

Lie or No Lie – (Rahab)

1. Conflicting Absolutism

- She lied, therefore she sinned
- She needed to repent and because she is commended in James 2:25, she must have repented at some point.

My view: Possible but not my 1st choice. I don't think Jesus had to choose between 2 sins. I don't lean this way.

2. Graded Absolutism

- She lied but did not sin because she kept a higher norm
- It seems possible on the surface but I wrestle with how do we determine the higher norm. And if you break one, you break them all.

3. Non-conflicting Absolutes

- She did not lie
- The sin of false witness is defined as distorting the facts in order to harm.

*Another view with/in this is that she did lie but did not have to. She should have left it in God's hands.

*With/in this view it is pointed out that the lie itself is not what is commended.

Hebrews 11:31

James 2:25

Exodus 1:17-19 - partial truth

My view: I lean here! I said earlier I'm not confident – Conflict --- either she lied and didn't have to and it's not commended. Or I lean toward she didn't actually lie in this case. Remember what I said, conduct alone is insufficient. You must also look at character and goals.

3 Different Types of Non-truths – Most Ethicists

1. Jocular lies (Jokes, Fiction)
2. Lies of necessity (Warfare, Sports)
3. Malicious lies (Perjury, Slander)

- The difference is not the communication of non-truth.
- The difference is the composition of the entire moral event.

Lying –

Exodus 20:16

- It doesn't say always tell the truth.
- It doesn't say always tell the whole truth.

So is it ever ok to conceal the truth by telling a partial truth?
Is it ever ok to deceive?

Exodus 1:17-19

Exodus 20:16

Joshua 8:1-8; 8:14-15; 8:18

Judges 7:15-22

*Could Rahab's situation be considered part of war?

1 Samuel 16:1-5

Proverbs 11:13

What might be a contemporary situation where concealment might apply? Does 1 Samuel 16:1-5 help with that?

-Missions

We have seen in Scripture that God sometimes had plans that included concealment and pretending.

Lying

- Distorting facts when the intent is to harm or to glorify self.
- This takes into consideration conduct, character, and goals.

3 Questions You Can Ask:

1. What moral norms apply to this situation? (conduct)
2. Am I acting out of love for God and love for neighbor? (character)
3. What path, choice or answer will bring the most glory to God? (goals)

Sources:

Thanks to the works of David W. Jones ("An Introduction to Biblical Ethics") and John Murray ("Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics")