***The Deception of the Sin Nature
RO87-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

Please turn to Romans 7:7-11. Our subject is "The Vindication of the Mosaic Law," segment number four.

We have found that the Mosaic Law taught the apostle Paul that mental attitude sins, such as coveting, were as evil as overt sins. While Paul honored the Mosaic Law as an expression of God's righteousness, which indeed it was, he also found that, strangely enough, it disturbed evil responses within him. By Paul's human viewpoint standards, he could proclaim himself to be blameless relative to the law. But by God's divine viewpoint standards, which was internal obedience, he had to declare himself to be filthy with evil.

**Coveting**

So, in Romans 7:10-11, Paul again sums up what he has said in verse 7-9. In those verses, he said, "What shall we say then? Is the mortal sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin." When he uses the word "sin" in the singular, it means "I had not known about the sin nature:" "But by the law (the law system), for I had not known coveting except the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'" That is the one commandment that deals with mental attitudes – not overt actions: "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of coveting. For apart from the law, sin is dead." It's inoperative. It's not making you feel condemned: "For I was alive (that is, self-satisfied) apart from the law system once. But when that commandment concerning coveting hit me, then the sin nature was activated, and I was humiliated concerning my condition. And I, in effect, died."

Now in verse 10-11, the apostle Paul is going to sum up what he has said in those previous three verses.

So, verse 10 reads: "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." The word "commandment" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the word "entole." "Entole" is a noun. It refers to the specific commandments of the Mosaic code. In this case, the Greek Bible has the word "the" in front of the word commandment, so that it is referring to the specific commandment that he's been discussing in the context: "And the commandment which was ordained to life." The word "to" is the word "eis." And here it indicates the purpose of the Mosaic Law: "And the commandment which to life."

This is very cryptic language in the Greek Bible. As you see in your King James translation, the words "was ordained" are in italics because they're not in the Greek text. The Greek just says, "And the commandment to life," indicating the purpose of it was life. The word "life" is this Greek word "zoe." Here it refers to eternal life in heaven.

**Eternal Life**

Romans 10:5 tells us that anybody who could keep the Mosaic Law perfectly would receive eternal life. "For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law; that the man who does those things shall live by them;" that is, shall have eternal life by them. As a matter of fact, way back in the book of Leviticus, when the Mosaic Law was first presented to the Jewish people, this same principle was enunciated in Leviticus 18:5, where God said to the Jews, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My ordinances, which if a man does, he shall live in them. I am the Lord."

So, the Bible does say that if you do keep the moral code of the Mosaic Law, and all those other requirements that constituted the various social and religious and national relationships within the Jewish community, that one could come to eternal life. The problem is that the old sin nature prevents anybody from keeping the Mosaic Law perfectly. The only person who kept it perfectly was the Lord Jesus Christ, and He did it for everyone else.

**Nobody can Keep the Mosaic Law**

Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes." So, because nobody can keep the Mosaic Law, nobody can live perfectly. The Mosaic Law, while it does express God's standard of righteousness that you must meet to go to heaven, cannot be kept. The sin nature undermines that.

**Paul was a Good Pharisee**

Now, for a while, the apostle Paul, as a good Pharisee, was just like all the rest of those Pharisees. He actually thought that he could make it by keeping the law. And he did so well at it that he could pronounce himself to be without blame relative to fulfilling the commandments of the law outwardly. And that's the point of this passage here in Romans – that he said, "One day I discovered that that very law that I believed could lead me to eternal life was the means of my condemnation, because I suddenly realized that, while I was a pretty good fellow outwardly, I was shot-through with mental attitude sins inwardly.

**The Mosaic Law was not Designed to Secure Eternal Life**

The Mosaic Law, therefore, was never designed to secure eternal life, because nobody could secure eternal life by means of it because of the sin nature. Earlier in the book of Romans, the apostle Paul clarified that very point in Romans 3:20, when he said, "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin" – the knowledge of the sin nature.

So, Paul has already said that nobody is going to make it into heaven by keeping a moral code, simply because you can't keep God's standard perfectly and completely. So, all that you find out from the Mosaic Law is how bad you are, and how far short of the glory of God you do indeed fall.

