

Illustrations on The Deceitfulness of Sin

Don't Take the Bait Beloved!

ILLUSTRATIONS REGARDING THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

- See related article - 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!

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 helper in the work of the Lord. Beware of the deceitfulness of sin! (AMG Bible Illustrations)

THE LAW REVEALS THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN (Romans 7:11)

Romans 7:11+ for **sin**, taking an opportunity through the commandment, **deceived** me and through it killed me.

Note again: it is sin that takes the law and misuses it; it takes the law and deceives us. How? There are at least two ways.

1. Sin misuses the law and deceives a person by making him feel safe and secure. Sin, that is, self-righteousness, says obey the law and you shall live. But this is deception, for no man can keep the law perfectly. Down deep, the thinking and honest man knows he can never achieve perfection by keeping God's law; but his sin, his self-righteousness, drives him onward to try and try; thus he is forever deceived and doomed. The point is this: the law reveals the deceitfulness of sin or of self-righteousness. The law proves that man is not perfect, that he cannot live without sinning, that he sins continually and cannot keep from sinning. When a man honestly looks at the law, the law destroys the deceitfulness of sin.

2. Sin misuses the law and deceives a person by discouraging him, making him feel helpless and hopeless. Sin deceives men into thinking that the law has been given to bring life to man. Therefore, when a man continues to break the law, he is keenly aware that he is condemned and unable to achieve the righteousness of the law. He knows that he has displeased God, senses that he is unacceptable to God. Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness swarm over him; he becomes defeated, down and out. Sin simply takes the law and uses man's failure to discourage him. Sin uses the law, so to speak, to whip man; to make him feel unworthy, helpless, and hopeless; to drive him deeper and deeper into despair. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide)

Titus 3:3+ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, **deceived**, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

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.

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.

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!

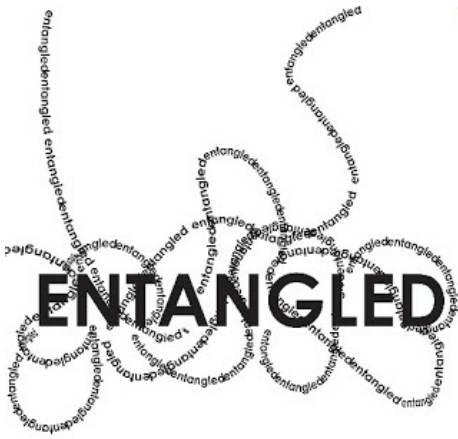
The pictures below illustrate physically what happened to Ephesus spiritually. For a full discussion see **Beware of Slowly Drifting from Your First Love of Jesus** (See also onsite article -- Are You Drifting Spiritually?)



Left - Aerial View of Ephesus - Blue Circle marks ruins of city with harbor 2 miles away!
Right - View toward the west with marshes & then the ocean (hard to see) ([Source](#))

Related Resources:

- [The Danger and Deceitfulness of a Hardened Heart](#)
 - [Are You Drifting Spiritually?](#)
 - [Backsliding](#)
 - [Beware of Slowly Drifting from your First Love of Jesus](#)
 - [Are You Entangled?](#)
 - [Give Me An Undivided Heart](#)
 - [Compromise](#)
 - [Daniel-Man of Integrity](#)
 - [Proverbs 4:23 Commentary](#) - Watch over your HEART with all diligence
 - [Matthew 5:8 Commentary](#) - Blessed are the pure in HEART.
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[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 their any "matador vines" in your life that need to be eradicated?

Bait and Hook Analogy Just as a fish is lured by a shiny bait, not realizing a sharp hook lies within, sin often presents itself as something attractive, harmless, or immediately pleasing, yet hides its destructive consequences. The fisherman’s goal isn’t the fish’s pleasure but its capture, just like sin entices for harm, not good.

Sin often begins small—what seems like a “little” lie, a minor compromise, or a small indulgence. But each compromise makes the next one easier, leading eventually to much greater damage. Like stepping onto a muddy slope, each step takes you further than you intended to go and is much harder to recover from.

Charles Spurgeon likened sin’s deceit to an addict’s experience: The first high feels exciting, but addiction soon follows, with every subsequent “pleasure” leaving emptiness, regret, and loss. The initial promise turns into a bitter cycle, reminding us that sin’s promises are empty—what begins as fun ends in bondage.

