

Lying: A Sure Way to Hell

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Lying is a deadly evil. Most people do not think so, but its evil and painful fruits are everywhere to be seen. In this generation men, women and children will lie repeatedly, and then lie about lying. From the highest officials of this nation, and the nations of the world, to the lowest peasant in the smallest country will lie about many things. Lying is destroying family life, business and government institutions, education and religions.

What is lying? Because of the general view that lying is not telling the truth under oath in court, or when it inflicts severe pain upon another, most people lie about everything and anything.

Lying is falsehood: fabrication, prevarication, misrepresentation, untruth, deceit, dishonesty. Prevarication is deception, to falsify, to fib, to lie, to perjure one's self. To misrepresent is to distort, exaggerate, falsify, misstate, pervert. An untruth is intentionally placing false information in the place of truth, to mislead. Deceit is cunning, chicanery, deception, fraud, trickery. The intent is to blind one to the true facts. Dishonesty is deception, duplicity, chicanery, fraud, immorality, mendacity.

Most people regard lying as insignificant and harmless if it does not damage the person or property of others. The fact is, lying on any level beguiles the person who hears and believes the lie, and also destroys the person who tells the lie, in this life and in eternity. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). This verse says ALL LIARS will live eternally in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: the second death. It makes no difference about the size or nature of the lie, or who tells it. The consequence for lying is universal and timeless. There is never an excuse or occasion for lying about anything.

A liar does not long hide his lying. True facts will emerge sooner or later and he will be exposed for his lying. Truth enlightens and makes one free from sin (John 8:32). Lying is the cloak that a deceiver tries to use to conceal his evil ambitions and sins.

Of course, all liars do not lie to conceal their sins; some lie to entertain, misdirect efforts to learn of the truth, and to simply make people "love" them more. Many "nice, good" people will lie to make conversation, entertain, make favorable impressions, and get approval from people who are important to them. A sluggard will lie to make people think he is industrious; a stingy person will lie to keep or obtain money; an envious person will lie to get revenge on one he hates; a criminal will lie to escape justice, and a self-centered person will lie to get attention. Of course, little children learn to lie about many things to escape correction and punishment for their disobedience and misconduct.

Lying: A Sure Passage to Hell

Lying is of the Devil. The Holy Spirit predicts that in this dispensation "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1-2). To give heed to "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" is to be deceived and to respond to the call of these doctrines of devils. They

Speak lies in hypocrisy: plain lying for the purpose of deception; pretending to be what they are not. That is hypocrisy.

The scribes and Pharisees were clever purveyors of deception. They used many approaches to mislead people and turn them away from the truth of Christ. A long dialogue between Jesus and these Jews is recorded in John 8. Some very strong language is used in these verses by Jesus to these scribes and Pharisees. Of the truth he said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth will release one from the bondage of sin and deception. Of lying he said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:44-45).

Every individual who lies in any matter, to any degree, is of the devil. Satan is the father of lying. Lying began with the devil in the garden of Eden. God put Adam, whom He had created, into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. God told Adam that he could freely eat of every tree in the garden except "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Of that one, God said; "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 3:16-17). Satan, in the form of a serpent, approached Eve in his subtle manner with his proposition for her to disobey God. He is described in this inspired language: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). This old serpent, the Devil, made his effort to get Eve to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. She refused at first, saying, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it . . ." Satan said to the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:2-5).

That temptation caused the woman to look at the forbidden tree in a different light and with disregard for what God had commanded. She SAW that the tree was good for food; she saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes; and she desired to have it to make her wise. That is what the inspired John said was of the world. "For all that is in the world, *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). Eve saw that the fruit of the tree forbidden to her was "good for food" -- lust of the flesh; it was "pleasant to the eyes" -- lust of the eyes; it was "desired to make one wise" -- the pride of life. She took of the fruit and gave to her husband. The result was that they were both driven from the garden and separated from the tree of life. Man and woman were sentenced to death and the tree of life was taken from them. Now the "tree of life" is in the presence of God.

"...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2).

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

Those who will not enter into the city are sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:15). All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Revelation 21:8). That refers to eternal hell, after the judgment.

God hates a lying tongue. A Supreme Immortal Being who can love so much can also hate much. God hates a lying tongue. "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). Of seven things mentioned here, three have to do with lying. "A lying tongue," "a false witness that speaketh lies" and "he that soweth discord among brethren." Misrepresentation is necessary to achieve discord among brethren. Truth will accomplish exactly the opposite: unity.

What Is a Lie?

