? Paul was talking to those in the church at Corinth, and he said—because of their carnality, and because of their schism, and because of their irreverence, and because of their immorality—he said, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and [some] sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). For what cause? Because of their sin. Many Christians were sick. Not all Christians are sick because of their personal sins. Some of God's choicest of saints have suffered—and they do. But, it would surprise us if we knew how much of our physical sickness is directly related to our spiritual meanness, and we talked about that last week; I'm not going to deal with that in great depth.

### **B. Loss of Prayer Power**

But, not only is there the loss of health; there's also the loss of prayer power. Did you know, friend, the time will come when for God to answer your prayer will mean more to you than anything else on the face of this earth? And yet, many of you will pray, and your prayers will get no higher than the light bulb. And, you say, "Prayer has failed." No, prayer hasn't failed. If I go into my house, and I throw the light switch, and the lights don't come on, I don't say, "Electricity is a failure." I may say, "There's a blown fuse," or I may say, "We didn't pay the bill," or, "The bulb is burned out." But, I wouldn't say, "Electricity has failed." When you pray and your prayers are not answered, and that prayer is in the will of God, it does not mean that prayer has failed. But, it means there's trouble somewhere, and most frequently that trouble is sin in the Christian's life. The Bible says in Psalm 66 and verse 18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"—"the Lord will not" (Psalm 66:18). You see, dear friend, un-confessed sin in our lives causes our prayers not to be heard. This is the destructiveness of sin in the life of a Christian.

### **C. Loss of Influence**

Not only may I lose my health; I'll lose the answer to my prayers. And, not only that—I may lose my influence and my ability and my power to bring others to Jesus Christ. Did you know that if I went out and got drunk, God would chastise me for that? I would not go to hell, but I believe some other people would go to hell if I went out and got drunk, because of what I did. People watch me, but they watch you. And, God demands as much holiness out of you as He does out of me. It took as much of the blood of Jesus to save you as it did me. Amen. See? The Bible says, "None of us live unto ourselves, and none of us die unto ourselves" (Romans 14:7). So many people say, "Well, will this hurt me?" That's not the only question. Will it hurt others? Will it cause someone else to stumble?

I read in the Bible, for example, about Lot. And Lot—when we're going ... when we're preaching through Genesis, we'll come to this—but Lot was a just man, the Bible says in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:7). That means he'd been saved; he's been born again. But, Lot moved into the city of Sodom and actually became one of the civic leaders in Sodom. And, he became so much like the people of Sodom (although he was saved) that when God came to Lot and said, "Lot, you get out of this city because I'm going to destroy it with fire and brimstone," Lot turned to the boys that his daughters had married and said, "Boys, let's leave. God's going to destroy this place." And, the Bible says that they laughed and sneered at him; they laughed him to scorn (Genesis 19:14).

### **D. Loss of Reward in Heaven**

Not only may you lose your influence; you'll lose reward in heaven by your sin. Did you know that God is keeping a record of your life? And, you're not saved by good works, but you're rewarded according to your works. And, did you know that when you sin, you

lose reward in heaven? Now, we'll talk about this more fully in a later lesson, but we're in 2 John. In 2 John 8, the Bible says, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 1:8). Many are not going to receive a full reward. Jesus said, "Lay up for yourselves [treasure] in heaven" (Matthew 6:20). That verse doesn't make sense unless some are going to have more than others, you see. And, while sin may not cost you your salvation, it will cost a loss of reward in heaven. You say, "Well, that doesn't make any difference to me—just so long as I get there." Well, I'm going to teach a lesson later on that I think will nullify that theory, but I don't have time to deal with that right now. There's going to be a loss of reward in heaven.

## **E. Loss of Physical Life**

Let me tell you something else that you may lose by your sin: even though you do not lose your salvation, there may be a loss of your very physical life. You're in 1 John 1. Turn to 1 John 5—1 John 5—and look, if you will, in verse 16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death"—that is, you intercede for a man if he hasn't sinned unto death. But then, he says—"There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16). That is, a brother or a sister in a church may cross a deadline where even intercession cannot keep him from dying prematurely. Did you know that death can—that death can—come to a Christian who sins when death ordinarily would not come to him? Did you know that many Christians die prematurely when they should not die? Go back to that verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 30: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and [some] sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). You know what that word sleep means? That's the Bible word for death in a Christian. Does ... It doesn't ... That's not the Bible word for death for the unsaved but death for the Christian. "[Some] sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30)—that is, they died prematurely.