“Just This Once” Lie Many are persuaded, “I can stop whenever I want; just this once won’t hurt.” This is a classic deceit: believing we can flirt with temptation and escape unscathed. Like a child thinking it safe to play near a fire “just once,” many discover too late the burns are real and lasting.

Trick Mirror Imagine a carnival mirror that distorts your image. Sin distorts reality, causing one to justify, rationalize, or dismiss the seriousness of actions. What seems “not so bad” is, in fact, dangerous.

Promise of Happiness, Delivery of Misery Sin convinces us that doing wrong will lead to pleasure, escape from trouble, or a better life. But the opposite is true—behind the “reward” is heartache, guilt, and spiritual death. Sin’s smiles are masks, hiding the pain that follows.

Hardened Heart The gradual effect of sin is similar to calluses forming on skin. Each act makes our hearts harder, more numb to God and conscience. What once caused guilt becomes habitual, and repentance grows more difficult the longer sin deceives us. “Sin

is false through and through. It promises pleasure but leads to misery. It feigns a heaven but inflicts a real hell. ... 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." — Charles Spurgeon

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.

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)!

Several renowned artworks vividly portray the idea of sin's deceitfulness by using symbolism, allegory, and dramatic scene selection. Here are notable examples:

Hieronymus Bosch, "The Garden of Earthly Delights" (c. 1490–1510)

This triptych's central panel teems with images of forbidden pleasure and temptation that appear beautiful and inviting, but the right panel descends into grotesque, nightmarish punishments—highlighting how enticing sins mask their fatal consequences. Bosch's surreal, intricate approach emphasizes how alluring sin can deceptively lead to ruin.

Michelangelo, "The Fall and Expulsion from Garden of Eden" (Sistine Chapel Ceiling, 1508–1512)

In this fresco, the serpent tempts Eve with the fruit, depicted as almost noble and persuasive. Adam and Eve initially look innocent and unconcerned, but are immediately plunged into shame and exile immediately after giving in, visually demonstrating how sin's promise lures before betraying.

Hans Holbein the Younger, "The Ambassadors" (1533)

This double portrait features a distorted skull (anamorphosis) lurking in the foreground, representing the hidden consequences of earthly pursuits and self-deception. The painting's intricate details symbolize how sin conceals mortality and spiritual ruin behind worldly allure.

Lucas Cranach the Elder, "Adam and Eve" (multiple versions, c. 1520–1530)

Cranach's versions highlight the serpent's seductiveness and the fruit's shine. The immediacy with which shame and loss follow eating shows sin's promises are a mask, concealing misery.

William Holman Hunt, "The Awakening Conscience" (1853)

This Pre-Raphaelite work depicts a woman rising from her lover's lap, suddenly aware of her compromised state. The sunlight and reflection symbolize an awakening to sin's illusion—a direct rendering of sin as an attractive path that ultimately traps and destroys.

Peter Paul Rubens, "The Fall of Man" (1628–1629)

This dramatic Baroque painting accentuates Eve's willingness and the serpent's charm, but also the tragic pathos that immediately overtakes Adam and Eve after their choice, visually capturing sin's two-faced nature.

These artworks repeatedly employ bait-and-switch imagery—pleasure masking poison, beauty masking death—echoing biblical warnings that "sin deceives by promising what it cannot deliver". Each example offers a powerful visual lesson in how sin's deceit operates: what attracts is not what it delivers, and the cost is always disguised until too late.

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+, [See also [Spurgeon's comments](#)] Ps

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)

Garbage Out of Control

In 1991, a judge fined brothers Geno and Russell Capozziello, owners of a Bridgeport, Connecticut, wrecking company, nearly \$900,000 for operating an illegal dump. In 1986, on the empty lots surrounding their facility, the brothers began dumping debris from buildings. Eventually the mound of rubble and muck covered two acres and reached a height of thirty-five feet, the equivalent of a three-story building.

The state ordered them to clean it up, but the brothers claimed there was no place to dump it legally in Bridgeport, and they could not afford to have it hauled away. While spending more than \$330,000 the previous year to have debris hauled away, they barely dented the pile. According to Geno, "It was never supposed to get this high."

