

When is it Okay to Lie?

by Sonny Bowman

Slide Notes

The following information was quoted in last week's message by Cere. This week we will take another look at it.

The Cultural View

"How to effectively use lying as a skill in life and business" by Sarah Bourassa, TODAY, April 9, 2014

Your mother may have told you, "Honesty is the best policy." But are there certain situations where it's OK to lie? What if it's to avoid hurting someone or to help you succeed at work?

"The truth about lying is that it's not all bad as long as no one's getting hurt," says psychiatrist Dr. Ish Major. "If you're using it to get ahead or spare someone's feelings, then it's generally considered socially acceptable."

He even says that lying can be a good indicator of how well you may do later in life. The younger you are when you're able to lie, the more likely you are to have a higher level of intelligence. So it's good to be able to lie early, but not necessarily often, he says.

Studies show that people will lie at least once during any given 10-minute conversation. On average, men tend to lie twice as much as women (telling four to six lies per day while women tell about two to three).

...women often need to learn to spin a story in order to get work done efficiently, which doesn't need to be perceived as being dishonest.

"I think there is a difference between lying in business in order to smooth things over between competitive clients or to make co-workers get along, and doing things that are dishonest like stealing or ripping the consumer off," ...

... "If you think of being able to tell a good lie as like having a super power, and you only ever use it for good, never for evil, then you'll be able to feel much better about it if and when you ever do."

Wow! Not only does this make me feel better about the lies I tell from time to time, it makes me want to develop my skill in lying some more!

It sounds good, kind, and reasonable, but is it true? ...or is it a lie, itself?

3 Common Lies (per TODAY)

- **1. Lies to cover your back**

These typically consist of excuses, defensive lies or shifting blame to explain absences, being late and projects not getting done on time or at all.

- **2. Lies to avoid conflict**

Generally used as a way to protect someone's feelings, these involve shielding an uncomfortable truth or giving false compliments, such as about a person's appearance or performance.

- **3. Lies to gain status**

These are more blatant and untrue than the others. They usually involve exaggerations of accomplishments, destructive lies, omissions, gossip and intentionally misleading others. For example, you may claim an idea as your own, give earlier due dates for projects to ensure they are completed on time and tell a job you are leaving for "personal reasons."

These don't just happen in business... and they are not just characteristic of non-Christians. The other two (#1 & 2) are also "intentionally misleading others" (not just #3)! Did you notice "These are more ... untrue than the others." What?!

A Half-Truth — Is a Full-Lie!

How the World Views Lying

- **Lying is a tool**
- **For gain**
 - advantage, power, control, wealth
- **For kindness**
 - don't make people feel bad
- **For good or noble causes**
 - comfort, encourage, convince
- **"Sometimes you have to do wrong for a good purpose."**

Examples of "Good" Lies...

- **Cops lying to a criminal to trap him or get a confession**
- **Telling someone it's going to be okay, when you really don't know that it will**
- **Not mentioning a problem with your car trade-in so you get a better price**
- **Telling someone you have plans when you simply don't want to attend their event**
- **Telling someone they did a great job when they really didn't**
- **Telling someone what they want to hear**

What is a Lie? Lie/Lying — Defined

- **According to Merriam-Webster...**

- 1: to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive
- 2: to create a false or misleading impression

- **Not telling the truth**

Other Words for Lying/Lie

- Deception
- Shading the truth
- Spin
- White lie
- Exaggeration
- Bluff
- Fib
- Half truth
- Fallacy
- Misleading
- Distortion
- Falsehood
- Misconception
- Misinformation
- Misinterpretation
- Misreport
- Misstatement
- Story
- Untruth
- Etc.

We have an awful lot of words to help us make lying not sound so bad.

Where Did “Lies” Originate?

- **Not from God**
 - ... which God, who cannot lie, promised ...
 - — Titus 1:2
- **Satan invented lies**
 - ... the devil... does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it — John 8:44
 - When you lie, you are using Satan’s resources
 - Can’t accomplish God’s work using Satan’s tools

I believe that if you could take away the devil’s ability to lie, you would almost put him out of business.

A Good Lie?

- **No such thing!**
 - God is the very definition of good
 - God would never lie

- Neither should we
- **Lies affect beliefs, beliefs have consequences**

Lies About Truthfulness

- **Often false dichotomies**
- **You must answer every question**
 - “See how many things they testify against You!” But Jesus still answered nothing... — Mark 15:5
- **Have to be harsh, cruel, or unkind**
 - ...speaking the truth in love... — Eph 4:15
- **Have to betray confidences if asked**
- **People will take advantage of you**
- **People will look down on you**
- **It will always get you into trouble**

A false dichotomy or false dilemma occurs when an argument presents two options and ignores, either purposefully or out of ignorance, other alternatives.

Jesus always told the truth, but He did not answer every question or tell all that He knew.

We fear questions like...

