

# Lying and Deceit: What Does the Bible Teach?

**What are some ways people may be guilty of lying and deceiving others? What causes people to tell lies or deceive, and what consequences can result? What must we do to overcome dishonesty and learn to be honest and truthful? What does the Bible teach about the dangers of falsehood?**

## Introduction

Our son Tim's company gave him two free tickets to a Cubs game, so he and I went. A professional photographer asked if we would like to have our picture taken for free. When we agreed, he gave us a card telling us how to access our picture online. But the site required us to pay \$20 to get any useable picture. He "took the picture" for free, but he knew people would think they would get a picture for free. He deceived us. Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things that are an abomination to God, and two of them involve lying: "a lying tongue," and "a false witness that tells lies." God hates a lying tongue!

### *Definitions of lying and deceit*

1 John 2:21 - No lie is of the truth.

**By its very nature, a lie is untrue. It is a falsehood.**

"Lie" - "...a false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive..." - *Random House College Dictionary*.

"Deceit" - "act or practice ... intended to ... mislead by a false appearance or statement" - *Random House College Dictionary*.

The difference is that a lie is generally spoken; but deceit includes anything, whether words or deeds, that are intended to lead people to believe what is not true.

**Note that not everything that is untrue is necessarily a lie or deceit.**

Lying generally involves *deliberate* falsehood, told with the *intent* of misleading or causing someone to believe error.

Note Isaiah 59:13 - Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

Acts 5:1-9 - Ananias and Sapphira sold property and gave part of the price to the church, but they told others that they gave the whole price. Peter asked, "How is it you have conceived this thing in your heart." They had lied to God.

We will notice several verses later that show that lies come from the heart. [Acts 5:1-9]

If someone asks me the ages of my grandchildren, if I tell what I believe is the truth, but it turns out to be a mistake, I have not lied. But if I know the truth and knowingly tell what is wrong, I have lied.

***In this lesson, we want to study the twin problems of lying and deceit.***

What are some ways people may be guilty of lying and deceit? Why do people practice them? What are the consequences? As we study we need to each ask ourselves whether we have been guilty.

Consider the Bible teaching about lying and deceit:

---

## I. Specific Kinds of Lies and Deceit

---

### A. Outright Falsehoods

These are "bold-faced lies" - the one who tells them is well aware that he has told an outright falsehood. He may consider it a "big black lie" (one with serious consequences) or a "little white lie" (one he thinks will not have serious consequences), but he knows it he has told a lie.

Many passages rebuke the general concept of lying.

Proverbs 6:16-19 - God hates a lying tongue and a false witness who speaks lies.

Exodus 20:16 - You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Ephesians 4:25 - Putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.

1 Timothy 1:10 - Liars are listed among other sins that are contrary to sound doctrine.

These are direct prohibitions against lying. Most people know that lying is morally wrong. Interestingly, people who often tell lies to others (like politicians) will often become very upset when other people lie to them and are often the quickest to accuse others of lying!

Other kinds of lies and deceit may be less obvious: people may not consider these acts to be lies or deceptions when they do it. Yet they often recognize such acts to be lying when other people do it to them!

[Other verses note especially Matthew 15:19; Leviticus 19:11,12; Colossians 3:9; see also Psalms 7:14; 32:2; 58:3; 59:12; Proverbs 4:24; 24:28; Isaiah 59:3,13; Hosea 4:2; Micah 6:12; Nahum 3:1; Romans 13:9; 1 Peter 2:1; 3:10; John 1:47]

## **B. False Promises**

Some people make promises they have no intention of keeping or know they cannot keep. This is a form of deliberately misleading people.

Genesis 29:18,25 - Many stories about Jacob involve deceit. He bargained with his uncle Laban to serve seven years for Rachel. Laban agreed, but at the wedding he gave Jacob Leah instead. Jacob said Laban beguiled or deceived him.

Exodus 8:28,29 - Pharaoh deceived Moses by promising to let Israel go if the plagues were removed. When that was done, he did not keep his promise.

Numbers 23:19 - God is not a man, that He should lie ... Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? The implication is that, if God did not keep His promises, He would be guilty of lying.