You read in the Bible where Moses—and Moses was a man of God; Moses is in heaven. Moses appeared with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration—but you read in the Bible where Moses disobeyed God, and he died prematurely. He committed the sin unto death. If you're a Bible scholar, you remember the episode. God said to Moses—when the people were murmuring and they had no water out in the wilderness—God said to Moses, "Moses, you take that rod that I've given you, and you strike that rock"—excuse me, "you"—"yes, you strike the rock. And, out of that rock will come water, and the people may drink" (Exodus 17:6). And, that's what happened. Later, they had given out of water. This time, God said to Moses, "Moses, speak to the rock, and the rock will give water" (Numbers 20:8). He was not told to strike the rock again.

Incidentally, there's a deep spiritual lesson there, because that rock was an illustration of who? Jesus. The Bible tells us in the New Testament, "That Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). That is, symbolically, it was Christ. When Moses struck that rock the first time, do you know what that symbolized? Jesus, "smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4). And, from His wounded side comes the water of life. It's a beautiful Old Testament picture of Jesus. But, the next time they needed water Moses was not told to strike the rock; he was told to speak to the rock and water would come. Do you see the symbolism? Jesus died once—smitten once, never to be smitten again. For when He died on the cross, He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). And, all we need we find in Calvary. No longer need that rock be smitten. We just speak to the rock, see? Just speak—just speak. And, from His riven side comes those refreshing waters of the soul that we have in the finished work of Calvary.

But, what did Moses do? Moses got so perturbed and exacerbated with those people, he took the rod, and he smote the rock. He should have known better. And, because he did not sanctify God in the eyes of the people, God said to Moses, "You're not going to cross this Jordan. You're not going to enter into My Promised Land. Come with Me, Moses, up here on the mountaintop" (Numbers 20:12). And, Moses went up on the mountaintop on Mount Nebo, and he saw the Promised Land afar off. But, he died without entering in. Nobody knows his burial place because God performed his funeral. But, the Bible says this about Moses when he died: the Bible says, "His eye was not [dimmed], [neither was] his [strength] abated" (Deuteronomy 34:7). That is, he died in the prime of health. There was no reason for Moses to die except that he sinned as a Christian, as a child of God. He sinned against God. He committed a sin unto death, and he died prematurely.

In the fifth chapter of 1 Corinthians there's a story of a man. This man was living in sexual immorality in the church. He had been warned. He had been prayed over and pled with, but he would not repent. And, do you know what Paul said there? Paul said, "Deliver such [a] one [to] Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5). Notice his body was destroyed; his spirit was saved. He was a Christian; he was a brother. But, he got into flagrant sin, and rather than confessing that sin and dealing with that sin, he was obstinate. He committed a sin unto death, and he was delivered "[to] Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Corinthians 5:5). When Satan started working on him, later on he did repent, and he did not have to die.

But, let me tell you another person who almost did die and didn't die: his name was Balaam. Do you remember reading about Balaam back there in the Book of Numbers, chapter 22? God said to Balaam ... Well, Balaam wanted to do a certain thing, and God didn't want him to do it. And, he asked God if he could do it, and God said no. And, he kept on asking, and then God said, "All right, you can do it." Now, it seems like God wanted him to do it, but God didn't want him to do it. God only allowed him to do it. You have



to be careful, friend, when you're praying with God.

You know, I heard about a man one day. He was just sort of an itinerant or vagabond, and he just rambled all over the country. And, someone said, "Well, how do you decide where you're going to go?" He said, "I just follow a trail." He said, "Well, what do you do when you get to the forks in the road?" "Well," he said, "I just have a stick." He said, "I throw it up in the air, and whichever way it lands—that way I go." He said, "Now, sometimes I have to throw it up as many as six times to make it land right." Now, that's the way some people are with God. You know, they say, "God, can I do this?" "No." They come back: "God, can I do this?" "No." "God, can I do this?" "No, you can't." "God, can I do this?" "All right, do it." It doesn't mean God wants you to; it means God's going to let you have your way, and you're going to come into the consequences of it because you would not listen to God the first time.