How did I do?

How does my hair look?

Does this dress make me look fat?

When you ask a question, are you looking for honest feedback— or do you just want to be encouraged?

Fasten Seat Belt

We are expecting some strong turbulence. So fasten your seat belt. You may feel offended, discouraged, or ashamed. My goal is to raise the bar – to challenge you to a higher level of living out your Christian life. We’ve been lied to about lying and about truthfulness.

Nice in Theory...

- **Probably most of us agree that we should always tell the truth & never lie**
- **However, we may also think that it is an impossible and impractical goal**
- **So we go on about our business with little significant change**

What if I put you on the spot and asked you to raise your hand if you agree that we should always tell the truth... Some would probably raise your hands so I wouldn’t feel bad. Others may raise their hands so others wouldn’t think you are a bad person.

But What Does God Think?

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight. — Pro 12:22

- **Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,** — Col 3:9
- **Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.** — Eph 4:25

Always telling the truth is not just a nice theory... Abomination – a very strong word. Not lying is God’s expectation for those who belong to Him!

The Scary Part of Truthfulness

- **Requires you to be real**
 - Open, visible, vulnerable
- **You feel...**
 - Exposed, naked, judged
- **So you have to trust God**
 - Lying or being truthful is actually a matter of who you are going to trust
- **It’s a lifestyle change**
 - A matter of Jesus truly being Lord of your life
 - Learning to consistently walk in God’s ways
 - A lifelong process of learning and growing

Deal with It

- **Always tell the truth and deal with any consequences in a godly way**
- **The cost of telling the truth is much less in the long run than the cost of lying**
- **Put your faith and trust in God, not in people or circumstances**

Again, this does not mean that you tell everything you know. Let your words be few, but truthful!

Imitate Me...

- **Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**
— 1 Corinthians 11:1
- **Paul is a human example, that it can be done**
- **Like a pioneer blazing a trail for others to follow**

- “Follow Jesus!” “This is the way!” “Follow me because I am following Jesus!”
- **It is not that Paul is perfect (or any of us),**
 - but that he is working to imitate Jesus, even though imperfectly.

How many times have you heard this verse quoted? It’s a bold statement by Paul. If we truly imitate him, we should say the same thing.

It is Possible!

- **In the Christian context...**
AND in the secular context
- **You must choose**
 - ... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served... But... we will serve the Lord.”
 - — Josh 24:15
- **We need and have help**
 - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. — Phil 4:13

God would not tell you to do something that was impossible without providing help to do it. We have the Holy Spirit in us who helps us to be what God has called us to be.

Over 40 years ago, I made a conscious decision to speak truth and avoid any lying or deception. I determined to let my words be few, but meaningful. I have done this in secular and Christian jobs. Though I am still working on it, it has become a way of life for me. It can be done!

Luke 16:10-11 — He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

The Results

- **Even though the world will think you are a fool for always telling the truth...**
- **Most will appreciate and respect your stand**
- **And you will bring glory to your Father God rather than shame**
- **But you need to be ready to pay the price**

Tips

- **Pray!**
 - Commit to God to always tell the truth
 - Ask for the Lord’s help

- **Don't announce to others, just do it**
- **As soon as catch self in a lie...**
 - Repent
 - Fix it if possible
 - Don't need to make a big deal about it
- **Use correct terms**
 - About, maybe, I think, I don't know, My guess...
- **Don't pass along possible lies – gossip, email**

Possible Responses

- **To a question you don't want to answer**
 - Man up! Talk straight
- **I prefer not to discuss this at this time.**
- **I am not at liberty to discuss that.**
- **That's a personal matter, let's talk about something else. Thank you.**
 - Be kind, but honest and clear.
- **To an expectation to lie**
 - He is not available at this time but will tell him you called.
 - If I can lie for you, I can lie to you... and I will do neither.

Listen More, Talk Less

- **In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
— Pro 10:19**

Those who know me will recognize that I don't talk much sometimes. That is not just because I am quiet by nature (though that is a factor).

Feeling Offended?

- **Truth offends the lies we have believed**
 - Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? — Gal 4:16
- **Maybe things don't go so well for a reason...**
 - Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished... — Pro 13:11
 - Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death. — Pro 21:6

- Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth... — Eph 6:14

If you have had trouble standing steadfast in your life or things are not going well, maybe this is part of the problem.

Remember...

- **God would never lie or deceive...**

Neither should we.

- Lies are the devil's invention
- We cannot do God's work using the devil's tools
- **There is no good or acceptable level of deceit.**
- **There is never justification for lying**
- **So let's persistently and patiently work on the process of changing our lifestyle**

Don't focus on what you can't do. Begin doing what you can now. Let it grow to become a way of life for you. It's a process.

It's not my goal to get you to stop lying. It's my goal to encourage you to pursue a lifestyle of honesty and integrity.

When is it Okay to Lie? — Never!