Like garbage, the effects of sinful habits have a way of accumulating beyond our plans and beyond our control. —Michael E. Hardin in Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching

Sin's Deception

When John Belushi died in the spring of 1983 of an overdose of cocaine and heroin, a variety of articles appeared, including one in U.S. News and World Report, on the seductive dangers of cocaine: "It can do you no harm and it can drive you insane; it can give you status in society and it can wreck your career; it can make you the life of the party and it can turn you into a loner; it can be an elixir for high living and a potion for death." **Like all sin, there's a difference between the appearance and the reality, between the momentary feeling and the lasting effect.** —Daniel Hans, Milford, Connecticut. Leadership, Vol. 6, no. 3.

Don't Ignore Small Snakes

Sins that seem little and harmless will grow.

Tolerate or ignore sin, and it will eventually lead to death

For eight years Sally had been the Romero family pet. When they got her, she was only one foot long. But Sally grew until eventually she reached eleven-and-a-half feet and weighed eighty pounds. Then on July 20, 1993 Sally, a Burmese python, turned on 15-year-old Derek, strangling the teenager until he died of suffocation. Associated Press Online (7/22/93) quoted the police as saying that the snake was "quite aggressive, hissing, and reacting" when they arrived to investigate. Sins that seem little and harmless will grow. Tolerate or ignore sin, and it will eventually lead to death (James 1:15). —Bruce E. Truman, Mt. Olivet, Kentucky. Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 4.

Paved Over Sin

Over one million acres that once held oxygen producing trees are paved over every year. Oxygen is the source of life for man. Without oxygen one dies quickly. In paving our tree-producing soil, we are cutting one source of life-sustaining oxygen. How like the person that hardens his feelings against God's leadership in one area of his life at a time. He is ultimately hardened against God's will and is lifeless. The Scripture says, "by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself." (Romans 2:5 RSV)

Spurgeon - "The deceitfulness of sin."

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.

Petrified Hearts

There are six great "forests" in the 94,189-square-mile Petrified Forest National Park within the Painted Desert of northern Arizona.

Virtually unknown until the late 1870's, the 135-million-year-old "stone trees" had been killed by natural processes and deeply buried in mud and sand that contained silica-rich volcanic ash. The logs became petrified as the mineral, carried into the wood by ground water, replaced the wood cells. Eventually, the surrounding material eroded away, and the petrified logs and fragments and chips of varied colors became exposed. The stone is of such hardness that it will scratch all but the hardest alloy steels.

I wonder how long it takes unconfessed sin to petrify our hearts, so that we no longer feel the Holy Spirit's touch?*

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.

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.

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.

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 - 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!)

JUDAS TREE.—We have heard of a singular tree that illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. It is called the Judas tree. The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects; and the

wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops dead from among the crimson flowers to the earth. Beneath this enticing tree, the earth is strewn with its victims.

ANOTHER VERSION - **Allurements of sin.**—We have heard of a singular tree, that forcibly illustrates the deceitfulness of sin.* It is called the Judas tree. The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects; and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops dead from among the crimson flowers to the earth. Beneath this enticing tree, the earth is strewn with the victims of its fatal fascinations. That fatal plant that attracts only to destroy is a vivid emblem of the deceitfulness and deadliness of sin.* For the poison of sin's bewitching flowers there is but one remedy: it is found in the "leaves of the tree of life" that groweth on Mount Calvary. (Dr Culyer)

ROYAL LADY.—A royal English lady once asked if she must be saved by the same Jesus who saved her coachman. When informed that there is no difference, she replied: "Then I will not be saved." When the haughty Queen Elizabeth came down to death, she shrieked: "My kingdom for a moment of time."

THE STEALTHY INSIDIOUSNESS OF SIN. There is a wide difference between the happy household that used to join with Abram's in sacrifice at the Bethel altar and that which we read of in Sodom on the night before the destruction of that city. That divergence was not caused by any single volcanic upheaval of passion, but by gradual defection. We have the key to it in the question addressed by Lot to the angel, when, asking to be allowed to flee into Zoar, he said, "Is it not a little one?" Depend upon it, that was not the first time Lot reasoned in such a way. Most likely he did so on the very occasion of this first fatal choice. He saw Sodom in the plain, but he said within himself, "I need not go into the city, I can always keep myself secluded," and promising this to himself he pitched toward Sodom. But after a time he became accustomed to the men of the place. He saw many advantages in the protection of their walls, as compared with his defenceless nomad life. Thus the temptation to go into the city, which he would at first have repelled from him with scorn, was entertained, and concerning it also the old argument was used—"No doubt the city is wicked, but I need not mingle with the inhabitants, and when I come to balance the matter I must not let a little thing like that prejudice blind me to my own interests"; and in this way he went into Sodom. In a similar manner he came to allow intermarriages between the families of the city and his own. **All this illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. No one ever became very wicked all at once.** The descent of the road that leadeth to destruction is made in single steps, and these not on a clear and well-marked staircase, but on an incline which seems to be but little out of the horizontal line. Be on your guard against the first temptation, and whenever an evil pleads with you, saying, "Am I not a little one?"

