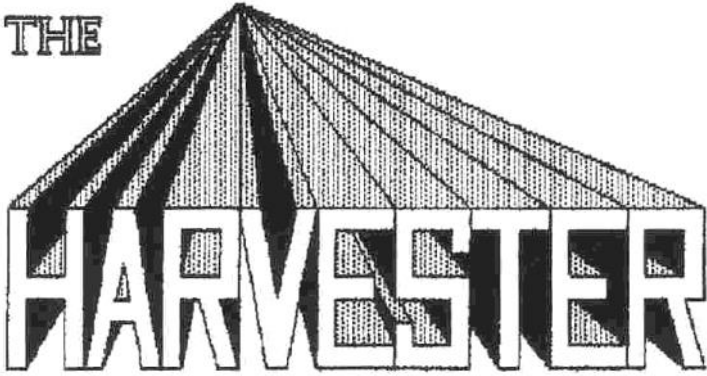


THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

April 2018

No. 388

THE SIN OF LYING

We all know that lying is sin. But sometimes we get into situations where telling the truth might be unkind or hurtful. A little child might ask us for our opinion on something they have written or drawn or done. Do we tell the truth? Spare no feelings? Is it okay to tell “little white lies”?

What if we had to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth for an entire day? What would that day be like? There is a movie called “Liar Liar” in which a lawyer cannot tell a lie for a whole day! (Remember that lawyers are known to use anything to get an advantage.)

THE HARVESTER
141 County Road 474
Woodland, AL 36280
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Once I read about a marriage counselor who had a couple in his office to discuss their marital problems. The man was neat, trim, and fairly good-looking. In contrast, the wife was messy-looking and not especially attractive. Her teeth were yellow from lack of brushing, and her face and hair needed washing. The husband complained that she was no longer appealing to him. Suddenly the woman turned to the counselor and said, "I resent what my husband said. Do you find me unattractive?" He paused and fidgeted and finally replied, "Well, whether or not you are attractive is beside the point." Then her husband responded to the counselor, "Come on now, quit hedging. I bet you agree with me." What do you think the counselor did? Should he tell her the truth and appear unkind? . . . He lied and felt bad about it.

What if we were asked a difficult question and to answer with the plain truth would devastate another person? Is it okay to lie then? NO! The Bible is very clear that lying is sin.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. (Eph. 4:22-25)

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; (Col. 3:9)

We are Christians, born-again in Christ and have put away our sinful ways. Lying is wrong, no matter what the situation is. We need to emphasize this fact today. People tend to excuse politicians or their heroes for lying. People might say that if a politician is caught in a lie, then it's not too bad if he or she is doing a great job in office. But lying is sin.

However, cruelty is a sin, too. "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use*

of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Eph. 4:29)

If “telling it like it is” will be unkind to someone and will hurt their feelings, then that is not the right solution either. We should never be heartless and run over people by plainly telling the truth and letting the chips fall where they may. James speaks to this issue in James 3:17:

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

So how do we handle those sticky situations?

Well, let’s look at the example of Jesus. He never lied, especially when He was put on the spot. Think of all the difficult questions He was asked. Remember how the scribes and Pharisees asked Him questions simply to entrap Him. If He answered one way, they had Him. If He said something else, they had Him again. But in all those situations, He never lied. He never bent the truth.

For example,

- The woman taken in adultery. *“So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” (John 8:7)*
- Who is greatest in the kingdom? *“And [Jesus] said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3-4)*
- The rich young ruler. *“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and fol-*

low me.” (Matt. 19:21)

- Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar? *“And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” (Matt. 22:20-21)*
- Admitting to being a King. *“And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.” (Matt. 27:11)*

He solved the issue by looking for the deeper truth. When He was confronted, He knew how to deal with the question at hand. He didn't lie. He told the truth, the truth that sets men free (John 8:31-32). If we stick to God's word, we will know what the truth is!

But let us also notice that Jesus didn't always tell everything He knew. Sometimes there are questions that don't even deserve an answer. In Matthew 21 when He was asked by the chief priests and elders of the people by whose authority He was operating under. First He asked them about the baptism of John – was it from heaven or from men? When they couldn't answer, neither did He tell them by what authority He did these things (Matt. 21:23-27). Some matters were too deep for men and He didn't have to fully explain. He could have told them the truth, but they wouldn't have accepted it anyway or they wouldn't have heard it at all.