As humans, there may be circumstances beyond our control when we simply cannot keep a promise we really intended to keep. But when we knowingly make a promise we never intend to keep, or when we could keep it but we deliberately choose not to, that is deceit. How many of us are guilty?

[Jeremiah 5:2; Exodus 21:8; Psalms 24:4; Malachi 1:14; Matthew 21:30; Acts 24:25; Genesis 3:4,5]

## **C. Flattery**

Often people want to make a favorable impression on others, so they say nice things that they don't really mean or don't really believe to be true. This may seem kind, but it is a form of deliberately deceiving others.

Psalms 62:4 - They delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. When we don't mean the nice things we say, we are lying.

Psalms 78:36,37 - Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue. Here the people flattered God by professing that they would serve Him but did not really mean it in their hearts. This is both a form of flattery and failure to keep promises. The passage says they lied.

Jude 16 - False teachers often walk according to their lusts, speaking smooth words, flattering people to gain advantage. This is deception because they say nice things about others, professing to care about them, but really they just seek their own advantage (money, a following, etc.).

This may remind us of politicians trying to get votes. They pretend to think highly of you, but they really want something from you.

Sometimes we really hold an unfavorable view of someone, but we don't want to insult them, so it is easy to say what we don't mean. Perhaps it isn't even proper for us to be thinking those negative thoughts about others. But if our thoughts are valid, then we need to either speak the truth or find something we can honestly say or just change the subject. But lying should not be an option.

Are we guilty?

[Romans 16:17,18; Proverbs 26:24,25,28; 27:6; Jeremiah 9:8; Psalms 12:2]

## **D. False Doctrine**

When religious teaching is presented as truth even though it cannot be proved by the Bible, deceit is always involved.

Genesis 3:4 - Satan told Eve she would not die if she ate of the forbidden fruit. Yet God had said she would die (2:17). After Eve sinned, she said the serpent had beguiled her (3:13). [1 Timothy 2:14; 2 Corinthians 11:3]

Jeremiah 14:14 - Prophets prophesied lies in God's name. He had not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them, but they prophesied a false vision and the deceit of their heart.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 - "False apostles" are called "deceitful workers," because they pretend to be servants of Christ, angels of light, and ministers of righteousness. Many teachers present themselves as men of God teaching His word, yet they teach things they cannot find in the Bible.

Acts 13:6,10 - Elymas the sorcerer tried to prevent Sergius Paulus from accepting the gospel. Paul accused him of being full of deceit and fraud.

Note that false teaching is sinful for a number of reasons. But one reason is that it always involves deceit. Many religious leaders are deceitful because they claim a teaching is from God when they know they don't have the proof. But sometimes a teacher is sincerely in error - he really believes he is teaching truth; in that case, he has been deceived by someone else. All false teaching is ultimately a lie in that it all originates with Satan, who knows it is a lie.

So false teaching is wrong for many reasons. But one reason is that it always involves deceit. Let us make sure we are not guilty!

[Note especially Ezekiel 13:6-9,19,22; 1 Thessalonians 2:3,4; 1 Timothy 4:2; Revelation 12:9. See also 2 Corinthians 4:2; Revelation 2:2; 3:14; 20:3,10; Isaiah 30:10; 9:15; Romans 16:18; Jeremiah 48:10; 5:31; 6:13; 20:6; 23:14,25,26,32; 27:10,14-16; 29:8,21-31; 1 John 4:1; Titus 1:10; Ezekiel 21:29; 22:28; Daniel 2:9; Zech. 10:2; 13:3; Matthew 24:24; Romans 1:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11; 1 Kings 22:22,23; 2 John 7; Deuteronomy 11:16; Ephesians 4:14; Colossians 2:4,8]

## E. Hypocrisy

A hypocrite is a deceiver because he pretends to be something he knows he is not. He tries to give other people the impression he is more righteous than he really is.

1 Timothy 4:2 - Those who depart from the truth speak lies in hypocrisy. Note that their hypocrisy is associated with lying.

1 Peter 2:1 - Lay aside guile (deceit), hypocrisy, and evil speaking. Again, hypocrisy is associated with deceit. Hypocrisy is deceit because the hypocrite puts on a false front. He pretends to be better than he is.

