



## DISCOVERING THE DECEPTIONS

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(Numbers 13:30-33)

**E**vil flourishes when we base our self-worth on what we do or what others think of us. Destined to drink the cup of failure, we'll soon learn that we can never do enough or be good enough. Many believers discover that their lives seem very similar to the lives of those who have never accepted Christ. So they try to gain value and meaning in their lives by obtaining the approval of people. They are tormented by past failures. They experience loneliness and alienation. In short, they are insecure.

Many people are seeking relief from emotional, relational, and spiritual insecurity. Their intense feeling of insecurity, along with the related thought patterns, is debilitating and painful. People who experience insecurity need to focus on the underlying reasons for the insecurity, not simply on finding ways to escape it. Feelings of insecurity reveal that something important is wrong with a person's foundational beliefs. As a fever indicates a physical illness, insecurity indicates a faith ailment that needs attention.

Insecurity is a common experience because of the effects of being born into a fallen human race. If people understand the ramifications of that liability, then they will also understand that life is a constant struggle to gain more and more freedom from this "birth defect." Scripture is replete with warnings about our natural condition. Before becoming believers, people are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). They walk "in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:17, 18). They also have "an evil conscience" from which they need to be cleansed (Heb. 10:22).

We are warned, however, that the battle for security and significance is far from

over at the moment we become God's children. Believers must be on their guard about accepting deceptions. Being deceived is simply believing something to be true that is false and, conversely, believing something to be false that is true.

### DOUBLE DECEPTIONS

Two prime deceptions are the cause of many people's insecurity. The first prime deception is that people don't realize that they are plagued by many deceptions. Only God can reveal the deceptions that hinder people's lives. These deceptions come in all shapes and sizes, in varying degrees, with varying sources. No amount of contemplation or reasoning can reveal every person's deceptions. Yet they constantly see the effects of those deceptions on their lives.

The second prime deception is that what people think they believe isn't what they truly believe. People often give intellectual assent to truth, but sadly, they don't entrust their lives to it. For example, if a person had a harsh, condemning father, usually their early beliefs about the heavenly Father are that He also is harsh and condemning. Later in life, they might be told that God is really a loving Father. But unless these early beliefs are confronted as deception, the person will give only intellectual assent to the belief that God is

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loving. They *think* that they believe that God is a loving God, yet they struggle to trust Him.

These "heart beliefs" are what actually control the person's understanding and experience of God. When people begin life as babies, they have no defense against absorbing the deceptions around them. That, combined with the natural mind that is antagonistic to the things of God, has encouraged people to entrust their lives to critical beliefs that are false. False critical or heart beliefs then influence their lives and their beliefs about God and themselves.

#### **TIME TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS**

People usually do not question the beliefs to which they entrust themselves. Most people can trace almost all of their insecurity to a deception about how they believe God responds to their failures, their sins, and their times of falling short of His standards. Every perception of God, every way a person interacts with Him, is built on what they believe is the basis of their relationship with Him.

Satan has been quite successful in distorting this aspect of a person's relationship with God. Many Christians hold a distorted view of grace and God's unconditional love. They know intellectually what these mean, but their hearts don't believe what their heads acknowledge. People fail consistently because of the sin nature; if they are not relying completely on the grace and love of God, they will feel that He has abandoned them or, even worse, that He has become their enemy.

When a person experiences insecurity, God desires that they come to Him and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the deceptions on which they depend. They need not be frightened by experiencing insecurity, worry, anxiety, or lack of peace. God allows these experiences so that He can show His

people the deceptions on which they are relying, and then remove those deceptions. He wants to set us free from insecurity so that we can be truly secure in Him. He will set us free when we seek Him, in spite of our fears and insecurity.

#### **FURTHER MEDITATION:**

Other passages to study about the issue of insecurity include:

- > Psalm 23
- > Psalm 34:18-22
- > Isaiah 43:1-3
- > Matthew 10:29-31
- > Ephesians 1:3-14
- > 1 John 2:1, 2

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To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on insecurity at Numbers 13:30-33 on page 189. See also the personality profile of Moses on page 219.

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theless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup>The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."

<sup>30</sup>Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

<sup>31</sup>But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." <sup>32</sup>And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying,

"The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. <sup>33</sup>There we saw the giants" (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

#### ISRAEL REFUSES TO ENTER CANAAN

**14** So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. <sup>2</sup>And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had

13:33 <sup>a</sup>Hebrew *nephilim*

#### KEY PASSAGE



Insecurity

## WE WERE LIKE GRASSHOPPERS!

(13:30-33)

Insecurity often occurs through comparing ourselves with others. Discouraging comments, negative thinking, and unreasonable expectations can also make us feel insecure. When the ten spies compared themselves to the well-armed Canaanites and their heavily fortified cities, they concluded: "We were like grasshoppers in our own sight." The result was fear, unbelief, and rebellion against God's plan for the people to take the land.