The greatest mistake of the Jews was in thinking that they could secure eternal life by keeping the rules of the Mosaic system. In Galatians 3:21, the apostle Paul says, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Paul said, "If God could have given us a set of rules to keep and said, 'If you do this, you'll go to heaven,' He would have done it that way." It would have been a lot less painful for His Son. It would have been a lot less costly all around.

**The Sin Nature**

However, the point is that no system that God could give would be obeyed. The Mosaic Law can't change the one thing that needs to be changed – the sin nature. It is as depraved when you have the rules as it is when you don't have the rules.

So, Paul means that the Mosaic Law was a perfect expression of absolute righteousness, which one must possess to go into heaven. But nobody can achieve it.

So, Paul, in Romans 7:10, says, "The commandment which was ordained to life" (to secure eternal life), he found resulted in something else. The word "found" is this word "heurisko." The word here means to discover. Paul discovered something about the tenth commandments which had been given for the purpose of guiding him into godliness. He discovered something at some point in his past. It was an impression that struck his mind – not one that he actively produced. It was a passive experience. But a statement of truth came to him. Paul did not discover this about the Mosaic Law by his personal investigation. It just suddenly hit him one day. He suddenly became aware of this. And that's what he means by he "found" – he discovered. He simply learned this one day, and an understanding came to him concerning the Mosaic Law that was a big surprise.

**The Purpose of the Mosaic Law**

He thought it was the agent for eternal life. And suddenly he got the shock of his life, and said, "You know what? The Mosaic Law is the agent for eternal death to me – just the opposite of what I thought it was, because if it is what God requires for a person to go to heaven, then it is clear that I can never make it." And he found, therefore, that this law of God was "unto." And again, this is same Greek preposition "eis." Here it indicates not purpose this time, but the *result* of the Mosaic Law. The purpose of the Mosaic Law, in terms of its own intrinsic value, was to lead people to righteousness.

**The Result of the Law was Eternal Death**

Instead, the result was death ("thanatos"). And here the word stands for eternal death. A wall was raised between Paul and God by the law which described God's righteousness. The moral commandments of the Mosaic Law brought no peace; they brought no happiness; and, they brought no holiness to Paul. What the law did was made him aware that he was not in fellowship with God, and that he lacked eternal fellowship with the God he someday had to face. And the more a person knows of God's standard of righteous living, the more the sin nature is aroused to resistance.

What Paul is indicating here is that he discovered then that not only could he not make it with God on the Mosaic Law, but it made him mad. He resented it. What's happening? Now he is insulted. And this is not an unusual experience. There are many good moral people in the world today that are downright insulted if you tell them that they are on their way to the lake of fire in their present condition, because they view themselves as a very commendable type of people. And they find it hard to believe that God will reject them.

The Mosaic Law was like a stick that you take to a clear a pool of water, and you start stirring up the bottom. And suddenly the mud, and all the reptiles, and all the snakes, and everything comes slithering out because you stirred it up. And the sin nature can look very sweet and pure until you bring along the law of God, and start stirring up what's there, and you discover what really is hidden.

That's what Paul found. He said that the Mosaic Law was like a stick. And once God started stirring around in my life, I couldn't believe what I found skittering here and there, and scooting out all the vile things that I couldn't imagine that were ever there. The Mosaic Law inflamed, in other words, the evil which was in Paul's sin nature, and showed him how helpless he was to do anything about it.

So, verse 10 summarizes what Paul has said previously, simply by saying. "The commandment, which should have established a basis for eternal life, he found simply to establish the fact that he was doomed to eternal death."

Then verse 11 begins with the word "for," which is this word, "gar", indicates that that he's introducing an explanation of why that was so: "For sin," and that is "hamartia." That word here in the singular is indicating the sin nature, and indicating the sin nature as something that has missed the standard of God. It has missed the mark. The Greek has the word "the" in front of it, indicating *the* sin nature. Furthermore, it stands first in the sentence. And this is the way the Greeks used to focus one's attention on what is important in that sentence. When they wanted to emphasize something, they could put it at the first. This comes first in the sentence.

