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'Things God Hates' Series  
#3

## "A Lying Tongue"

Proverbs 6:16-19; James 3

### Introduction

Last week we began our study of some of the specific things that God hates. We started with haughty eyes. And that was a fitting beginning, because at the heart of sin is an exaggerated view of self. It's not so much that we seek happiness and pleasure; there is nothing wrong with that, the problem is that we think we can determine what will bring us that joy apart from God. We seek independence from God so that we might sin, that is haughtiness. .

It's interesting that in this list of things God hates the Lord attaches different body parts to help us understand the temptations that we face. Not only are we to avoid haughty eyes, but God has something to say about the potential evils of our hands, our hearts, our feet and our tongues.

Today we consider the dangers of a lying tongue. Because of the fact that we are prone toward self-glory, we are capable of telling all kinds of lies in order to secure personal gain. But our tongues should be used to speak the truth so that God is the one who receives glory. Today we are going to discover that there are many ways and reasons for lying. But God has provided a way to use our tongues as instruments of truth not error.

[Proverbs 6:16-19; James 3]

The things that James writes about the tongue are some of the strongest and frightening statements anywhere in the Bible about the tongue. And while they go beyond the sin of lying, certainly lying falls well within the range of problems he is addressing. What can we learn in general about the tongue?

- It is impossible to tame in this life. If you could you'd be perfect. Therefore, we can rightly assume that what we are going to talk about today is relevant to all of us.
- The tongue is not only capable of doing tremendous damage and evil, it can also do great good. For every evil use of the tongue there is a counter use that is glorifying to God.
- Jesus taught us that the mouth speaks that which fills the heart. Therefore, we are accountable for what we say and must admit that when we speak lies and deceits, there is something deep in our heart that is not right.

Before we look at some of the particular ways that we are prone to lie, let's look at a quick sampling of some of the commands of God's Word on this subject.

*Exodus 20:16 - "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

*Exodus 23:1 - "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.*

*Leviticus 19:11 - 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.*

*Proverbs 10:10 - He who winks the eye causes trouble, And a babbling fool will be ruined.*

*Proverbs 10:18 - He who conceals hatred has lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool.*

*Ecclesiastes 5:6 - Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?*

There are also some positive commands.

*Proverbs 3:3 - Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.*

*Ephesians 4:25 - Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.*

*Proverbs 10:9 - He who walks in integrity walks securely.*

That's just a small sampling of what God commands on this subject. When you begin to examine the Scriptures in more detail, it's interesting to find that people tell lies for lots of different reasons. There are at least five types of liars. We are going to look at four of them right now.

1. The Guilty Sinner
2. The Self Promoter
3. The Manipulator
4. The False Teacher
5. The False Witness (We will defer our study of this one until later, because God singles the False Witness out as #6 on his Top 7 List of things He hates.)

#### I. The Guilty Sinner

Maybe the first lie a child tells when he's still real little is *I didn't do it!* The fallen nature of man has a natural cover up mechanism. Adam and Eve immediately hid themselves from God because they didn't want their sin exposed. Right after Cain killed his brother Abel, the Lord came to him and asked

*Where is Abel your brother?* To which Cain responded with a lie. *I do not know.* When Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they devised an extensive lie to convince their father that an animal had killed him. They hid their sin for years and years.

We don't have to be taught to lie about our sin. God has written the Word of God on our hearts and our conscience bears witness to us when we sin. Why do we cover up our sin?

- Shame
- Pride
- And we do not want to take responsibility for it.

How often have you lied about your sin? How often have you pretended to others that you are not guilty? We can spend an enormous amount of time trying to make ourselves look better than we are. This is a huge problem and the Bible constantly warns us about it.

John wrote that *if you say that you have no sin you are liar and the truth is not in you.* Proverbs 28:13 warns that *he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.*

You see, even if you don't lie to another person about your sin, but if you simply ignore it and do nothing, you are in essence lying to God and yourself about it. God hates this kind of lying tongue because it is an affront to His holiness. When we sin, we sin against God. When we fail to confess our sins, we compound our guilt. The only way to avoid a lying tongue when it comes to our sins is to confess them to God. Psalm 32 shows the contrast between using our tongues for good and for evil when it comes to our sin. When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day

long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

You see, the counter stroke to a lying tongue is a confessing tongue. God calls us to confess our sins to Him and to those whom we've sinned against.

