

Perception Deception

By Pastor Ronald Schubert

Perception (*Webster*) – to receive knowledge through the senses; to see, feel, or understand.

Deception (*Webster*) – fraud, illusion, causing a false impression.

When these two words merge, they create something deeply unsettling: *Perception Deception*—the reality that things are not always as they appear. In our digital age, where information travels at the speed of light and truth often gets buried beneath layers of misinformation, perception deception has become one of the most dangerous weapons against integrity and character.

A World Built on Illusions

We live in an era where deception has become commonplace. Counterfeit money floods the market. Fake identities proliferate across social media platforms. Résumés are padded with fabricated accomplishments. Fraud schemes multiply daily. Beer commercials promise happiness in a bottle. Synthetic diamonds masquerade as natural treasures. Political candidates make promises they never intend to keep.

The prevalence of fraud and illusion has blurred the lines between what is genuine and what is false, creating a hazy and uncertain reality where we've grown dangerously numb to deception. As Solomon warned in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."

This art of deception stretches back to the very beginning of human history, when Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves to conceal their nakedness from God. Eve sought equality with the Divine through a single bite of forbidden fruit, while Adam complied with her deceptive reasoning. Since that moment in Eden, a chronology of deceit has unfolded throughout Scripture and human history.

Biblical Examples of Perception Deception

The pages of Scripture are filled with examples of how appearances can deceive:

- **Samson** thought Delilah loved him, but she was plotting his downfall (Judges 16:4-20)
- **Goliath** thought David was a pushover, underestimating the shepherd boy's faith (1 Samuel 17:42-44)

- **David** thought Uriah would be easily manipulated, but the soldier's integrity exceeded the king's schemes (2 Samuel 11:6-13)
- **Moses** thought the people of Israel would appreciate his leadership, but they complained and rebelled repeatedly (Exodus 14:11-12)
- **Joseph** thought his brothers accepted him, missing the depth of their jealousy (Genesis 37:4-8)
- **Jacob** thought Joseph was dead, deceived by his sons' elaborate lie (Genesis 37:31-35)
- **Jonah** thought he could run from God's calling, only to find himself in the belly of a great fish (Jonah 1:3)
- **Everyone** thought Noah was crazy for building an ark when there was no sign of rain (Genesis 6:19-22)
- **Martha** thought Mary was lazy, not understanding her sister's spiritual priorities (Luke 10:40-42)
- **The Scribes and Pharisees** thought themselves righteous while missing the heart of God's law (Matthew 23:25-28)
- **Judas** thought a kiss would be a simple betrayal, not grasping the eternal consequences (Matthew 26:47-49)
- **Everyone** thought Lazarus was permanently dead, not knowing Jesus had other plans (John 11:11-14)

As Jesus himself warned in Matthew 24:4, "Watch out that no one deceives you." The enemy of our souls has been perfecting the art of deception for millennia, and in our digital age, his tools have only become more sophisticated.

Four Decades of Building Character

For over 40 years, I have dedicated my life to serving God and others with integrity. I have walked alongside families in their darkest hours, holding their hands as they faced unimaginable loss. I have spent countless nights in hospital rooms, praying with the sick and comforting those fighting for their lives. I have traveled around the world on my own dime to provide humanitarian aid to those in desperate need, believing that faith without works is dead (James 2:17).

Throughout these four decades of ministry, I have maintained a spotless record. I have no criminal history. I have built my life around the principles found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7, which

calls leaders to be "above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money." Those who know me intimately understand that my character has been forged through years of consistent service, sacrifice, and stewardship of God's creation.

As Proverbs 22:1 reminds us, "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." I have spent four decades carefully building that good name, one act of service at a time, one moment of integrity after another.

When Deception Becomes Personal

I never imagined that I would become the target of such elaborate deception, yet in recent years, my own name and reputation have been weaponized in ways that were completely false and devastating.

Digital Identity Theft: A Modern Plague

Some time ago, a cybercriminal seized my Facebook account—operating under my real name, *Ron Schubert*. This was not simply a case of someone creating a fake profile; they had completely taken control of my legitimate account, locking me out of my own digital identity. Pretending to be me, this person began promoting cryptocurrency investments, something I know absolutely nothing about and would never endorse.

The deception grew more elaborate and harmful. Using my Messenger account and Facebook Marketplace, this imposter began listing items for sale, collecting payments from unsuspecting buyers, but never delivering the promised products. Friends, acquaintances, and complete strangers were being deceived into believing they were dealing with me directly.

