

Something to Think about When We Decide to Say Anything

We may not think a lot about it, but the Bible says quite a bit about lying. Of all the sins that man may commit, lying is perhaps the most destructive. Lies are not physically harmful; they are just words, but their consequences are destructive. When people base their decisions on lies, they make bad choices that end up destroying their (and other's) lives. Moreover, lies conceal the truth, which may lead to injustice for both the guilty and innocent.

The sin (yes, sin) of lying contradicts the very character of God. The Bible teaches us that God cannot lie (Tit. 1:3; Heb. 6:18); it is against His very nature to advance that which is false. Remember that Jesus says Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). Hence, to lie is to choose **not to be like God** and to imitate the character of Satan. Proverbs 6:19 says lying is among the things that God hates. It is no wonder that one of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Exo. 20:16).

John writes in Revelation 21:8:

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.

John certainly did not discriminate on what kind of liars would be lost; he simply said, "**all liars.**"

We (Christians) must be people who speak truth. God holds us to a higher standard, as Ephesians 4:25 says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." The context of Ephesians 4 tells us that speaking truth is part of what it means to be a new creation in Christ; it is at the heart of being a Christian. Colossians 3:9 parallels Ephesians: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."

For the Christian who is striving to follow Jesus' teaching, it is a simple matter of observing Jesus' teaching on this subject. In Matthew 5:37 Jesus said, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." James echoes Jesus comments in James 5:12:

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

The Jewish people had turned oath taking into another way of lying. Such was forbidden by Jesus and by implication, lying as well.

Yes, we know that sometimes it is hard to tell the truth. People (we) do not always want to hear it because it exposes the darkness in their lives and people love darkness better than light (John 3:19). In the world today there are fewer and fewer people who concern themselves with truth—especially with truth as a virtue. Thus, not telling the truth is not only tolerated, but also in some cases expected. We see lying becoming an integral/essential part of doing business, succeeding in national and local politics, and covering up the sins of sports figures and even creeping into the religious (so-called) world.

As the Lord's people, however, **we are obliged to tell the truth in love** (Eph. 4:15) and we speak truth because we do love (1 Cor. 13:6). Let us do so and be people who love truth regardless of the consequences that speaking it may bring, and let us never be involved in the sin of lying.

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BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

Only two sources of authority exist in religion. Authority is "from heaven [Divine] or from men [human]" (Mat. 21:25). Human authorities consist of such things as the rulings of one man or a council/ convention of men, creed books, the majority vote of members, and personal conscience. Such sources constitute no *standard* at all, for they are all subjective, arising from the thoughts, desires, philosophies, and whims of men. Human *authorities* in religion produce doctrinal division and confusion and endorsement of such things as sexual immorality, drinking, and gambling. Jeremiah stated the fallacy of reliance upon human religious authority: "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Right religion demands an objective standard, one that originates apart from human thinking, desires, and opinions. The Bible is verily that objective standard.

While approximately forty men were employed in its writing, they did not write their own philosophies and thoughts. They spoke "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). The Bible came from men who "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).

The Bible is our Creator's revelation of Himself and His will to His rational creation. Men could not know the will or the plan of God for us without the revelation of this mystery through the inspired men (1 Cor. 2:7-10). No one knows one thing about how to worship God so as to please Him apart from the New Testament. Apparently, many think that God is somehow obligated to accept whatever they choose to offer, but not so. We **must** worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24), and only the Bible tells us how to do so. Jesus said that men who reject Bible doctrine for their own precepts worship in vain (Mat. 15:9).

Likewise, the New Testament is the only source of information on how God wants us to behave in our daily lives. The world is drowning in its own moral filth because so many people have rejected God and His will in favor of their own subjective, selfish lusts (Rom 1:21-32).

Without the Bible we would not know that we are sinners in need of salvation. Moreover, we would never have known of God's gracious plan to save us had He not revealed it to us in His Word, the only source of this information.

Author Unknown

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

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FORGIVING A BROTHER

When should one forgive a brother who has sinned? Can one forgive before the one who has sinned seeks forgiveness? This is a matter that has, from time to time disturbed brethren. Below are some questions that were received and answered by some brethren regarding this matter.

