

Exodus 20:16
October 19, 2014

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: How did your parents teach you about the importance of not lying?

As children, the subject of telling the truth was “black and white.” We were taught to be honest at all times. There were no exceptions. But then we became adults. We got introduced to half-truths and white lies.

Today we are studying the ninth commandment, which is “Do not give false testimony against your neighbor.” The subject of lying will feel like a “hot topic,” but what I am most looking forward to is hearing your own stance on whether or not lying is permissible under certain circumstances. So let’s enjoy letting “iron sharpen iron” and learning from God’s Word.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

Observations/Process Qs-

V.16:

- “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
- Q: When is telling a lie appropriate? [According to Dr. Haney, there are five “useful lies” we have to tell based on certain circumstances we find ourselves in –
 - Lies for the Greater Good – Ex: surgeon answering the question of family members wanting to know how their loved one is doing.
 - Lies that preserve your relationship with others – Ex: “Do I look fat in this dress?” How you respond reflects what’s in the best interest of preserving your relationship. Questions like these are born out of insecurities, so you answer in a way to build up your spouse.
 - Lies out of Retaliation – an argument escalates to hyperboles. You “always” do this, or you “never” do that. Always and never are lies.
 - Unintentional Lies – Someone told me “x” and I shared it with someone else, and the information turned out to be wrong. Those are lies of ignorance.
 - Toupee Lies – As Dr. Mann always said, “Pastors reserve the right to put hair on their stories.” It’s the idea of embellishment.
- Sermon Theme (Dr. Haney): The 9th Commandment is not necessarily saying the above five kinds of lies are wrong, BUT it is saying “never throw your neighbor under the bus with lies about them. We absolutely cannot damage or deceive another person. ***There are two kinds of lies that will violate the 9th Commandment:***
 - Lies we tell **about others** (Destructive Lies) – We are careless in not only what we say about others, i.e. gossip, but we are careless in what we accept as truth as we watch Entertainment Tonight, or TMZ, or pick up a National Enquirer, etc. We also gossip under the banner of “sharing prayer concerns” for others. ***CURE: Never say something about someone who you haven’t said to someone.***
 - Lies we tell **to others** (Deceptive Lies)
- X-Ref: Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:25

- X-Ref: **James 3:1-18** (sobering to read v.8-10) Application: Our tongue is a dangerous, lethal weapon. Our words need to mirror “true wisdom” (see v. 17-18)

LOOK:

Q: Since our tongue is a lethal weapon capable of telling lies about others (Destructive Lies) or to others (Deceptive Lies) according to James 3, what will you do differently to exercise more control over your tongue? Moreover, how can you use your tongue to offer blessings to others?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 1–2). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

I. Do not bear false witness (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25).

Toussaint, S. D. (1985). Acts. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.)The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. (Vol. 2, pp. 115–124). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

j. The ninth commandment (20:16)

20:16. This command concerns bearing **false testimony against** someone that would cause him unjustified injury. Keeping this law helps maintain stability in a society by protecting individuals' reputations.

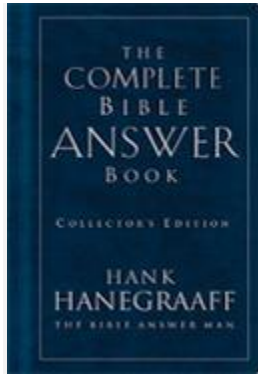
Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 92 – 94). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

20:16 Strictly speaking, this commandment applies to perjury during a legal proceeding, and not to speech in general. Nevertheless God, who is Himself the Truth and speaks only the truth (Ps 119:160; Jn 1:14; 17:17) expects people to tell the truth (see note on Ex 1:19). Yet the Bible records an instance where the Lord caused, or permitted, false prophets to lie (1 Kg 22:23). That passage reflects the OT writers' tendency to attribute all things to God, recognizing that events could occur only if the Lord permitted them. King Ahab had hired false prophets to spread lies supporting his personal ambitions, and these prophets conveniently proclaimed messages in the Lord's name that agreed with the king's desires. The Lord permitted them to do what they were determined to do, to provide Ahab with the lie he wanted to hear—and which led to his death (1 Kg 22:34–37). In this way God allowed a disobedient man to bring judgment upon himself.

Dr. Dave Haney – Sermon on the Ten Commandments:

http://www.riverbend.com/media#!/swx/pp/media_archives/130876/episode/35876?play=1
Sermon on “Do Not Bear False Testimony Against Your Neighbor by Dr. Dave Haney

Is it ever morally permissible to lie?



This article is from Hank Hanegraaff, *The Complete Bible Answer Book—Collector's Edition*

(Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008)

In the interest of truth, I should first disclose the fact that Christian theologians are divided on this subject. Some—like Saint Augustine—believed that it is never permissible to lie. Others—like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who had ample time to contemplate this issue from the perspective of a Nazi prison cell—held that under certain circumstances lying was not only morally permissible but morally mandated. Thus, Bonhoeffer advocated deceiving the enemy in circumstances of war, and he had no compunction about lying in order to facilitate escape for Jews facing extermination.

Furthermore, while the Bible never condones lying qua lying (lying for the sake of lying), it does condone lying in order to preserve a higher moral imperative. For example, Rahab purposed to deceive (the lesser moral law) in order to preserve the lives of two Jewish spies (the higher moral law). Likewise, a Christian father today should not hesitate to lie in order to protect his wife and daughters from the imminent threat of rape or murder.

Finally, there is a difference between lying and not telling the truth. This is not merely a matter of semantics; it is a matter of substance. By way of analogy, there is a difference between unjustified and justified homicide. Murder is unjustified homicide and is always wrong. Not every instance of killing a person, however, is murder. Capital punishment and self-defense occasion justified homicide. Similarly, in the case of a lie (Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5) there is an unjustified discrepancy between what you believe and what you say, and so lying is always wrong. But not telling the truth in order to preserve a higher moral law (Rahab, Joshua 2) may well be the right thing to do and thus is not actually a lie.

For further study, see Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), chapter 7.

“The king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: ‘Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.’ But the woman had

taken the two men and hidden them. She said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.' (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)"

Joshua 2:3–6

January 10th, 2011 by Christian Research Institute | Type: Standard

© 2014 Lee Ann Penick