That's what Balaam did. God said, "Balaam, can I do this?" Or, or, Balaam said, "God, can I do this?" "No." "Can I do this?" "No." Finally, Balaam thinks that God is giving him permission, and it's really Balaam's own decision. And, Balaam was a prophet; he was a man of God. And, some of the marvelous prophecies about Jesus in all of the Bible came from the mouth of Balaam. But, Balaam is riding along on his donkey, and the donkey sees something that Balaam couldn't see. What the donkey saw was the angel of Jehovah with a drawn sword standing before Balaam. And, when the donkey saw this drawn sword, it just ... it scared him so much that he turned aside to get out of the way. And, he was in a narrow place, and he crushed Balaam's foot up against a wall. Well, it made Balaam angry, and he beat the donkey and said, "Now, let's go." The donkey started again. He saw the angel of the Lord, and the donkey went out in the field. He beat him again. Third time—he said, "Let's go," and the donkey just fell down and wouldn't move. Balaam was so angry. He beat that poor animal the third time, and the donkey spoke. A miracle took place. The donkey said, "Now, why have you beaten me these three times? Haven't I been your faithful beast?" Somebody said they knew what language that donkey used. It was Hebraic. Anyway, he spoke to old Balaam. And, at that moment, Balaam's eyes were opened, and Balaam saw what the donkey saw. And, what Balaam saw was the angel of the Lord with a drawn sword (Numbers 22:11–34). And, you can turn to Numbers chapter 32 and find it for yourself later—chapter 22, verse 32 (Numbers 22:32). But, here's what the angel of the Lord said to Balaam: the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "If you had come any further, I would surely have slain you" (Numbers 22:33). There's only so far God will let you go. Now, Balaam was a man of God; he was a prophet. But, the angel of the Lord said, "Had you gone any further, I surely would have slain you" (Numbers 22:33).

I wonder if there are some of you who are not about two steps away from that. And, everybody will say, "Wasn't it awful—that automobile accident? Wasn't it awful—that heart attack? Wasn't it strange—that sudden death?" "There is a sin unto death" (1 John 5:16). You say, "Brother Rogers, are you trying to scare me?" You bet your booties. "[There's] a sin unto death"—"[there's] a sin unto death" (1 John 5:16). That's what the Bible says. You can die prematurely. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and [some] sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). You see, God will not let you, if you're a real Christian, just continually disgrace Him. You take your little boy to a birthday party. He starts pulling girls' pigtails or sticking his fist in the cake and just using bad language. And, you speak to him, and that doesn't help him. And then you spank him, and that doesn't help him. Then, what's the third thing you do? You say, "Come on, let's go home." Right? "You're not going to stay here and disgrace me like that." You just bring him on home. That's what God does to some of His children—they just come on home. "Let's go home early. The party's over. That's it. Come on home. I spoke; you wouldn't listen. I spanked you; you wouldn't listen. Let's go home." (See Dr Rogers' entire collection which is available in [Logos](#) and [Wordsearch](#)).

## ILLUSTRATIONS REGARDING THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

**The Deceitful Appearance of Poisonous Mushrooms** - There are a thousand or more varieties of mushrooms that are good to eat... The most dreaded of the poisonous mushrooms are two members of the [Amanita](#) group. One is the [death cap](#), and the other is the [fly amanita](#). The [death cap](#) grows in the woods from June until fall. Its poison acts like the venom of a rattlesnake, as it separates the corpuscles in the blood from the serum. No antidote is known for the poison of the [death cap](#). The only hope for anyone who has eaten it is to clean out his stomach promptly with a stomach pump. It is small wonder that one variety is known as the [destroying angel](#). The [death cap](#) has often been mistaken for the common mushroom. A person should not make this mistake if he observes carefully. The poisonous plant has white [gills](#) ([picture](#)), white spores, and the fatal poison cap around the stem. The plant that is safe to eat has pink gills, brown spores, and no cap. Many of the mistakes come from picking it in the button stage, for it does not show all these differences until it has grown larger. Sin is most dangerous when it is in the button stage!

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**Charles Hodges' Outline** dealing with the Deceitfulness of Sin...

Compare the expressions, deceitfulness of riches, of unrighteousness, of lusts. The latter is the better sense. The subject for

consideration is the characteristic of sin as deceitful.

**I. Sin is not an act but a power,** a principle, something innate, indwelling, permanent and active, an enemy of the most dangerous kind, not only because it is within and ever on the alert and powerful, and has so many allies, but also because it is so treacherous.

## **II. How is sin deceitful?**

1. It deceives us as to what is sinful, as in the case of Adam. So also in the case of thousands.
2. It deceives us as to its demands. It promises to be satisfied with a limited indulgence. So the slothful, the negligent, the sensual, the avaricious. It is the first step that costs.
3. It deceives as to the pleasure it promises. Adam expected to be like God.
4. It deceives us as to the true motives which determine our conduct. Ministers, missionaries, as well as others are thus deceived.
5. It deceives us as to its effects and to the degree of impunity with which it can be indulged.