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!"

The behaviour of the children of Israel in the wilderness is an illustration, on a great scale, of the deceitfulness of sin; especially of the proneness of the heart to fall into unbelief with respect to spiritual things. It might have seemed safe to predict that, after all the great Divine deliverance of which they had been objects, they would have steadily gone on in the way of obedience; whereas only a very short time elapses before they are found believing the wishes of their own hearts rather than the word of God through Moses. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." Those who are fallen to-day were standing yesterday, and some standing to-day will be fallen to-morrow. And if we are not among the fallen, it will be because we are giving daily practical heed to this truth concerning the deceitfulness of sin.

2 Kings 18:31-32 illustrate the deceitfulness of sin; he promised them peace and plenty until they were taken away into captivity. There is always an "until" to disobedience.

The Bible is filled with illustrations and narratives that powerfully demonstrate the deceitfulness of sin—how it disguises its consequences, entices the heart, and leads to spiritual ruin. Below are some of the most vivid biblical examples:

1. The Fall in Eden (Genesis 3)

The very first sin involved deception. The serpent deceived Eve with the promise, “You will not surely die... your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God” (Genesis 3:4-5). Sin appeared as wisdom and advancement, but brought judgment, shame, and death instead. This story is foundational for understanding how sin promises good but leads to destruction.

2. King David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12)

David’s sin with Bathsheba did not begin with blatant rebellion, but with small compromises. He deceived himself into believing there would be no consequences, then further compounded the sin with lies and murder. When confronted by Nathan’s parable (2 Samuel 12), David initially failed to see his own guilt—a classic display of sin’s blinding power.

3. Achan’s Greed (Joshua 7)

Achan coveted forbidden things among Jericho’s spoils, thinking he could hide his sin without consequence. The allure of wealth blinded him to the risk, bringing disaster on himself and his community. Only when exposed did he see the true cost—another example of how sin’s temporary pleasures mask eventual ruin.

4. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

They pretended to give all proceeds from a sale while secretly keeping some, seeking praise while hiding the truth. Their deceit not only provoked immediate judgment from God, but showed how sin leads people to rationalize dishonesty, thinking they can escape the consequences. This story underscores the spiritual danger of living behind a facade.

5. Samson’s Compromise (Judges 13–16)

Samson repeatedly played with temptation, believing he could manage its consequences. He was attracted to forbidden relationships and ultimately betrayed by Delilah, leading to his capture and downfall—sin’s gradual erosion reached its inevitable end.

6. Israel in the Wilderness (Numbers 13–14; Psalm 78; Hebrews 3:7–19)

Despite witnessing God’s miracles, Israel was repeatedly deceived by sin—grumbling, disbelief, and rebellion—thinking disobedience would somehow benefit them. The result was wandering and even death in the wilderness, a warning that “the deceitfulness of sin” can harden hearts over time.

7. Judas Iscariot (Matthew 26:14–16, 47–50; 27:3–5)

Judas was deceived by greed and the belief that gaining money was worth betraying Jesus. The fleeting pleasure of thirty pieces of silver gave way to overwhelming guilt and despair—a stark example of sin’s empty promises.

8. New Testament Warnings

James 1:14-15 says temptation lures by desire, “then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death”—showing sin’s seduction, slow progression, and ultimate outcome.

Hebrews 3:13 warns that sin “hardens” hearts, and believers must exhort each other daily lest deceit blinds them.

These accounts reveal that sin often appears harmless or desirable, but its true nature is to deceive, destroy, and distance us from God. The greatest danger lies not only in the act, but in how easily hearts are blinded, rationalized, or made callous—underscoring the Bible’s urgent warnings against the subtle and destructive power of sin

DAVID’S DECEIT BY SIN - 2 Samuel 12:6 To restore fourfold was according to the demands of the Law (Ex. 22:1). That David could be such a moralist against the rich man in the parable, while at the same time hiding his own sin, illustrates the deceitfulness of sin.