**The Sin Nature Takes Occasion**

It is the sin nature that is the crux of the whole problem, because he says, "The sin nature, taking occasion." The word "taking" looks like this: "lambano." "Lambano" means "to possess" or "to seize." It is in the aorist tense. At some point in the past in Paul's experience, the sin nature took hold of something – namely when he became aware of the internal implications of the Mosaic Law. It's active voice. The sin nature within us does this. It is participle – a spiritual principle.

The sin nature took occasion. We've had this word before: "aphorme" This is a noun that basically means "starting up." In the Greek world, it was a military term. It means a base of operations – a staging area from which the sin nature jumped off to execute its plan. We would perhaps translate this by the idea of "opportunity." The sin nature takes an opportunity that presented itself. The sin nature works in us, actually, by capitalizing on occasions to do evil.

**Targets of Opportunity**

In military parlance again, when, for example, airplanes are sent out on a bombing mission, they are given an objective. But if for some reason they cannot hit that objective, then they are instructed to take advantage of what our called "targets of opportunity." Whatever they see en route that is worth militarily attacking, then they should attack that.

This is how the sin nature works. The sin nature takes the law of God and makes that the base of opportunity for its attack against the believer. By bestirring indignation, resentment, and all the arrogance that comes from being confronted with the Mosaic Law, and being subject to it, the sin nature uses that as a base of operation in order to bring the Christian out of temporal fellowship, and to keep the unbeliever from coming into eternal life.

So, the sin nature works by targets of opportunity. There are some Christians who never learn that. I encourage you to pursue that in your own thinking (in your own life) and with the circle of your acquaintances, to see how Christians are shot down, because they become targets of opportunity for the sin nature, and because they have exposed themselves to being attacked by the devil.

For that reason, 2 Timothy 2:22 warns us against making ourselves targets of opportunity. We should not put ourselves in a position where the sin nature can spring an attack upon us from the base of operations of the code of God's righteousness: "Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." It goes on to say, "But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they breed strife. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach patience; in meekness instructing those that oppose them, if God perhaps will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will." Those are targets of opportunity. That is Christians who are violating doctrinal principles, or being ignorant of doctrinal principles, or being sloppy and careless about their living in the Word.

This is one of the techniques of the Christian life. And it's not enough, folks, to try to live it on Sunday. You're not going to make it. Sooner or later, the devil is going to get you, and he's going to shoot you down. That's why we have all those marvelous tapes up there, for you to try to fill in the gaps in between time – a little bit every day, in order to keep yourself oriented to divine viewpoint thinking and principles. But there is a lot more for us always to know. Furthermore, we need up your minds bestirred so that we have a firm grasp upon these things which are going to keep Satan from shooting us down. We should know how serious it is when we go gossiping; how serious it is when we start slandering people; and, how serious it is when we get caught up with the lust for approbation – somebody to pat us on the back and to praise us – all these things that Satan can use as a basis of attack upon us.

That's what Paul is saying to Timothy: "Timothy, don't be looking through the pornographic magazines. Don't be going to the pornographic entertainments. Flee those youthful lusts. If you put yourself in that position, then you become a target of opportunity for the devil, and he will snare you. Timothy, don't hang around Christians who are negative to divine viewpoint, even if they're your bosom buddy, because you'll be contaminated, and you'll be caught up in the snare of the devil." There's only one relationship that ever exists between two people. They either agree with one another, and they follow a common course; or, they disagree with one another, and they separate company, or one of them changes his mind, and takes the position of the other.

If you don't know that about human relationships, then you don't know anything – zero. That is the basic principle of human relationships between one-on-one two individuals. You either agree and walk together; or, if you disagree, you part company, or if you don't part company, somebody has to change his mind and get on the common ground. There's no other way it's going to go. The tragedy is that there are so many Christians who refuse to part company, and that's why people get into a lot of low-class, bad marriages, when they should have cut out long ago. And it's usually the one who's on divine viewpoint, who is not strong in that divine viewpoint, who compromises with the character and human viewpoint, and goes along with the other one. Then they become a target of opportunity.

The book of James deals with this feature of the sin nature of capitalizing on an occasion to do evil change. In James 4:7-8, James says, "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he'll flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." The only way you're going to do that is by the intake of doctrine into the mentality of your soul. That's the only way you're going to flee from the devil. That's the only way you're going to resist the devil. If you think you can resist him on any other basis, I can guarantee you that he's going to knock you out. You are going to be a prime target of opportunity, and he will get you.