One may tell something that is not true and yet not be lying. For instance: Someone calls and asks if my wife is at home, and I say, No. If I knew she had left home to go to the grocery, and I did not know that she had returned home, I would say, No. But if, indeed, she had returned home and I did not know it, I would be wrong, but I would have no intention to deceive. I would be mistaken, but I would not be lying. The one who tells a lie knows he is trying to deceive. Lying is the attempt to mislead. However, if I knew she had returned home, and I told the caller that she was not at home, I would be lying: I would intend to deceive, for whatever reason. Lying is the intent to misinform and beguile, regardless of the nature and consequences of the deception. A "little white lie" is as damning to the one who tells it, as the most consequential deception he can conceive.

Lying is deception from the heart. It is not an accident; it is an effort from the heart to mislead others. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies . . ." (Matthew 15:19).

I could lie by slightly altering the truth with a view of misleading the person who hears me. We hear this kind of lying every day by people with whom we come in contact. I could be lying by speaking when I ought to be quiet, or being silent when I ought to speak. In either case I would be attempting to deceive others by my maneuvering truth.

Hypocrisy is pretending something that is not true. Jesus repeatedly called the scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites" because of their continual practice of beguiling the people in promoting their "traditions" and religious corruption in the name of God. Phariseeism is not dead.

Why Do Men Lie?

Obviously, there must be some reason in the mind of a liar for him to lie. The temptations vary, and the rewards desired are different, but the underlying causes remain the same. There are a few that are apparent to all:

1. Many people lie to cover their sins and to feign innocence. "Some shall depart from the faith," speaking lies to cover their sins (1 Timothy 4:2); hypocritical lies to cover hate for one's brother when he must love him (1 John 2:9).
2. Some will concoct lies to avoid correction and punishment for sins in their own lives. The business world is full of such sins of lying.
3. Many people will habitually lie to get the attention of people important to them, and to entertain anyone around them. Some feel important when they can get other to laugh with them, and lying is one of their tools to accomplish such.
4. Many, including members of the church, use lying to obtain and keep money. If we could see what God sees in the hearts of members of the church, we would be astonished at the number of "righteous"(?) Christians who will frequently lie in their personal life, as well as in their business life, to "make money." When the saints in Jerusalem sold their properties and gave the proceeds to the needy in Jerusalem because they were in need, the divine Book records the actions of a man and his wife, Ananias and Sapphira, who were members of the church. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-5). Ananias fell dead for his lying. Three hours later, Sapphira, his wife, came in with the same lie, and she fell dead also. Both of them died with a lie on their tongue, and it concerned their own money about which they were lying, with greed in their hearts. They used deception to receive the credit for giving as other disciples were doing, yet keep the money they were supposed to be giving. Countless thousands rob God each week by pretending to give as they have been prospered, while holding back a "part of the price." Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.
5. Many people, both in the church and in the world, lie to get revenge and hurt others whom they have come to hate for some supposed injury done to them. Countless millions will find themselves in the lake of fire and brimstone for eternity for such senseless behavior.
6. Many will lie by concealing their real feelings to deceive others whom they want to impress or to avoid some responsibility to them. This is common behavior for many church members who try to evade their responsibility to others. This is the seething pot for serious trouble in any local church. Countless millions will be lost in eternity for this type of lying. It is difficult to work with such people.
7. Many lie by pretending to be religious when, in fact, they care nothing about God and His word. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie . . ." (Revelation 3:9). "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). One is a liar when he plays the hypocrite in his profession at serving God.
8. Most destructive to the work of Christ and his church is the brother deceive brother scenario. Such is based upon lies that fomented the situation, and lies that perpetuate it. "Lie not one to another,

seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9). "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14). "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25).

Consequences of Lying

There are bitter consequences to lying that should keep every person who knows the word of God from lying. I do not understand it, but it seems that most people who read the Bible and claim to understand and believe it, are not impressed by the certainty of being lost eternally if they do not obey Christ. Somehow, the vast majority do not seem to wince at the fact that all those who do not obey the gospel will be lost in hell forever. Immediately before the judgment, Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel, of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Lying will cause believers to be lost. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Lying will keep people from going to heaven. Most people who have any religious convictions at all believe there is a heaven. They usually have no real understanding what it is like, but they think they are going there. These people consistently lie in some way every day of their lives, yet they know they are going to heaven. Of the beauties described in Revelation 21, we read this: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). People who lie will not enter heaven. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murders, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:14-15). Just think about how many will be denied eternal life in heaven because they lied just a little.

