

A few weeks ago, either Randy Ballard and I were talking and the subject of lying came up and how it was one of the things that God hates. I want to expand on that matter this morning as we consider the matter of integrity, which includes honesty. *I heard about a movie a few years ago entitled "Liar, Liar." It starred Jim Carrey and he played the part of a fella named Fletcher Reed. Now Reed was a fast talking attorney who was a habitual liar. One that he lied to frequently was his five-year old son named Max. The time came when Max was having his 5th birthday party and his dad promised that he would be at his party; but he failed to keep his promise. As you see Max blowing out the candles on his birthday, he is making this wish. He wished for 24 hours in which his dad could not tell a lie. And his wish came true. For the next 24 hours, all that Fletcher Reed could do was to tell the truth.*

I wonder if we should make the same wish for many in our society today. We have developed a culture of habitual liars where the truth no longer has the value it once had. One study reveals that 91% of Americans readily admit that they lie either at home or at work. 89% admitted that they lied to their parents. 75% admitted to lying to friends and neighbors. 73% said that they lied to siblings. 69% said that they lied to their spouse.

Another study revealed that 97% lie very frequently; as much as 1000 times a year. That breaks down into several times a day. We have become very creative in the way that we lie, but that's nothing new. The Pharisees in the days of Jesus were very creative in the way that they lie. Remember on one occasion Jesus rebuked them for playing fast and loose with the truth. They would make a vow and give their word but then they would fail to keep it. They reasoned that if they swear by the temple, then they didn't have to keep that promise. It's sorta like making a promise with your fingers crossed behind your back. But if we swear by the gold of the temple, then that's sacred and we have to keep that promise. Jesus said it didn't matter if it was the temple or the gold of the temple, God is involved in all that we do and say. You keep your word; you let your yea-be-yea and your nay-be-nay.

Sometimes people lie by telling a deliberate untruth. Others try to get by with telling a half truth. Then there are times when people lie without ever speaking a word. Did you know that 2/3 of the people in our country no longer believe that it's wrong to tell a lie, and only 31% believe that honesty is the best policy? Regardless of what people believe, God still insist that we be people of integrity; that we be honest, and that our word counts for something. ***Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.***

Or there in another passage that says, **Col 3:9** *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*

It's important that we be people of integrity because of three reasons. There is (1) the Father of liars, (2) the family of liars, and (3) the folly of liars.

NO. 1. WE NEED TO TELL THE TRUTH BECAUSE OF THE "FATHER OF LIARS." Jesus identifies the "*father of liars*" over in John 8:44 as being the Devil. The Pharisees were making false claims against Jesus and he responded to them by saying; **John 8:44** *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* The devil himself is the father of liars. We see that to be true by looking at his history. The first time we encounter this behavior is back in the Garden of Eden. There we see his coming to Eve and he slanders God in the presence of man. In Gen 3 he asked Eve this question **Gen 3:1-4** *... Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* Now he knew better than that, but he was trying to create doubt in the mind of Eve. **(2)** *And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* It was here that the devil went to work slamming the integrity of God. He said **(4)** *Ye shall not surely die:* He was saying that God misrepresented things; He wasn't telling you the truth. You're not going to suffer any consequences; you can eat of that tree. God lied to you when he said you would.

He not only slandered the integrity of God, he also slandered the goodness of God. **Gen 3:5** *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* He was suggesting that God was holding out on them. There was something that was good for them and that they needed and God was holding it back from them. In essence, the serpent was suggesting that God really didn't care about them. He was presenting God in the worst possible light. So the devil slandered God before man.

Then another time, he slandered man before God. Notice Job 1:6 ff. Job tells us that a day came when the sons of God (probably angels) presented themselves before the LORD and Satan came with them. Then we have an amazing conversation between God and Satan as God asked "*Where have you been?*" Satan replied that he had been

going to and fro throughout the earth and up and down. The implication is that he was seeking some trouble to get into or some people to deceive. ***Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*** Do you recall what Satan said in response? ***Job 1:9-10 Doth Job fear God for nought?*** Do you think that the serves you for nothing. The only reason that he serves you is because you have built a hedge around him and around everything that he has. You have blessed the work of his hands and you have prospered him. You take all that away and he will no longer serve you. ***Job 1:10-11 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. (11) But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*** He was slandering the motive of Job.

Doesn't that show us how devious the devil is? In the Garden of Eden he says to the woman, *"God hasn't been good enough to you."* But when he talks to God about Job he says, *"You have been too good to man."* Here we see the inconsistency with Satan. He says whatever supports his cause. He is a liar and the father of lies. So when you tell those lies, you put yourself with some pretty bad company. You are never more like the devil than you are when you lie. So let us strive to avoid being dishonest because of the association with the father of liars.

NO. 2 NOTICE NOW THE FAMILY OF LIARS. Look at some of the children in this family of liars. The father of liars has a rather large family.

