

*WHEN WHAT  
YOU SEE IS NOT  
WHAT YOU SEE*

T H E

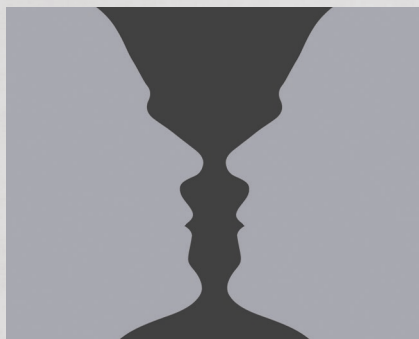
P E R C E P T I O N

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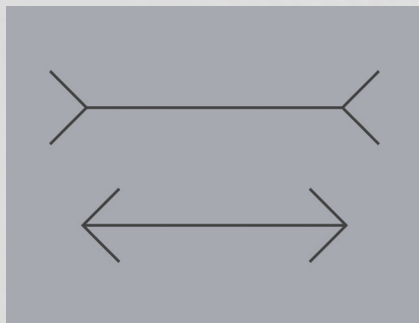
**IT IS MY OBSERVATION**, during over forty years of ministry, that the slyest form of deception is the ‘*perception deception*,’ which when operating in the mind of a person can lead to unfounded speculation, innuendos and false rumors, damaging a person’s reputation.

What is perception? Perception can be your concept of a mental image. It can be the awareness of your environment. Perception can be a feeling you get when observing or hearing something. True perception is the ability to comprehend something—correctly.

Look at the following picture. What do you think it is?



Now look at these lines and tell me which one is longer and which is shorter?



The fact is both lines are the same size. Take a careful look at the first picture again and see if you can detect a *vase* or do you see *two faces* looking at each other. Two

people can look at the same picture and “see” two different images, just as two people can see the same accident and present two sides to the story.

### PERCEPTION DECEPTION IN THE CHURCH

In Christ’s Olivet discourse, four times he warns of deception (Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24). He warns deception will affect ‘many’ (v-5, 11) turning them from the truth and will also corrupt the very ‘elect’ (v-24). By definition, deception is to purposely give a false impression through an appearance, statement or through using influence. To be deceived is to be led off course by someone else’s influence. According to Christ the main source of religious deception is words from a false prophet or a false teacher. The New Testament warns that in the ‘last days,’ hearers of teaching will not tolerate “sound doctrine,” but will have “itching ears;” meaning they will choose teaching that soothes them and ignore anyone whose message confronts them. The sad fact is that in many local congregations, good people have been hurt, and their reputations marred because someone spread gossip that was unfounded and based on a twisted perception instead of a fact.

### PERCEPTION AS A WEAPON

Jesus was continually misunderstood. He spoke in metaphors about ‘eating his flesh and drinking his blood,’ and ‘destroying the temple in three days.’ His enemies misinterpreted his statements, using what he intended as an object lesson, as a weapon to discredit his ministry. I call this *weaponized distortion*. The Pharisaical perception of Moses law, concerning working on the Sabbath, in their distorted view also forbid healing the sick on the Sabbath. Yet, the Torah does not indicate us to negate a miracle on the Sabbath. The Pharisees distortion of truth was a facade to conceal their jealousy. Always remember that, *you*