## **III. The effects of sin as thus deceitful.**

1. It hardens. That is,
  - a. as to the will it renders it stiff and fixed. It becomes settled in evil.
  - b. As to the feelings it renders them obdurate. Motives cease to affect, the conscience to warn or reprove, and the result is a reprobate mind.
2. It slays or destroys the soul.
  - a. In destroying its sensibility.
  - b. In destroying desire and hope of amendment.
  - c. In bringing it fully under the power of the law.

## **IV. Means. The preliminary conditions are;**

1. A sense of danger.
2. A sense of weakness. The means are;
  - a. Committing ourselves to Christ and his Spirit. To be guided by his wisdom. To regard nothing as innocent or harmless which he condemns.
  - b. To resist the beginning and first suggestions.
  - c. In doubtful cases always to go against what may be evil.

(Hodge, C. Sermon Outlines: Taken from Princeton Sermons Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation)

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There is an insect that has a very close resemblance to the bumblebee, but which is a terrible enemy to it. Because of its likeness, it sometimes finds its way in a fraudulent manner into the bee's nest, and there deposits its eggs. But when these eggs are hatched the larvae devour those of the bee. It comes in as a friend and helper, but turns out to be a devouring enemy. Such is the secret sin harbored in the heart. It eats away the vitals of the spiritual life, and effectually destroys the power of growth and usefulness. It is all the more dangerous when it comes in the likeness of a friend and helper in the work of the Lord. Beware of the deceitfulness of sin! (AMG Bible Illustrations)

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**[Let's Go Higher!](#)** - Author Ragnar Arlander tells about the time he and some friends scaled Mt. Rainier. When they reached a plateau, the group decided they had gone far enough.

Arlander, however, continued the climb to find a person who had traveled on ahead. Eventually he found him resting, gazing at a beautiful glacier. The man was ready to go back, but when he saw Arlander approaching, he jumped up and exclaimed, "Since you've come, let's go higher!"

This experience makes me think of the events described in Acts 28. As the apostle Paul was traveling to Rome, he met some fellow believers, and "when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15).

What better compliment could be offered us than to have someone say, "Talking to you has encouraged me to continue on in my spiritual walk." The world is filled with troubled and discouraged souls who are struggling along in the Christian life. Battle weary, they are almost ready to give up. When they see you, what influence do you have on them? Do you inspire them to more noble lives of service? Or does your example tend to drag them down?

May we influence others in such a way that they will take heart and say, "I want to go higher!" —Richard De Haan ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

Oh, I would be to others  
A cheering ray of light,  
Inspiring them with courage  
To climb some new-found height!  
—Bosch

**The human spirit soars with hope  
when lifted by an encouraging word.**

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**Sin Is Like An Insect!** - It was reported recently that an enormous pine tree in the mountains of Colorado had fallen victim to a pine beetle and died. According to locals, up to that point the tree was thought to be indestructible. It had survived fourteen lightning strikes and many years of Colorado winters, including avalanches and fires. But it was eventually brought down from within by a tiny insect that did its work silently. That's the way it is with sin in a person's life, be they a Christian or a non-Christian. **Watch over your heart with all diligence.** Pr 4:23+

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**Rousseau's "Self-Ruse"** - The deceitfulness of sin is vividly seen in the life of the French philosopher Rousseau. He declared, "No man can come to the throne of God and say, 'I'm a better man than Rousseau.'" When he knew death was close at hand, he boasted, "Ah, how happy a thing it is to die, when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach." Then he prayed, "Eternal Being, the soul that I am going to give Thee back is as pure at this moment as it was when it proceeded from Thee; render it a partaker of Thy felicity!"

This is an amazing statement when we realize that Rousseau didn't profess to be born again. In his writings he advocated adultery and suicide, and for more than 20 years he lived in licentiousness. Most of his children were born out of wedlock and sent to a foundling home. He was mean, treacherous, hypocritical, and blasphemous. ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

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### **Hebrews 3:13 Do It Now!**

Exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. —Hebrews 3:13

Several years ago a friend took me to a motivational seminar that I thoroughly enjoyed. Instead of focusing on money and success, the leaders guided us toward understanding our unique identity and purpose in life. Then they passed along some helpful methods for effective living. One motto has stayed with me: "Do it now!" The principle they taught us was that it takes as much energy to avoid a task as it does to do it. Procrastination saps power; completion gives relief.

