

DEVOTIONAL

Hollywood Prayer Network

DECEPTION

"The enemy comes only to steal, kill and destroy." That's the foundation of why we are all hurt at some point in our lives by deception. This week we're looking into how to deal with the deceiver and those who deceive, including ourselves. Let's not let the enemy deceive us in any way or at any time!

DAY 1

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CHOICES

"I PRAY TO GOD THAT I SHALL NOT LIVE ONE
HOUR AFTER I HAVE THOUGHT OF USING
DECEPTION."

-ELIZABETH I

"WE LIKE TO BE DECEIVED."

-BLAISE PASCAL

New King James Version

Genesis 3:13

And the Lord God said to the woman, "What
is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me,
and I ate."

DAY 1

PRAY: Dear Lord, You know my heart and yet I have so much trouble accepting the responsibility for my actions. From the beginning of time man has blamed others for our personal choices and I ask You to please help me to be strong enough to acknowledge the wrongs that I do and to admit my mistakes. Then I can ask You for healing and change. I want to be more Christ-like and I need You to give me the strength to change my ways. Thank You for being there for me in times of fear and weakness. I pray in Jesus' Name.

REFLECT: Like Adam and Eve, it's easy to see the weaknesses and sin in others, but it's so hard to see it in ourselves. What would it take for us to be able to ask the Lord to reveal our sins and our deceptions, embrace them, and then choose to do something to change them? That's probably the most difficult human task, but are you up for it? Reflect on how that would change your life. It can't be with shame, guilt, or blame, but with the desire to trust completely in the Lord, with humility and confidence in Him.

DAY 1

ACT: Take a moment and seek the Holy Spirit and ask Him to choose one trait or area of your life where you can honestly admit that you are either deceiving yourself or others. Once you define it, then bring that trait or issue to God and ask Him to reveal to you if you've been blaming someone else for that sin, instead of taking personal responsibility. Ask Him to heal you, or to show you how to handle it until you can release it to Him. This is an extremely difficult exercise and will probably take more time to fully deal with it. But keep asking the Lord to help you, with honesty and humility, and you will see breakthrough.

DAY 2

DON'T DECEIVE OTHERS

"THE NEW FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
BROUGHT BY THE INTERNET GOES FAR
BEYOND POLITICS. PEOPLE RELATE TO EACH
OTHER IN NEW WAYS, POSING QUESTIONS
ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO
PEOPLE WHEN ALL THAT WE KNOW ABOUT
THEM IS WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED THROUGH A
MEDIUM THAT PERMITS ALL KINDS OF
ANONYMITY AND DECEPTION."

-PETER SINGER

New King James Version

Leviticus 19:11

You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to
one another.

Psalms 101:7

He who works deceit shall not dwell within
my house;
He who tells lies shall not continue in my
presence.

DAY 2

PRAY: Dear Lord, I know we live in a culture of lies. We get used to white lies, lies to protect someone's feelings, and lies to protect ourselves from embarrassment. But You don't want me to deceive others. Your biblical view is often so different from our culture's views of truth, lying, and deception. So, would You please reveal to me Your truth about how I'm practicing deceit so that I may dwell in Your house and stand in Your presence. Amen.

REFLECT: God is so vague in some areas and so clear in others. This verse couldn't be more clear on what we are to do and not do. It's easy to know that we're stealing or outright lying, but it's harder to be honest with ourselves about how we might be deceiving one another. But we must deal with this issue head on so that we may dwell in the house of the Lord and stand in His presence forever.

ACT: Right now, ask the Lord to reveal your heart to you and to make you white as snow. Tell Him that you want to dwell in His house forever and that you want nothing to get in the way of being in His presence for eternity. Ask Him to reveal anything to you that may be getting in the way of standing before Him with a clean heart. Don't rush, just bask in His presence and wait on Him. Then thank Him for meeting you in that private place.

DAY 3

DECEITFUL HEARTS DESTROY

"HATEFUL TO ME AS THE GATES OF HADES IS
THAT MAN WHO HIDES ONE THING IN HIS
HEART AND SPEAKS ANOTHER."

-HOMER

"I KNOW HOW EASY IT IS FOR ONE TO STAY
WELL WITHIN MORAL, ETHICAL, AND LEGAL
BOUNDS THROUGH THE SKILLFUL USE OF
WORDS - AND TO THEREBY SPIN, SIDESTEP,
CIRCUMVENT, OR BEND A TRUTH COMPLETELY
OUT OF SHAPE. TO THAT EXTENT, WE ARE ALL
LIARS ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS."

-SIDNEY POITIER

New King James Version

Psalms 12:2

They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips and a double heart they
speak.