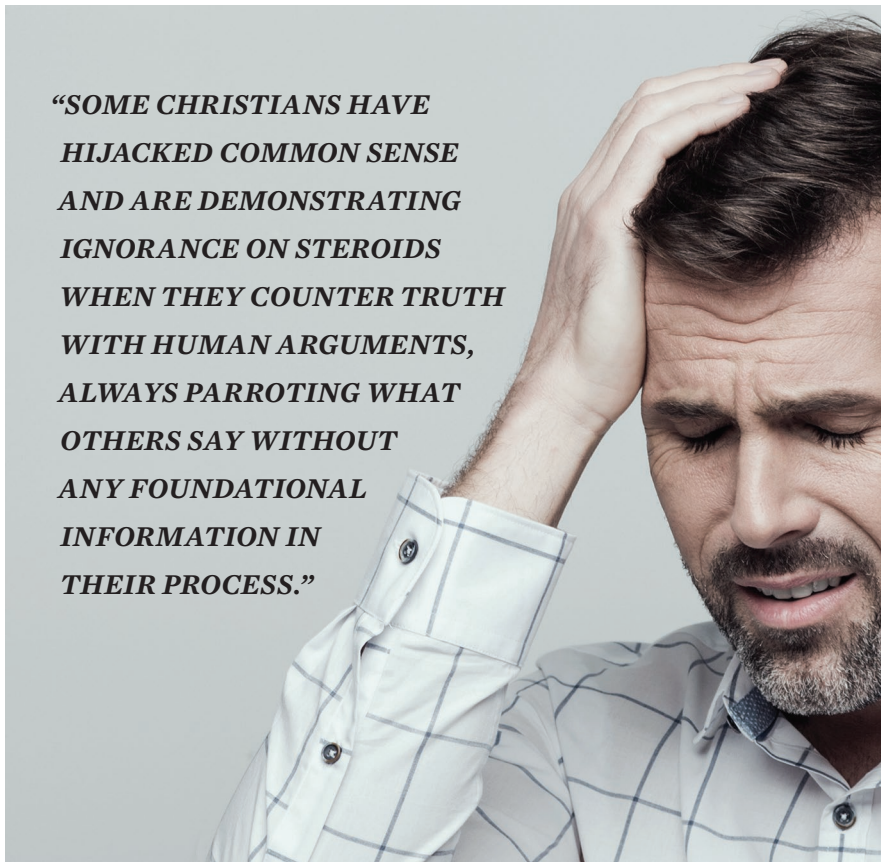
*are often controversial among those who disagree with you!*

My own ministry had to endure years of criticism and misrepresentation from those whose denomination glasses were tinted to focus on one view point but were blind to any other opinion that countered their traditions. I have preached messages in which I was misquoted to pad the opinion of a critic. When I began preaching the Hebraic roots of the Christian faith and leading tours to Israel, I was tagged a “Judaizer” and a “heretic” by ignorant ministers who had no knowledge of the subject, but had expertise in tearing down others to build their own self-esteem.

Before a critic presents their case, their first statement begins with, “I heard that...,” or “Someone told me...” or “They say...” The first warning sign should be that the person revealing the information was *not even in the room* when the alleged statement or act occurred. Then the second question should be, “who is the ‘someone’ and the ‘they’” handing out the accusations. I have taught that when a rumor is repeated and you were not present to actually hear what was said, you can fall into the position of a ‘accuser of the brethren,’ which is a serious spiritual crime against a fellow believer. The Lord is so concerned about the danger that can be released in your words that He warned, “the power of life and death are in the tongue” (Prov. 18:21).

A noted minister with a global television and national radio ministry was criticizing my book, “The Meal that Heals,” which teaches the power of receiving daily Communion when you are sick. The minister spent three days tearing apart the teaching. When a friend of mine asked him when he read the book, the outspoken negative preacher said, “I never read it. I just went on the internet to get the comments everyone made about it...” What if a diseased person would have been

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healed after obeying the truth in the book and after listening to this minister's unbelief and negative false perception it prevented the person from reading the book because of what he said? This is an example of the “power of life and death” in what you say.

Some Christians have hijacked common sense and are demonstrating ignorance on steroids when they counter truth with human arguments, always parroting what others say without any foundational information in their process.