A spiritual application can be seen in Hebrews 3, a passage filled with an air of immediacy as it calls us to obey the Lord. "'Today,' if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, . . . but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (vv.7-8,13). We don't know how long it would have taken the children of Israel to reach the Promised Land if they had obeyed God, but their 40-year journey resulted from their unwilling hearts. An entire generation missed the adventure of a lifetime (vv.8-11).

When we know how the Lord wants us to live, why don't we just say "Yes!" No debate, no delay. Do it now! [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It's easy to procrastinate  
And leave good deeds undone,  
But such a course will bring regrets

When life's short race is run. —Anon.

Do it now! Today will be yesterday tomorrow.

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### Warning Sign

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. —  
Hebrews 3:12

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 3:1-13

On a sandy beach in Uruguay, giant concrete fingers partially submerged in sand reach up toward the sky. It is called the Monument to the Drowned. Locals just call it La Mano, "The Hand." It was created by Chilean artist Mario Irarrázabal as a warning to swimmers about the danger of drowning. "The Hand" has become a tourist attraction, but its real purpose remains to remind swimmers about the perils of the sea.

The Word of God contains its own kind of warning signs. The book of Hebrews especially provides cautions about perils to the soul. "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13).

The context of the verse is a review of the unbelief and rebellion of Israel in the wilderness. Though this happened centuries before the book of Hebrews was written, the spiritual principle applies today. We are to exhort one another to resist the hardening of our hearts that comes with sin.

Warning signs are given to us for our safety. Praise God that He has given us protective warnings in His Word because of His great love for us. [Dennis Fisher](#) ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

Lord, thank You for the warnings in Your Word  
that are intended to protect and preserve my life.  
Help me to heed Your reproofs and instruction  
that I may live a life that is pleasing to You.

God gives us loving warnings in His Word to protect and preserve us.

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### **Sin Saps Us**

READ: Judges 16:1-4,15-20

Return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously." --Hosea 14:2

Sin saps us of our God-given strength. We become spiritually weak and decrepit, but often we imagine that we're just as hardy as ever.

That's the deceitfulness of sin. Gradually we drift away from God. We lose our desire to spend time in His Word and in prayer. The current of this world carries us away from friends and godly influences. We drift deeper into sin—our pathetic, feeble state evident to all eyes but our own.

I think of Samson, that man of towering strength who pillowed his head in the lap of sin, then rose from his sleep and said, "I will go out as before . . . and shake myself free!" (Judges 16:20). But he didn't know that the Lord had taken away his strength.

Many years later, the prophet Hosea confronted the people of Israel and said that they too had lost their strength because of sin, and they didn't realize it (Hosea 7:8-16). So Hosea commanded them to "return to the Lord. Say to Him, 'Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously'" (14:2).

Sin can sap us too. That's why we must deliberately take time to ask the Lord to expose our sin (Psalm 139:23-24). When we turn in repentance to Him, He will receive us graciously, set us free from sin's domination, and arm us again with strength. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my anxieties;  
And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.  
—Psalm 139:23-24

Sin adds to your trouble,  
subtracts from your energy, and  
multiplies your difficulties.

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**Misnomers** - A newspaper columnist expressed astonishment at the way truth is often stretched in advertising. She recalled ordering "fresh fruit salad" from the menu in a Boston restaurant. But when the item was served, it was anything but "fresh." The peaches, pineapples, grapes, and maraschino cherries had spent months wallowing in their own juice in a tin can. When the waitress was asked what happened to the "fresh" fruit salad, she responded cheerily, "Oh, honey, that's just what they call it." Such deception occurs not only in advertising; it happens whenever people move away from God's principles of truth and goodness. Deception, misnomers (the use of a wrong name), and outright lies are the tools of an immoral person's trade. Selfish and evil people call themselves generous and good. The slaves of sin call themselves liberated. The foolish call themselves enlightened. And the lustful describe their acts as love affairs. God is not fooled by these misnomers. In Isa 5:20, He warned against those who "call evil good, and good evil." No matter what the world calls good or evil, let's take our definition from the God of all truth. With Him there are no misnomers. —M R De Haan II ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

Deceptions, twists, and outright lies  
Define the words of fools;  
But those who know God's Word will have  
A life where wisdom rules. —Sper

