

### Honesty and Lying

Honesty and lies are very important to the follower of the Bible. Solomon speaks of the things that God hates and at the top of that list is lying. It is second on the list and is ahead of murder. Proverbs 6:17

*A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

The Apostle James gives us some advice about our speaking, when he discusses the tongue in chapter 3 of his letter. He recognises that it is not easy to always speak correctly, but this is the aim of those who follow Jesus. He discusses how that the tongue is such a little part of the body, yet by its words seems to control the whole body. James 3:4-5

*Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

When we think about it, even big ships have only a relatively small rudder which controls the direction of the ship; even though the tongue is so small, it controls the direction of the person by the manner of their speech.

James goes on a bit later James 3:8: *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

When we think of what we have said in the past and how it has affected others, we should consider carefully what we say in the future. Remember that what we say will be bought up at the Judgment for us to give an answer to Jesus. Matthew 12:36

*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

James goes on to say more in James 3:9-11: *Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?*

When you think about it, there is a problem here; we pray to God on the one hand and then we go out and lie and say evil things about others. We are not constant with our speech. Matthew 12:36

*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

It is critical in any society that trust be established as a matter of course. Trust is a thing which can never come about when one or more of the parties are lying. Would we trust a doctor who we suspected of lying about our illness? Would we trust a lawyer through whom we were purchasing land if we suspected him of lying? Of course not! Honesty is the way to go

We sometimes can be very tempted to lie our way out of a tricky situation, but in the long run, it is better to be “up front” and honest — this creates less problems and less difficulties for us.

The Bible also agrees that honesty is the way to go (not surprisingly). Look at Philippians. 4:8

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

This covers almost all things in this area — honesty, justice, purity, virtue, praiseworthiness and good report, ie, no one speaking bad about you. This is a place where we all desire to be, but often fall short.

The Bible is full of examples and advice in this area.. In Ephesians 4:25 we get this advice.

*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

So truth is the opposite of lying; when truth exists, lying cannot. It is basically a state of mind; we either let our selves tell untruths or we tell the truth. The two are mutually opposite. Truth is a virtue which is very precious, such that if we are known as truthful people, then our word is always trusted. Proverbs 3:3

*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:*

The wise man that wrote down these words knew what he was talking about; Truth was very important; it was to be figuratively tied around ones neck and written on the heart. These figures show how closely guarded truth should be.

There is a proverb which is taught to our children “Honesty is the best policy”. This is not a Bible quotation, but has come into being because someone recognised that human beings are basically untrustworthy people who often are not honest and up front. The Bible backs up that finding, as we have seen from the quotes given here, but for those who wish to follow Christ. we must put these things aside and try to be as honest and trustworthy as possible, avoiding lying at all costs and being able to control our speech.