So, the apostle Paul is saying here, in verse 11: "The sin nature, taking occasion, as a base of opportunity, through the commandment" (this specific commandment, the moral commandments of the Mosaic Law – the specific one on coveting). The Greek, says, "*the* commandment," because it's referring to that one: "The sin nature uses the Mosaic Law of God as a base of operation to promote evil in the life of the believer."

**Rebellion and Arrogance**

We would translate this as: "For the sin nature, seizing opportunity provided by the commandment," because the sin nature hates everything that God tells us to do, and what God tells us not to do. The core quality of the sin nature is rebellion. The core expression is arrogance. That is what the sin nature promotes in the believer. And it uses the law of God to do it.

**Deception**

The apostle Paul says, "The sin nature, then, taking this as a base of operation, the commandment of God deceived me." And here's the important and key word for today: "exapatao." "Exapatao" means "to beguile." This word actually is made up of two words. The word "apatao" means "to beguile" or "to deceive." In the Greek language, when you add this preposition "ek," or here it becomes "ex" because of this vowel ("exapatao"), makes it intensive. So, Paul is really saying "to beguile thoroughly" or "to deceive completely."

This is the word which is used in 1 Timothy 2:14: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." Adam was not thoroughly deceived, but the woman – she was thoroughly deceived. She was completely conned. He was not conned. He knew what was going on, and what Satan, through the serpent, was doing. But Eve was tricked. She was thoroughly deceived.

**Control your Mouth**

So, the apostle Paul says, "This is the way the old sin nature works in us. It just completely deceives us. It completely leads us astray." This same word is used in James 1:26, where we read, "If any man among you seems to be religious, and doesn't bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart (deceives his own mentality), this man's religion is vain." If you can't control your mouth in gossip; in cursing; in vile language; in slander; and, in all the things the mouth should not be used for, your religion is in vain.

A lot of folks have a lot of trouble with that. You can very quickly tell that some people have an enormous amount of trouble with that. You can't be with them very long before their yapping about some other human being. You can't be around them socially before you discover that the main thing they talk about is other people. The apostle Paul says, "If anyone doesn't know how to control his mouth, then you have completely 'exapatao' (thoroughly deceived) your mind, because you've looked upon yourself as being religious." And he uses this word "religious" in a good way, meaning that you're a godly person; meaning you're in touch with God; and, meaning you're a good kind of Christian. And Paul says, "Baloney. You're not. Otherwise, you would demonstrate it by controlling your mouth.

So, it's not a small thing when you hear somebody who has a vile mouth; somebody that talks dirty; or, somebody that curses. It tells a great deal about that individual, and it tells a great deal about his mental state and his personal soul.

This verb, "exapatao," is used in 2 Corinthians 11:3. Here is another example of its use: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled, Eve ('exapatao" – thoroughly deceived Eve) through his craftiness, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. And, of course, any Christian with an ounce of sense knows that that is one of the great concerns of his life. One of the great occupational hazards of the Christian life is that your mind is going to be deceived. It'll be deceived about yourself. That's why the Bible says, "Don't think of yourself more highly than you should."

It will also cause you to be deceived about other people. You will not have the discernment to be able to discern what those people are. You'll be dumb enough to let those people come and tell you that they're doing something because of this, and you know that there's a reason behind that. That's the front reason. That's the smoke screen. They're not proud of the real reason. And they may be so spiritually disoriented, they don't even know the real reason themselves. But you will not be deceived by that, if you have a capacity built within yourself; that is, the pure doctrinal basis of the Word of God, and you've committed yourself to it.

Satan used God's good and holy commandment about the tree to lead Eve to rebel against God. Eve was thoroughly deceived by Satan. She thought that the commandment was unjust. She got to thinking that the commandment was really a little irrational, and that's why she rejected it. The devil did a total con job on her. The forbidden fruit, however, once stubbornly eaten, turned to ashes in her mouth.