**We would not delight in sin if we were not deceived by sin.  
If you rationalize one sin, it becomes two.**

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**Check The Compass** Two Florida men charted a course and drove their fishing boat out into the Gulf of Mexico. Using the boat's compass, they headed to deep waters 60 miles offshore where they hoped to catch grouper. When they arrived at what they thought was the right place, they turned on their depth finder and realized they were nowhere near their target. They discovered that one of them had laid a flashlight near the ship's compass, and the attached magnet had affected the reading. Just as that magnet changed the compass, so our sinful hearts can influence our thinking. Many of Jesus' countrymen, for example, thought they were moving in the right direction by denying that He was the promised Messiah (Jn 7:41, 422). But the real problem with these people was the bias in their hearts. They resisted Jesus because of the threat He seemed to pose to their religious traditions. Rather than carefully checking all the Scriptures, which would have verified who He was, they settled for what they preferred to believe. And they rejected Him. Because we too can be self-deceived, we must ask the Lord to expose the inner motives that cast shadows across our minds and dim our spiritual discernment (Ps 139:24-[notes](#)). With His help, we can get back on course. —M R De Haan II ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

Often I have walked in my own way,  
Trusting in my self-deceiving heart;  
Now I realize that I must pray,  
"Lord, from Your way I will not depart." —Hess

**To avoid self-deception,  
seek God's direction.**

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**Got Moles?** - While cutting our grass, I spotted rounded mounds of sandy loam on what had recently been a smooth lawn. A family of moles had emigrated from nearby woods to take up residence beneath our yard. The little creatures were wreaking havoc with our lawn by burrowing into the soil and disrupting the beautiful turf.

In some ways the activity of moles illustrates the dark side of the human heart. On the surface, we may appear polished and polite. But greed, lust, bigotry, and addictions can work inner destruction. Sooner or later, those sins will become apparent.

King Saul had a fatal flaw that festered beneath the surface—rebellion against God. He had been commanded not to take any of the spoils of war from the Amalekites (1Sa 15:3). But after a decisive victory, he let the Israelites keep the best of the livestock for themselves (1Sa 15:9).

When the prophet Samuel confronted the king, Saul rationalized that he had kept the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to God. But this

was a mere cover for his sinful pride, which had erupted in defiance of the God he claimed to serve.

God's remedy for rebellion is confession and repentance. Like Saul, you may be rationalizing your sin. Confess and forsake it before it's too late.—Dennis Fisher ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

God wants complete obedience—  
Excuses will not do;  
His Word and Spirit point the way  
As we His will pursue. —Sper

**One sin becomes two when it is defended.**

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**Evil Is Like a Wild Wolf** The 19th-century pastor Henry Ward Beecher told of a mother in the wild frontier country who was washing clothes beside a stream. Her only child was playing nearby. Suddenly she realized he was gone. She called his name, but there was no answer. Alarmed, the mother ran to the house, but her son was not there. Frantically, the woman dashed out to the forest. There she found the child, but it was too late. The youngster had been killed by a wolf. Heartbroken, she picked up his lifeless body, drew him close to her heart, and tenderly carried him home. Beecher concluded, "Oh, how that mother hated wolves!"

Every Christian should have a similar hatred for evil (Ps 101:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, [8notes](#)). Yet many mothers and fathers who are so careful to guard their youngsters from physical harm don't notice the evil forces that threaten their spiritual welfare. As a result, they leave them unprotected. They show little concern for the kinds of friends their children make, the magazines they read, or the TV programs they watch. But whenever these influences are bad, they should be seen as a deadly threat, and we should protect our children from them. It's not wrong to hate when we hate what is wrong. —R W De Haan ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

FOR FURTHER STUDY

According to Psalm 101, what are we to hate?  
How can we avoid looking at evil? (Ps101:3).  
How can we please God with our speech? (Ps101:1, 5, 7).

**If we do not hate evil,  
we cannot love good.**

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**Pulling Weeds** Pulling weeds from my lawn can be a struggle. Whether it's unearthing a string of ivy or digging up dandelions, it's often difficult to overcome God's curse in the Garden of Eden (Ge 3:17, 18). When the ground is hard and dry, weeds are highly resistant to being uprooted. But when a soaking rain softens the soil, they yield quite readily. I've also noticed that the youngest weeds are easier to remove and the older ones are more stubborn. Bad habits are like that. The longer they remain, the more difficult they are to remove. If we uproot them early, when our heart is tender toward God's love, we will have the best chance for success.

