Hatred and deceit go hand in hand, as these verses testify. Verse 23 observes that we cover up wickedness, just as we coat pottery with a nice finish. People of the time coated cheap earthenware with by-products from purifying silver—probably litharge, lead monoxide. Of course, it’s mildly toxic, but covering hatred with deceit is almost certainly even more toxic. Verses 24-25 continue this theme, noting that when the deceitful, hate-filled person “speaketh fair,” you need to watch out. Fair speech is another deceitful method that we use to conceal hatred, but God knows everything. He judges us by the abominations in our heart rather than the smooth words that we use to cover them. But verse 26 assures us that we will all eventually see the truth. Deceit just doesn’t work forever. We will all ultimately stand before God with every sin revealed, of course, but the truth is usually revealed much earlier. We’re also warned in verse 27 that plotting the downfall of another leads quickly to our own destruction. So we’re given some insight into the deceitful, desperately wicked hearts of humanity, but we’re also given some good reasons not to indulge such a heart in ourselves. Verse 28 notes that not only is hatred usually covered by deceit, but that deceit is actually an indicator of hatred. The two ideas are, in the human heart, inseparable. We are called to seek a soft, pure heart of flesh, free from both hatred and deceit.

**Proverbs 26:23-28**

**Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.**

**He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;**

**When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.**

**Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.**

**Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.**

**A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.**

**Striped Snakes**

The eastern coral snake and the scarlet kingsnake are look-alikes. There is a picture of each above, and one of each below. As you can see, they look quite similar. Both species are native to the southeastern US. But there is an important distinction. Eastern coral snakes carry a potent neurotoxic venom, while scarlet kingsnakes are not venomous at all. Scientists call this “Batesian mimicry,” and conceive of the kingsnakes as imitating the coral snake in order to take advantage of the protection of a venomous reputation. In humans it’s the opposite: the venomous individuals attempt to decieve everyone into thinking them harmless. Of course, we know that predators will leave the poisonous snake alone, but it turns out that they will avoid any snake even resembling a venomous one. As Christians, we certainly have to eliminate hatred from our hearts. We need to pray continually for the soft hearts that God promised to give us (Ezekiel 11). But we also need to avoid anything remotely resembling that wickedness and hatred! And as we see, deceit is closely linked to hatred. We must avoid it. We don’t want to resemble the wicked as closely as these two species of snakes resemble each other!

Nature: Natural Born Hustlers

Season 5: Natural Born Hustlers

Episode 1: Staying Alive

Start: 22:36 (30:26 from End)

End: 27:30 (25:32 from End)