

Gathering Question:

Can you remember a time when evil crept up on you and you didn't even realize that it was happening? Explain.

Detecting the Deceiver

In the movie *Jurassic Park*, Dr. Allan Grant and his team are digging for dinosaurs in the Badlands, near Snakewater, Montana. They set off a seismic charge, and the image of an ancient skeleton appears on the video screen. It is the skeleton of a Velociraptor, one of the most cunning and deadly predators ever to walk the earth. But a young boy visiting isn't impressed. He comments that the remains do not look very scary at all, more like a six-foot turkey.

Dr. Grant responded to the boy by describing how the ancient dinosaur attacked its prey. "You stare at him and he stares right back and that's when the attack comes, not from the front but from the side, from the other two raptors you didn't even know were there."

In spiritual warfare the most dangerous attacks come unexpectedly. Christians often focus their attention on spiritual enemies that are obvious and plainly visible. While we are focused on the obvious evil in front of us the most lethal attacks come from the sides, from satanic influences we did not even know were there. In other words, the greatest threats to our faith, our families and our church do not come from the demonic influences we can see but from those that we cannot see—the ones that are so cunning and deceitful that they are virtually invisible.

Read:

II Corinthians 11:1-15

Reflect:

1. How does Paul contrast himself to the "false apostles" in this passage? Does it surprise you?
2. How are the dangers the Corinthian church faced similar to those Eve faced when she first met the serpent?
3. Why is it easy for deceivers to distort the gospel than to deny it altogether?
4. How does biblical knowledge protect you from eloquent speakers who are trying to deceive you?
5. What are some of the pious disguises that Satan uses to deceive God's people today?
6. How can you tell if someone in the church is really working for Satan and not for the Lord?