Measuring oneself against others will lead to insecurity. We can always find someone who is better looking, wealthier, better dressed, more spiritual, or more intelligent. We'll see "giants" next to whom we feel like "grasshoppers." Instead, we are to measure ourselves "within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us" (2 Cor. 10:13). In other words, we should be asking how we are doing with the looks, wealth, appearance, brains, and special abilities that God has given us. Ultimately we are accountable only to Him.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about insecurity on pages 186, 187. See also the personality profiles of Moses on page 219.

#### SOUL NOTE



**Lost Hope** (14:1-4) The Israelites were camped at the edge of the Promised Land, but the negative report of the spies caused them to lose hope and perspective. They wanted to go back to Egypt, forgetting that they had been slaves there.

They were afraid to enter the land, forgetting the miracles God had performed to deliver them from Egypt. Lost hope and lost perspective meant a lost land, for God refused to let them enter. When feeling hopeless, we should check our perspective, remembering where God has brought us, and allowing Him to work new miracles in our lives.

**Topic: Hope**

### THE PREVIOUS COMMAND TO ENTER CANAAN

**1** These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain<sup>a</sup> opposite Suph,<sup>b</sup> between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazereth, and Dizahab. <sup>2</sup>*It is eleven days' journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. <sup>3</sup>Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them, <sup>4</sup>after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in<sup>a</sup> Edrei.

<sup>5</sup>On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying, <sup>6</sup>"The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb,

saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. <sup>7</sup>Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain,<sup>a</sup> in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. <sup>8</sup>See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.'

**1:1** <sup>a</sup>Hebrew *arabah* <sup>b</sup>One manuscript of the Septuagint, also Targum and Vulgate, read *Red Sea*. **1:4** <sup>a</sup>Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *and* (compare Joshua 12:4). **1:7** <sup>a</sup>Hebrew *arabah*

## PERSONALITY PROFILE



### Insecurity

## MOSES: HUMBLE OR INSECURE?

(DEUTERONOMY 1)

Moses had an amazing early childhood. Born in secret, lovingly abandoned, miraculously rescued, unexpectedly raised, Moses appears in the Bible as a person with an unusually varied past. The mystery that surrounds Moses' growth to adulthood offers few clues, but the man who eventually served as God's chosen leader of the chosen people was more prepared to lead than he realized.

Moses' life spanned 120 years. The first 40 were devoted to academic and leadership training—Egyptian style. The second 40 years Moses spent in the desert, where he practiced leading sheep through the wilderness. Thus he was unknowingly prepared to lead people through the same terrain. The last 40 years were spent in the stressful role of champion and leader of a nation on the move.

Each phase in Moses' life began with a crisis. By the time he was 40, his instincts to protect his people were well intentioned but poorly timed (Ex. 2:11-15). He killed an Egyptian guard and had to flee for his life into the desert. There he stayed until God called him. That call (Ex. 3:1-4:17) reveals much about Moses' character. He questioned, avoided, and resisted God's direction. He had lived with the failure and shame of his actions in Egypt for almost 40 years. He had grown accustomed to what seemed like insignificance. But God had plans for Moses' combination of ability and insecurity, a combination that made Moses a humble man.

God used Moses' experiences to hone his abilities and shape his character. Moses' training improved his gifts, his failures deepened his dependence on God, and God made the loving effort to convince Moses of His plans.

God can use our insecurities and uncertainties as effective tools in our lives. They can make us useful in God's service. God can make strengths out of weaknesses. We might allow them to come between God and us, but God transforms them into part of the living bridge that connects us with the One who loves us best of all.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about insecurity on pages 186, 187. See also the key passage note at Numbers 13:30-33 on page 189.

in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' <sup>3</sup>Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. <sup>4</sup>And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. <sup>5</sup>After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. <sup>6</sup>Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. <sup>7</sup>And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you. <sup>8</sup>You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."

<sup>9</sup>So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. <sup>10</sup>When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. <sup>11</sup>And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" <sup>12</sup>Then a man from there an-

swered and said, "But who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" <sup>13</sup>And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

<sup>14</sup>Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?"

So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere to be found, we went to Samuel."

<sup>15</sup>And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you."

<sup>16</sup>So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said.

#### SAUL PROCLAIMED KING

<sup>17</sup>Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, <sup>18</sup>and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' <sup>19</sup>But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup>And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. <sup>21</sup>When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup>Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment."

<sup>23</sup>So they ran and brought him from there;

<sup>10:19</sup> <sup>a</sup>Literally *thousands*

#### SOUL NOTE



**Insecure and Afraid (10:22)** The soon-to-be-crowned king of Israel was "hidden among the equipment." God had chosen Saul, but apparently Saul was insecure and afraid. Moses too had been insecure about his calling, begging God to send someone else (Ex. 4:13). When God calls someone to a task, He promises to be with them and to accomplish His work through them. The job may be difficult, but God will be there. Be secure in God's call. **Topic: Insecurity**

PSALM 48

THE GLORY OF GOD IN ZION

*A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be  
praised  
In the city of our God,  
In His holy mountain.  
Beautiful in elevation,  
The joy of the whole earth,  
Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north,  
The city of the great King.  
God is in her palaces;  
He is known as her refuge.