Similarly, when God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem to offer a sacrifice and to anoint David, He instructed Samuel to mention only the matter of sacrifice if he was questioned (1 Sam. 16:1-3). That may seem underhanded. It seems dishonest and deceitful. Don't get me wrong. We should put a high premium on truthfulness but we need not tell everything we know or give a full description of our feelings. In everything, be honest. If it's best not to answer that difficult question, then honestly inform

the questioner.

So how should we answer difficult questions? Truthfully and sincerely. The secret can be found in Ephesians 4:15—"... *speaking the truth in love...*" There are different ways to speak the truth, aren't there? Do it with love!

Based on a sermon by RAY MCMANUS
(Deceased)

RUN THE RACE

We are all familiar with races. It could be two children challenging each other as to who will get to a certain place the fastest. Or it could be organized games in school or even the Olympic Games. Whoever gets to the goal the fastest is the winner. The Apostle Paul likens your life as a Christian to running a race. "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain*" (1 Cor. 9:24). In order for you to win a race, you must put all of your energy into doing the best you can, otherwise you are likely not to win. That type of effort is what you and I should be using to run our Christian race. The prize is the crown of life.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (Jas. 1:12)

While in a physical race only one wins the first place prize, in your Christian race, you want all of your brothers and sisters in Christ to receive the crown. But the effort you use in running your race should be an all-out effort to receive the prize.

The writer continues in 1 Corinthians 9:25,

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

When top athletes prepare for a race, they watch what they eat and drink. They eat the best foods and are careful to avoid anything that might harm their bodies and slow them down. They make sure they get lots of sleep and are rested before the race. They do all this to receive a prize such as a ribbon, medal or trophy. In a similar way, you should prepare yourself as best you can to run your Christian race. You want to be careful about what you do for your physical body and your spiritual life so that you can be at your best spiritual performance. You want to spend time in prayer, feed yourself good spiritual food, and keep sin out of your life so that you can run a good spiritual race and receive the crown of life.

The writer continues in 1 Corinthians 9:26, *“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.”*

Imagine a runner uncertain of where the goal is. You can imagine him running the wrong way or sitting down in the middle of the race. Such a runner would lose. Or imagine a boxer doing shadow boxing; he jabs his fists at the air and tires himself without landing any blows or defeating his opponent. You have a definite goal that you need to keep ever before you. Your life has the purpose of serving your Lord and receiving the crown of life.

The Apostle Paul concludes in 1 Corinthians 9:27, *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”*

Top athletes go into training before a race. They make sure

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God’s harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 * Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221 * Email: raymcmamus@hotmail.com

Web Page: www.churches-of-christ.org

they don't do anything to violate the rules. They don't take any banned drugs or supplements. They make sure they are not disqualified for any reason. You also should discipline yourself to make sure there is no activity or sin in your life that would disqualify you for the crown of life.

The race you are running is more of a long distance race than a sprint. It is certainly an endurance race.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:1-2)

You must put off any weight that would slow you down. You must disentangle yourself from any sin that would ensnare you and stop you from completing your race. You must keep on going regardless of the obstacles, jeering bystanders or discouragements along the way. Look to Jesus as your example. He told the church in Smyrna in Revelation 2:10b, “*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

I encourage you to run your race so that when you come to the close of your life, you can be like the Apostle Paul as he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:6-8:

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

ED ANDERSON
(Sierra Vista, AZ)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
March 30 - April 1	New Bethel Cullman, AL	Tim Lewis (Eubank, KY) & Mark Carpenter (Liberty, KY)
April 5 - 8	Junction City Junction City, KY	Tim Lewis (Eubank, KY)
April 6 - 8	Freefield Stateline, MS	Donald Thompson (Wedowee, AL)
April 6 - 8	Owen's Road Prattville, AL	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)
April 19 - 22	Oak Grove Eubank, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 27 - 29	Valley Valley, AL	Bill Prince, Jr., Chad Prince, & Brad Prince
April 27 - 29	Verona Verona, KY	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. How old was Noah when the floods came? 600 (Gen. 7:6)
2. When Joseph was in prison, whose dream did he correctly interpret to mean he would be restored to his job? BUTLER (Gen. 40:9-21)
3. In which book of the Bible would you find the record of Balaam and his donkey? NUMBERS (Num. 22:22-35)
4. Jesus initially sent the twelve disciples to preach to which group of people? HOUSE OF ISRAEL (Matt. 10:5-6)
5. What part of Paul's clothing did Agabus use? GIRDLE (BELT) (Acts 21:11)