**The Sin Nature has a Cluster of Lusts**

The sin nature, you must remember, has a cluster of lusts. These lusts are what deceive us. It has a cluster of lusts, which in a way, because we live with it all the time, seems natural to us. And that cluster of lust we will never identify except from Scripture. Once you become aware of them, bit-by-bit, then you have to be on your guard and say, "I'm not going to let that particular intense desire (that lust) take hold of my life" – whether it is for praise; whether it is for money; whether it is for sex; whether it is for getting married; whether it is for some economic ambition; or, whatever it is.

In Ephesians 4:22, the apostle Paul says, "That you put off concerning the former matter of life, the old man (the man 'in Adam' is the idea) which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." The lusts of the sin nature are deceitful. They will seem natural, and they might even seem reasonable, but they're going to trick you into self-destruction.

Hebrews 3:13 speaks on this: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The deceitfulness of the sin nature will harden you against the realities that God has for you. The sin nature presents some violation of God's moral law as good, but when it is experienced, it proves to be a deadly evil.

**Sexual Immorality**

There is a lot of sexual immorality in our day which is be presented as a good thing. So, violation of God's moral code, relative to sex, is presented as a good thing. Yet people are discovering that they have been deceived. The terrible disease of herpes is running rampant. The terrible disease of AIDS is running rampant. And people are shocked by the fact that there is a God who calls the plays, and calls a halt.

**Sweden**

Some people live in a benighted society, such as Sweden, for example, which is one of the most spiritually benighted societies on the face of the earth. The Dallas News today told about the fact that the Internal Revenue system of Sweden has decided that prostitution is a profession, and, therefore, it is business income, and that they must report that not as gifts from their paramours, but they must now report it as regular business income.

Someone told me the other day that the Swedish parliament has also passed another law – that it is no longer illegal in Sweden to practice incest as long as you're over 21 years of age. Sex within members of the family is now acceptable in Sweden if you're over 21. And fornication is now acceptable, which at all is pretty well has been, if you're over 21.

Now that is a benighted society. They're not ignorant people, but they believe that these are good moves for them to make – that this is good for the freedom of the individual. And what you are seeing there is the sin nature deceiving the leadership of that country, and deceiving the people of that country. And the result is going to be that what seems to them a trifling thing, and it seems that God is trying to put an unreasonable obstacle in their way for the gratification of harmless desires, they are going to discover is going to result in suffering now, and will bear eternal consequences, whether they are believers or unbelievers who are following that course. And the only reason they do it is because the sin nature has said, "Forget what the Bible says. That's out of date. Nobody knows what it really means. It's OK to do it."

So, Paul, in verse 11, says, "The old sin nature, taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it, slew me ('apokteino')." "Apokteino" means "to kill." The word is used here in a spiritual sense, not a physical sense. The action terminated Paul's spiritual arrogance about himself. The sin nature did the killing. It really showed him how deep he was willing to go into sin, and how vile in his thinking he was willing to be. The more one depends on the Mosaic Law to secure eternal life, the less you will be sure of eternal life, because the more you know of the Mosaic Law, the greater will be your condemnation.

The apostle Paul expected life, but it says that he found death. He expected happiness, but he found misery. He expected holiness, but he found corruption. There are many deceptions that that sin nature plays upon all of us. It might be well to alert ourselves to a few of them.

**Deceptions of the Sin Nature**

1. **The Nature of the Mosaic Law**

There is the deception concerning the nature of the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law was a good thing if it is used as God intended (1 Timothy 1:8). The sin nature deceives by giving the impression that evil is only external acts, and not mental attitudes. But the Mosaic Law says, "No, that's wrong. It's internal mental attitudes as well." So, people with external morality, consequently, are deceived into thinking that they are justified before God, when in fact they are doomed to hell. The road to hell is paved by the sincere use of the Mosaic Law by people who are trying to meet a standard of righteousness acceptable to God.

1. **Hopelessness if One Violates the Mosaic Law**

There's the deception of hopelessness if one violates the Mosaic Law. Sooner or later, internally or externally, everybody is going to violate that law. The sin nature then seeks to create a feeling of total frustration when God's laws have been broken. It makes one feel that there is no hope for rising above what one has done and the violation one has been guilty of. The sin nature makes a helpless sinner feel so depressed that he abandons himself to evil. He says, "What's the use? I'm on the skids." And he lets go. That's part of the deception.