Malachi 1:14 - When one pretends to offer a sacrifice to God but refuses to give what He knows God wants, he is a deceiver accursed of God.

Many people, even in the church, profess to serve God faithfully. But are we really doing what we know we should, or are we just deceiving others and maybe ourselves? Are we giving what we know God wants, or is it just a pretense?

[Psalms 78:35-37; Galatians 2:14; Acts 5:1-9; Jeremiah 7:4-11; 3:10; Acts 5:5]

## F. Half Truths

Some think they are innocent as long as they say what is technically true, even though they intend to mislead others to believe what is not true. It is possible to tell things that are technically true, yet we leave out pertinent facts or otherwise so speak that we lead others to believe untruths.

### *Bible examples*

Genesis 37:28,31-33 - Joseph's brothers sold him to the Midianites, dipped his coat in blood, brought it to Jacob and said, "We found this coat. Does it look like your son's or not?" This was technically true, but they omitted pertinent facts so they could lead Jacob to believe a wild animal had killed Joseph.

Exodus 32:4,24 - When confronted by Moses regarding the golden calf, Aaron said he threw in the gold and out came the calf. But he neglected to say that he had fashioned the calf with an engraving tool!

Matthew 26:60,61; 27:40 - One of the accusations made against Jesus at His trials was that he claimed He would destroy the temple and build it again in three days. But those who said this were "false witnesses." It was technically true that Jesus had said He would build the temple in three days. But He was referring to His body, meaning that He would rise from the dead three days after they killed Him (John 2:19-21).

### *Modern examples*

Many salesmen are experts at half-truths. This is the method the photographer at the Cubs game was using. Modern entertainment is often filled with this. Even Disney movies, "I Love Lucy," "Andy Griffith," and other supposedly good programs often justify deceit.

A popular song entitled "Sad Movies Always Make Me Cry" tells of a girl who goes home crying because she saw her boyfriend at a movie with another girl. When her mother asks her what's wrong, she says "to keep from telling her a lie, I just said, 'Sad movies always make me cry.'" It was technically true, but deceitful.

Most false teaching involves half-truths. What the teacher says may be technically true, but he leaves out essential facts or twists the truth to lead people to believe something different from what God intended.

I emphasize: we are *not* required to tell people everything we know. Some things are confidential or there may be no good reason why some particular person should be told what we know. Keeping a matter secret or confidential is not necessarily wrong. But if you are keeping a matter to yourself, don't lead others to think things that are untrue or that you have told them the whole matter when you have not.

I suspect that every accountable person has violated these principles, most of us many times. But have we repented of it, or do we continue to justify such practices?  
[Proverbs 30:8; Acts 23:27; Genesis 3:4,5; Ezra 4:1,2,11-16]

## G. Self-Deception

One of the saddest forms of deceit is self-deception. People who don't want to face reality can sometimes convince themselves to believe things that they really know are not true.

### *Bible teaching*

#### **Many passages warn about self-deception.**

1 Corinthians 3:18 - Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. People often think they are so smart that they fool themselves into believing error.

A man in the movie "Princess Bride" thought he could out-smart anyone. He tried to fool another man to get him to drink poison, but then ended up drinking it himself. That is the way people are who think they are so smart but end up fooling themselves.

Galatians 6:3 - If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Sometimes people do not want to admit what they are really like, so they deceive themselves into thinking they are better than they are.

#### **This especially happens in religion.**

James 1:22,26 - But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. People deceive themselves, because they are in many ways religious. So they think they are acceptable, but God is still not pleased because of sins in other areas of their lives.

1 John 1:8 - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

2 Timothy 4:3,4 - Some will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Note that these people end up believing error, because they do not like the truth. They prefer teachers who "tickle their ears" - tell them what they want to hear. So they may end up believing they are acceptable to God, but they deceived themselves.

### *Modern examples*

People who believe in evolution, atheism, and many other false doctrines, often have motivations for not believing in God. They claim they have been convinced by scientific evidence, but that is not really why they believe as they do. They just don't want to face the truth, so they defend evolution or other error till they convince themselves it is true.

