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# Put off *the* Evil Culture of Deception



**I**T IS BECOMING more commonly accepted in our society to shade the truth, sidestep, use qualifying words, narrowly defined meanings, or other devious methods to mask the true meaning of what is being said. We have become a culture that is more and more accepting of, or at least more tolerant and perhaps desensitized to, *deception* than were past generations. It's become part of our norm.

But the Bible takes a strong position against *deception*. Matthew 5:37 says, *“But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.”*

In this week’s study, *Put Off the Evil Culture of Deception*, I would like to investigate, build your awareness of, and stimulate the creation of convictions regarding the evil nature of *deception*. Unfortunately, in our culture, *deception* has become an acceptable practice.

*continued next page*

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CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. Refreshments Served.  
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 HOUSE: 7:30 AM Thursdays, The Capitol Hill Club. Hot Breakfast Served.

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MINISTRY LEADER QUOTE

**James Lankford**

*U.S. Senator, Oklahoma*



**“The work of ministry leaders is vital because it will influence the future of nations. As you disciple an elected official, you are shaping the future of the country because God is shaping their hearts. Help elected officials understand how to apply the Word, and God will apply that to the laws of the nation.”**

What exactly is *deception*? It is the act of causing someone to believe something that is not true, typically in order to gain some personal advantage. It is to intentionally give a mistaken impression. It is viewed, often, as a political necessity.

May I, however, proffer an alternative? There is always a better way than lying and *deceiving*: Be Honest. Read on.

Ralph Drollinger

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Lincoln’s insistence on honesty and putting away deception is apparent throughout his life. One such illustration comes from Mark Steiner’s book *An Honest Calling: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln*. He notes:

A relative by marriage, Augustus H. Chapman, recalled: “In his law practice on the Wabash Circuit he was noted for unswerving honesty. People learned to love him ardently, devotedly, and juries listened intently, earnestly, receptively to the sad-faced, earnest man ... I remember one case of his decided[ly] honest trait of character. It was a case in which he was for the defendant. [Previously] satisfied of his client’s innocence, it depended mainly on one witness. [But] that witness told on the stand under oath what Abe knew to be a lie, and no one else knew. When he arose to plead the case, he said: “Gentlemen, I depended on this witness to clear my client. He has lied. I

ask that no attention be paid to his testimony. Let his words be stricken out, [even] if [it means] my case fails. I do not wish to win in this way.”

For clever, seasoned public servants the intentional use, omission, or manufacture of misleading impressions comes easily. In stark contrast to the temptation to *deceive* is Proverbs 19:22:

*... it is better to be a poor man than a liar.*

Abraham Lincoln modeled the essence of that principle many times in many ways. God’s Word has much to say about this subject and the capital community has much to learn in response. Habitual truth-telling needs to be the goal even — and especially — when it costs you something.

**HOW ARE YOU IN TERMS OF HABITUAL TRUTH-TELLING?**

Is this the habit of your heart and



tongue? Are you a card-carrying member of the Honest Abe society? Never jeopardize your integrity for short-term gain. Let's look to the book of Proverbs, which has much to say about telling the truth. One Proverb from this lesson that you should memorize is 12:19:

*Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.*

## II. TWO RESOLUTIONS REGARDING LYING AND DECEIVING

### A. GOD'S RESOLUTION

6:16-17, 19 *There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood ... a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.*

Note the kinship of five of these seven particular sins and the progression here in this passage: A self-righteous attitude that underlies haughty eyes is often the character trait that motivates lying about others, which in turn hurts innocent people and leads to division and strife. Scripture declares that God hates this progression!

12:22 *Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.*

In this Proverb each of the two stanzas serves to further elaborate on the

meaning of the other. The Hebrew word for *deal* (*asah*), which means "accomplish or achieve," is key to interpreting this Proverb. Whereas God hates *lying* lips or falsehood, He delights in those who *deal*, accomplish, or achieve truthfulness, i.e., the discipline of jurisprudence, the establishment of what is actually true in and about a given situation is something God *delights* in! (Good lawyers should use this passage to defend their profession!) God is especially pleased with individuals who have the discipline and objectivity to ascertain truth. These passages inform us about the character, nature, and resolve of God; we need to emulate this.

