Subject: Is lying morally justifiable?
Posted by Gary on Thu, 31 Dec 2015 17:56:59 GMT
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In the interest of truth, I should first disclose the fact that Christian theologians are divided on this subject. Someâ€”like Saint Augustineâ€”believed that it is never permissible to lie, (Quote from CRI).

One of the ten commandments says: Thou shalt not lie. Of all the things to put in the Ten commandments why would lying be part of the original Ten?

Christians are now under a new covenant and not under the law. The question is, Can Christians lie with impunity?

In the New Testament we see where Ananias and his wife were dealt with because they lied.

Quote:
5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostlesâ€™ feet. 3 But Peter said, â€œAnanias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?

Many Scriptures speak against lying and here is just a small few quoted from God's Word, these barely scratch the surface on this subject:

Quote:

Psalm 101:7
He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.

Proverbs 14:25
A true witness delivers souls, But a deceitful witness speaks lies.

Isaiah 9:15
The elder and honorable, he is the head; The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail.

Colossians 3:9
Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

1 John 2:21
I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Revelation 21:26-27
26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lambâ€™s Book of Life.

Lying started in the garden of Eden from the very beginning.

The question is: Is lying ever morally justifiable?

Interesting concept and has been a subject of debate by well known theologians, with that in mind, God is the one who speaks against all forms of lying.

Gary

Subject: Re: Is lying morally justifiable?
Posted by james on Thu, 31 Dec 2015 18:53:01 GMT
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Of course, haven't you heard of "the end justifying the means". I know it's OK because I looked it up on the internet and it said that as long as no one is harmed by the lie, it's OK.

I know! I know! It was a rhetorical question... A lot of 'theologians' have debated a lot of moral issues throughout the years with lots of various conclusions. I think I'll stick with what God said..."Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Isn't a false witness an untrue statement?
New Testament says to speak the truth in love, the opposite of truth is a lie.

Justifiable before God? No, but men can justify anything within our minds...it's a form of deception, in my opinion.

Subject: Re: Is lying morally justifiable?
Posted by Gary on Sat, 02 Jan 2016 12:49:04 GMT
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Its interesting how others view lieing, some make the statement:

Quote:

Furthermore, while the Bible never condones lying qua lying (lying for the sake of lying), it does condone lying in order to preserve a higher moral imperative. For example, Rahab purposed to deceive (the lesser moral law) in order to preserve the lives of two Jewish spies (the higher moral law). Likewise, a Christian father today should not hesitate to lie in order to protect his wife and daughters from the imminent threat of rape or murder.

Is the Bible condoning lieing because it gives the facts concerning what happened with Rahab and the two spies?

Here they quote the situation with Rahab, who was at this point not Jewish and had not heard the law. Here they say a lie is okay because it protects these two men, but as stated is this what the Bible is showing?

Secondly, in the case of the Father protecting his wife and children we are told its okay to lie. If this is the case could a Christian in the first century lie to a Roman soldier to protect his family?

Again they state:

Quote:

Finally, there is a difference between lying and not telling the truth. This is not merely a matter of semantics; it is a matter of substance. By way of analogy, there is a difference between unjustified and justified homicide. Murder is unjustified homicide and is always wrong. Not every instance of killing a person, however, is murder. Capital punishment and self-defense occasion justified homicide. Similarly, in the case of a lie (Annanias and Sapphira, Acts 5) there is an unjustified discrepancy between what you believe and what you say, and so lying is always wrong. But not telling the truth in order to preserve a higher moral law (Rahab, Joshua 2) may well be the right

thing to do and thus is not actually a lie.

Definition of truth:
Quote:

Truth
noun, plural truths
1.
the true or actual state of a matter:
He tried to find out the truth.
2.
conformity with fact or reality; verity:
the truth of a statement.
3.
a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like:
mathematical truths.
4.
the state or character of being true.
5.
actuality or actual existence.
6.
an obvious or accepted fact; truism; platitude.
7.
honesty; integrity; truthfulness.

Versus the word Lie:
Lie
noun
1.
a false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive; an intentional untruth; a falsehood.
Synonyms: prevarication, falsification.
Antonyms: truth.
2.
something intended or serving to convey a false impression; imposture:
His flashy car was a lie that deceived no one.
3.
an inaccurate or false statement; a falsehood.
4.
the charge or accusation of telling a lie:
He flung the lie back at his accusers.

verb (used without object), lied, lying.
5.
to speak falsely or utter untruth knowingly, as with intent to deceive.
Synonyms: prevaricate, fib.
6.
to express what is false; convey a false impression.

I don't see how one can separate the truth from a lie and make some sort of justification for lying. To tell a lie your denying the truth, or better yet deceiving someone with untrue facts.

Telling people its okay to lie is sending a mixed message of untruth. If the Roman soldiers came in and asked are you a Christian?, Or a Christian father is protecting his family from imminent harm to his family, (Can we justify this in our minds because of the situation?), then according to these theologians, in the situation they used, you can lie to protect your family from harm. Either way his motive would be to protect those in his family. In the one situation a man lies to protect his family then could he not justify it in another situation?

I think something becomes lost in the practice of Bible Hermeneutics. Rahab lied so it becomes okay and justifiable in their thinking. Of all the things that God could of put in the Ten commandments He chose, you should not bear false witness.