The same often happens with people who have family members or loved ones who go into error - perhaps an unscriptural divorce or false religious practice. They cannot bring themselves to believe their loved ones are lost, so they seek for a justification till they finally convince themselves.

One of the few things I remember from my college psychology course was an experiment in which people were asked to do a boring job (turn pegs on a board), and they said it was boring. Then they were paid to convince other people it was a good job. When asked again later, they said it was a good job. For the sake of money they had misled other people so long that they ended up believing their own lie.

I'm convinced this happens with many false teachers. They may doubt what they teach, but they know they are expected to teach it and people want to hear it, so they teach it. After a while they become convinced it is true. Self-deception is sad in any area of life, but it is especially sad that the area of life in which most people deceive themselves is religion.

God hates tongues that speak lies. What about you and me? Are we guilty of lying? The truth is that we have all been guilty at one time or another. Have we been forgiven? Have we repented and obeyed God's conditions to forgive us?

[Romans 1:19-25; Isaiah 30:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Jeremiah 5:31; John 8:31-55; 2 Timothy 4:4]

---

## II. Causes of Lying and Deceit

---

In order to avoid lying and deceit, we need to know what causes people to be guilty. Ultimately all lies are conceived in the heart under the influence of Satan.

John 8:44 - Jesus said regarding Satan: "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." Satan influences men to lie.

Acts 5:1-9 - Ananias and Sapphira lied about their gift to the church. Peter asked, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?"

Matthew 15:18-20 - Jesus names things that come from the heart and defile a man, including false witness.

When we tell lies then we have followed the influence of Satan, but the ultimate problem is in our hearts. If we are going to change, we have to start by changing our attitudes.

What specific problems lead us to tell lies?

[Isaiah 59:13; Jeremiah 17:9]

## **A. Selfishness or Personal Gain**

Some lies are told for personal gain or pleasure. We seek to obtain some benefit that we think we cannot achieve by telling truth.

### ***Bible examples***

Genesis 31:7 - Jacob said his uncle Laban had deceived him and changed his wages ten times. He would agree to pay a certain wage, but the result would work out to Jacob's advantage, so he would change and try to pay something else instead. Jacob said this was deceitful.

1 Kings 21:1-16 - Ahab, King of Israel, wanted to buy a vineyard, but the owner Naboth would not sell. Ahab's wife Jezebel proclaimed a feast in Naboth's honor (vv 9,10), then had two men testify he had blasphemed, so he was stoned to death.

Proverbs 11:1; Micah 6:11 - A false balance and deceitful weights are an abomination to God. These are ways to cheat people in business dealings by lying and deceit.

### ***Modern examples***

Often businesses tell lies to convince people to buy their products. Some companies require employees to lie. Years ago a clerk told me that, at her store, clerks were expected to overcharge customers enough to pay their own salary.

I like to shop at OfficeMax, but I don't like some of their ads. They have a rewards program that offers items, like a case of paper for \$40 with \$30 rewards. Ads say, "It's like getting it for \$10." But it isn't! To use the \$30 reward, you have to buy something else for \$30 or more. So it isn't like getting something worth \$40 for \$10. It's getting things worth \$70 for \$40! That is deceitful.

Politicians make false promises or lie about their past in order to get elected.

Personal gain is also what motivates many false teachers.

Proverbs 19:22 - A poor man is better than a liar. God says if you can't get rich honestly, change your job or stay poor.

How honest are we in our business dealings?

[Lev. 6:2-5; 19:11; Amos 8:5; Proverbs 21:6; 20:23; Exodus 18:21; Romans 1:19-25; Isaiah 32:7; Josh. 7:11; Jer. 5:27; Malachi 1:14]

## **B. Cover-up**

When people sin or commit other acts they want to hide from others, they often tell lies.

### ***Bible examples***

Genesis 37:28,31-33 - This is what led Jacob's sons to deceive him to think a wild animal killed Joseph. They had sold him as a slave and did not want their father to find out.

2 Kings 5:25 - When Elisha healed Naaman of leprosy, he refused to take a gift from him. Elisha's servant Gehazi pursued Naaman and asked for money and garments. When Elisha asked about it, Gehazi said he had not gone anywhere. He lied to cover up.

