

Lifelines

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Topic: Breaking out of your rut

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

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As a child I was fascinated by a relative's cuckoo clock. I would run towards the sound and watch the little door open as the bird popped out, cooing out the hour of the day it was. Many years later, my wife and I enjoyed our very own Bavarian cuckoo clock. .

I learned something new this week about cuckoo birds (*Cuculus Canorus*). I had never bothered to research them before now. As it turns out, they exist predominantly in Europe and Asia, also in North America. They are tree-dwellers with the blue-grey color of a dove, and related to the pheasant, and the roadrunner.

In Europe they are known as "brood parasites," since the cuckoo mother lays one egg in another bird's nest that has eggs in it. The cuckoo removes one of the host bird's eggs and lays one of hers in its place. The cuckoo bird's hatching cycle is shorter than most other birds, so the cuckoo hatches first among the nest's eggs. The mother of the nest then feeds the cuckoo chick, which has a head start on any other birds hatched in the nest. It often kicks the other eggs and/or hatchlings out of the nest, thereby getting all the food. So the cuckoo bird is indeed a "brood parasite" by reducing the population of other birds, allowing itself to thrive. Since the mother cuckoo bird is not around to teach baby cuckoo to do away with its competition in the nest, this trait is innate, not learned. The cuckoo bird survives, the host's offspring don't.

As I reflected on this behavior, I wondered if there are examples of this in the lives of humans. Does this apply to our human psychology, cultures, social interactions, or spiritual lives?

I will mainly address spiritual deception and robbery, but humans under Satan's influence become deceivers and destructive. In John 8:44 (NLT) Jesus told the pompous, mean-spirited leaders trying to destroy Him "For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies."

In the New Testament era's Corinthian church there were evil and deceptive people seeking to infiltrate the church disguised as apostles of Christ. Paul explained it this way in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 (NLT): "But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve."

So, yes, there are human "cuckoo birds" that use cuckoo tactics that deprive others of resources or opportunities, and try to push their competition out of the nest. Bad characters like this are everywhere, in our work places, in education, government, in communities, in clubs, and even in churches. Some people only have eyes for themselves, selfishly trying to get to the top. Examples include male athletes claiming to be females to reach the top podium, or a candidate for office pretending to espouse certain beliefs only to change them once in office, and on-line radicalization, among many others. Communism is a prime example of this deception; it seduces with promises of free everything, neglecting to mention it confiscates your property to pay for it. This smiling

humanitarianism ends up stealing all the resources for itself, gorging on benefits gained from corruption, while leaving others hungry and vulnerable.

Satan loves to twist reality in order to manufacture false identities, false characters, false values, to deceive people into destroying themselves, and taking others with them. All of the deceptions by evil have the destruction of humans and humanity at the core of their temptations. Satan comes as an angel of light, looking beautiful, but when unmasked he is a beast preparing to tear apart the person who has been deceived. Evil is by nature destructive. Evil pretends to be light and joy, but in the end is darkness and sorrow.

Jesus offers us a better way, when He said “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:20, NASB). Jesus waits to be invited in, and shares His resources with us, instead of muscling His way into your life and stealing from you.

The cuckoo may be a pretty bird, but don’t invite it into your nest. Let Jesus in instead.

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