From *Questions Answered*, Lipscomb and Sewell, Kurfees, pg. 260

Question: If a brother in the church offends us, is it right for us to forgive him whether he comes and ask us to or not, or must we hold it against him until he comes and ask our pardon? Would it not be more Christlike to forgive him and try to love him as much as lieth in us, whether he comes and ask us to or not?

Answer: Christ never forgave anyone his sins until he repented of them, nor do we see how anyone can. Christ loved them while yet sinners, was anxious for them to repent, suffered and died to bring them to repentance. We should be like him; should love men, be willing to suffer that they may be brought to repentance, and be kind gentle, longsuffering to help them to turn; but there is and can be no forgiveness with God or man without repentance; and when a man sincerely repents, he will confess and ask forgiveness of whomsoever he has offended.

Question: Brother Sewell: Does not the Bible teach us to forgive our enemies whether they repent and ask forgiveness or not? I heard a preacher of the gospel say there art no passages in the Bible where anyone ever forgave another unless he repented. I say the Bible teaches us that we must forgive whether they repent and ask our forgiveness or not.

Answer: Here is a passage that settles this question: "Take heed to yourselves: I thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). There are two sides to this question. If one does us wrong, it is our duty to tell him of this wrong, and thus rebuke him for his wrong. Then, if he repents, we must forgive him; but if he will not repent he is not worthy of forgiveness. But we have no right to hold malice against him, no in any way take vengeance upon him. But we can follow the rule given in another passage, which is to take one or two with us; and if he refuses to hear the church then let him be as a heathen or a publican—that is, let the church withdraw from him and leave him with other sinners. That may cause him to repent. If not, the Lord will attend to his case in due time (See Matthew 18:15-17). But no Christian has the right to punish, hold malice against or abuse another. It is a fact that God himself does not forgive sinners that will not repent. All such will be lost at last. Let a Christian in such cases do right in all things, no matter what the backslider or rebellious member may do. But if the wrongdoer will not repent, he will be sure of his deserts at last.

From *Question and Answers* Volume II, Guy N. Woods, Freed-Hardeman, pg. 41

Question: "Should I forgive a man even though he does not repent?"

Answer: Our Lord said, "If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). Jesus forgives only those who repent (Acts 2:38), and He expects no more of us. It is, indeed, impossible to forgive one who does not repent since forgiveness is the acceptance of a relationship which existed before the sin. Unless the rebellious brother desires this relationship it is impossible to establish it. We must ever be ready to forgive and we must entertain no malice or bitterness in our hearts. But, we can forgive only when penitence is shown. Those who question this conclusion (and there are always those who thus do, not knowing the true significance of forgiveness), remember that the Lord's order is (1) if a brother sins against you, rebuke him; (2) if a brother repents, forgive him (Luke 17:3).

Let us keep in mind that we should always remain ready to forgive once one repents.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, Justine Hall's husband, Joe and Tim Smith.

News and Notes will return when Ken Chumbley returns from England, please keep him and the work there in your prayers.

She Invited a Friend

This is the "true story" of a four-year-old girl! Each Sunday morning and Wednesday night a little girl named Becky would skip out of her front door and over to the next door with a tender knock. Becky's question was simply, "Can Denise come to church with us today?" Most of the time the answer was, "Yes." The invitations continued. The visits continued. One day something was different. Becky made her Sunday morning journey next door, but the answer was, "No." However, the words that followed were music to her ears. "No," the father answered, "Denise will be going with us this morning. We will see you at worship, Miss Becky." The family visited, studies followed, and Denise's mother and father were baptized into Christ! What is the magic, the mystery, the awe? There is none! Just an invitation given over and over! Some things we make too hard. Some of the easiest things in life we conjure up into difficult messes. Some want sophisticated mail-outs to do it for us. Some believe that carefully designed programs will do it for us. Some want others to do it for us. Some, sadly enough, don't care. Please understand: the benefits of mail-outs, programs, and other avenues are wonderful when used wisely. But, nothing dismisses our personal responsibility to invite folks. Who? My neighbor, postman, doctor, mechanic, coach, teacher, friend, parent, child, uncle, aunt, co-worker, partner, boss, banker, on and on. Jesus freed the man who had legions of evil spirits. He was changed and grateful and wanted to go with Jesus. Jesus refused to let him go saying: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19).

Author Unknown