### ***Modern examples***

A classic example of our time has been Pres. Clinton and the Lewinsky affair. But many other politicians and other famous people have lied to cover up their sins. Politicians are often known to practice many forms of evil, but lying under oath is about the only one that seems to upset many people.

Nearly every criminal lies to deny guilt.

Illegal aliens often lie about their citizenship status in order to get a job or a driver's license.

And most of us have lied to cover our sins.

"The devil has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all." Almost any sin you can name will lead to lying to cover it up: adultery, murder, stealing, etc.

Have you and I been guilty? Have we repented of the sins of the past?

[2 Samuel 11:6-13; Isaiah 28:15-17; Proverbs 26:24-28; 12:19,20; Genesis 18:15; Josh. 7:11]

### **C. Pride and Envy**

Often people tell lies because they want people to think they are better than they really are.

#### ***Bible examples***

Psalms 59:12 - For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, Let them even be taken in their pride, And for the cursing and lying which they speak. Note that pride has led these people to lie.

Acts 5:1-9 - The lie Ananias and Sapphira told was evidently motivated by pride. Other people were giving sacrificial gifts to the church, and they wanted people to think they had made a greater sacrifice than what they had.

Matthew 6:2,5,16 - The Pharisees were hypocrites because they pretended to be religiously devout in order to get the favor of people.

#### ***Modern examples***

Like Ananias and Sapphira, some people deceive others about their possessions or wealth or generosity in order to impress others.

Some lie about how much education or what work experience they have in order to get a job.

Many false teachers misrepresent their doctrine or their personal lives. If they told people the truth they couldn't get a following, so they must be hypocrites and deceive others. We hear of many who try to hide their immorality so people would think more highly of them.

Has pride led you deceive or mislead other people in order to impress them?

[Matthew 23:5; Acts 20:29,30; Matthew 7:15; 26:59 with 27:18; Psalm 119:69; Galatians 6:3; Isaiah 44:20; Hosea 10:13]

### **D. Misguided "Love"/Kindness**

Some people tell lies just to avoid causing problems for others or even just to avoid hurting their feelings.

#### ***Bible examples***

Genesis 12:11-13 - When Abraham moved to a foreign land he told his wife Sarah to tell people that she was his sister, otherwise someone might kill him to take her as a wife.

Genesis 27 (note vv 18-20,24,35) - Isaac sent Esau to hunt and fix venison, then he would bless him. Rebekah loved Jacob more than she did Isaac and wanted Jacob to receive the blessing. So she fixed venison from a goat, put skins on Jacob's hands and neck, put Esau's clothes on him, and sent him in to get the blessing. So because she supposedly loved him, she led Jacob to take the blessing with guile (deceit). [Cf. v12]

#### ***Modern examples***

This kind of lie is often justified on popular TV shows and movies. You don't tell the truth if it hurts someone's feelings or gets them in trouble.

Young people often think that loyalty means they should lie to protect their friends. My aunt once was upset with my cousin and me because we had told her different stories about what we had done. He said if he knew what I was going to say he would have said the same thing. She asked if he would lie to her just to cover up and he said he would.

Family members likewise often lie to cover for one another. They may fuss and feud among themselves, but they will cover for one another even lying if necessary.

These are perverted concepts of love. Jesus said that love should lead us to obey God's commands; it is not an excuse to disobey them (John 14:16; 1 John 5:3).

### **E. Habit**

Some people begin to lie for various reasons, but then it just becomes a way of life. They lie even when there appears to be no real purpose in it.

Jeremiah 9:4,5 - People could not trust anyone else because everyone would deceive his neighbor. They would not speak the truth; they taught their tongue to speak lies.

Psalms 52:2-4 - The deceitful tongue loves evil more than good, and lying rather than speaking righteousness. Some people just seem to get pleasure out of misleading others. They are not just kidding others. They just enjoy seeing if they can deceive people. [Psalms 50:19]  
Lying is basically an attitude problem. People lie because they do not love truth and love God as they should. The only solution is to change the heart and love God enough to obey Him.  
Are you and I guilty? Have we repented and been forgiven of our sins?

