

# How to Handle the Dishonesty of Others

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: Joshua 9:3-16

- A. Lying never brings any lasting good.
  - 1. "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)
  - 2. "I'm not upset that you lied to me, I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you." (Friedrich Nietzsche)
- B. Many believe lying is a "values neutral" means to their goals.

## I. THE CRAFTY

- A. The Gibeonites - Joshua 9:3-6
  - 1. Israel even suspected a trick - Joshua 9:7
  - 2. They misguidedly took them at their word - Joshua 9:12-15
  - 3. They didn't discover the error for three days - Joshua 9:16
  - 4. Why the intricate deceit? - Joshua 9:24
- B. The Samaritans - Ezra 4:1-2
  - 1. They volunteered to help with the building project; however, they were not Israelites, but idolaters transplanted into Palestine.
  - 2. When Zerubbabel rejected their offer, their true nature was exposed - Ezra 4:3-5
  - 3. Nehemiah ran into a similar plot - Neh. 6:1-4
  - 4. When the first efforts failed, they threatened to charge them with rebellion - Neh. 6:5-7
- C. The chief priests and scribes attempted to entrap Jesus - Luke 20:19-22
  - 1. The question was a dishonest attempt to manipulate Jesus into make a statement they could exploit.
  - 2. Jesus exposed their evil plan by highlighting their dishonest means of accomplishing it - Luke 20:23-26

## II. CRAFTINESS

- A. Craftiness is lying for hidden motives by failing to tell the whole truth or by telling the truth in creative ways.
  - 1. It was by craftiness that Satan deceived Eve - 2Cor. 11:3; John 8:44
    - a. He uses lies to manipulate people into sin. Satan attires sin in attractive ideas to lead us into a trap.
- B. Solomon warned about being trapped by a cunning seductress - Prov. 7:10
  - 1. He is so deceived, he doesn't consider consequences - Prov. 7:21-23
  - 2. How many people would allow themselves to be deceived if the deceiver was upfront about the consequences of believing them?
    - a. Prov. 7:24-27
- C. We must be on guard against the deceitfulness of sin - Heb. 3:12-13

## III. THE INCENTIVE FOR DECEIT

- A. Deceit was a serious problem in Israel - Jer. 9:4-6

- B. People use lies to enrich themselves - Prov. 21:6
  - 1. It is a manifestation of laziness, attempting to obtain what one did not work for - Jer. 17:11
- C. It is also a form of hostility and greed - Hosea 12:7
  - 1. The poor often become targets - Amos 8:5-6
  - 2. Imagine people so greedy that they are willing to take money from people who can least afford to lose what little they have.
  - 3. Examples: phone and email scams, the lottery, the entire gambling industry, contingency fee attorneys, politicians, etc.

#### **IV. OVERCOMING CRAFTINESS**

- A. Expose it - 2Cor. 4:2
  - 1. Craftiness exists in half-truths and hidden motives - Neh. 6:8-9
  - 2. In our dealings, be open and honest even if it is to our personal disadvantage, and require the same of others around us - Eph. 5:11
- B. Educate ourselves and others around us - Eph. 4:12-15
  - 1. Recognize the truth - Luke 20:26
- C. If possible, require confirmation or further explanation. Truth is not afraid to defend itself - 1Cor. 3:19-20
- D. Do not allow the crafty to benefit when they are exposed.
  - 1. Job 5:12; Joshua 9:27

#### **V. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN LIED TO**

- A. Assess the liar.
  - 1. Recognize when the person is lying.
  - 2. Look for patterns in the person's lies.
  - 3. Determine whether the person's lies are harmful.
  - 4. See if the person gets pleasure from lying.
  - 5. Look for signs the person is a pathological liar.
- B. Confront the liar.
  - 1. Document instances of lying.
  - 2. Talk to the person privately.
  - 3. Give the liar a chance to explain the lie.
  - 4. Show your evidence that a lie was told.
  - 5. Explain that your trust has been lost.
  - 6. Recommend psychological treatment if necessary.
  - 7. Very few faithful members of the Lord's church are willing to confront the unfaithful who are habitually dishonest about their attendance. "I have been sick, I have no transportation, I am afraid of illness, I have family obligations, et al." And yet they post pictures of themselves out of town visiting with family, at restaurants, at state parks, and any other venue available to them. The fact is: they are unfaithful and putting their souls at risk and bringing reproach on the name of Christ. They are in sin. And we do them no favors when we politely avoid the subject.
- C. Deal with the aftermath.
  - 1. Understand that it might take a while for the liar to stop lying.
  - 2. Know you don't have the power to change another's behavior.
  - 3. Protect yourself from being harmed by the liar. (Wikipedia)