### B. MANKIND'S RESOLUTION

It follows that if we are to be Christ-like, and reflect the character of God in our lives, that we put on the same attributes of honesty.

4:24 *Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you.*

24:28 *Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips.*

30:8 *Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion...*

Like Lincoln, who wants to win or, so to speak relative to this Proverb, be *rich* by use of *deception*? Translated

### ♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

## Proverbs 12:22

*Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.*



*Resolve to be one who reflects God's attributes of honesty and integrity at all times and at all costs.*





Patrick Henry



“Righteousness alone can exalt [America] as a nation...Whoever thou art, remember this; and in thy sphere practice virtue thyself, and encourage it in others.”

— Patrick Henry, revolutionary general; legislator; “The Voice of Liberty”; ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; Governor of Virginia.

Patrick Henry, *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches*, William Wirt Henry, editor (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1891), Vol. II, p. 592, to Archibald Blair on January 8, 1799.

into the “New Capitol Standard Version,” this Proverb means:

**IT IS BETTER TO ALWAYS BE HONEST THAN IT IS TO ACHIEVE A CERTAIN OUTCOME**

...especially if that outcome is achieved by lying and deceiving others regarding self, issues, or opponents.

20:17 *Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.*

Again, a *lying* tongue is only for a moment. Such practices will not bring you gain over the long haul: your colleagues will distrust you and you will not have their vote, both literally and figuratively.

31:30 *Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.*

In this Proverb of contrast, *charm* (*chen*) (which is not a bad thing in itself since the root word here means “gracefulness”) is used in the context of *deceptive* motives, i.e., a woman being *charming* or graceful for wrong, selfish reasons. It follows that men can use grace with wrong, *deceptive* motives as well. Too often, for example, public servants utilize flowery, flattering oratory for reasons disingenuous.

Resolve to be a public servant who reflects God’s attributes of honesty and integrity at all times and at all costs.

**III. TWO REASONS FOR LYING AND DECEIVING**

**A. HATRED**

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

17:4 *An evildoer listens to wicked lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.*

26:24 *He who hates disguises it with his lips, but he lays up deceit in his heart.*

**B. PRIDE**

25:14 *Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.*

**IV. SEVEN RESULTS OF LYING TO AND DECEIVING A PERSON**

**A. WORTHLESSNESS**

6:12 *A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who walks with a perverse mouth...*

**B. SHAMEFULNESS**

13:5 *A righteous man hates falsehood, but a wicked man acts disgustingly and shamefully.*

**C. FOOLISHNESS**

14:8 *The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, but the foolishness of fools is deceit.*



## D. DESTRUCTION

11:3 *The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.*

11:18 *The wicked earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness gets a true reward.*

Many are those who pursue unfair and deceptive business practices to their own demise. In the end, they reap what they sow and their sins will find them out. One of God's inviolate principles is this: time and truth run hand in hand. As one deceives himself in his business practices, he sets his own snare. The wheels of justice, both in a formal and informal sense, may grind slowly, but they do move.

## E. MISLEADING COUNSEL

12:5 *The thoughts of the righteous are just, but the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.*

The Hebrew word translated here for *deceitful* (*mirimah*) can also mean "dishonest or false", therefore, be careful from whom you receive *counsel*. Always quiz yourself as to the motive of the *counselor*. *Deceptive* counselors are evident in the following two Proverbs:

12:17 *He who speaks truth tells what is right, but a false witness, deceit.*

12:20 *Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy.*

Proverbs also indicates that those who have a proclivity toward *lying* and *deceit* are evident by their keeping company with the same:

17:4 *An evildoer listens to wicked lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.*

You can know a person's character by the company he or she keeps (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33). The following contrasting Proverbs best summarize for those in public service the results of *lying* and *deceiving* counselors:

21:28 *A false witness will perish, but the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.*

7:7 *Excellent speech is not fitting for a fool, much less are lying lips to a prince.*

Be careful whom you employ to counsel you as a governing official whose first duty is to "*please the one who enlisted him*" (2 Timothy 2:4).

