



Scripture in Action



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Vol. 4 No. 3 – Deception Most Wicked – Introduction

Starting in Volume 3 Number 1, we have been looking at relatively simple, contemporary scenarios and asking ourselves the question, how should someone living a Christ-like life respond. We answered that question in those simple examples by looking at specific passages from the Scriptures to support our answers.

In the last instalment, there was an interlude. I offered a **Prayer of Diligent Discipleship** to encourage our study of the Scriptures. I also offered a **Homily on Dispute Resolution**, inspired by one of the Beatitudes in Matthew, Chapter 5.

We shall now resume the presentation of a contemporary scenario and ask you to consider what your response would be – or should be – if you wished to follow a Christ-like life. All of the future scenarios will be more complex, but they will all be true! As always, I shall offer my own response. Will we share the same view?

Feedback is always welcome. Email any feedback to alan.branford@live.com by the due date for following issue of the *Sharing the Love* magazine, and please indicate if you wish your comment to be attributed to you or to be anonymous.

Although many of you will be aghast to learn, the story presented below is indeed true. I have changed the names of the people involved, not so much as to hide their identities, but more because all this happened about 25 years ago, and I have forgotten their names!

Vol. 4 No. 3 – Deception Most Wicked – Part 1

I had been at a social event, and I was introduced to a young man by the name of Alexander. We got on well together and talked a lot during that evening. At the end of the event, he invited me to a small gathering he was having at his flat on the following Saturday evening, and so we swapped mobile telephone numbers.

I duly received a text message informing me of the details of the gathering at his flat, and I went along. Four of the people, Alexander, Cheryl, Karen, and Carly, were friends from high school. They clearly were a close-knit group of friends, as they still formed a group now several years after high school. There were a few others there, such as me, and also a guy named Steve, who was clearly in a (very) romantic relationship with Carly.

Over time, there were several such small events, always at Alexander's flat. He lived reasonably close to the city, which I presumed was the main reason. The exact make-up of the social event varied, but always included the gang of four plus Steve, Carly's boyfriend.

There was one occasion, though, where Carly and Steve were absent – I have long since forgotten why. During that evening, Alexander, Cheryl, and Karen made frequent references to a girl named Cindy. I was puzzled, as it seemed to me that these references were applicable to Carly, but I had never before heard them mention a Cindy. When I queried this, the answer I received left me speechless.

It seems that Alexander, Cheryl, and "Carly" never gave out their own mobile telephone numbers socially, but always gave out Karen's number. I discovered that the number I had for Alexander was in fact the number for Karen. Whenever I called Alexander, the call was in fact to Karen's telephone, and she would let it go through to voicemail. She would pass on my message to Alexander, and then she would send me a text message with his reply. Likewise, if I sent Alexander a text message.

The same thing had happened to poor Steve. His communication with his lover, "Carly", was always via Karen! But "Carly" was really Cindy, who was married with two young children. Cindy and her husband took turns socialising with their respective friends, with the other looking after the children.

Steve was sleeping with a woman who was using a pseudonym, and who actually married with two young children! And he was completely unaware of this!

If you were me, what would you have done?

Vol. 4 No. 3 – Deception Most Wicked – Part 2

I left matters for a while after that revelation, just so that I could take it all in and to reflect. I then sent Alexander – well in fact it was Karen – a text message to say that if the four of them did not confess everything to Steve, then I would tell him myself. They clearly figured that I would make good on my threat. The next time I heard about Steve he was in an apoplectic rage. I never met these people again.