I once heard a taped sermon by Hal Lindsey entitled “The Peril of Unconscious Decay.” It was on the life of David. He talked about David’s sin with Bathsheba and how it didn’t just suddenly happen. David had been slowly, and maybe even unconsciously, slipping away from his regular duties and his walk with God. He stopped going out to battle with Israel, and even when he spotted Bathsheba it was when he had just got up out of bed in the evening! Sin was deceptive. A little dabble here, a little dabble there and before long David was a murderer and an adulterer!

The sins of Samson are a good illustration of the deceitfulness of sin.

[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](#))

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." J. Vernon McGee tells a story that nicely illustrates this truth. "Let me illustrate this. When I was a boy in Oklahoma, I used to have to milk a stubborn old cow. When it grew dark early in the evenings, I would have to take a lantern out to the barn with me. When I reached the corncrib two things would happen. The rats ran for cover—I could hear them taking off—and the little birds that were roosting up in the rafters would begin to twitter around and sing. The presence of light caused one to flee and the other to sing. Now, did the light make a rat a rat? No. He was a rat before the light got there. The light only revealed that he was a rat. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, He was the Light of the world. In His presence two things happened: He caused the birds to sing and the rats to run. Let me illustrate this same thought with another story. Years ago there was a big explosion in a mine in West Virginia, and many men were blocked off in the mine because of the cave-ins. After several days a rescue party dug through to the trapped men. And one of the first things they managed to get through to them was a light. After the light came on, a fine young miner said, "Why doesn't someone turn on a light?" The other miners looked at him startled, suddenly realizing that he had been blinded by the explosion. But it took a light to reveal that he was blind. God blinds nobody. He hardens no heart. When the light shines in, it reveals what an individual is, and that is what Isaiah means. That is exactly why the Lord Jesus Christ quoted this passage." (Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.)

John Witherspoon - And now, my brethren, view (and view it with terror!) the dreadful consequence of the deceitfulness of sin, and by what fatal steps it leads on to that hardness of heart which is a sure prelude of eternal misery. Who that ventures upon the practice of sin, ever intends to go so far? They mean only to take a short trial of the pleasures of vice; but it gains upon them insensibly, and fixes its hold still faster and faster, till they are its absolute slaves. I shall conclude this illustration of the deceitfulness of sin with observing, that there is an exact correspondence between the progress of a saint in holiness and meetness for heaven, and the progress of a wicked man in sin, and his growing fitness and preparation for hell. A new convert finds it hard at first to separate himself from his sins, and confine himself within the bounds of duty; he has some relenting thought towards his lusts, as old companions from which he is to part forever. Just so a young and unexperienced sinner finds some reluctance at sin, some uneasiness from the challenges of conscience, and painful forebodings of his unknown future fate. — A good man after walking some time in the paths of virtue finds the way become smoother and easier, and serves God with greater constancy, and with greater pleasure. Just so the sinner finds it more easy, through time, to violate his conscience, does it more frequently, and with less remorse.—A good man soon associates himself with the excellent ones of the earth, he is instructed by their conversation, emboldened by their example, and assisted by their prayers. Just so the sinner soon finds, or is found out by those who are like him in inclination; they join in confederacy, adopt each others principles, and follow each others practice. — A good man in time is thoroughly confirmed, becomes possess of a prevailing love to God and holiness; so that it is his very nature, his delight, as well as duty. Just so the sinner, in process of time, is governed by his lusts: they acquire that authority over him that they do not solicit but demand indulgence. — A good man is fortified in his choice, and despises the smiles and frowns of a corrupt world. Just so the sinner lays aside shame, and says, nay but I will do that which hath proceeded out of my mouth. — A good man is filled with concern for the interest of religion. Just so the sinner espouses the cause of profanity, will plead it in his conversation, and strengthen it with his substance.—In fine, a good man is at last raised above the world, his heart is in heaven, and he longs to be carried there. Just so the sinner fills up the measure of his iniquity; the infernal passions take possession of the whole man, he becomes weary of the earth for the few good men that are in it, and is fully prepared for the language of blasphemy and despair.