## II. The Self Promoter

Sometimes people lie because they want to look good in the eyes of others. You may lie about your deeds, accomplishments or character. In so doing, a person is seeking glory, praise or reward.

There's a classic example of this kind of lying at the beginning of II Samuel. King Saul had just died in battle. A young Amalekite came and reported his death to David. Thinking he could cast himself into the image of a hero he told this lie about Saul's final moments: (Saul) said to me, 'Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.' "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

This man, by making himself out to be the one who took Saul's life (and putting a positive spin on it) was hoping David would reward him for doing away with the one who had so long persecuted David. Instead, David gave him the death sentence.

God hates this kind of lying tongue because it seeks glory for self instead of for God. God is opposed to the proud. He calls us to die to self and to live and walk humbly before Him.

God says, *let another praise you and not your own mouth.* The right way to use your tongue is to become a person who commends others. Too often when we are together, we try and outdo each other with our stories. We play a little one-upmanship: *I did this. Oh yeah, well I did this.* There are lots of ways that we speak about ourselves to seek glory and praise. An honest tongue will give all the glory to God and take none for self.

### III. The Manipulator

This kind of liar is someone who wants to control another person by lying to him. His motive is personal gain. There are different ways we can do this. Flattery is a form of deceitful speaking. We tell people things they want to hear so that they will give us something we want. False promises are another form of manipulating people. Of simply telling untruths so that people make decisions based on your lie.

Satan is the master manipulator. If you study the temptation of Christ you will see that Satan told all kinds of lies and made false promises in an attempt to get Jesus to worship him. Jacob's sons lied to the Shechemites so that they would be circumcised. But they did it to kill them, not to unite with them.

But we too can easily find ourselves doing the same thing. Lustful young men lie to their girlfriends about their love and commitment because they are after things. People make promises about things they will do and how responsible they will be so they can get loan or a favor. When we sign a contract, we are giving our word that we will fulfill certain obligations as long as the contract is in effect. And yet today, contracts and covenants are

often not worth the paper they are written on because our society has lost a basic sense of integrity. We have too often lowered ourselves to the place where we will say whatever we have to say to get what we want, but we have no intention of fulfilling our commitments. God hates this kind of a lying tongue. We need to be people who speak the truth and fulfill our promises. If we swear to our own hurt we will not change.

Not one promise of God's has ever failed. Nor will he have speak and not do it. The gospel is the truth. You can therefore trust it and Him.

#### IV. The False Teacher

In the Old Testament there were false prophets who told lies to Kings so that they influence the policies and decisions of those kings. In the New Testament there were all kind of false teachers who perverted the gospel so that they might have power and influence over people. Controlling others is a powerful lust for some people and it is the primary motive for a false teacher.

God hates false teachers because they oppose the truth of His Word. Jesus defined himself as the way and the truth and the life. He said the way to freedom is through the truth.

Whether we have formal opportunities to teach or we seize informal opportunities (something as simple as sending information over the internet), we must be very careful that we do not lead people into falsehood.

Ezra gave a pretty simple formula for protecting ourselves from becoming a false teacher. Ezra 7:10 says *Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.* Diligent study and learning, followed by steady and faithful application should always precede the teaching of God's Word.

So here are four kinds of lying that we need to guard ourselves against:

- Covering up our sin
- Promoting our own glory
- Using lies to get things from others
- Controlling others actions and beliefs through false teaching.

Only Jesus Christ has been free from a lying tongue. If you want to be a man or woman or child who speaks the truth, then you need to be connected to Christ. If you have failed, if you are not an honest person, then forgiveness awaits you in Christ. He can transform the way you speak.

Would God say of you that you have a lying tongue? The tongue is a fire – capable of causing great destruction. Will you commit yourself to a path of integrity? If you have sin you need to confess, will you do it today? If you are perpetuating a lie about yourself before others, will you stop it? If you are a flatterer or someone who is unfaithful to your promises, will you do what is right no matter what it costs you? God hates a lying tongue.