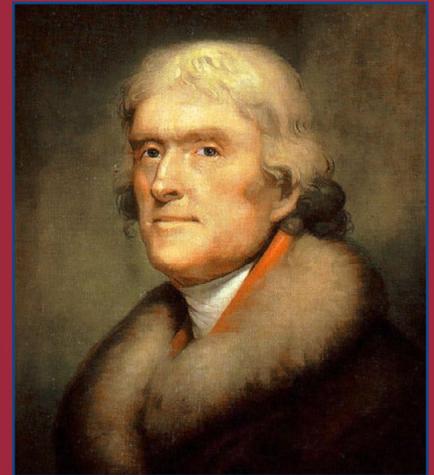
## F. TEMPORALNESS

12:19 *Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.*

20:17 *Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.*

21:6 *The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.*

Thomas Jefferson



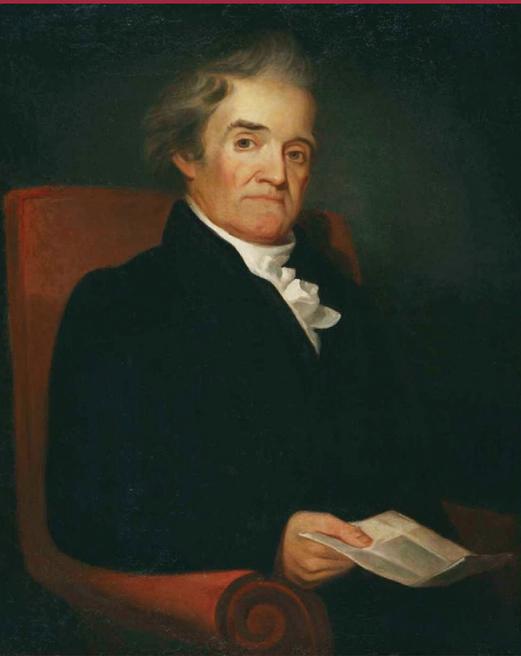
*"Truth and reason are eternal; they have prevailed and they will eternally prevail. However, in times and places, they may be overborne for a while by violence, military, civil, or ecclesiastical. The preservation of the holy fire is confided to us by the world, and the sparks which will emanate from it will ever serve to rekindle it in other quarters of the globe, numinibus secundis (in accordance with God's will)."*

—Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; diplomat; Governor of Virginia; Secretary of State.

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter written from Monticello to Samuel Knox, February 12, 1810.



Noah Webster



*“The Bible is the chief moral cause of all that is good and the best corrector of all that is evil in human society — the best book for regulating the temporal concerns of men.”*

— Noah Webster, revolutionary soldier; judge; legislator; educator; “Schoolmaster to America.”

Noah Webster, *The Holy Bible ... With Amendments of the Language* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1833), p. v.

## G. TREACHERY

**Treachery** is defined as: “A violation of allegiance or of faith and confidence: betrayal of trust: ‘Treason’ (Merriam-Webster).

14:25 *A truthful witness saves lives, but he who utters lies is treacherous.*

A good summary regarding the results of *lying* and *deception* is the following overarching Proverb on the subject. This is another select Proverb to program your mind with in order, as a follower of Christ, to escape the bondage of *lying*.

19:5 *A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape.*

Proverbs goes a step further, paralleling the NT in 1 Timothy 1:9-10, stating those who are habitually characterized by *deceit* are not saved:

19:9 *A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish.*

## V. THREE RESULTS OF LYING TO AND DECEIVING A NATION

Again, because Solomon is preparing his son for statesmanship in Israel, most every subject we have studied in Proverbs contains advice as it relates not only to personal ramifications, but also to governmental ramifications stemming from either obedience or neglect of these principles relative to a nation’s leadership;

the subject of *lying* and *deception* is no exception.

