

**THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH
(Do Not Be Deceived)**

GRACE TRULY RECEIVED BREAKS THE PATTERN OF SIN

An unbroken pattern of sin is what defines the devil and the world. In contrast, the true believer is now a “**new creation**” in Christ, and has been freed from both the penalty and the power of sin (cf. Rom. 6; 2 Cor. 5:17). When it comes to the HABITUAL PRACTICE of sin, God’s people are not to be naive. After expressing concern that some of the Corinthians may still be involved in ongoing flagrant sin (cf. 2 Cor. 12:20-21), Paul challenges them, “**Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.**” (2 Cor. 13:5)

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers to not so much as eat with a “**so-called brother**” who is involved in a pattern of ongoing flagrant sin. In such a case the church is to JUDGE and to remove the evil person from the fellowship (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-11). We are a “holy family” and there is accountability within the family (cf. Col. 3:12). Paul then goes on in 1 Corinthians 6 to warn, “**Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.**” (1 Cor. 6:9).

He then gives a long list of sinful behaviors that define the lost world saying, “**And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified...**” (1 Cor. 6:10-11). The word “**But**” is a contrast word. The present tense practice of these kinds of sins used to define us, BUT that all changed when we came to Christ. Note it carefully, “**Such WERE some of you.**” (emphasis mine). This is what we WERE as unbelievers, not what we ARE now as believers! DO NOT BE DECEIVED! Those who continue to practice sin as a continual pattern of life will not inherit the kingdom!

In Ephesians 5 after exhorting the Christians to “**walk in love**”, Paul gives a list of sins that should not even “**be heard of among**” Christians (cf. Eph. 5:3). He then says that they know with certainty, “**that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**” (Eph. 5:5). He then follows up by saying, “**Let no one deceive you with empty words...**” (Eph. 5:6). The concern is that there will be those who live in flagrant sin and yet will claim to be Christian. Believers are NOT TO BE DECEIVED by such empty talk that is totally divorced from reality! (cf. Gal. 5:19-21)

In 1st John 3, the Apostle John stresses that people are known by their PRACTICE. 1 John 3:7 says, “**Little children, let no one deceive you.**” The Scripture consistently and repeatedly warns us not to be deceived on this score. There are always those “living in sin” and yet at the same time claim to be Christian. PRACTICE TELLS! The issue is not the PERFECTION of our practice, but it is most certainly about the DIRECTION of our practice! John says, “**He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous**” (1 Jn. 3:7). He goes on to say that “**He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.**” And then John interjects, “**For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**” (1 Jn. 3:8). The “**works of the devil**” in context are an UNBROKEN pattern of sin. This defines the devil and those who belong to him.

Christ came to BREAK that pattern, and He has in the lives of all those who truly know Him. John says, “**In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.**” (1 John 3:10).

God alone is the final JUDGE and Paul says, "**The Lord knows those who are His**", but then he immediately warns, "**Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.**" (2 Tim. 2:19). John defines a LIAR as one who claims to know the Lord but doesn't keep His commandments (cf. 1 Jn. 2:3-4).

John also says that ALL LIARS will have their part in the lake of fire (cf. Rev. 21:8). Believers are not to be naive! We are to be "fruit inspectors". "**Many**" will say, "**Lord, Lord**" on judgment day, only to hear Christ say, "**I never knew you, depart from Me**" (cf. Matt. 7:15-23).

Last days "**imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.**" (2 Tim. 3:13). They include those who still hold to a "**form of godliness**" but their PRACTICE denies the life-changing power of it (cf. 2 Tim. 3:5). Paul in Acts 20 warned of "**savage wolves**" which come in amongst God's people and ravage the flock (Acts 20:29). This threat was so serious that he did not cease to warn those in Ephesus about this concern night and day for three years with tears, and then left them with a parting exhortation to WATCH (cf. Acts 20:28-31). DO NOT BE DECEIVED!

If our professed relationship with Christ hasn't changed our relationship with sin, then we are DECEIVED!

The warning is strong: DO NOT BE DECEIVED!