The concept of the deceptiveness of sin is a recurring theme throughout the Bible, illustrating how sin can mislead individuals, distort truth, and lead to spiritual downfall. Sin, by its nature, is deceitful, often presenting itself as harmless or even desirable, while its ultimate end is destruction and separation from God.

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."**

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.

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.

[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.**

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+

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](#))

We should also be mindful of the deceitfulness of sin. Satan is full of guile and duplicity. Satan is the master of mendacity, the father of falsehood, the king of craftiness. He knows that if you repeat a falsehood long enough, many people will believe it. Let us consider some of the big lies of Satan (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Hebrews 3:12–13).



The Deadly Matador Plant (see [discussion](#))

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!

“The size of the lie is a definite factor in causing it to be believed, for the vast masses of a nation are in the depth of their hearts more easily deceived than they are consciously and intentionally bad. The primitive simplicity of their minds renders them a more easy prey to a big lie than a small one, for they themselves often tell little lies but would be ashamed to tell big ones ... “Something therefore always remains and sticks from the most impudent lies, a fact which all bodies and individuals concerned with the art of lying in this world know only too well, and hence they stop at nothing to achieve this end” (Mein Kampf, Adolf Hitler).

The deceitfulness of sin. - Isaac Watts

- 1 SIN has a thousand treach'rous arts
To practise on the mind;
With flatt'ring looks she tempts our hearts,
But leaves a sting behind.
 - 2 With names of virtue she deceives
The aged and the young;
And while the heedless wretch believes,
She makes his fetters strong.
 - 3 She pleads for all the joys she brings,
And gives a fair pretence:
But cheats the soul of heav'nly things,
And chains it down to sense.
 - 4 So on a tree divinely fair,
Grew the forbidden food;
Our mother took the poison there,
And tainted all her blood.
-

The deceitfulness of sin. The demoniacs “worshipped him” (Mark 5:6). This was not true worship. It was deceitful worship. They had intended evil (Matthew 8:28); but because Christ had commanded the demons to come out of the men (Luke 8:29), they fell down (the word translated “worshipped” means to fall prostrate before someone) before Christ and pleaded not to be exorcised. So it was deceitful worship. Sin likes to look like it is worshiping, but it is phony. This is what Paul was speaking of when he said of evil, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5).

1 Timothy 6:9. THE Bible speaks of the deceitfulness of two things—“the deceitfulness of sin” and “the deceitfulness of riches.” Riches are like a mirage in the desert, which has all the appearance of satisfying, and lures on the traveller with the promise of water and shade; but he only wastes his strength in the effort to reach it. So riches never satisfy: the pursuit of them always turns out a snare.

INTRODUCTION:

The prodigal son found that the attractive path led to a pig pen. Peter went out and wept bitterly after carelessly wandering into the tragic alley. Judas went out and hanged himself after realizing that he was too far down the dead-end street to turn back.

I. THE DEFINITION OF SIN

The Bible says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4).

Solomon defined sin as, "He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth" (Prov. 14:21). Paul explained that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). James stated, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). John wrote, "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17).

There are many different kinds of sin illustrated in the Bible. There is the secret sin—like Cain's impulsive sin—like Esau's; covered sin—like Joseph's brethren and Achan's; sin prompted by others—such as Ahab's reluctant sin.

II. DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

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

Jeremiah stated that, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9), and the psalmist cried in Psalm 120:2. "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue."

Jesus said, "Take heed that ye be not deceived." (Luke 21:8).

Paul warned, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7).

III. DEATH BY SIN

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." (Ezek. 18:20). Death was promised to Adam and Eve, if they took of the tree. Spiritual death came the instant they sinned. Physical death followed.

Eternal death is called "the second death." "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

