

Satan, the great deceiver, was about to lecture some of his young recruits on the fine art of deception . . . "Before I begin," he said, "I would like to hear from you what you consider to be the best methods of leading people away from God."

An eager young recruit quickly raised his hand, and said: "I think the best method of deception is to convince people that there is no God." Satan commented: "We call your method the 'frontal attack'. It has been used for centuries, but I must say, without any great success. Only a handful of humans ever accept a position of total atheism."

Another recruit said: "Perhaps we could convince people there is no hell." Satan replied: "That was successful for a period of time. However, with so much selfishness, hatred, and war that has been promoted over the years, people feel that in some way they will have to account for what they do."

A very young recruit offered the suggestion: "Rather than try to convince people there is no God, we should plant the idea that God is so easy-going that there is no need in making any immediate decisions." "Ah," said Satan, "You have offered the second most effective temptation. It's called 'procrastination'. For centuries it has been our best method with the young. However, it has a serious defect and is largely ineffective with the elderly who know their earthly time is running out."

"Then what is the best method of deception?" asked the recruits. Satan began: "Listen carefully. Our best method of deception works on those who go to church regularly as well as on those who do not. We call it MODERATION. We convince people not to get too excited or fanatical about God or the practice of their faith. This way they convince themselves that they are true believers, but in reality there is NO FIRE in their souls. Yes, MODERATION works just about every time."

Jesus is anything but MODERATION. Our Lord tells us: "If you want to be my disciple, you MUST take up your cross and follow me." And, there's no MODERATION in that.

We are NOT called to a life of MODERATION in living a Christian life. Jesus lived life fully. He celebrated weddings, ate at banquets, he laughed and enjoyed friendships. But He also cried, suffered, and died. Then rose again from the dead to claim the ultimate victory for Himself and His followers.

As His followers we are to follow in the footsteps of the Master. We are to embrace every facet of life and live it fully. We are to live our lives filled with faith—a faith that is full of excitement, enthusiasm, and expectancy that God will comfort us and bless us with His loving care.

We are to live the TRUTH that Jesus revealed, the truth that is Jesus. By doing that, your cross will come. But, it is in bearing your cross that you will share in the resurrection.