

Twisting The Truth – Session 1: The Source of Deception

Series Background

The CTU (Changing Truth Unit) gains a new member and works to train Agent Bender to become a valuable member of the group.

Each session in this series begins with Agent Bender learning new ways to succeed in giving the world new ways to think about what has always been God's will.

Andy Stanley follows that with a 30-minute teaching about what the truth has always been and what it always will be.

Session 1 – The Source of Deception
Session 2 – All is Not as it Seems
Session 3 – Says Who?
Session 4 – Facing Forward
Session 5 – It's Only Physical
Session 6 – It's No Mistake

You know how amazingly weird it is — moments of clarity followed suddenly by moments of insanity. We may know the right thing to do, yet we go out and do the exact opposite. Why is that? Is something wrong with us?

Or could it be there is an invisible world impacting our visible world? Is there something we cannot see influencing everything we can see?

The Bible's answer is that, yes, there is an unseen world affecting our lives. It is all around us. It impacts every single thing we do, everything about us. It affects all our relationships. It influences our thinking, our attitudes, and our decision-making. It colors our perspectives on finances, on morality, and on how we do business. And it can actually be life-threatening — physically, emotionally, and relationally.

Background

Doctors and scientists once believed that diseases just “popped up” spontaneously with no explainable cause.

In the 1800's, Louis Pasteur and others confirmed the presence of invisible organisms that carried disease. These micro-organisms can be found everywhere. They represent an invisible world constantly impacting the visible world, bringing infection and illness and even death.

The Bible tells us about another unseen world that constantly impacts us in harmful ways. Jesus gives us specific insight into it, and His explanation is unsettling, almost disturbing.

But maybe it can also be helpful. Maybe it explains some things. Maybe it is something we need to learn to factor into our struggles with temptation and in our difficulties in relationships and in marriage and in our families.

Discussion Starter

Talk about a time in the past when you were deceived by someone, or you fell for some hoax or trick. What was the reason behind the deception? Could you have avoided it? How?

In general, how susceptible to deception do you consider yourself to be?

Video Overview

The Bible gives Jesus' take on an unseen world. He was having a conversation with religious leaders who refused to recognize who He was, although His words and actions proved that He had come from God. Jesus let them know why they were unable to recognize Him.
(John 8:43 – 44)

Jesus went on to describe Satan in John 8:44).

Jesus was saying, “Why do you not get it? It is because there is a deceiver, Satan, the source and originator of all lies. And you have been so influenced by his power that your thinking is too twisted to recognize Me?”

So Jesus believed in the personal existence of Satan, whose ultimate agenda was the destruction of human life and whose tool is deception – distorting and twisting truth. He can persuade human beings that what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right. It devastates our hearts and minds, and sometimes even our bodies. It wrecks relationships, marriages, families, and anything that is truly valuable to the human race.

Jesus later referred to Satan as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31 and John 14:30). This corresponds to an earlier confrontation between Jesus and Satan. Having come to tempt Jesus, Satan “led him up to a high place and showed him in an install *all the kingdoms of the world*. And Satan said to Jesus, “I will give you *all the kingdoms of the world*. And Satan said to Jesus, “I will give you *all their authority and splendor*, for *it has been given to me*, and I can give to anyone I want” (Luke 4:5 – 6).

In an important sense, our world is currently Satan's domain, where he has been given authority to use deception in trying to accomplish his destructive agenda.

Scary, is it not? But maybe it helps explain the intensity of our struggles with temptation and our inconsistency in doing what we know – in our saner moments – is right. Something invisible is impacting everything we do and see.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways are you affected by things you cannot see – germs, electricity, the wind, etc?
2. How does our culture portray the devil?
3. What is your understanding of who the devil is?
4. What do you learn about the devil from Jesus?
John 8:43 – 44
5. Does it surprise you that God has granted Satan temporary influence on the world around you?
Luke 4:5 – 6

Why would God allow this?
6. How has Satan's influence been felt in this world?

Mileposts

- The Bible assures us of Satan's existence and that this world is under his influence.
- Satan is a murderer, and his agenda is the destruction of human life and all that is good in human life.
- To accomplish this agenda, Satan's tool is *deception*. He is a liar and the source and originator of lies.

Moving Forward

We read in the gospel of John that shortly before Jesus was arrested and crucified, He twice referred to Satan as “the prince of this world.” Yet Jesus did not say the devil had either total control or final victory. Instead He said, “Now the prince of this world *will be driven out*” (John 12:31), and, “The prince of this world is coming. *He has no hold on me*” (John 14:30).

What specific assurance and confidence do these statements give you about the power that we have through Jesus to resist Satan? What difference could this make in your own view of Satan? Make a list of the most important things you need to remember about you have just learned.

Changing Your Mind

It is easy to lose perspective on what Satan is really like – and the danger this brings into our daily lives. You can become more aware of this by meditating on the following verse. Remember that this description of Satan come directly from Jesus.

*He was a murderer from the beginning,
not holding to the truth,
for there is no truth in him.
When he lies, he speaks his native language,
For he is a liar and the father of lies.
John 8:44*

Preparation for Session 2

- Review the words of Jesus in John 8:42 – 44. As you reflect further on these truths about the devil and how he operates, how do you see his strategy being played out in our lives and in our world today?
- Read Ephesians 6:10 – 11. As Paul encourages us to become “strong in the Lord,” what reason does Paul give? What dangers does Paul say are out there? Why do you think these dangers require us to “put on the full armor of God”?
- Read Ephesians 6:12. Paul acknowledges that we face a “struggle.” What is *not* with? Who does Paul say our true struggle is against? What does that mean to you?
- Read again Ephesians 6:10 – 12. Do you think there is any way to avoid the struggle Paul mentions here? If so, how? Or, if it is unavoidable, what is the best response we can aim for? Is this somehow better than avoiding the struggle entirely? Why? How?
- Read Ephesians 6:13 – 18. As you face this struggle with the devil, what resources from God – what “armor” – can you use and depend on? What do these mean practically to you?