### A. DECEPTION AFFECTS LAWMAKING

Too often lawmakers use the Scriptures out of context during committee hearings or floor debates in order to “make *their* point” (the antecedent to the pronoun “their” being lawmakers, not the Scriptures). This is a very serious form of *lying* and *deception*:

### TO INVOKE GOD’S WORD IN THE MISLEADING OF OTHERS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST EVILS IN THE WORLD

Notice the seriousness of this in the following Proverb:

30:5-6 *Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.*

To lie with the Word of God as your supposed source is to invoke the wrath of God. This is no light matter, my beloved. Make no mistake here, God in His holiness will not allow you, I, or anyone else to toy with His Word. This admonition is emphasized in the book of Revelation, chapter 22:18-19:

*I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are writ-*



*ten in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.*

Do not in any way bend the Scriptures. Such practices are serious matters (Cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; Jeremiah 26:2). One illustration of bending the Word of God is that of the *deceptive* misuse of Scripture by the “Social Gospellers” to justify the existence of a myriad of social programs; this has loudly reverberated in our society — leading our nation to the brink of bankruptcy — a sowing and reaping form of God’s wrath.

## B. DECEPTION AFFECTS LEADERS

*23:1-3 When you sit down to dine with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for it is deceptive food.*

### REMEMBER, THERE IS NO FREE LUNCH IN DC — FROM THE LOBBYISTS TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Do not be enticed by *delicacies* to only later feel a sense of obligation. You are wise enough to see through *deceptive food*.

*27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.*

How specifically does *deception* affect leaders?

*29:12 If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, all his ministers become wicked.*

If the leader uses enticements to *deceive*, it sets a tone and culture around him; he or she attracts whom they are. Like begets like.

## C. DECEPTION AFFECTS JUSTICE

The following Proverbs all reflect the effect of *deception* on justice: It is horrible and destroys it.

*14:5 A trustworthy witness will not lie, but a false witness utters lies.*

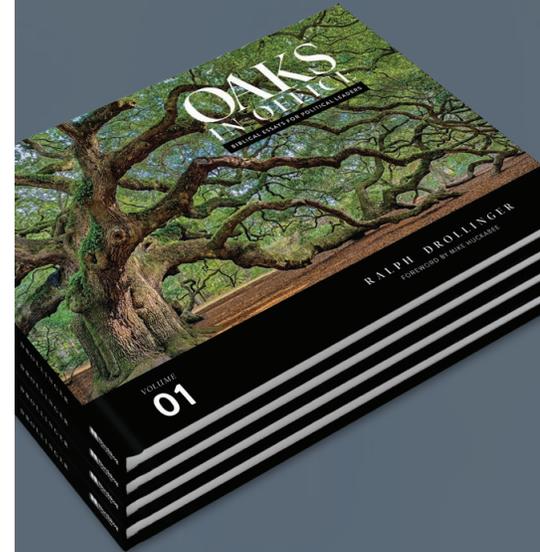
*19:28 A rascally witness makes a mockery of justice, and the mouth of the wicked spreads iniquity.*

*20:23 Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD, and a false scale is not good.*

*21:28 A false witness will perish, but the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.*

*25:18 Like a club and a sword and a sharp arrow is a man who bears false witness against his neighbor.*

*26:18-19 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows and death, so is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, “Was I not joking?”*



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VI. SUMMARY

Deception is the act of causing someone to believe something that is not true, typically in order to gain some personal advantage. It is to intentionally give a mistaken impression. It is often viewed as a political necessity. But you can see from this study the tremendously deleterious effects deception has on lawmakers, governmental leaders, and the nation's justice system. Don't be a contributor to that cause. Deception destroys both individuals and nations.

It is critically important that public servants completely abandon the manufacturing of mistaken impressions and instead practice honesty — the strictest honesty, as practiced by Abraham Lincoln. So be it. cm

Benjamin Franklin



*"I pronounce it as certain that there was never yet a truly great man that was not at the same time truly virtuous."*

— Benjamin Franklin, signer of the Declaration of Independence; diplomat; printer; scientist; signer of the Constitution; Governor of Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Franklin, *The Busy-body*, No. 3, February 18, 1728.

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