

This world is ripe with deception, whether from crooks, politicians, and even from so-called preachers and prophets who twist the Word of God for profit.

How can we recognize them?

Mat 7:15-16: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits."

2Cor 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds."

Where does deception start?

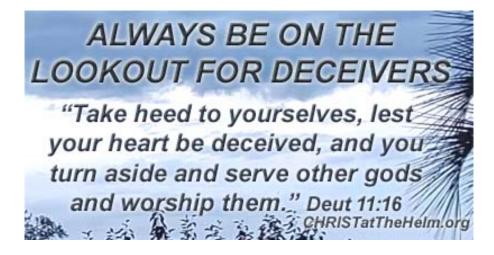
Mark 7:20-22: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly."

James 4:1: "Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members?"

Why is that so?

1John 5:19: "We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Can we discern deceptive influences?



How can we recognize deceivers?

Col 2:8: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

Eph 5:6: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." Why?

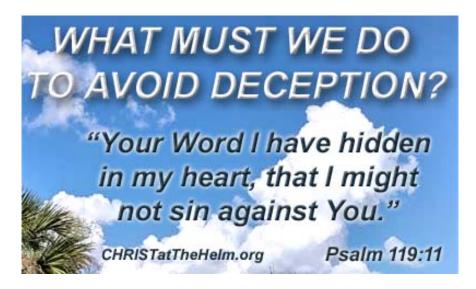
Rom 16:18: "For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

Gal 6:7-8: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

1Tim 4:1-2: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron."

2Cor 11:3: "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Mat 22:29: "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God."



The only sure way of avoiding being deceived by the world is through the knowledge of the Word of God.

How is that achieved?

1Peter 2:1-2: "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby."

Rom 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Eph 4:14: "We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."

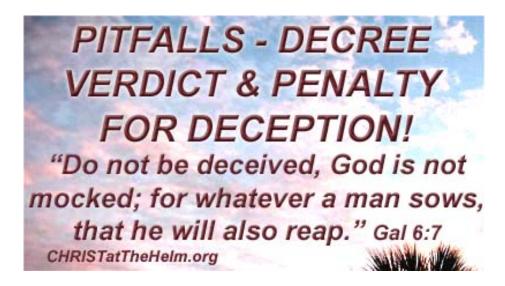
Philip 4:8: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things."

James 1:22: "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

Gal 5:16: "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

2Cor 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds."

Will we heed the call to embrace the Word of God in our hearts?



If we are deceivers, or drawn by the flesh allow ourselves to be deceived by false prophets and teachers, what can we expect from God?

Isaiah 29:13-14: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."

1Cor 6:9-10: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

Rev 21:18: "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Mat 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Will we rely on and stand firmly by the Word of God to avoid being deceived by the world?