The final consequence of lying is to be cast into the lake of fire for eternity. That does not make much impression upon people today. Sin has hardened the hearts of millions and they do not want to think about it now. Inspiration says, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Romans 1:24-25). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Truth makes men free from their sins. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Men must love the truth to preach it and defend it against the onslaught of lying from all quarters. The truth is God's word: "Sanctify them through truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Results of Believing a Lie

The scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem asked Jesus why his disciples transgressed their traditions. Jesus in turn asked them why they transgressed the commandments of God by their traditions. He called them hypocrites because they pretended to draw near to God with their mouths, but their hearts were far from Him. They worshiped in vain because they taught the commandments of men rather than the truth of God. "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:13- 14).

Some examples of believing religious lies are found in both the Old and New Testaments. In fact, the beginning of human history records the fatal decree of man for believing the lie of Satan. Genesis 3 gives the account of Eve being tempted to eat of the forbidden tree in the midst of the garden. Satan lied to her, and she believed the lie and acted in disobedience to the command God gave to Adam. She persuaded Adam and he ate also. The result of Eve believing and obeying a lie was death to her and her husband. That is the result of believing a lie at times when it causes disobedience to God's revealed will.

The consequence of believing a lie is further illustrated by the account of a prophet sent to Bethel, recorded in 1 Kings 13. As Jeroboam stood at the altar to burn incense in Bethel, this prophet cried against the altar and the ashes of it poured out. Jeroboam, the king, stretched forth his arm and ordered the prophet arrested, but it stiffened that he could not draw it back. Jeroboam cried to the prophet to entreat the Lord that his hand may be restored. The prophet asked the Lord and Jeroboam's hand was restored. The king invited the young prophet to go home with him and eat, but the prophet said the Lord told him to "eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest" (1 Kings 13:9).

An old prophet that lived in Bethel heard of this prophet and what he did, and he went after him and found him under an oak. He tried to persuade this young prophet to return home with him and eat, but he refused, saying that God had told him not to eat or drink nor to return home by the way he went. Now the old prophet told him that an angel of the Lord spoke to him saying, "Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him" (1 Kings 13:18). The young prophet went back with him to his house.

Now, the sentence upon this young prophet for believing a lie that caused him to disobey the command of the Lord: his death. "And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers" (1 Kings 13:20-22). On his way home a lion met him and killed him and left his body in the way, and the animal upon which he rode stood by him, as did also the lion. People passed by and saw the body and the lion and went to tell the old prophet. The old prophet said, "It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him,

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him" (1 Kings 13:26). This happened to a prophet of God who believed a lie and was destroyed by the lion, according to the will of God.

The young prophet was responsible for his conduct. The first message to go to Bethel was clear and direct. He was told exactly what to do. He was told not to eat and drink in that place, and to return home another way. He knew that was right. The second message from the old prophet was through a stranger to the young prophet: there was no evidence that it was from God. He received no message that God had changed His mind, only the word of the old prophet who "lied unto him." Today we receive no message but from God concerning His will to us. Inspiration by Paul said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8-9).

Beguile With Enticing Words

To beguile is to deceive: It is false reasoning for the purpose of misleading. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Some people beguile or deceive themselves. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). People beguile or deceive themselves by not doing the will of God as they learn it.

A Persuasive argument: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power . . ." (1 Corinthians 2:4). "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). To avoid such deception by the lying of others, and even ourselves, we must be well grounded in the faith and actively engaged in the work of the Lord. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Philosophy, vain deceit, worldly wisdom in spiritual matters, the rudiments of this world and the commandments of men are all methods of lying against the divine truth of God. The end is eternal death. But men who do not love and respect the word of God will turn to these deceptive tactics to mislead themselves and others.

Deceivers use feigned words to gain their ends. That is religious lying. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you . . ." (2 Peter 2:3). Pretenders and deceivers seldom consider their tactics in religion to be lying, but it is and its consequences are the same as that of the young prophet who believed a lie and disobeyed God.

What Religious Lying Does to People

1. Many people refuse to recognize their guilt of sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8,10). These misrepresent the truth about themselves. They try

to make God a liar, but in so doing they make themselves liars (Romans 3:4). God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

2. Many people claim to know God, but they do not obey Him. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). "Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him and keep his saying" (John 8:55).
3. Some people claim Christ, but they deny him. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22). To deny Christ is to deny his authority and word. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Christ was raised from the dead, and seated at the right hand of God, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:21-22).
4. Some people claim to love God, while at the same time hating their brother. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20).
5. Some do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, thus reject his testimony. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 John 5:10). The inspired apostle John penned these words of the Holy Spirit: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).