Paul tells us of God's great love and abundant grace to us (Ro 5:20,21-notes). These truths can soften the soil of a hard heart. And when we understand that Jesus died to free us from the penalty and the power of sin (Ro 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14-notes), we will see the need to fight aggressively against sinful habits. A passive faith won't kill a bad habit. Faith must actively apply these truths. "Pulling weeds" is often a painful process of multi-failures followed by the success of failing for the last time. Do you have some weeds that need pulling? —D J De Haan ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

The sins that would entangle us  
Must never be ignored;  
If we do not get rid of them  
They'll pierce us like a sword. —Sper

**A bad habit is like a soft chair—  
easy to get into but hard to get out of.**

---

**I Was Deceived** - It was dusk. My wife and I had just strolled across the famous Charles Bridge in Prague when a man approached us with a wad of money in his hand. "Forty-two Czech korunas for one dollar," he said. The official rate was about 35Ks for one US



dollar. So I exchanged 50 dollars for 2,100 Czech korunas.

That evening I told my son about my good fortune. "Dad, I should have told you," he apologized. "Never exchange money on the street." We looked at the bills. The 100K note was a good Czech bill, but the two 1,000K bills were worthless. They looked like Czech money but were Bulgarian notes no longer in circulation. I had been deceived—and robbed!

Satan employs similar tactics (John 8:44). He capitalizes on the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13), using its "passing pleasures" (Hebrews 11:25-notes) to hide the pain that always follows. Sin may be attractive, even offering something that in and of itself is good—but behind it is deception.

Our best defense against that deception is to have a growing knowledge of God's Word. As we follow the psalmist's example, we'll keep from being deceived by sin: "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11-[notes](#)) (See Memorizing His Word). —Dennis J. De Haan ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

Give me, O Lord, a strong desire  
To look within Your Word each day;  
Help me to hide it in my heart,  
Lest from its truth my feet would stray. —Branon

**God's truth uncovers Satan's lies.**

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**Booster Words** - Booster shots—think of the benefits! They are part of a complete program of vaccinations that protect us against threatening diseases.

Booster words—ever heard of them? They are words we say to help others in the fight against discouragement and despair.

In his book *Secrets From The Mountain*, Pat Williams tells of an experiment with a group of students. They were told that scientists had proven that brown-eyed children were smarter than blue-eyed ones. Immediately, the brown-eyed students began doing better in school. A few days later, though, the students were told that they had been misinformed, and it was the blue-eyed youngsters who were actually smarter. Quickly, the scores of the blue-eyed children rose above those of their brown-eyed classmates.

Lying to children is never right, but the study demonstrates that words have the power to influence behavior. Paul recognized this, so he sent Timothy to the church at Thessalonica to encourage the believers in their faith—and his words did just that (1Th 3:2, 3-notes, 1Th 3:6-note).

Do we "exhort one another daily"? (Hebrews 3:13). Do we bring comfort and encouragement to the people we know? Try using some booster words today. —Dave Branon ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

#### **Putting It Into Practice**

Think of someone who needs encouragement.  
How can you help that person today?  
Make a phone call, send an e-mail, or pay a visit.

**Hope can be ignited by a spark of encouragement.**

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**The Power Of Sin** - I was having lunch with a pastor-friend when the discussion sadly turned to a mutual friend in ministry who had failed morally. As we grieved together over this fallen comrade, now out of ministry, I wondered aloud, "I know anyone can be tempted and anyone can stumble, but he's a smart guy. How could he think he could get away with it?" Without blinking, my friend responded, "**Sin makes us stupid.**" It was an abrupt statement intended to get my attention, and it worked.

I have often thought of that statement in the ensuing years, and I continue to affirm the wisdom of those words. How else can you explain the actions of King David, the man after God's own heart turned adulterer and murderer? Or the reckless choices of Samson? Or the public denials of Christ by Peter, the most public of Jesus' disciples? We are flawed people who are vulnerable to temptation and to the foolishness of mind that can rationalize and justify almost any course of action if we try hard enough.

If we are to have a measure of victory over the power of sin, it will come only as we lean on the strength and wisdom of Christ (Ro 7:24, 25-notes). As His grace strengthens our hearts and minds, we can overcome our own worst inclination to make foolish choices. —Bill Crowder ([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without](#)

[their permission](#))

The price of sin is very high  
Though now it may seem low;  
And if we let it go unchecked,  
Its crippling power will grow. —Fitzhugh

**God's Spirit is your power source—  
don't let sin break the connection.**

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**Connected Actions** - My son Steve was running the best cross-country races of his life. Just a high-school freshman, he earned a spot on the varsity team.

