

How to Handle the Dishonesty of Others

Joshua 9:3-16

How to Handle the Dishonesty of Others

- Lying never brings any lasting good.
 - “There is beauty in truth, even if it's painful. Those who lie, twist life so that it looks tasty to the lazy, brilliant to the ignorant, and powerful to the weak. But lies only strengthen our defects. They don't teach anything, help anything, fix anything or cure anything. Nor do they develop one's character, one's mind, one's heart or one's soul.” (José N. Harris)
 - “I'm not upset that you lied to me, I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you.” (Friedrich Nietzsche)
- Many believe lying is a “values neutral” means to their goals.

The Crafty

- The Gibeonites

- Joshua 9:3-6 - “But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5 old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. 6 And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.’”

The Crafty

- Israel even suspected a trick.
 - Joshua 9:7 - “Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, ‘Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?’”
- They misguidedly took them at their word.
 - Joshua 9:12-15 - “‘This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. 13 And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.’ 14 Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. 15 So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.”

The Crafty

- They didn't discover the error for three days.
 - Joshua 9:16 - "And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them."
- Why the intricate deceit?
 - Joshua 9:24 - "So they answered Joshua and said, Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing."

The Crafty

- The Samaritans

- Ezra 4:1-2 - “Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, ‘Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.’”

The Crafty

- When Zerubbabel rejected their offer, their true nature was exposed.
 - Ezra 4:3-5 - “But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, ‘You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.’ 4 Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, 5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.”

The Crafty

- Nehemiah ran into a similar plot.
 - Neh. 6:1-4 - “Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, ‘Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.’ But they thought to do me harm. 3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, ‘I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?’ 4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.”

The Crafty

- When the first efforts failed, they threatened to charge them with rebellion.
 - Neh. 6:5-7 - “Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written: ‘It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. 7 And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, “There is a king in Judah!” Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.’”

The Crafty

- The chief priests and scribes tried to entrap Jesus.
 - Luke 20:19-22 - “And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people--for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. 20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. 21 Then they asked Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?’”

The Crafty

- Jesus exposed their evil plan by highlighting their dishonest means of accomplishing it.
 - Luke 20:23-26 - “But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, Why do you test Me? 24 ‘Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?’ They answered and said, ‘Caesar’s.’ 25 And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ 26 But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.”

Craftiness

- Craftiness is lying for hidden motives by failing to tell the whole truth or by telling the truth in creative ways.
- It was by craftiness that Satan deceived Eve.
 - 2Cor. 11:3 - “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
 - John 8:44 - “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and 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.”

Craftiness

- Solomon warned about being trapped by a cunning seductress.
 - Prov. 7:10 - “And there a woman met him, With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart.”
- He is so deceived that he doesn't consider consequences.
 - Prov. 7:21-23 - “With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. 22 Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, 23 Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it would cost his life.”

Craftiness

- How many people would allow themselves to be deceived if the deceiver was honest about the consequences of believing them?
 - Prov. 7:24-27 - “Now therefore, listen to me, my children; Pay attention to the words of my mouth:
25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,
Do not stray into her paths; 26 For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong men. 27 Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death.”

Craftiness

- We must be on guard against the deceitfulness of sin.
 - Heb. 3:12-13 - “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

The Incentive For Deceit

- Deceit was a serious problem in Israel.
 - Jer. 9:4-6 - “Everyone take heed to his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; For every brother will utterly supplant, And every neighbor will walk with slanderers. 5 Everyone will deceive his neighbor, And will not speak the truth; They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves to commit iniquity. 6 Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me,’ says the LORD.”

The Incentive For Deceit

- People use lies to enrich themselves.
 - Prov. 21:6 - “Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.”
- It is a manifestation of laziness, attempting to obtain that for which one does not work.
 - Jer. 17:11 - “As a partridge that broods but does not hatch, So is he who gets riches, but not by right; It will leave him in the midst of his days, And at his end he will be a fool.”

The Incentive For Deceit

- It is also a form of hostility and greed.
 - Hosea 12:7 - “A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress.”
- The poor often become targets.
 - Amos 8:5-6 - “Saying: ‘When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat?’ Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit, 6 ‘That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals -- Even sell the bad wheat?’”

Overcoming Craftiness

- Expose it.
 - 2Cor. 4:2 - “But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”
- Craftiness exists in half-truths and hidden motives.
 - Neh. 6:8-9 - “Then I sent to him, saying, ‘No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart.’ 9 For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.”

Overcoming Craftiness

- Be open and honest even if it is to our personal disadvantage, and require the same of others around us.
 - Eph. 5:11 - “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

Overcoming Craftiness

- Educate ourselves and others around us.
 - Eph. 4:12-15 - “For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’ 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise”

Overcoming Craftiness

- Recognize the truth
 - Luke 20:26 - “But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.”
- If possible, require confirmation or further explanation. Truth is not afraid to defend itself.
 - 1Cor. 3:19-20 - “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their own craftiness’; 20 and again, ‘The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’”

Overcoming Craftiness

- Do not allow the crafty to benefit when they are exposed.
 - Job 5:12 - “He frustrates the devices of the crafty, So that their hands cannot carry out their plans.”
 - Joshua 9:27 - “And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.”

What To Do When You Have Been Lied To

- Assess the liar.
 - Recognize when the person is lying.
 - Look for patterns in the person's lies.
 - Determine whether the person's lies are harmful.
 - See if the person gets pleasure from lying.
 - Look for signs the person is a pathological liar.

What To Do When You Have Been Lied To

- Confront the liar.
 - Document instances of lying.
 - Talk to the person privately.
 - Give the liar a chance to explain the lie.
 - Show your evidence that a lie was told.
 - Explain that your trust has been lost.
 - Recommend psychological treatment if necessary.
- Very few faithful members of the Lord's church are willing to confront the unfaithful who are habitually dishonest about their attendance.

What To Do When You Have Been Lied To

- Deal with the aftermath.
 - Understand that it might take a while for the liar to stop.
 - Know you don't have the power to change another's behavior.
 - Protect yourself from being harmed by the liar.