

The Simplicity in Christ
(2Corinthians 11:1-4)

- I. This study examines various means by which Satan frustrates the word of God, particularly in believers.
- II. Definitions.
- A. corruption: The perversion of anything from an original state of purity.
 - B. simplicity: The state or quality of being simple in form, structure, etc.; absence of compositeness, complexity, or intricacy.
 - C. simple: Free from duplicity, dissimulation, or guile; innocent and harmless; undesigning, honest, open, straightforward.
 - D. beguile: *trans.* To entangle or over-reach with guile; to delude, deceive, cheat.
 - E. guile: Insidious cunning, deceit, treachery.
 - F. subtily: Acuteness, penetration, perspicacity. 3. Cunning, craftiness, guile.
- III. Observations.
- A. There is a positive simplicity and a negative simplicity.
 - 1. The simplicity in Christ is obviously positive and commendable.
 - 2. Simplicity in the form of base thinking or willing ignorance is another story. **PRO 1:22; 9:4-6; PSA 94:8; HEB 5:12-14; 2PE 3:5.**
 - B. There is a positive subtily and a negative subtily.
 - 1. Subtily in the sense of gaining perspicacity (discernment, clearness of understanding, keenness of sight) is obviously positive and commendable. **PRO 1:1-4 c/w PSA 119:97-98; MAT 10:16; 2PE 3:18.**
 - 2. Subtily in the sense of crafty guile to deceive is another story. **MAT 26:4; ACT 13:10.**
 - a. There is a worldly wisdom which opposes God and is to be shunned. **ROM 1:22; JAM 3:14-15; JER 4:22 c/w ROM 16:19.**
 - b. Deep thought is not necessarily good thought. **PSA 64:6 c/w REV 2:24.**
 - 3. It is the lie of Satan that good and evil are indistinct or fluid and may be equally “known.” **GEN 3:5; ISA 5:20; ROM 3:8.**
 - C. There is a need to discern between unintentional deceit and intentional deceit.
 - 1. A deceived heart cannot see its own deception so as to be delivered from it. **ISA 44:20.**
 - 2. One may be a deceiver by simply repeating the same deception to others which holds himself captive. **ACT 26:9.**
 - 3. But one may be an intentional deceiver, as Satan. **EPH 4:14.**
- IV. An overview of **2CO 11:1-4**.
- A. This epistle is written to the saints of the church of God in Corinth and to satellite saints in Achaia (**2CO 1:1**). They are believers by definition, therefore are born of God. **1JO 5:1.**
 - B. Paul was the father of their understanding. They had been begotten to his gospel and ways in Christ (**1CO 4:15-17**). His pure gospel was being threatened by rival teachers with a different message and agenda who might affect these converts. **2CO 11:13-15.**
 - C. The Corinthian saints had a history of idolatry and immorality (**1CO 12:2; 6:9-11**), the remnants of which still lingered. **2CO 12:21; 1CO 10:14, 19-22.**
 - 1. People with lingering sin or guilt issues are ripe candidates for alternative gospels that offer earned righteousness.

2. Satan's key to reel them in is to deceive them away from the message of grace. **GAL 2:21; 3:1.**
 3. But how does he do that when the message of "grace that saved dead sinners" is so plain?
- D. Chief rivals of Paul's gospel were professed Hebrew Christians. **2CO 11:22-23.**
1. They had monotheistic history to their credit. **DEU 6:4.**
 2. They had Jerusalem church membership to their credit. **ACT 15:24.**
 3. They also had a honed Pharisee sophistry with its rabbinical glosses which tended to confuse and obfuscate. **LUK 11:52.**
- E. Paul draws a parallel between Satan's beguiling of Eve and false teachers beguiling the church.
1. The church was espoused to its husband, Jesus Christ. **v. 2.**
 2. For the analogy to be fitting, Satan would seem to have beguiled Eve away from her husband, Adam, as well as from her Creator.
 3. A review of **GEN 2:15-17; 3:1-6** shows that it only took a few moments of separation, isolation, doubt-sowing and humanistic reasoning about the advantages of something other than what God had said to lay the groundwork for the Fall.
 4. Where Eve first gave way, was in mentally harboring for a moment the possibility insinuated by the serpent, of God not having her truest interests at heart, and of this "other" professing friend being more concerned for her than God.
 5. Did Satan "come" to Eve with a rival message that seemed to make sense? So, "...if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus..." (**2CO 11:4**).
- F. This situation reinforces the importance of not being moved from First Principles, plain though they may be, reasoning from solid foundation and premise to a proper conclusion.