DAY 3

DECEITFUL HEARTS DESTROY

New King James Version

Psalms 36:3

The words of his mouth are wickedness and
deceit;
He has ceased to be wise and to do good.

Psalms 52:2

Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

DAY 3

PRAY: Heavenly Father, I pray for the decision-makers in Hollywood, who are choosing the messages and the stories in all of the films, TV shows and music that we hear and watch as our entertainment. Would You touch their hearts so that their words are not wicked and deceitful. I know that many of them don't know You Lord, so I ask that You reveal Yourself to them and convict them so they turn from evil and do not practice deceit or harbor deception in their hearts.

REFLECT: Reflect on how much time we spend watching television and films, playing video games, and listening to music. Because many of the people creating our media and entertainment don't know Jesus, we know that their hearts are deceived and they could be practicing deceit and destruction. Wouldn't it be much more eternally productive to not judge them or get angry, but to pray for the Lord to come into their lives, touch their hearts and give them wisdom to do good? Your prayers could change both their lives and change the messages of the films, TV shows, music, and video games that we watch and listen to.

DAY 3

ACT: Choose one film, TV show, video game, or song that you think is horrible, immoral, inappropriate, or crude. Now, take 5 minutes and pray for whomever the people are who wrote it, directed it, acted in it, or produced it. You don't need to know their names. Ask the Lord to come into each of those people's lives and transform them from the inside out. Ask Him to reveal Himself to them so that their hearts melt for Him, and to bring solid believers into each person's life so that each one can experience Him personally, through a loving friend or co-worker. Then ask the Lord to show those people how they can create uplifting, educational, joyful, hopeful projects that will lift the human spirit. Remember to never judge any of the people, but pray lovingly for them to meet Jesus, personally and powerfully. You may have just changed the world a little bit.

DAY 4

WATCH OUT, BE WISE

"FOR I HAVE SWORN THEE FAIR, AND
THOUGHT THEE BRIGHT, WHO ART AS BLACK
AS HELL, AS DARK AS NIGHT."

-WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

"UNLESS WE EXAMINE WHAT WE BELIEVE AND
WHY WE BELIEVE IT, WE CAN EASILY BE
DECEIVED AND NOT KNOW IT."

-PAMELA CHRISTIAN

New King James Version

Matthew 24:4 - 24:5

4 And Jesus answered and said to them:
"Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For
many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the
Christ,' and will deceive many.

DAY 4

PRAY: Dear God, I pray for wisdom today. I want to watch out for anyone who may be trying to deceive me, especially those coming in Your name, claiming to be speaking Your truths. I don't want to be listening to false teaching or following false leaders, but I need Your Holy Spirit to give me that discernment. Please, Lord, don't let me be deceived by the evil one through people who are using You for personal gain. Fill me with Your wisdom, God. Amen

REFLECT: It's so easy to get to know or like someone and then trust everything they say. As Christians, we want to be wiser than that. But we need to pray for discernment and ask for wisdom. Jesus warns us about false leaders, but because He doesn't list who they are, we have to seek Him to know whom we should trust and whom to walk away from. We can't be untrusting of everyone or paranoid of liars, but if we place ourselves under the spiritual authority of anyone, we do need to ask God for the wisdom to see and hear that person for whom he or she really is. What would that look like in your life?

DAY 4

ACT: Pray for your spiritual leaders right now. Ask the Lord to fill them with only His wisdom, truth, knowledge, and love. And ask Him to reveal to you anything that you need to know to protect yourself from any false teaching. Remember that we are all human and not perfect. Commit to pray for your pastor, counselors, prayer leaders, and even government leaders. Ask the Holy Spirit to come into the hearts of the leaders in your life, in order to clean house, build truth, and to fill them with words of truth, grace and love. And don't just pray today. Leaders, speakers, pastors and teachers need our prayers every day, for the enemy is always trying to steal, kill, and destroy lives through the words and actions of other people.

DAY 5

DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF

"CHRISTIANS DON'T TELL LIES, THEY JUST GO TO CHURCH AND SING THEM."

-A.W. TOZER

"IF THE WHOLE CHURCH GOES OFF INTO DECEPTION, THAT WILL IN NO WAY EXCUSE US FOR NOT FOLLOWING CHRIST."

-LEONARD RAVENHILL

New King James Version

Galatians 6:3

For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

DAY 5

PRAY: Oh, dear Father in Heaven, I come humbly before You and ask that You reveal my heart to me. I don't want to think that I am something that I'm not. I don't want to deceive myself into thinking I'm better, smarter, cooler or better looking than others. I don't want to mock You by taking personal credit for anything You've given me. I understand I will reap what I sow, and so I want to sow humility in my own heart but complete confidence in You. I want to celebrate what You've given me and yet, not take credit for it myself. Would You help me find that balance Lord? I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen!