DANDELION DECEPTION - Dandelions, when left unchecked, spread quickly. As spring progressed in Northern Idaho, dandelions kept popping up in my yard where there were none before and my lawn was being overrun. It was time to do something before it was too late. Sin is the same way. It is progressive. It is almost unnoticeable at first, but if not checked, before long it will completely overtake your life. The horrible sins of the Gentiles listed in Romans 1:26–31 (homosexuality, unrighteousness, wickedness, etc.) began with the passive sins of neglecting to "honor God as God and give thanks" (verse 21). **Check sin at its inception before it progresses.** Honor God and give Him thanks daily. Below that pretty little short-lived dandelion flower is an ugly weed that will kill your lawn. Sin is just like that. It appears very attractive (2 Corinthians 11:14–15) and is even pleasurable at first (Hebrews 11:26). However, the gratification soon wears off or wears out, leaving only the ugly lasting effects. Once the fleeting moments of sexual pleasure of adultery are gone, there remains the broken families, the loss of trust and respect of spouse and children, the hurt feelings, and the guilt—not to mention the possibility of AIDS. It seemed good at the moment, but in the end it is terribly ugly. The roots of the dandelion are instructive. A plant ten inches in diameter is fed by a single taproot only one-half inch at its widest point. Similarly, the "big" sins such as murder and adultery are merely the outgrowth of "smaller" sins that are under the surface, in the heart (Matthew 5:21–28; 1 Timothy 6:10). Contemptuously calling another person a "fool" or a "stupid jerk" comes from the same hateful attitude that causes others to murder. Likewise in adultery, the real sin—lust—is under the surface, in the heart. So watch your heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23). Another thing about dandelion roots is that, though relatively small, they go very deep. This makes it difficult to dig the whole root out. Likewise sin. Long after we become Christians, those same old desires continue to plague us (Galatians 5:17). Consequently, we must continually "put to death the deeds of the body" (Romans 8:13) and be "renewed in the spirit of our mind" (Ephesians 4:23). A heavy dose of God's word, however, will act like herbicides on a dandelion and kill even the roots of sin. But unlike Roundup, one shot is not enough. Which brings up the next point. Dandelions don't grow on a healthy lawn. The good stuff (lush green grass) can out-compete the weeds if its roots and leaves are healthy and obtain plenty of nourishment. Sin is just like that. It has its greatest success when we are spiritually malnourished. So our best preventative measure is God's word. David said, "Thy word I have treasured up in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11; see 1 Peter 2:2). Plenty of the proper nourishment can keep us free of the weeds of sin. The next time you see a yard overrun with dandelions,

think of sin and its lasting and terrible consequences. Think about how quickly it progresses from bad to worse and about how deceptive it is. Think about where it begins (in the heart) and what it will take to root it out and keep it out. If you have a lawn, go out and pull some dandelions. Bring your whole family and see how many lessons they can find in these simple little weeds. You will improve the looks of your lawn, but more importantly you will learn much about sin. -- Randy S. Hofh

As it has been well said, sin is like Jael, who, when asked by Sisera for water, brought forth milk, "butter in a lordly dish," but had the hammer and nail behind! -- Judges 4:17-21

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.

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.

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.

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.**

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.**

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.

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, [8 notes](#)). 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.**

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.

The Deceitfulness of Sin! James Smith, 1859

A death-bed is a great revealer. Some time ago, I was called to visit a lovely young woman on her death-bed. She had regularly attended the means of grace, often felt impressed under the Scriptures — but never came to saving faith. She was suddenly seized with illness, which soon terminated fatally. On that sick bed, she saw things very differently to what she had done, and deeply regretted the course she had pursued. Often on her dying pillow, she was heard to exclaim, "Oh the deceitfulness of sin! Oh the deceitfulness of sin!" She now saw that it had deceived her, and bitterly regretted that she had yielded to its fascinations.

Reader! Sin is very deceitful. It never appears at first in its true colors — but wears a mirthful garment to deceive. Beware of it, lest it deceive you. Many have never been undeceived — until it was too late; the door of mercy was closed, and they were beyond the reach of salvation.

JANE JONES was a lively, good-tempered, kind young woman. Her conduct was moral, and she stood well with her employers. She read her Bible, sometimes attended a place of worship — and her case appeared very hopeful. But she was invited to a public dance. She hesitated about going. She was pressed, and was assured there was no harm in it. She went. She was fascinated. She soon gave up reading her Bible. Then she neglected public worship, and went out visiting friends on the Lord's day. She acquired a fondness for dress, for mirthful company, for music, for parties — in a word, for all that was frivolous and mirthful.

But in the end, she was ruined. She lost her job and her character, her conscience became hardened, she could laugh at serious things, and became a victim to the deceitfulness of sin. One step led on to another, until she perished in her own deceivings, and became the victim of her own folly!

Had she refused to go to the dance, had she kept to her Bible and the house of prayer — she might have lived respected, and died happy.

Young woman! Beware of the village dancing-room. It was the ruin of Jane Jones — and has been the ruin of thousands beside!

