

Do you tell lies???? You might be thinking, "What a question to ask; of course I don't." I believe that as Christians our aim should always be to please God as much as possible. None of us are perfect, but nevertheless, perfection is the goal towards which we should be striving.



What is a lie? The dictionary definition of a lie is, 'A deliberately false statement.' There are a number of words that people use for a lie – big lie, little lie, white lie, falsehood, untruth, whopper, fib, porkie and crossing the fingers as they speak. The general tendency seems to be to grade lies and make some of them very bad lies and some little fibs that do not really matter. Can we grade lies in this way? Are some lies acceptable? What does God think about lies? Whatever name we give to it, does a lie = a lie = a lie?



What about exaggeration? Is that a lie? It is certainly not telling the truth because it is something that we do deliberately. 'There were 150 in church this morning.' (There were about 100.) 'We had a brilliant prayer meeting that went on for an hour and a half.' (It had virtually finished after an hour then people had started to leave.) 'I was on the 'phone to the council for an hour but gave up in the end.' (You were on the 'phone for 25 minutes; in fact, it was not that long because you waited for 10 minutes, got fed up with waiting, put down the 'phone then tried again later for a further 15 minutes.) Why do we exaggerate in this way? It is usually either to make something sound better than it actually was or to make something sound worse. As Christians, I am sure that deliberate exaggeration should not be on our agenda at all. God is able to accept us telling the truth, whatever that might be, so surely, if it is acceptable to God then it should also be acceptable to other people.



Giving a false impression of the truth is also a lie. Let me give you an illustration. I once visited an elderly lady who lived on her own and she was thrilled to have a visit. When it was time for me to go she gave me a couple of chocolate biscuits, which I put into my bag. After having seen the state of her kitchen, on my arrival home I immediately popped the biscuits into the bin. On my next visit the inevitable question was asked, "Did you enjoy those biscuits?" What was I to say? There was no way that I could tell her what I had really done with them, but, I would be telling a lie had I said that I had enjoyed them. Trying to change the subject as quickly as I could my answer went something like this:- "They are lovely biscuits aren't they? That is a nice cardigan you are wearing; did you knit it yourself?" The words I spoke were actually true, but, the impression I had given was a lie. I felt that a false impression in an instance such as this made the statement acceptable because it would have been very hurtful to have told her the truth after the lady had chosen to give me the gift.



There are times when we deliberately give a false impression of the truth in order to either ensure that the hearers have a better opinion of us or to hide something from them. I would say that a deliberate false impression such as this is unacceptable to God because it is based on deceit. Sometimes things are not always black and white and it can be very difficult to know where to draw the line. Instances where I personally have difficulty are when someone has told me something in confidence and then another person asks about it. I will not break the confidence but can find it difficult to know how to answer in such cases and my very hesitation can show that I know something about the situation.

One thing I find very interesting is the oath that is given by a witness in court. 'I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' This is spoken



as the witness has his/her hand on the Bible so they are swearing the oath to God as well as to the court. Not telling the truth in court – perjury – is seen as a deliberate intention of misleading the court. The punishment in England for lying under oath can be imprisonment, probation or a fine. Those who are guilty of this are also convicted of the crime of dishonesty so that can

interfere with their ability to obtain employment. It is unusual for secular bodies to set such high standards for what we would class as Christian ideals. Telling 'The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth' should be the norm in the everyday lives for all those of us who are Christians. We do not have to stand in a court and take an oath about it each day because God hears everything that we say anyway so our ultimate aim should always be to please Him.

Related Bible readings:

Proverbs 12: 17 – 19 Truthful lips endure for ever

Matthew 5: 33 – 37 Simply say, 'Yes or No'

Colossians 3: 8 – 10 Do not lie to one another



The absolute truth is favoured by God
He smiles down at us and gives us a nod
Whoppers and fibs He does not want to hear
No white lies or porkies – No fear
Are some lies big and others small?
Are some lies OK – No, not at all



Exaggeration God does not wish to see
Always the truth then let it be
Things better or worse it can make them sound
But not a good idea I've found
When we stretch tales more than what they are
Reputations are ruined – We have gone too far

False impressions are not on the cards
The truth is missed by many yards
Deceit is not part of the Christian walk
And no way should it enter into our talk
Only the truth God expects us to say
Then we will draw closer to Him each day
DMO

JESUS SAID