#### **EARLY PENTECOSTAL PERCEPTIONS**

In the early Pentecostal movement, the wearing of any jewelry including wedding bands was forbidden. Yet as a teen I read Scripture where the prodigal son's father presented his estranged son a ring upon his return (Luke 15:22). The wedding band ban was eventually dropped, because of a perception when hotel clerks saw a preacher checking in a hotel with a woman and neither had wedding bands on. The perception was the minister and a ‘girlfriend’ were staying together. What Pentecostals perceived as an outward sign of holiness (not wearing

gold ornaments), while others had a totally opposite perception.

#### **BODY LANGUAGE**

If I were to hold up my hand with two fingers pointing upward, what does that mean? In a ballpark it could be “two hotdogs.” At the conclusion of a ball game it could be a symbol for “victory.” In a war march the two fingers can mean “peace.” In a restaurant it may be perceived as, “I need two seats.” In the west when something is correct we make a circle using our pointing finger and thumb, indicating OK. In some setting outside of the western hemisphere, the same signal can refer to a desire to have sexual intercourse. Words carry perceptions and images. What is considered slang in one nation could be cursing in another. The greatest danger is when our perceptions are used by the enemy to paint an untrue picture of a person or a circumstance.

#### **HE WAS WITH A STRANGE WOMAN**

Many years ago, dad was preaching a revival. After several nights, the atmosphere shifted and he sensed he was not connect-

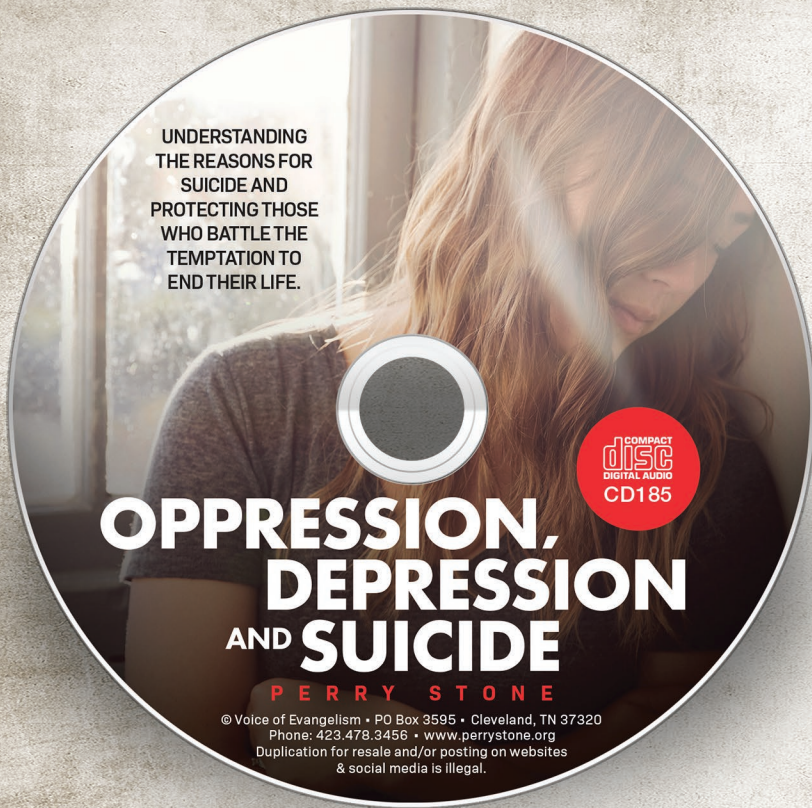
ing with the congregation. The pastor later informed him that a member had seen dad with his arm around a young woman crossing the street, trying to ‘hide’ under an umbrella. The next night, dad asked his biological sister, Brenda, to stand. He informed the church a relative had been hospitalized and he took Brenda to the hospital when it was raining a few days back. He said, “I understand that some busy body made a comment about me with another woman. That woman is my sister!” A man in the church turned red faced, hung his head, as a few members looked in his direction, smirking. His perception was wrong and his words damaged a revival.

