

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Is it ever okay to lie?****Is it ever okay to lie? - posted by inotof (), on: 2005/6/9 12:35**

i got a question. Rahab. She lied about the spies yet she was preserved and her family as well. yet proverbs says that lying lips are an abomination. how do you reconcile the fact with out getting into relativism? not looking to stir up strife, this was posed to me and i couldn't answer it. is it okay to lie to preserve human life? (there are others as well)

Re: Is it ever okay to lie? - posted by dann (), on: 2005/6/9 12:41

Lying wasn't the only sin that Rahab committed. She was a prostitute after all.

The bible doesn't excuse her lying (or her prostitution for that matter). She wasn't saved because of her lying - nor were the men saved because of her lying. God would have saved those men even had she not lied. God wasn't blessing her because of her sin - rather he was blessing her (as he does each of us) --in spite of-- her sin.

Lying is never acceptable, nor is it ever blessed by God. God doesn't bless the 'sinless' or no one would be blessed. I hope that makes sense. Our sin may condemn us, but our obedience will never merit favor - like the servant in Christ's parable, even if we could be perfect in our obedience - sinless that is - we would have done nothing worthy of a blessing..

Food for thought.

Grace and peace.

Dan

/\

\

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2005/6/9 13:17

This is something I have thought about off on on for some time.

Was it a sin for Christians that helped hide Jews from Hitler when they lied about hiding them? I personally don't think they were sinning. Or maybe it was still sin but God saw it differently, I don't know.

That's just a thought.

Mike

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/6/9 13:26

What is a lie?

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2005/6/9 13:31

By definition a lie is a statement that deviates from or perverts the truth or saying something with the intention to deceive someone. Was it a lie? By that definition, yes. Was it wrong or sin, I still don't think so.

Mike

Re: - posted by GaryE (), on: 2005/6/9 15:32

There are different places in the bible where people use deception that are usually thought of as being Godly people. When David left the spit go down on his beard while hiding from Saul in enemy territory, he was living a lie. It seems to me that a person does not always have to speak a lie for it to be a lie.

Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and 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.

Thank God that the repentant believer has had the curse for these sins buried with Christ in the Red Sea of God's forgetfulness. Thank God the scape goat {Jesus} has carried our sins away. That God we have entered the city of refuge {Jesus} where our accuser can't get us as long as we stay in the border of that city. Thank God the blood that is carried into the Holiest separates the presence of God over the Ark from the law that is against us that is in the Ark and that we can as priests enter the Throne of Grace with that blood to present our petitions and confess our sins. Thank God by faith in what Jesus has done the curse of our sins has been nailed to the cross. Gal 3:13, 2 Cor 5:21

In Christ,
GaryE

Re: Is it ever okay to lie? - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/6/10 2:08

Quote:
-----i got a question. Rahab. She lied about the spies yet she was preserved and her family as well. yet proverbs says that lying lips are an abomination. how do you reconcile the fact with out getting into relativism? not looking to stir up strife, this was posed to me and i couldn't answer it. is it kay to lie to preserve human life? (there are others as well)

The Bible, unlike some of us preachers, doesn't try to do everything at once! It is quite happy, at times, simply to record events without passing a judgment. The dispute between Barnabas and Paul is a classic example. According to their temperaments Christians side with one or the other, but the Bible doesn't. It simply records the facts. The book of Judges is appalling in some of the 'facts' it records.

Rahab is a good example. We have enough evidence to charge her with lying and treason, but the scripture sticks to its point and simply commends her faith. I mentioned this recently on another thread but it is amazing how many stories the Bible leaves 'unfinished'. I think we do well to be cautious in accusing those that the Bible does not accuse.

I have taken New Testaments and concordances through communist custom posts and when asked 'are you carrying Bibles I have said 'no'. My words were technically accurate. I had my own single Bible and more New Testaments and much more material that they were looking for, but my answer was technically accurate in that they asked a question about 'bibles' - plural which I answered accurately. But I did so with the intention to deceive, so was that a lie?

A linked question is 'does one lie make a liar?'. If I have driven a bus, does that make me a bus-driver? Liar, as with the other descriptions in the Revelation list, seems to be indicating a fixed pattern of life. In the comfort of our homes it is easy to be absolute in our convictions, but when the situation faces us where our word may mean life or death for someone else we will need that grace which comes 'in the nick of time' to know how we should behave.

Re: Is it ever okay to lie? - posted by no_stamp (), on: 2005/6/10 2:42

I was asked this same question by somebody who I was evangelising too. I wasn't sure how to answer it so I said to them I'm not sure about that and it may be different in that aspect. Anyway I wrote to Ray Comfort regarding it and he replied with the following -

This is from *How to Bring Your Children to Christ*

A Question of Yes or No

Here now is a very interesting question that may come up. Should Christians always tell the truth? Before you say a quick "Yes," I have a scenario for you. The reason for me doing this is because you may be asked the question by your child, or by some cynic:

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Is it ever okay to lie?