That's when Steve decided he wanted to go even faster—but not on foot. So he spent a Saturday racing a dirt-track motorcycle. All went well until he misjudged a jump and ended up with his leg under a Yamaha.

Nothing was broken, but having a banged-up calf muscle took a toll on his cross-country season. His times got worse, and he missed making the varsity team for the state finals.

Steve learned an important lesson: All of our actions are connected. Each action affects other areas of our lives.

Sometimes we try to keep parts of our lives separate from our faith in Christ. One example is thinking that watching immorality on TV does not affect our walk with God. But the Bible says, "He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow" (Proverbs 22:8), and "He who sows to his flesh will ... reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will ... reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:8).

All elements in life are inter-related. We must make sure that each thought, each action, and each word flows from a heart of Godliness—so that everything we do is for God's glory, honor, and praise. —Dave Branon (([Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission](#))

Surer than autumn's harvests  
Are harvests of thought and deed;  
Like those that our hearts have planted,  
The yield will be like the seed.  
—Harris

The best reason for doing what's right today is tomorrow.

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## Hebrews 3:7-19 TODAY IN THE WORD

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. - Hebrews 3:7-8

What one national park worker calls ""a false sense of security"" continues to lead visitors of national parks to ignore warnings and to take dangerous chances. Despite clear warnings, for example, people still try to pose with the bears, to get too close to other wild animals, or to enter waters that are not safe for swimming. This park worker suggests that perhaps the word ""park"" itself helps to lull people into feeling safe when they are actually in a potentially dangerous environment.

It seems to be part of our human nature to ignore warning signs. The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews had a very clear warning posted before them of the tragic consequences of allowing their hearts to be hardened through unbelief. But the writer was afraid these believers were about to crash through the warning sign and commit the same error that a previous generation of God's people had committed.

These verses are part of an ongoing series of warnings directed at a group of people who were wavering in their commitment to Christ. They were reminded that the generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt under Moses never reached God's promised rest in Canaan, although it was waiting to be claimed.

The problem was the people's hardness of heart, which led them to test God, to doubt His provision, and to rebel against His will for them. These Israelites provoked God to anger, and He ""declared on oath"" (Heb 3:11) that their bones would bleach in the desert until the entire generation died out (Heb 3:17).



We also need to take this warning to heart. Unbelief always displeases God. The solution to this problem is to keep our hearts tender toward Him, something believers need to help one another do every day (Heb 3:113).

The urgency of doing this today is obvious from the fact that sin is very deceitful. If we ignore it, sin will harden our spirits as surely as cement hardens once it has been poured. We need the same kind of faithfulness the writer of Hebrews urged his readers to maintain (Heb 3:14).

Just to make sure the point wasn't missed, the writer returned to the example of Moses' unbelieving generation (Heb 3:115- 19). It's a warning we can't hear too often. God honors faith, whereas unbelief invites His judgment.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - This very day is one of the ""todays"" that the author of Hebrews urges us to take advantage of as we encourage one another. Through today's study, we have attempted to encourage you to walk faithfully with Christ. Do you know someone you can encourage in his or her walk? It might be a family member or a friend who is experiencing doubt or a trial. Ask God to lead you to someone who needs an encouraging word this week.

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**Harmless Little Sins?** - What happened to the great city of Ephesus? Often mentioned in the New Testament, it was one of the cultural and commercial centers of its day. Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, it was noted for its bustling harbors, its broad avenues, its gymnasiums, its baths, its huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana. What happened to bring about its gradual decline until its harbor was no longer crowded with ships and the city was no longer a flourishing metropolis? Was it smitten by plagues, destroyed by enemies, or demolished by earthquakes? No, silt was the reason for its downfall--silent and nonviolent silt. Over the years, fine sedimentary particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders. Little evil practices, little acts of disobedience may seem harmless. But let the silt of sin gradually accumulate, and we will find ourselves far from God. Life will become a spiritual ruin. In the book of Hebrews we are warned of the danger of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13). James said that the attractive pleasures of sin are really a mask covering death (Jas 1:15-notes). ([Ibid](#))

**God forbid that we let the silt of sin accumulate in our lives** --[Vernon Grounds](#) ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets](#)). Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

*Christian, walk carefully, danger is near!  
On in your journey with trembling and fear;  
Snares from without and temptations within  
Seek to entice you once more into sin.  
--Anon.*

**Little sins add up to big trouble.**

**Sin will take you farther than you ever thought you'd stray  
Keep you longer than you ever meant to stay  
And cost you more than you ever thought you'd have to pay!**