

We are going to continue discussing the importance of integrity in the life of the child of God with emphasis on truthfulness and honesty. We noticed last Sunday that a large percentage of our population engages in lying. So it's important for God's people to be people of integrity. An understanding of the father of liars, the family of liars, and the folly of liars will help us live a life of integrity.

Jesus said that the devil was the father of lies and standeth not in the truth because there is no truth in him (John 8:44). We noted in part 1 that we are more like him when we lie than we are at any other time, and we certainly don't want to be a part of that family. We also noted that when you lie you become children of the "*father of all lies*" and that there are various ways a person can lie and be part of the family of liars. We talked about the perjurer, the rumor monger, the flatter, and the insinuator. Now we want to continue this line of reasoning as we look at some other children in the family of liars.

We will begin with the slanderer. The Bible warns against that type of practice. *James 4:11-12* ***Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. (12) There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?*** Don't speak one against another. I expect there is nothing the devil enjoys any more than hear God's people backbite one another and slander one another. Fighting and bickering with one another does more to divide the church; to create hard feelings, and hinder the cause of Christ than anything else. There is nothing that discredits the people of God in the eyes of the world than when we fail to get along with one another. We should be known as disciples by the love that we have one for another. *(John 13:35) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Now if we love one another, then we will be careful about the way we talk about one another.

Now this slander is serious because James tells us that when we do that we set ourselves up as a judge of the law. But as James reminds us, there is only one lawgiver and judge. There is only one that is qualified to make laws that govern the people of God, and that is God Himself. As God's people, we are in a position of obeying laws, not making laws, and it's not our business to pass judgment on the merits of what God commands. But when you gossip and slander and backbite, you are in essence assuming the place of God by saying, "*God, this really isn't a good law so I'm just going to disregard it because it is not a good command.*" What you are doing is passing judgment on the law of God. So we need to be careful about this matter of slander.

Another member of this family of lies is the coward. This is the person who refuses to speak up when he should. Now there is a point when you can talk too much and the more you talk the more you are apt to sin. But there are times a person can sin by failing to speak up when he should. Let's suppose that someone is accused of a wrong doing and you know that he is innocent. But instead of coming to his defense you keep quiet. By your silence you have implied that the charges made against him are true. You are misrepresenting truth by your silence. Now this doesn't happen often, but it can.

Someone is being slandered and gossip is being spread and you know that there is no basis for what is being said but out of cowardness you remain silent. That's a form of lying. Notice what Moses told the children of Israel regarding this matter. *Lev 5:1 And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.* The principle is if you are a witness to something and you know the truth of the matter but remain silent and let the innocent suffer or the guilty go free then you will bear your iniquity. Let us be people that have the courage to speak up.

Now there is another member of this family of lies which is hypocrite. This is the person who lies by the way he lives his life. The hypocrite feels one way on the inside but acts another way on the outside. This word hypocrite came from a Greek word that refers to an actor on the stage. Back in the early days of Greek drama when a person was going to portray different emotions on stage they would put on a different kind of mask. If he was going to portray someone who was happy, then he would put on a mask with a big smile. Likewise, if he portrayed someone who was sad, then he would put on a face with a frown. Whatever the attitude being portrayed, there was a mask to wear, but these masks didn't really portray the true attitude of the actor on the inside – thus the term hypocrite.

The Pharisees were guilty of being hypocrites. Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites. Why? Because they put on a front of being religious; they went through the motions but their hearts were not right; the inside was wrong. *Matt 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.* They were not lying by their lips but rather by the lives that they lived. They appeared to be clean on the outside while the inside was full of corruption. Now we all know that the way that we live ought to reflect our true values and our inward character. But the hypocrite, the man who pretends to be something that he is not belongs to the family of liars.

No. 3 We ought to be people of integrity because of the folly of liars. *Prov 14:8 ... the folly of fools is deceit.* One of the most foolish things that you can do is to lie. The reason people twist the truth is that they think somehow it's going to be to their advantage, but it never is.

1. DECEIT IS SUCH A FOOLISH THING BECAUSE IT HURTS OTHER PEOPLE. Whenever you distort the truth by lying, someone is going to get hurt. Lying always causes trouble for somebody. Someone's reputation is destroyed; someone's life is ruined; a friendship is severed. People have been falsely charged and imprisoned because of a lie. When damage is done from a lie, often there is a harm that can never be undone.

There are some mistakes that you can make that can be fixed and corrected. But when you lie about someone and slander their reputation, the damage is not repairable. *Reminds me of a story I once heard about a man in the hospital that was dying. While he was there, he heard about a vicious rumor that was spread about him and it grieved him so that he made a turn for the worse. The man that started the rumor heard about the man's relapse and repented for what he had said. He went to the man and asked for the man's forgiveness. He said that he had received forgiveness from God and now he sought forgiveness from the man. The man was touched and said that he would forgive him but asked that he do something for him. The man seeking forgiveness said that he would do anything for the dying man. The sick man asked the man to take a pillow from the bed and go over to the window. The man did as he was asked and when he got to the window, the sick man instructed him to open the window and cut the pillow open and scatter the feathers into the wind. The man thought that was strange but complied with the sick man's request. After he had finished tossing the feathers out into the wind, the sick man said there was one more thing he would like for the man to do. Naturally the man asked what it was to which the sick man replied, "Go out into the street and gather up all those feathers and put them back into the pillow case." The man said that there was no way he could do that because the wind had carried the feathers everywhere. He could never retrieve all of them. Then the sick man said this. "That is precisely the point. I will forgive you for what you said about me, but the damage is like those feathers and can never be retrieved." Once you tell a lie, you have no way of knowing how far it spreads. Try as you may to fix it, but that lie will always be several steps ahead of you.*

2. IT'S ALSO FOOLISH TO LIE BECAUSE IT'S HATEFUL TO GOD. *Prov 6:16-17 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: (17) A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed*

innocent blood. God hates a lying tongue. ***Prov 12:22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.***

Lying is contrary to God's nature. While Satan is a father of lies, God is a god of truth and integrity. Everything God does is based on this integrity. ***John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*** The lie defiles the character of God and because it is repulsive to Him, God hates it. We need to understand that lying will keep you out of heaven. Over in Rev. 21:8 John is talking about those who will find their life in the lake of fire and who will be destroyed in fire and brimstone. ***Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, AND ALL LIARS, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*** Liars are placed in pretty bad company. In fact he puts special emphasis on liars by saying ALL LIARS. This point is mentioned again down in v 27. One of these days, all liars are going to have a homecoming in hell.

3. IT IS ALSO FOOLISH TO LIE BECAUSE IT IS HARMFUL TO YOU. One of the things that lying does is that it destroys a person's character. ***Prov 11:3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.*** When you lie, you lose a little more respect for the truth and evil becomes entrenched in your heart. It's not hard to tell a lie but it's almost impossible to tell just one. It like the potato chip commercial a few years ago that said you can't eat just one.

You think about King David. After his first lie about Bathsheba, there was more and more deceit in order to cover his sins. Eventually, one if not all of those lies will catch up with you. Here is why lying destroys character. It's because a lie doesn't originate with the lips; it doesn't begin in the mouth, it starts in the heart. In Matt 12:34 Jesus said ***for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*** A lying mouth reveals a dishonest heart which will erode your character. It is a foolish thing.

You may be here and have been dishonest to others. Maybe you are here and have lied to God by not keeping the commitment and promise you made to Him when you became a Christian to serve and obey Him. Maybe you've lied to yourself by telling yourself that you are alright spiritually when in reality you are not. You really need to obey the gospel.

Invitation.