First there is the perjurer. That is the fella who stands up in a court of law and he willingly perverts the truth. He lies under oath. Let's look back to Exodus 23. This is one of the things that God condemns as he gives his commandments to the people of Israel. ***Exo 23:1-3 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. (2) Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment: (3) Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.*** Whenever you stand up in a court of law, you had better tell the truth. Don't twist the truth in order to favor the rich and powerful or to promote the poor. Let it be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The false witness perverts the end of justice. In essence when you lie on the witness stand you really become a thief because you steal from a man his reputation; sometimes you steal his property, and sometimes you can even steal his life. But the false witness is a thief. While you may be able to perjure yourself and deceive the judge, you cannot pull the wool over God's eyes and one day when we stand in the final judgment, you will give an account for that perjury.

Another member of the family is the "rumor monger." Back to Ex 23:1 the text says, ***Thou shalt not raise a false report.*** This has reference to the spreading of rumors; one who tells tells about others that are not truth, and who repeat things that are harmful. Sometimes a thing can be true and harmful at the same time and just because it is true does not give us licenses to spread it. Obviously if it is not true you ought not to repeat it, but we also need to consider the consequences of what we say even if it is true. If all it does is to bring hurt and harm to someone else, then we best leave it untold. Rumors are dangerous and destructive. They can do more harm than you can imagine.

Really rumors were used to put Jesus on the cross. In John 2, Jesus said during the early stages of his ministry a statement to the Jews. He said, ***John 2:19 Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*** Now skipping down to v21 John explains that Jesus was making reference to the temple of his body. He was predicting the resurrection on the third day. But when he was arrested, they could find no legitimate charge against Jesus. So his enemies were grasping for straws. They took that statement of Jesus and twisted it around to mean something that Jesus never said. They said we heard him talking about this magnificent temple that took years to build in Jerusalem and he said he could single handedly tear it down and rebuild it in three days. Hearing this, the court accused Jesus of blasphemy and eventually this charge led to his death. They used a rumor to justify murder. This illustrates for us just how harmful rumor mongering can be. Rumors are easy to start and almost impossible to stop. Christians should be very careful in what they say, especially about others.

One Sunday after preaching a sermon against rumors, a man came up to the preacher and said, *"You know preacher, I'm not the one that spreads all these rumors, it's the people that I tell things to that's at fault."* It might do all good to examine our words and the things that we repeat. We wonder how a lot of things get started. Maybe they start with us.

Let me suggest another member of the family of liars and that's the flatter. This is the person that engages in flattery. ***Prov 26:28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.*** Solomon put lying and flattering in the same category and that's because flattery is a form of lying. Someone asked what the difference between flattery and gossip is. Gossip is saying behind a person's back that you would never say to their face. Flattering is saying to a person's face that you would never say behind their back. Flattery can be defined as insincere praise. You just come on and are so smooth and kind and complementary all the while you don't mean a word of it. You flatter a person in order to get on their good side where you can manipulate them for some personal benefit or gain.

Now understand, there is nothing wrong with sincere genuine praise and complements. We all need that and we thrive on such kind words. So it's good to complement others when they deserve it. ***Rom 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*** To recognize someone for doing a good job or accomplishing a major task is certainly appropriate. We all could probably improve in giving others a pat on the back and words of encouragement. I hope we recognize that type of behavior is a far cry from flattery. Flattery is insincere selfish praise for an ulterior motive. David describes this person in the book of Psalms. ***Psa 55:21 The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*** Flattery is a form of lying.

One more member of the family of liars is the insinuator. The insinuator is the person who implies that something is true. While he may not come right out and say it, he leaves that impression. You can do that in a number of ways. You can insinuate something by your facial expression and never say a word; by changing the tone of your voice; or by choosing some words of implication without actually telling a lie. So when questioned you say, "*No he didn't actually say that but...*" He left that impression and you came away believing that's what he meant, which was not true.

One day the captain of the ship wrote in his daily log, "The first mate was drunk today." When the first mate saw that entry he approached the captain and begged him to remove the statement from the log. He said if their superiors saw that then it would ruin his chances for advancement and any possible opportunity to become the captain

of his own ship some day. So he begged the captain. But the captain refused and said it was remain as written. The next day the first mate was to take care of the daily log and he wrote, "The captain was sober today." Now what he wrote was true, but what did it insinuate. The implication was that the captain had been drunk before, which was an implied lie.

It's so good that we can be members of a different family. Instead of being part of a family of the father of lies, we can be part of a family whose father is a father of truth and integrity and honesty. Our father is a Father of life. Wouldn't it be horrible to be like Little Max in the movie and you could never really know if your father is telling the truth or not. The God we serve cannot lie. **Heb 6:18 ... it was impossible for God to lie, ...** When God says he will forgive your sins, then He will. When God says that you can be a part of His family, then you can. There are some things for you to do in obeying the gospel message and becoming a part of God's family. Which family are you a part of this morning?

Invitation