For behold, the kings assembled,  
They passed by together.  
They saw it, and so they marveled;  
They were troubled, they hastened away.  
Fear took hold of them there,  
And pain, as of a woman in birth  
pangs,

7 As when You break the ships of Tarshish  
With an east wind.

As we have heard,  
So we have seen  
In the city of the LORD of hosts,  
In the city of our God:  
God will establish it forever.

9 We have thought, O God, on Your  
lovingkindness,  
In the midst of Your temple.  
According to Your name, O God,  
So is Your praise to the ends of the  
earth;  
Your right hand is full of righteousness.  
11 Let Mount Zion rejoice,  
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,  
Because of Your judgments.

12 Walk about Zion,  
And go all around her.  
Count her towers;  
13 Mark well her bulwarks;  
Consider her palaces;  
That you may tell it to the generation  
following.  
14 For this is God,  
Our God forever and ever;  
He will be our guide  
Even to death.<sup>a</sup>

PSALM 49

THE CONFIDENCE OF THE FOOLISH

*To the Chief Musician. A Psalm  
of the sons of Korah.*

1 Hear this, all peoples;  
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,  
Both low and high,  
Rich and poor together.  
My mouth shall speak wisdom,  
And the meditation of my heart shall  
give understanding.  
I will incline my ear to a proverb;  
I will disclose my dark saying on the  
harp.

5 Why should I fear in the days of evil,  
When the iniquity at my heels surrounds  
me?  
6 Those who trust in their wealth  
And boast in the multitude of their  
riches,  
7 None of them can by any means redeem  
his brother,  
Nor give to God a ransom for him—

48:14 <sup>a</sup>Following Masoretic Text and Syriac;  
Septuagint and Vulgate read *Forever*.

SOUL NOTE



**Secure (49:1-10)** People can become insecure when they focus on the differences between themselves and others. There will always be someone more wealthy, more good-looking, more intelligent. But eventually life in this world will be over, and those differences will be meaningless. The only difference that ultimately matters is whether people have trusted Christ for salvation. When we feel like we don't measure up, we must look at ourselves as God sees us. If we have trusted Christ for salvation, we are eternally secure. **Topic: Insecurity**

Trust in the LORD forever,  
 For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting  
 strength.<sup>4</sup>  
 For He brings down those who dwell on  
 high,  
 The lofty city;  
 He lays it low,  
 He lays it low to the ground,  
 He brings it down to the dust.  
 The foot shall tread it down—  
 The feet of the poor  
 And the steps of the needy.”

- 7 The way of the just is uprightness;  
 O Most Upright,  
 You weigh the path of the just.  
 8 Yes, in the way of Your judgments,  
 O LORD, we have waited for You;  
 The desire of *our* soul is for Your  
 name  
 And for the remembrance of You.  
 9 With my soul I have desired You in the  
 night,  
 Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek  
 You early;  
 For when Your judgments are in the  
 earth,  
 The inhabitants of the world will learn  
 righteousness.

- 10 Let grace be shown to the wicked,  
 Yet he will not learn righteousness;  
 In the land of uprightness he will deal  
 unjustly,  
 And will not behold the majesty of the  
 LORD.  
 11 **LORD, when** Your hand is lifted up, they  
 will not see.  
 But they will see and be ashamed  
 For *their* envy of people;  
 Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall  
 devour them  
 12 LORD, You will establish peace for us,  
 For You have also done all our works in  
 us.  
 13 O LORD our God, masters besides You  
 Have had dominion over us;  
 But by You only we make mention of  
 Your name.  
 14 *They are* dead, they will not live:  
*They are* deceased, they will not rise.  
 Therefore You have punished and  
 destroyed them,  
 And made all their memory to perish.  
 15 You have increased the nation, O LORD,  
 You have increased the nation;

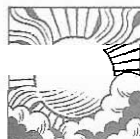
26:4 <sup>a</sup>Or Rock of Ages

#### SOUL NOTE



**Perfect Peace** (26:3) Occasions for anxiety happen. Jesus reminded His followers that “in the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33). The prophet Isaiah wrote that God gives peace in spite of conflict and turmoil. Peace is so basic to God’s nature that it is part of His name. God the Father is the “God of peace” (Phil. 4:9; Heb. 13:20). God the Son is the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6). And God the Holy Spirit produces peace in our lives (Gal. 5:22). To have “perfect peace,” wrote Isaiah, we must focus our minds on God and trust in Him. **Topic: Anxiety**

#### SOUL NOTE



**Secure in Him** (26:4, 5) The answer to human insecurities is to “trust in the LORD forever.” In Him we should find our security, peace, and confidence. We are surrounded by plenty of problems that fill our thoughts. Beset by fear and insecurity, we feel shaky, unstable, and unsafe. Jesus told His followers, on this eve of His death, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). With Christ’s peace in our hearts we can be secure, knowing that He is in control. **Topic: Insecurity**