SAMUEL SMITH was a sober, steady, and industrious young man. He promised well. In the Sunday school he had learned many useful lessons, and under a faithful minister became "almost a Christian." But he was urged to join a club which met at a tavern, and, from an exaggerated representation of its advantages — at length did so. At first he went, paid his money, drank his pint of beer, and returned home. At length he took a pipe of tobacco. Soon after, he remained to hear one song. Soon he became fond of the society of vain, mirthful, thoughtless young men — and at times drank so much that could not walk straight when he went home. A craving for strong drink, mirthful company, and foolish jests was produced, and step by step he was led on until he squandered his property, destroyed his health, and ruined his soul!

Disease was generated by his bad habits — his constitution was undermined, and he sank into a premature grave. He was another victim to "the deceitfulness of sin."

Young man! avoid the tavern as you would a house full of disease! Join no society or club which holds its meetings there. The ruin of thousands has been accelerated thereby. If you take one step in sin — you will be tempted to take another, and another, until you are undone! Yielding to temptation, is like making a break in a huge dam — the waters will soon become all-powerful, and carry everything before them. If you begin — you cannot stop when you will; for habits are soon formed — but, once formed, are not easily broken off! Hence that fearful text of Scripture, "Let the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots — then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil."

HENRY MAYNE was a kind-hearted, amiable lad, a good son, and a faithful employee. His conscience was tender, his conduct was consistent. His mother was proud of him, and his father used to say, "there was not a better lad in the town than our Henry!" He had just turned his eighteenth year when he was coaxed away one day to the races. There he was introduced into mirthful company, which proved a snare to him. He became selfish, and his temper was soon soured. He could not bear the restraints of home. He was now too much of a 'man' to be tied to his mother's apron string — nor would he put up with the old man's lectures. If he earned money — he had a right to do what he pleased with it, and he would, too!

He left home, went to lodge with a loose young man, and was soon added to the number of those who are destroyed through "the deceitfulness of sin." Poor Henry! he might have been a respectable young man, a useful member of society, and a happy Christian — but sin deceived him, and he died as he lived — a slave to his passions, one of the dupes of Satan — led captive by the devil at his will.

Reader! beware of yielding to temptation! Beware, Oh beware, of taking the first step in the road to ruin! Seek grace from God in prayer, to enable you to live godly, righteously, and soberly in the present world. Keep, Oh keep eternity in view, for you must live forever in happiness — or woe! Your eternal destiny is fixed — by the course you pursue in time. There is a strait gate and a narrow way that leads to glory, and comparatively few go in thereat: and there is a wide gate and a broad road that leads to destruction — and multitudes, multitudes, go in thereat! Strive, therefore, to enter in at the strait gate, and be sure you enter it by a living faith. It leads to the way of holiness, it conducts to the presence of God.

Do not be deceived by sin! Do not walk in the way of sinners. Young woman! avoid the dancing-room, it is one of the first steps to ruin! Young man! avoid the tavern, and the race-course — for there Satan lies in wait to destroy. The best way to escape from all the traps and snares that Satan lays for you — is to come to Jesus, and be saved from sin and the wrath to come through him!

[Paul Chappell](#) - I counseled a man some time ago who was enslaved by pornography. He wanted to get rid of that vile habit, and sometimes he managed to stay away from it for a week or two. But after a little time passed, the craving for sin returned, and he would go to almost any lengths to find something to feed his addiction. I'll never forget what he said to me: "I just don't think normally anymore. Lust has destroyed my mind."

This man was once a loving and committed husband. He had no intention of becoming enslaved to a destructive habit. Sin is deceitful because it shows you the pleasure without showing you the pain that follows later on. To overcome temptation, you need to consider the end result of the sin. Many of us learned this saying back when we were in Sunday school: "Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay."

It's not hard to cut down a tree when it's only three or four inches tall. But allow that tree to grow for a few years, and the task become much more difficult. Allow it to grow for decades, and it will take power tools and a full day's work to cut it down. Sin works the same way. It slowly grows over time until it becomes so large and powerful that it is almost impossible to remove.

*Destroy your sins while they are small;
don't be deceived into thinking they will remain that way.*

Today's Growth Principle - There are no harmless or little sins.

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.

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.**

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.

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 3:111) that their bones would bleach in the desert until the entire generation died out (Heb 3:117).

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.

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](#) 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!*