You never want to let your sin nature put hopelessness upon you, especially as a Christian. I don't care what you've done, or which of the rules you've broken. You're down in the dust, and you have a mouthful of dust. Your confession enables you to find God picking you up; dusting you off; setting you on your feet; and, getting you on your way. But you'll be down in the dust with your mouth in it again, unless you take the preventive measures of putting the Word of God (the doctrinal principles) into your soul day-by-day – feeding upon every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

1. **Lawlessness**

There is the deception of lawlessness. The sin nature makes light of evil, because God's grace covers everything, so why should we worry? Since we are not under law, but under grace, we don't have to obey rules.

**Legalism**

I cannot believe how many people are just that dumb to think that obeying rules is legalism. We have parents sometimes in Berean Academy that don't like some of our rules, and they attack us by saying, "How come you're so legalistic?" And I feel sorry for the person because anybody with the smallest amount of biblical education knows that the New Testament is full of rules for Christians to abide by, and full of rules of things that Christians are warned that they are not permitted to do and must not do. Because we obey God in these regulations, are we legalistic? No. What the Bible means by legalism is that you are obeying those rules because you think that this way you'll get to heaven. You're obeying these rules because, this way, you think that God will reward you.

You want to make some money. So, you believe that if you obey all these rules of morality, then God is going to reward you with money. Well, God will prosper you for obeying His doctrine. He's going to prosper you because He already wants to do that as your Father. He doesn't want to give you rocks or snakes. He wants to give you bread, He says. But you have to have the capacity to receive it. The reason some of you are so broke is because you don't have the capacity to be able to handle money. You don't have the capacity for God to bring things into your life that will prosper you. But when you develop the capacity, you'll suddenly wonder: how in the world, and why the world, is not prospering me like this? It's because you have the capacity to be able to have it and not destroy yourself with it.

It's like people who own property at a distance. I've discovered over the years that owning property at a distance is a very dangerous thing to do. It enables you, unless you have the spiritual capacity, to destroy yourself spiritually, because you decide the best place for you to be on weekends is out there at the lake at your property. Or you may have some other toy that you enjoy going out to use.

The deception of the sin nature is that if you have rules, you're being legalistic. God will prosper, and God will bless. But keeping rules is not being legalistic, unless you think that you're going to get something out of God because you do it. The idea of being under grace is perverted in the concept that the more one sins, the greater is the work of God's grace and forgiveness in his life. So, we indulge ourselves in evil.

1. **Missing out on Good Things**

The next deception is missing out on good things. This is a big one for young people. Their sin natures sneak up on them and deceive them with the idea that: "I'm just missing out on life, I'm not out there where the action is. I'm not out where it's at. My parents won't let me do all these things. I'm in eighth grade, and my parents won't let me go out on a date." This is the deception of missing out on good things. The sin nature promotes the idea that God is trying to deny us the enjoyment of innocent pleasures. That was Satan's approach to Eve. God is seen as a stern and reasonable tyrant, putting limits on us. God's laws are portrayed as forcing us to live in ways that we don't like, and we don't have to like. And we shouldn't have to live that way. And we should be able to be out there, and enjoy what all the rest of the young people are enjoying – what all the other people (our contemporaries) are enjoying in our society. Our society is full of dirt and filth. And because you don't go along with everything that the world does, you're not missing out. But your sin nature is going to deceive you to tell you that you are.

1. **Self-Conceit**

Then there's the deception of self-conceit. The sin nature praises our ability to make our own decisions. God is seen as someone who is squelching our creativity and our sensitivity, and our reasoning capacity. That is denying us the freedom to live our own lives without intimidation. And the sin nature says, "You're better than that. You can do better than that." And our self-conceit tells us to resent what God is insisting we do.

1. **Personal Needs Denied**

Then there's the deception of personal needs being denied. Somehow our real needs are being denied. The sin nature portrays God as repressing our legitimate, normal instincts and desires. Psychology and psychiatry tell people that what they should do is go out and have a good, healthy dose of sin because they're repressing themselves. These are their natural inclinations, and their sin natures are telling them to go out and kick up their heels. God is accused of inhibiting our mental health by making us feel guilty about doing certain things. Denying the full expression of our innate yearning, we are told by our sin nature, will warp our personalities.

