

Is it Ever OK for a Christian to Lie?

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We were talking during the meal about the issue of lying, and is there ever a reason for a Christian to lie, like to save a life or things like that, because there's situations in the Old Testament like Rahab or other people lying and it seems as though good things happened as a result of that. So is there ever a reason or would it ever be ok for a Christian to lie today?

Well, first of all, the fact that good things happen because of something doesn't mean anything about whether it's right or wrong. There are a number of passages in the Old Testament that raise questions. I think that it's a very risky thing to start talking about lying being right in a situation because it has to do with my integrity and my character.

Would God lie to me? If it's acceptable, then God might lie to me in order to accomplish a greater good. I don't think we have to take it that God condoned Rahab's lie, but rather that He condoned her faith. And so, I'd be very cautious about that. You get into all kinds of issues because you have things like you leave a light on in the house, you're trying to make people think you're home, but you're not. A general does a diversionary tactic trying to make the enemy think that he's doing such-and-such; actually, he's deceiving them. And when a soldier's taken in battle, is he under obligation to tell the truth? Some argue that wherever there's a covenant of truth between people, that's where there's an obligation to tell the truth.

So in other words, I ought to expect an enemy soldier not to have to tell me the truth. So I don't know if there's any validity to that or not. It seems to me that in light of the character of God, that He is a God of truth. Most of those questions where you bring up is it right to lie... and that comes up in ethics classes and stuff like that; almost always those classes are designed in such a way not to help you to understand better what you should do, but to undermine your faith in right and wrong entirely. And they never bring in the vertical of God being there, they always are on the horizontal level. And a lot of times whenever you see the Lord's answers to questions, somebody will ask Him a question and they'll set up the ground that the battle is to be fought on, and if you do that you're going to lose. And the Lord would answer - it said Jesus answered and said, and it's clear over here somewhere that doesn't even seem to relate to the question.

A lot of times the devil tries to set us in situations where, you know, well, look you've got to sin. No, you don't. There are many, many things like that. Do you have to tell the Germans about the Jews hiding in your house and things like that. I think probably what would happen to me is that I'd be killed before too long, because the idea of lying about something, you might be able to say something like search and see or something like that. You know, Corrie Ten Boom's sister strongly believed that you should not lie. They had a trap door under the table, and her brothers hid in that trap door when the Germans came. They had a rug over the trap door and then a table sitting on it. And they said, "where are your brothers?" She said, "They're under the table." They looked under there and said, "don't play games with us." Well, actually, they were under the table. God protected them. But it's not always that way either. I'm not going to be much help on that one. I think there are times when we can avoid saying everything. I don't think we have to say everything.