Your wife and kids are hiding behind a false wall upstairs in a house in Nazi Germany. She is Jewish; you are German. Your kids are considered to be Jewish (the lineage is through the mother). The Nazis come to your door and say, "Are there any Jews hiding in this house. Yes or No?"

You are aware that if you say "No," they will quickly move on to the next house. If you say, "Yes," your beloved wife will be immediately arrested, raped (many times) by German soldiers, humiliated, and then be put to death in a concentration camp. Your children will be separated from their mother and become State-owned. They will be put to death if they are weak. If they are strong they will be renamed, adopted, brainwashed, and then raised as Nazi youth.

Not wanting to lie, you say a simple "Yes." The soldiers ransack the house and find your wife and your terrified kids. As the excited soldiers bring your beloved wife passed you, you look her in the eye and say, "I'm sorry about that Honey. I was thinking of me, not you. I didn't want to transgress my conscience."

I'm not saying that Christians should lie. But I will say that Rahab the Harlot lied to the King about hiding Hebrew spies, and there is no condemnation pronounced against her (see Joshua 2:1-6, Hebrews 11:31).

Be careful with this scenario; it's a church-splitter. I would simply say to those who press for an answer, "I will cross that bridge when I come to it...when Nazis come to my door."

I avoid the "Yes I have told a lie but what about the Nazis..." by just saying "I know what you are saying-there's a difference between discretion and a bold-faced lie. Have you ever told a bold-faced lie?"

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/6/10 10:14

Quote:
-----A linked question is 'does one lie make a liar?'. If I have driven a bus, does that make me a bus-driver? Liar, as with the other descriptions in the Revelation list, seems to be indicating a fixed pattern of life. In the comfort of our homes it is easy to be absolute in our convictions, but when the situation faces us where our word may mean life or death for someone else we will need that grace which comes 'in the nick of time' to know how we should behave.

I have thought about this question often and found that the word for 'liar' is used in one form or another about 13 times in the NT and 9 of them are in John's writings. Looking at all he said about the topic it seems to me that the lying he is referring to has to do with the Kingdom as opposed to simple everyday life. a person who says that they know God and do not keep His commandments or a person who does not believe on Christ, etc. The lies seemed to be directly connected to Kingdom issues. Lying against the Truth or making a pretense to misrepresent the Truth. When I say the "Truth" I am referring to the Truth of God's word. I am wondering if a distinction should be made between "Bearing false witness against thy neighbor" or "God" or "Christ" or the "Truth of the Gospel" and simply making a statement to the spys such as Rehab did.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: philologos' Response - posted by preacher_ish (), on: 2005/6/12 22:09

Nice post philologos...

"I have taken New Testaments and concordances through communist custom posts and when asked 'are you carrying Bibles I have said 'no'. My words were technically accurate. I had my own single Bible and more New Testaments and much more material that they were looking for, but my answer was technically accurate in that they asked a question about 'bibles' - plural which I answered accurately. But I did so with the intention to deceive, so was that a lie?"

It is kind of like Corrie Ten Boom and her involvement in preserving a people under persecution... she often times lived a lie, but how she trusted in her Lord.

preacher_ish

Re: As a matter of fact... - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/6/13 1:01

I think this interesting discussion on lying would be incomplete without at least a mention of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's essays on "Truth" in Ethics. First off, I think he would agree with Robert's statement.

Quote:
-----...it seems to me that the lying is referring to has to do with the Kingdom as opposed to simple everyday life. a person who says that they know God and do not keep His commandments or a person who does not believe on Christ, etc. The lies seemed to be directly connected to Kingdom issues. Lying against the Truth or making a pretense to misrepresent the Truth.

"...the lie is primarily the denial of God as He has evidenced Himself to the world. 'Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?' (I John 2:22)."

Bonhoeffer believed that the formal description of the lie as a "discrepancy" between thought and speech is inadequate. Truth is more than a "matter of fact". There is a way of speaking factually that avoids truth. Who hasn't cocked their heads like a puppy dog, upon sniffing a politician's "truth" that contains the scent of deliberate ambiguity or omits something essential?

What really interests me about Bonhoeffer is his view that not all people have the right to hear truth. "After all, 'truthfulness' does not mean uncovering everything that exists. God himself made clothes for men; and that means that in statu corruptionis many things in human life ought to remain covered, and that evil, even though it cannot be eradicated, ought at least to be concealed. Exposure is cynical, and although the cynic prides himself on his exceptional honesty, or claims to want truth at all costs, he misses the crucial fact that since the fall there must be reticence and secrecy."