---

### III. Consequences of Lying and Deceit

---

Why should we avoid lying? What problems does it cause?

#### A. Lying Harms Other People.

##### *Examples in Jacob's life*

These examples show the harm that can come when people practice lying and deceit.

Genesis 27 - Jacob deceived Isaac to get the blessing that Isaac intended to give to Esau. Esau was so hurt and angry when he learned what Jacob had done that he threatened to kill Jacob (vv 34-38). As a result, Jacob had to flee from home and Jacob and Esau were alienated for years afterward. [27:41; 28:2]

Genesis 29 - After promising to give Rachel as a wife to Jacob, Laban instead gave him Leah. As a result Jacob worked seven years for a woman he did not want to marry. Later, Jacob became so alienated that he left his father-in-law, because Laban kept deceiving him (chap. 31). Eventually both sisters married Jacob, resulting in strife and alienation the rest of their lives.

Genesis 37:33-35 - When his sons deceived him, Jacob grieved and mourned for many years believing his son Joseph really had died. Later his sons were sorry for the grief they caused.

Many of us know families in which people have been alienated from one another because of lies. One of the main lessons to be learned from Jacob's family is the severe problems that deceit can cause. If you want a good family life, one thing you need to develop in a relationship in which every family member can trust everyone else to be honest.

##### *Other passages*

Lying and deceit often destroy people's reputations or alienate people, not just in families, but also on the job, at school, and in the church. When people find out others have lied to them or about them, they are often hurt and angry.

Psalms 109:2 - They have spoken against me with a lying tongue. Often lies and slander are used to destroy the credibility and reputation of an innocent or godly person.

Matthew 5:11 - Jesus warned that people would revile and persecute His disciples, and say all kinds of evil against them falsely. False accusations and lies are a standard means of persecution, intended to intimidate the righteous to compromise the truth or to discredit their influence.

Proverbs 25:18 - A man who bears false witness is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow.

The man who said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," obviously was never the victim of the campaign of a slanderer. Trust me, it can be quite painful and leave wounds in your emotions and marks on your reputation for years.

We need to be sure that we do not harm others with lies. We need to practice sincere honesty with our family, friends, and in the church.

[1 Kings 21; Exodus 20:16; Lev. 6:2-5; Deut. 19:18; Psalms 31:18; 35:20; 62:4; 119:69; Matthew 26:59; Proverbs 26:18,19; Jer. 9:8]

#### B. Lying Influences Others to Sin.

##### *Liars often influence other people to tell lies.*

Proverbs 29:12 - If a ruler pays attention to lies, all his servants become wicked. Lying tends to feed on itself. The more some people tell lies, the more other people become involved, especially when people in influential positions tell lies.

Children often learn to practice lying from their parents. Jacob learned it from his mother, and his sons learned it from Jacob and from his mother and his uncle.

A son observed his father cheat on his income tax. The father sent the son to tell a salesman he was not home. An uncle bribed a police officer to avoid a ticket. Later the son was expelled from a military academy for

cheating. The father said, "I just don't understand it! Where did you learn to act like that?" Is your example teaching your children to be liars? If so, you can expect them to lie to you!

***False teachers also deceive other people to sin.***

Genesis 3:13 - The very first sin occurred because the serpent "deceived" Eve.

Isaiah 9:14-16 - The prophets taught lies and led the people to err and be destroyed.

Ezekiel 13:22 - The lies of false teachers not only strengthen the hands of the wicked, they also make the righteous sad. [Jeremiah 23:14,32]

Many have been led to sin by the influence of people who lie and deceive. People who go into error are still responsible, because they should check out what is taught. But the false teacher is also responsible for the fact his lies led people into sin. Meanwhile, some continue to do right, but they are saddened by seeing others led into sin and by hearing teaching that says they are the ones who are wrong.

What about you and me? Have we led other people to sin by telling things that are untrue?

[Matthew 24:24; 1 Kings 13:8-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:9,10; Deuteronomy 11:16; Jer. 27:14-16; Amos 2:4; Zech. 10:2; Acts 13:6-10; 1 Timothy 4:2]

### **C. Lying Leads to Loss of Respect and Confidence.**

Who can trust someone who is known to tell lies?

