

# “Self-Deception”

By Tony Melton

The New Testament warns against “self-deception,” saying, “Let no one deceive himself” (1 Corinthians 3:18). Self-deception signifies “to deceive one’s self by false reasoning, to delude one’s self or to confide in a falsehood.

We may be deceived by others or we may deceive ourselves. The worst of the two is self-deception, because it results when we convince ourselves that it is okay to practice something sinful. It is when we accept something as being okay in God’s sight, which in reality displeases Him. It is as the French author Lambert wrote: “We cheat ourselves in order to enjoy a quiet conscience, without possessing virtue.”

The worst product of self-deception is that it causes men and women to sit idle after hearing God’s word. The Bible says, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22). We are deceiving ourselves when we hear or read what God wants us to do, but do not do it. Why is this self-deception? The deception is in the notion that we can serve God and please Him without obeying Him. Jesus says, “But why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). To call Jesus our Lord while refusing to follow His laws and commandments is simply an exercise in self-deception. In doing this, we are certainly not deceiving the Lord, which is impossible, but rather ourselves.