Bonhoeffer gives the example of a child who is asked in front of the class by a teacher if his father often comes home drunk. In fact, the student's father does often come home drunk, but in answer to the teacher the child denies that the teacher's description is true. According to Bonhoeffer, the child rightly lies in answer to a question that should have never been asked in a classroom. Bonhoeffer explains "...the family has its own secret and must preserve it," which the teacher has failed to respect. The blame for the lie falls back entirely upon the teacher.

At this point I might be tempted to think that Bonhoeffer was a relativist. Such a conclusion would have to overlook his decision to leave America, where he could have been a celebrated scholar, to return to Germany to face inevitable incrimination for his convictions.

Bonhoeffer's choice to return was based on a premise that only those Christians who fight for truth have a right to preach the Gospel. He saw early 20th century American Anglo-Saxon Christianity as the product of fleeing the struggle for truth, abandoning the confessional struggles of Europe. Subsequent generations of "Protestantism without Reformation" born free of the battles for which their forebears fought no longer thought it necessary to fight about anything.

Obviously this was an opinion from someone who was decrying the future enslavement of Europe as the world's largest democracy looked on. However, it does create an interesting "what if" question. What if those Christian colonialists had not fled their heritage in search of their hermitage? What would the church look like today? What would our 21st century Gospel sound like if our 17th century forefathers felt called to fight instead of flight for truth's sake?

"Precisely because of our attitude to the state, the conversation here must be completely honest, for the sake of Jesus Christ and the ecumenical cause. We must make it clear—fearful as it is—that the time is very near when we shall have to decide between National Socialism and Christianity. It may be fearfully hard and difficult for us all, but we must get right to the root of things, with open Christian speaking and no diplomacy. And in prayer together we will find the way. ...all evasion is useless. ...Only complete truth and truthfulness will help us now. I know that many of my German friends think otherwise. But I ask you urgently to appreciate my views."

MC

Re: protecting the interests of the evil ones, or God's people. - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/6/13 9:27

Quote:
.....As the excited soldiers bring your beloved wife passed you, you look her in the eye and say, "I'm sorry about that Honey. I was thinking of me, not you. I didn't want to transgress my conscience."
.....

This comment hits the nail on the head. We must ask, is our desire to avoid a lie for the sake of our own self-righteousness, or for the sake of those whom we have been called to protect.

Love ALWAYS PROTECTS. 1 Cor. 13 What if someone's desire to keep their conscience clean put your life at risk. Would you commend them?

I see no difference between misleading information and a lie. It is the motive that is the issue.

Is our lie merely a self-protective measure, the product of weak faith?

From what I can see, Rahab's deception was the direct result of her FAITH in God. She placed her loyalty in God and that's why she protected God's people at a cost to her own life. Her lie put her at great risk - being condemned by her very own people. SHE LAYED DOWN HER LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. By lying, she also exposed her own people to God's judgment. She did not wish to stand in the way of God's judgment on sin. She BELIEVE GOD and his ways.

I suspect that her moral conscience was higher than mine - I can't tell, because I have not been put in such a place, (that I know of).

She definitely forsook all - including her heritage and security in order to follow God. and God rewarded her for it. Her lie was not the product of a weakness, but of a great strength - FAITH.

I ask, is it ever LOVE to protect the interests of the evil ones even if by our passivity, even if by avoiding a lie. It may boil down to this: Whose side are we on - God and his principles, or the evil one (even if it is out of fear). It is sometimes a hard and costly test. Prior to the war, if the German Christians had understood this principle, history would have been very different.

My grandfather was a leader in the underground in Holland, and he saved the lives of many. Of course, he gave misleading information, (ex: gave his twelve children fictitious names, and different "parents" in order to protect them) and of course he had to do the Rahab thing many times. But his faith was strong, and he saw many miracles, which are now documented.

Perhaps the real issue is one's FAITH and obedience to God and not merely one's WORKS (WORDS)

Another thought burns on my mind - and that has to do with hypocrisy - which is described in the bible as a LIVING A LIE - in other words, not being honest about our true inner self. So in our own zeal to refrain from telling a lie we must also be open to the possibility that we may unconsciously be telling ourselves lies about our own righteousness.
Diane

Re:, on: 2005/6/14 22:17

Nice extorting.

I think i just bit my tongue.

"The fruit of the Spirit, love,patience...peace...etc..etc'

"Against these things there is NO law'

Hmm, hmm....

I just bit my tongue again. (I can't think of ANYTHING against what you all have spoken, from Biblical principles).

hmm :-?