

Just Kidding?

**“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour:
for we are members one of another.” [Ephesians 4:25]**

Introduction

The point of this study is to help us to put away all lying, not just some lying, but even the kind of lies that we may not think of as lies. Many of us will agree, now that God has saved us, that so-called “little white lies” are sin and are to be avoided and confessed and repented of when we do tell them. Yet, how often do we use the term “just kidding” after telling a falsehood, a lie - and often with children as our audience. If we were to be honest and more precise, shouldn’t we say “just lying” or “just trying to deceive you for the fun of it”. We prefer not to use the word “lie”. We prefer to use words that soften our sin, so we say that we are “just kidding” or we are “stretching the truth a little”. But one important characteristic of truth is that it neither bends nor stretches. It is immovable and unchangeable.

Webster defines the word “kid” as “deceive as a joke” or “to make fun of”. Is this something God’s children should be doing? Is this the kind of behavior that our Redeemer deserves from us? And are we not being hypocrites when we condemn a politician for lying to us (the public) and then we go and do something that is no different in the eyes of God.

Does the Bible have anything specific to say about this issue?

The Bible has a specific reference to “kidding” in Proverbs chapter 26 (KJV):

Proverbs 26:18 - As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, 19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

The Modern King James Version puts it this way:

Proverbs 26:18 - or like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death. 19 so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, Am I not joking."

Young's Literal Translation says:

Proverbs 26:18 - As one pretending to be feeble, Who is casting sparks, arrows, and death, 19 So hath a man deceived his neighbour, And hath said, 'Am not I playing?'

The point here is that a man is deceiving his neighbor and justifying it by saying he is doing it "in sport", or "joking" or "playing".

The repercussions of this sin

How can deception be OK just because we reveal the deception right away? If I call you someone a horrible name, and then say "I didn't mean it" does that make the original offense all right? If you shout "fire" in a movie theater and then shout "Just kidding" is that OK? Obviously not... the damage has been done. What damage is done when we "kid around"? Quite a number of things:

We violate someone's trust in us. This is an especially grievous sin when we violate the trust of children, because when it comes time to teach children about God and the Bible, we have destroyed (or at the minimum damaged) our credibility.

We perpetrate a lie - we bear false witness against our neighbor, violating one of the 10 commandments.

We glorify deception by making a game of it, teaching others by example that this kind of behavior is acceptable and perhaps even pleasing to God.

We seek to make a fool of someone, by making them believe us when they should not believe us since we are lying about something.

It is important for Christians to be good and godly examples to everyone around them. When we deceive children and others for fun, we set a bad example and in so doing, we can cause others to stumble:

Romans 14:21 - It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

What are we teaching others about honesty, purity, and the value of truth by “kidding around”. It may have been “OK” to our peers when we were unsaved, but is it ever OK to God, especially now that we are saved and now that we are ambassadors for Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:20 - Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

What is “kidding” all about?

Why do we “kid around”? To glorify God? No. We do it to get attention or to make ourselves popular with others or perhaps simply because we enjoy deceiving others - we actually make a “game” out of it, don’t we? Ever since the fall in the garden of Eden, man has enjoyed trying to make a fool of his brother, when all he is doing is proving that he is the fool, for heaping up wrath upon himself:

Romans 2:5 - But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Hosea 8:7 - For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: ...

To the sinner, and to the flesh, accomplishing our sinful desires is “sweet to our souls”, but it is not glorifying to God.

Proverbs 13:19 - The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

Believers are to crucify the flesh - to die daily:

Galatians 5:24 - And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

1 Corinthians 15:31 - I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

So why do we like to “kid” others?

Proverbs 21:6 -The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

The treasure that we get by “kidding” others, is their attention - and we get their attention by a lying tongue, telling them things that are not true but that we know will get a reaction out of them. God describes this kind of talk as *foolish talking and jesting*:

Ephesians 5:3 - But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;

We see in verse 4 above that God says this kind of behaviour

is not to be taken lightly. He says it should not even occur ONCE among us. God's children, like the psalmist declares, should hate every false way, and one of those false ways includes "kidding":

Psalms 119:104 - Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

And in Ephesians 5:9 above we see that we are to cultivate "truth" along with the other fruits of the Spirit.

How to break this habit

1. Confess sin -

If we make a habit of confessing our sins one to another and to the Lord, right away, we will find ourselves having greater sensitivity to sin. Overlooking our faults can cause us to become numb to sin. When we realize that we are "kidding" others and that it is wrong to do so, an appropriate response would be to say something like: "I'm sorry. That statement I just made is a lie. I should not have said that. Please forgive me."

James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2. Be in the Word -

As with any other sins that we truly wish to repent of, we need to hide God's word in our hearts that we would not sin against him. (Psalm 119:11)

Exodus 20:16 - Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

**Leviticus 19:11 - Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely,
neither lie one to another.**

**Psalms 26:3 - For thy lovingkindness is before mine
eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.**

**Psalms 86:11 - Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in
thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.**

**Psalms 119:29 - Remove from me the way of lying: and
grant me thy law graciously.**

**Psalms 119:30 - I have chosen the way of truth: thy
judgments have I laid before me.**

**Proverbs 3:3 - Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind
them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine
heart**

**Proverbs 8:7 - For my mouth shall speak truth; and
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.**

**Proverbs 12:17 - He that speaketh truth sheweth forth
righteousness: but a false witness deceit.**

**Proverbs 12:22 - Lying lips are abomination to the LORD:
but they that deal truly are his delight.**

**Proverbs 14:5 - A faithful witness will not lie: but a false
witness will utter lies.**

**Proverbs 14:9 - Fools make a mock at sin: but among the
righteous there is favour.**

**Isaiah 38:3 - And said, Remember now, O LORD, I
beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth
and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is
good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.**

Isaiah 63:8 - For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

Jeremiah 9:5 - And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.

Zechariah 8:16 - These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates

John 8:44 - Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Acts 5:3 - But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

James 3:8 - But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

3 John 1:3 - For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Revelation 21:8 - But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Revelation 22:15 - For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and

whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Other little foxes we may be overlooking in our lives

And as God says in Song of Solomon 2:15, it is “the little foxes, that spoil the vines”. Little sins lead to other more gross sins, so we dare not wait until we are telling gross lies before we start caring about truthfulness. Some of these besetting sins that can cause others to stumble and can lead to other sins include:

slander

gossip

minced oaths

unforgiveness

disrespect

pride - too proud to admit we are wrong - too proud to give credit to God instead of ourselves when complemented

unthankfulness - to God and others

**unattentiveness - ignoring others because we are too busy
(too selfish to share our time)**

cheating our boss out of time at work

**speeding and violating other traffic laws or just being
discourteous behind the wheel**

**justifying sinful actions instead of admitting them and
repenting of them**

**participating in sinful conversations/activities when we
should be preaching against such behavior**

**making excuses for not praying, studying the Bible,
ministering to others, and sharing the Gospel or just letting
other things get in the way of these things**

Conclusion

Let us keep each other honest and let us act as if we really care about the truth and really care about being obedient to God...

**Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider one another to
provoke unto love and to good works**

**Colossians 3:9 - Lie not one to another, seeing that ye
have put off the old man with his deeds**