I also recall a time when Pam appeared with me on a Manna-Fest program. Pam is a behind the scenes leader and is a bit uncomfortable publicly speaking. After the program aired, she received a letter from a woman rebuking her for her lack of excitement, lack of joy and basically condemning her for presenting such a bad image for a minister's wife on television. I wrote the critic back to inform her that Pam had just had a miscarriage, was heartbroken, and was very sick when she agreed to join me. The judgmental spirit is so evil and wrong.

#### **BELIEVING A LIE**

When nearing the conclusion of his life, Paul fell victim to a political lie that cost him most of his friendships. Nero in a rage against the Roman Senate, burnt Circus Maximus, destroying over seventy percent of the stores and markets, blaming the blaze on Christians, penning Paul's name in a plot to destroy Rome. As the rumor spread throughout the empire, persecution broke loose against Christians and many Christians in Asia believed Nero's lie causing them to turn against Paul. Without any hardcore evidence, only a rumor, people reacted. Paul wrote:

“You already know that all who are in Asia turned away and forsook me, Phygellus and Hermogenes among them. May the Lord grant [His] mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, for he often showed me kindness and ministered to my needs [comforting, reviving and embracing me like fresh air!]”



# OPPRESSION, DEPRESSION, AND SUICIDE

Suicide is increasing globally, and the causes can be caused by neurological disorders, various forms of medicine, depression, or oppression and at times pressure from a spirit. We must understand the reasons for suicide and protect and pray for those who battle the temptation to end their life. This is a very compassionate and needed teaching at this time.

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He was not ashamed of my chains and imprisonment [for Christ's sake].

"No, rather when he reached Rome, he searched diligently and eagerly for me and found me." – 2 Tim. 1:15-17 (AMP)

Paul also noted:

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray to God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me..." (2 Tim. 4:16-17)

Human nature is strange. People love a hero, will support an underdog but will run from a successful person when it is rumored or proven they have experienced some negative circumstances, especially some moral or spiritual failure.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Years ago, a U.S. Senator investigated six major Christian ministries for financial abuse. Most of the six were completely cleared of any impropriety. However, before the final verdict, the internet slammed with armchair jurors, all Christians, provided the nails and crosses to openly crucify, destroy and 'put in prison' all of these "crooked" ministers. One godly woman, Joyce Meyer, was accused of buying a \$23,000 commode.

The "perception" from the word commode was a \$23,000 toilet! Once that assumption was made, it suddenly was a gold-plated toilet, and on and on the Christian gossip specialists barked. Here are the facts from an eye-witness, not a rumor monger!

"I've seen her \$23,000 commode. It is a piece of antique furniture donated to her ministry to specifically sit in the lobby of her office. An antique commode is not a toilet. It is a chest of drawers that people once sat water pitchers on to wash" – Phil Cooke

The thousands of outspoken critics were the ones who had "excrement" on their faces! The only thing worse than ignorance being given credibility is when other ignorant persons repeat the lie. I am very firm on what I am saying as I have witnessed churches, ministries and good people nearly ruined for life due to the wrong information being promoted as truth.

Christ taught not to judge others lest you be judged, with the same measure you judge others, you will also be judged (not just on earth but in eternity - Matt. 5:25). Christ taught that out of your own mouth he would judge you (Luke 19:22). Christ also said that men judge others after the flesh (appearance of things) but he judges no man by the

flesh (he judges the heart and the intent - John 8:15).

*"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects me, and receives not my words, hath one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."*  
 - John 12:47-48

## THE RULES OF PERCEPTION

First of all, if it is not my business I have no desire to make it my business as I have to care for my own business. Second, I have no rights to put myself into any conversation that I am not invited or welcomed into. Third your "reliable source" may not be real—lie able, meaning the story may not be all truth and partial truth corrupts total truth and cracks the facts to the point of weakening them. I have learned that should I want the truth or the facts I should go directly to, not a source, but the person the incident involves.

Remember, things are not always as they are first perceived and when judging a situation, we must judge by the Word of God, spiritual discernment and not flawed human perception. ■