Psalms 40:4 - Those who love God do not respect those who turn aside to lies. People want friends they can trust and rely on. If you want good people to respect and trust you, don't lie.

Psalms 101:7 - He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence. Good people cannot afford to continue to associate with liars, and surely cannot tolerate it in their own homes.

Jeremiah 9:4,5 - People could not trust even their own brother because they would lie and deceive. A liar is not trustworthy. You never know when he's lying.

Young people need to learn this lesson early. If you lie to your parents about where you go or what you do, it ruins your relationship. Some complain, "Why don't you trust me?" "I only told one lie." That's all it takes to destroy trust. After that they never know when we are lying.

Have you ruined other people's trust in you by telling lies?

### **D. Lying Alienates from God and Condemns Eternally.**

Proverbs 12:22; 6:16-19 - Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight. Remember that lying is twice in the list of things that God hates.

Psalms 5:6 - God will destroy those who speak falsehood. He abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. God is true and cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When we lie, He cannot fellowship us. We separate ourselves from Him.

Revelation 21:8 - All liars will have part in the second death, the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:27; 22:14,15 - He who makes lies will in no wise enter into the holy city. But everyone who loves and makes a lie will be outside the city.

Lying is the common cold of spiritual diseases. It is probably the most common sin committed by men, including Christians. As a result, many people consider it minor. They speak of "little white lies." But no lie is little or white. Unlike colds, lies are deadly: spiritually deadly. They will eternally damn those who do not repent.

If we want spiritual fellowship with God, we must love truth, speak truth, and remove lying and deceit from our lives.

[Isaiah 59:1-4; Romans 1:29,32; Proverbs 19:5,9; 21:28 Psalms 5:6; 55:23; Zech. 8:17; 5:4; Ezek. 13:6-9; Psalms 58:3]

[God cannot lie - 1 Peter 2:22; John 14:6; 1:14; 16:13; Romans 3:4; Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; John 17:17; Heb. 6:18; Isaiah 53:9]

---

## **IV. Overcoming Lying and Deceit**

---

Consider some steps we should take to help avoid being guilty of lying or deceit.

### **A. Love Truth and Hate Lies**



Psalms 119:104,128 - Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. All Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way.

Psalms 119:163 - I hate and abhor lying, But I love Your law.

1 Corinthians 13:6 - Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

You and I must develop a strong commitment about lying. Don't just mildly dislike lies, but actively hate the practice. If we continually remind ourselves of the terrible consequences of lying, this should motivate us to avoid lying and to oppose it in others.

### **B. Fill Your Heart with Truth**

Matthew 12:34,35 - For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. We speak according to what is in our hearts, so we need to harbor only truth in our hearts.

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true ... meditate on these things.

Psalms 15:2 - The one who abides in God's tabernacle is he who speaks the truth in his heart. In order to speak truth with our mouths, we must speak truth in our hearts.

Psalms 51:6 - You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. To be speakers of truth, we must fill our hearts with truth, especially with God's word.

[Proverbs 12:5; 26:24; John 8:32; John 3:21; 2 Tim. 4:2-4]

### **C. Stay Far from Falsehood.**

Do not dally with falsehoods. Do not consider repeating such things. Refuse to have anything to do with them.

Exodus 23:7 - Keep yourself far from a false matter.

Proverbs 4:24 - Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.

Proverbs 30:8 - Remove falsehood and lies far from me. Don't see how close to error you can get; stay "*far*" from lying.

We must both fill our hearts with truth and reject lies and deceit. Don't harbor falsehood in your heart and it cannot be expressed in your speech.

### **D. Avoid People and Influences Known to Lie or Deceive.**

Often we end up telling lies because we associate with liars, we listen to their lies, and we learn to imitate their evil.

Proverbs 17:4 - An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue. When we listen to other people's falsehoods, we are tempted to speak them ourselves.

Psalms 101:7 - He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence. [Cf. vv 4-7]

If we are to keep truth in our hearts and avoid falsehood, we must take care whose speech we listen to. Yes, we should help liars repent and be forgiven. But if they refuse to repent and continue to speak lies, we must limit our association in order to keep our own hearts pure.