1. **Making Evil Appear Glamorous**

There's the deception of making evil appear glamorous. Satan's world is portrayed as elegant and sophisticated. Our advertisements do that all the time. One of the saddest statements in the Bible was the man who deserted the group of believers that Paul was associated with. He was a fellow named Demas. He defected to the world, Paul says. He fell in love with the glamor of the world. The biblical lifestyle is made to appear by our sin natures as being drab and dull and suited only to people who have no class and no imagination. The subsequent physical, emotional, and mental pain of evil is ignored, but there are consequences. There are consequences for all the evils that the world does that you think is glamorous.

So, while some slinky, shapely girl standing with her hand next to a big Cadillac smoking Bonzo cigarettes, and you're missing it all, don't you kid yourself. You aren't missing anything. The same thing goes for the guy who's standing there very sophisticated, with his dark suit and his classy tie, and his mustache and his hair, and his derogare look, and he's standing there with a little class highball in his hand. Andy you think, "Isn't that glamorous?"

Don't you feel intimidated when you go to a restaurant (a nice, classy restaurant), and the waiter comes up to you, and the menus are always two feet by two feet, or three feet by three feet. You know that you're classy immediately. And the first thing he does is that he comes up there his pencil and his pad, and he says, "What drinks would you like, folks?" I love it. I say, "A glass of water, please." The first thing he offers you is the booze. That's classy. That's glamorous. If you're not careful, your sin nature is going to feel intimidated: "Why can't you be like all these other folks who come into this classy restaurant, and they order Black Marys, or Bloody Marys, or Half-and-Half, or whatever they are, and there they are just enjoying life?" That's the deception of the sin nature, making evil appear glamorous.

1. **Eternal Punishment**

There's the deception about eternal punishment. The sin nature declares that it's unreasonable, brutal, and beastly to punish people in conscious pain forever. You ought to rub them out, not let them suffer. Divine retribution, therefore, is ridiculed by the sin nature as a primitive superstition of backward minds who have a brutal God. Punishment for crimes is viewed, therefore, in the human sphere, as mere heartless vengeance – unbecoming of civilized, enlightened people.

We are constantly hearing about somebody that takes someone's life, and they put him in prison for a limited number of years, and he gets out. But God says, "If he's taken that life, and he did it deliberately and willfully, then his life should be taken in exchange." But the sin nature says, "That's terrible."

1. **Self-Righteousness**

There's deception of self-righteousness. The sin nature resents the divine demands to be born again spiritually. This is seen as an insult to our personal dignity, but something that religious fanatics demand. Any time you talk about being born again in our society, you will notice that that is viewed as someone who is a religious fanatic. On talk programs, I've noticed, they really love to zero in on these nuts who think that you have to be born again or you're not going to heaven. The filthy rags of human good works is seen as making one worthy of heaven. The necessity of trusting in Christ for salvation is portrayed as bigotry, and as being insulting to other religions who don't subscribe to Him as Savior.

1. **Salvation through Law-Keeping**

Then finally, we may mention the deception of salvation through law-keeping. Keeping the 613 requirements of the Mosaic Law can never save a person. Galatians 2:16 says that in so many words. What a sinner needs for salvation is God's absolute righteousness – not just personal morality. But there is that deception, that you can make it to heaven by keeping the rules of some moral code.

The people who are in agony in Hades today are, by and large the regular good, ordinary, moral folks that you and I rub shoulders with every day. The sin nature deceived them into the lake of fire.

So, the apostle Paul makes a very important statement to us. In verse 10, the commandment should have been for life. He found that it was the stench of death upon him. The sin nature uses the very commandments of God as a base of operation to bestir within us a resentment against everything that is wholly and just and right and good. And that sin nature, thereby, puts us in the position of death: eternal death as unbelievers; and, temple death as believers. All of the things that we've mentioned today – you and I, as Christians, can be as guilty of them because our sin nature makes the same kind of deceitful appeals. The keyword today is "deceit." Remember it. It results in death in a variety of ways.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)