I submitted my driver's license and passport to Facebook repeatedly, following every protocol they recommended. Yet incredibly, the platform continued to reply that it could not verify my identity and claimed to see "no signs of identity theft." Despite providing official government identification multiple times, I remained locked out of my own account while someone else continued to damage my reputation and defraud innocent people in my name.

This experience taught me firsthand what David meant when he wrote in Psalm 55:21: "His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords." The digital age has given deceivers new tools to wage war against character and truth.

Character Under Renewed Attack

More recently, my name and character have again come under attack through false allegations that strike at the very heart of who I am. Those who know me understand that the accusations are completely contrary to everything I believe and practice as both a Christian and a steward of God's creation.

On the advice of legal counsel, I cannot share details while these matters are being resolved through proper channels. What I can say with absolute certainty is this: the claims are entirely untrue, and when the appropriate time comes, the full story will be told and my innocence will be demonstrated.

Understanding the Spiritual Battle

Two separate incidents. Two different methods. Two attempts to destroy the same thing: a good name built over more than forty years of faithful ministry and service. From a spiritual perspective, I see this as far more than mere coincidence.

Jesus warned us in John 10:10 that "the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." The enemy of our souls is particularly focused on attacking those who are actively advancing the Kingdom of God. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

When God's people are making a genuine impact for His Kingdom, we become targets. The enemy cannot attack our salvation, so he attacks our reputation. He cannot destroy our eternal destiny, so he attempts to destroy our earthly effectiveness. As I was preparing to launch a new ministry initiative to serve pastors across the nation, these attacks intensified.

Peter understood this reality when he wrote in 1 Peter 5:8: "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." The devil is particularly interested in devouring the reputations of those who pose the greatest threat to his kingdom of darkness.

The Power of a Good Name

Scripture places tremendous value on reputation and character. Proverbs 27:5-6 tells us, "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." True friends will defend your character when you cannot defend yourself. They know the difference between the person they've walked with for decades and the caricature painted by false accusations.

In Ecclesiastes 7:1, Solomon wrote, "A good name is better than fine perfume." A good name is something that takes decades to build but can be attacked in moments through

modern technology and malicious intent. However, as Isaiah 54:17 promises, "No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me."

The Call for Discernment

I share this not to seek sympathy, but to call for something desperately needed in our age of perception deception: **discernment**. As believers and as citizens, we must look beyond headlines, social media posts, and carefully crafted narratives to seek the truth.

Jesus taught us in John 7:24, "Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly." In our rush to judgment, particularly in the digital age, we often forget this crucial command. We see a headline, read a post, or hear an accusation, and immediately form conclusions without seeking the full truth.

Proverbs 18:13 warns, "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame." How often do we violate this wisdom in our connected world, where information spreads faster than verification can occur?

The apostle John gave us a crucial test in 1 John 4:1: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine whether they are from God." This applies not only to spiritual matters but to every piece of information we encounter. We must test sources, verify claims, and seek truth rather than accepting perception at face value.

Standing Firm in Truth

Character is built over a lifetime through consistent choices, faithful service, and unwavering integrity. It cannot be destroyed by false headlines, hacked accounts, or malicious accusations—no matter how sophisticated or widespread they may be.

As Paul encouraged Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Those who have walked with me for years, who have seen my heart in action, who have witnessed my character under pressure, know the truth about who I am.

I remain committed to advancing the Kingdom of God, serving with integrity, and living a life that demonstrates the difference between perception and truth. As Jesus promised in Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Moving Forward with Hope

In this age of perception deception, we must remember that truth has a way of rising to the surface. As Numbers 32:23 declares, "Be sure that your sin will find you out"—but the corollary is equally true: innocence will also be revealed in God's perfect timing.

I continue to trust in the promise of Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Even attacks on our character can be used by God for His glory and our ultimate good.

To those facing similar attacks on their integrity, remember the words of Isaiah 43:2: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you." God walks with us through every storm, including storms of false accusation and character assassination.

The truth will prevail. Character built over decades will outlast lies spread in moments. And God's people will continue to advance His Kingdom, regardless of the enemy's attempts to stop them.

In a world of perception deception, let us be people of truth, discernment, and unwavering character. Let us build reputations that can withstand any storm and demonstrate to a watching world what authentic integrity looks like.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." - Philippians 4:8