In the Hebrew were told:

Quote:
Hebraic Insightâ€¦

The ninth commandment prohibits swearing falsely against your neighbor in matters of law and civil proceedings, but, on a deeper level, it implicitly indicates the responsibility to be a witness of the truth at all times. Note that the Hebrew word for â€œtruthâ€• (emet) is composed from the first, the middle, and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, thus indicating that it encompasses the first things, the last things, and everything in between. Thus, in relation to our neighbor (who is really everyone), we are to be truthful and bear witness to the truth in all our moments of life. By lying, by bearing false testimony, we effectively deny the relationship to the One who said, â€œI am the Way and the Truth and the Life.â€•
(hebrew)
â€œThou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighborâ€•
â€” Ex. 20:16

If God is truth and in Him is found no lie, would not His disciples want to pattern their lives after their God?

It's interesting that in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, everything started out with the devil lying to Eve, then when God confronts everybody they pass the blame on to someone else. This still happens even to this very day, someone gets caught and they pass the blame off on someone else.

I don't think the Bible is condoning Rahab's lying it is only stating what took place. How can anyone use this scripture and say its okay to lie?

I knew an older gentlemen, an architect by trade, and I would try to explain to him concerning certain sub-contractors, who I thought he could rely on to do a good job. I would tell this man (out of habit), that they were real honest. He would always reply to me, there is no such thing as being "real honest", he said; your either honest or your not.

By the same token there is no justification for lying, your either lying or your not.

Gary

Subject: Re: Is lying morally justifiable?
Posted by william on Mon, 04 Jan 2016 20:17:42 GMT
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Quote:...Or a Christian father is protecting his family from imminent harm to his family, (Can we justify this in our minds because of the situation?), then according to these theologians, in the situation they used, you can lie to protect your family from harm. Either way his motive would be to protect those in his family. In the one situation a man lies to protect his family then could he not justify it in another situation?

Looks like to me that Ananias and Sapphira could be justified using that criteria.

Ananias lied because he was attempting to hold on to some money so that his family would be 'protected' from financial harm during bad economic times.

The principle of 1 Tim 5:8 clearly states "...But if any provide not for his own, and specially for

those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

If we were to accept the higher moral principle argument then I think that someone who lies in order to avoid being worse than an 'infidel' might be morally superior to one who is just giving all of his money to the church.

I know that Ananias got into trouble not for actually holding back some of the money but for lying, still... didn't he do it for a good cause? <grin> Oh, and Sapphira... all she did was to submit to her husband like every good wife should do, right? <grin> I'm sure she wouldn't have wanted to be thought of as rebellious -- ([1Sa 15:23 KJV] 23 For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry...) ... you know, higher moral principle and all.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Is lying morally justifiable?
Posted by james on Mon, 04 Jan 2016 22:16:38 GMT
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william wrote on Mon, 04 January 2016 14:17

Looks like to me that Ananias and Sapphira could be justified using that criteria.

That was my point, men can justify anything. Without The Standard of God's Word and His Spirit guiding us we can allow the flesh to justify murder(I was protecting my family); stealing (I was providing for my family); fornication (it's just consenting adults, no one is hurt)...ect.

I've been mulling over what it means to please God, love what He loves and hate what He hates. He mentions in His Word over and over we're to walk by faith, in love with meekness, humbly, speak the truth, show mercy, be forgiving...all attributes of His character. Not excuse making, self justifying, self serving little gods unto ourselves. It's something I have to stop and remember sometimes, because as I said, we can justify anything in our minds, and often try to do just that.

Subject: Re: Is lying morally justifiable?

Posted by william on Mon, 04 Jan 2016 22:33:42 GMT
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james wrote on Mon, 04 January 2016 16:16william wrote on Mon, 04 January 2016 14:17

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Right, and as long as we are using Rahab as our standard concerning lying why not justify her profession too?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Is lying morally justifiable?
Posted by Gary on Tue, 05 Jan 2016 23:16:29 GMT
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William wrote:

Quote:

Looks like to me that Ananias and Sapphira could be justified using that criteria.

Ananias lied because he was attempting to hold on to some money so that his family would be 'protected' from financial harm during bad economic times.

Heres what took place before the death of Ananias:

Quote:

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostlesâ€™ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostlesâ€™ feet.

We see here everyone in this church was selling their property and bringing the money to the Apostles. everyone had houses or lands which they sold.

Looking at the scriptures concerning Ananias:

Quote:

5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostlesâ€™ feet.

3 But Peter said, â€œAnanias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.â€•

5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

It says that Satan filled his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to hold back part of the price.

Three hours later his wife comes in and is told "they agreed to test the Spirit of the Lord".

Quote:

7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter answered her, â€œTell me whether you sold the land for so much?â€•

She said, â€œYes, for so much.â€•

9 Then Peter said to her, â€œHow is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.â€• 10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. 11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

They did not lie to the Apostles(men), but lied directly to the Spirit of God.
It was severe because of the circumstances and who they lied too.

What I am saying is he lost any and all justification because of the nature of what took place. It shows also that Satan was a big influence in their decision making.

No matter what it put a damper on people just running into the church and doing what they thought was right in their own eyes.

The worst part was they were not lying to men.

Gary