REFLECT: How can we look at ourselves in the mirror and really see the truth of who we are? How do we honestly look at how we are deceiving ourselves into believing what we want to believe, versus understanding the truth of our lives? It's only the Holy Spirit who can keep us from deception. We reap what we sow, but the Holy Spirit is our guide, our teacher, our comforter and our mirror. This scripture says that we should not deceive ourselves, but how is that possible without the Holy Spirit?

DAY 5

ACT: Take some time to talk to the Holy Spirit about your heart and your understanding of yourself. Ask Him to reveal to you what you are sowing and reaping so that there is no deception in your life. Tell Him that you don't want to puff yourself up, but you don't want to cut yourself down. You want to be pure of heart and free of wrong motives or actions, but you need Him to do that. Ask Him to reveal to you anything that you think about yourself that may not be accurate and then to help you to see yourself through His eyes. What a freeing revelation that could be.

DAY 6

DON'T MAKE TROUBLE - PROMOTE PEACE

"A LIE CONSISTS IN SPEAKING A FALSEHOOD
WITH THE INTENTION OF DECEIVING."

-AUGUSTINE

"A LITTLE LIE CAN TRAVEL HALF WAY 'ROUND
THE WORLD WHILE TRUTH IS STILL LACING UP
HER BOOTS."

-MARK TWAIN

New King James Version

Proverbs 6:12 - 6:14

A worthless person, a wicked man,
Walks with a perverse mouth;
13 He winks with his eyes,
He shuffles his feet,
He points with his fingers;
14 Perversity is in his heart,
He devises evil continually,
He sows discord.

DAY 6

DON'T MAKE TROUBLE - PROMOTE PEACE

New King James Version

Proverbs 12:20

Deceit is in the heart of those who devise
evil, But counselors of peace have joy.

DAY 6

PRAY: Lord, I ask that You will protect me from evil people. Would You give me wisdom and discernment to know who is full of truth and who is trying to deceive me or others. Lord, I want to stay away from troublemakers and villains and those who are plotting evil, stirring up conflict, and deceiving people around them. Would You make me a person who promotes peace and is full of joy and open my eyes to people who aren't, so that I can be wise to their motives and pray for them. Thank You, Lord. Amen

REFLECT: Being a Christian can be hard, especially when we're told to stay away from deceivers. We don't want to be on a witch hunt and question the motives of everyone around us, but we don't want to be blind or naive to the evil around us. Reflect on how to find the balance between discerning a troublemaker and embracing those around us with the love of Jesus. And in the process, how might you promote peace and have joy?

ACT: Choose one person in your life, at work, in the neighborhood, at school, and even in your family, who creates conflict or who is deceptive, and commit to pray for him or her. Lift that person up to the Lord every day - even if just for a month - and ask the Lord to make her a peacemaker, not a troublemaker. Ask the Lord to melt his heart, to fall in love with Him and to no longer be able to plot evil or have malice. Your prayers for that person can completely turn around their life. Don't judge but pray for them with loving and healing prayers.

DAY 7

BE TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD TO BE LIKE JESUS

"THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPOTENT THAN
WORDS WHICH LIE DORMANT IN OUR BRAINS
AND HAVE NO INFLUENCE ON OUR LIVES."
-ALEXANDER MACLAREN

New King James Version

1 Peter 2:22

Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth

James 1:16

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

James 1:22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers
only, deceiving yourselves.

DAY 7

PRAY: Jesus, I praise You that You are and always have been sinless. You are my role model, my inspiration, and my encouragement. Don't let me be deceived. Let me read and learn Your word and then do what it says, so that I will not deceive myself into thinking that I am more righteous than I am. Please help me to be more like You and to depend on You for everything I do and say. Thank You Jesus. I pray this in Your name.

REFLECT: How humbling to realize that in our humanness we can deceive ourselves and others into believing and doing things that aren't true. Even when we think we're good people, doing good things and following Jesus, we can still say and do deceitful things. That's why we need a Savior. That's why Jesus died for us, even though He committed no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth. Reflect on Jesus and what it means to follow His example in your life, not just in your thoughts, but in your words and actions. We have to intentionally put the Gospel into practice and ask Jesus to help us.

ACT: Spend the next five minutes just praising Jesus. Praise Him for being sinless, for being your Savior, your role model, your inspiration and your comfort. Thank Him for loving you so much that He is your example of truth. Praise Him for giving you His word to follow and His life as an example of how to live. Praise Him that no deceitful word has ever come out of His mouth. Praise be to His name!