What Does it Mean to "Love and practice a lie?"

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Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and **whoever loves and practices a lie.**

Rev 22:14-15 NKJV

I have read this portion of Scripture more times than I can count, but it wasn't until very recently that the last phrase jumped out at me. **Loving and practicing a lie.** Making it a "lifestyle to lie" is to make sure that one will not be able to enter into the New Jerusalem and partake of the Tree of Life. This statement will carry weight for those who believe there is an eternity after this life. It will not be of concern for those who do not believe this.

Simply speaking, the opposite of a lie is truth. There are many nuances however, as well as the current prevailing social belief that there are many truths and each person is free to establish their "own truth." Where tolerance once meant that we were encouraged "to hate the sin but love the sinner" semantic drift has morphed the meaning into demanding that tolerance now means to AGREE and support anything!

This is really the proverbial "slippery slope" because after listing many of the offending behaviors, Paul told us that approving of such things amounts to the same thing as practicing them.

who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, **that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them**. Romans 1:32 NKJV

Entirely opposite to this current social norm is the Word of our God.

Sanctify them by Your Truth. Your Word is Truth. John 17:17 NKJV

It is really no surprise to most readers here that the world system and those who do not believe in our God find the declaration of His Word as the final, ultimate truth to be hypocritical at best, and outright exclusive and offensive at worst.

At a time when there is a preponderance of people who DO believe His Word is True, and His ways to be desirable, to be a model for our ways, this recognition of Truth greatly influences all behaviors. It provides the social expectation of right behavior. Even when people fall and do wrong, they still know there is a difference between right and wrong because people around them help enforce this knowledge. This is what I believe the Word means when it speaks of the Word as being a pedagogue.

[24] Wherefore the law was our **pedagogue** in Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
[25] But after the faith is come, we are no longer under a pedagogue. For you are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:24-26 Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition

This is a point of confusion for those who rely on only the English translations. The NKJV has "pedagogue" as "tutor." The original meaning of these words was not what it is today, but rather more of a protector while "on the way."

It would SEEM to say that we are no longer under the law because we came to faith. In Greek and Roman context, it reflects the understanding that wealthy families hired a "pedagogue" to escort their children to their teachers and back home. This was to **externally protect** them from other influences that could lead them into questionable or dangerous circumstances. When the child came to his own faith, he had come to a personal belief and no longer needed a protector, ideally anyway! His own faith, now from **internal conviction** and relationship with our God, would then become the basis for decisions. Oh, how life might be different if our society had been more conscientious about protecting our young people from those questionable circumstances while they were too vulnerable!

A quick digression here: when I was first learning about psychological testing such as the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) I learned that one question in particular reflected an entirely different understanding than mine. "If you could sneak into a theatre without being caught, would you do it?" my paraphrase from memory. My answer would be no, because I know that God knows and it wouldn't be in secret. However, to those who provided the interpretations of responses, they considered the normal response to be "yes." To say "no" was regarded as "faking good" meaning that the response would be intended to make one "look good" rather than coming from a personal conviction of faith. In grad school, I was taught that the professional assessment was that if one thought there MIGHT be an eternal God, it meant a neurotic diagnosis but if one believed with certainty that there is an eternal God, it meant a diagnosis of psychosis. In nearly 50 years, it has

only gotten more blatant. Even counselors who appear to be providing a Biblically based model are still saying some things like “whatever you decide is right.”

Every person needs to conclude what their standard for Truth will be; will we submit to our Father God’s standard or try to make our own? This is the task to be accomplished during childhood growing to maturity. Do we agree with His Word that God’s ways are the yardstick to measure our choices or do we think that each of us is wise enough decide for ourselves what truth is? This of course, is the perennial problem ever since the adversary influenced Eve that God was holding out on her and that she could be “like God.”

If one does a word search in the online Blue Letter Bible on “lies” the result is a listing of 51 verses. There are more when related words are added.

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

You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity. **You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way,** In the multitude of your mighty men. Hos 10:13 NKJV

“**Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad,** whom I have not made sad; and **you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.** “Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.” ’ ” Eze 13:22-23 NKJV

These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: A proud look,
A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil, **A false witness *who* speaks lies,**
And one who sows discord among brethren. Proverbs 6:16-19 NKJV

At least two things that our LORD hates involve lies, and I think more could be added.

Did you ever notice that this list is in direct opposition to the list of the Spirits that rest on our Messiah, as listed in Isaiah 11:2:

The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

So for those who ARE striving to “hit the mark” and be pleasing to our heavenly Father and our Messiah, here are some thoughts about identifying types of lies, in ourselves and in those around us.

The most blatant lie is of course, stating or leading others to believe that something is true when it is known not to be true. This is usually called “commission” of a lie.

A more devious lie is one where information that would be needed to more correctly understand something is left out…called an “omission.”

And an indirect kind of lying is when questions are avoided and a response is intended to redirect AWAY from whatever is at hand; to convince another of one’s innocence or character by providing other information; called a “character lie” or a “lie of influence.”

Prayerful assessment of ourselves, asking the Ruach haKodesh/Holy Spirit to search us and know us (Psalm 139) to show if there be any wicked way in us, including lying… and be prepared to repent if something is brought to light! How much better to be found with clean hands and a pure heart! Then we can be part of His solution, not “strengthening the hands of the wicked.”

The following three suggestions were modified from Vanessa Van Edwards 2017 article on Types of Lies.

For other people, lies of commission can be handled with more careful attention to information given, double checking, or checking back to see if the information remains the same over time.

Lies of omission also can be detected with seeking additional information from a source other than the original.

“Character or influence lies” involve listening to find out if there is a really a relevant response to your question or if extra information is being provided without answering, in which case one can simply repeat the question until it is answered.

I would add that when lying becomes habitual, a regular practice, it seems that people can become very good at it. The nervousness or avoidance of eye contact can be a giveaway for someone who isn’t accustomed to lying when they do lie, but the practiced liar has disciplined themselves not to react. There are some personality disorders that involve the ability to lie with a straight face when personal gain is involved. To protect oneself from these issues usually involves an awareness over time of patterns of behavior or outcomes that don’t match what was originally indicated.

Because we are always still dealing with our flesh, the world system and the adversary, it seems that nearly anyone can be occasionally inflating the truth or sidestepping it, or even out right telling an untruth. I do consider this a sin, but it is not quite the same thing as making lying a habitual practice without a desire to change. This all involves the need for repentance and restoration which we are grateful to have!

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 John 1:8-10 NKJV

Our eternity is greatly influenced by our willingness to ferret out any kind of lies that have grown too familiar or comfortable. When we concentrate on THE source of Truth and HIS ways, we can be a part of that pedagogue or community who helps protect those around who are still "on the way" to their own faith that is strong enough to withstand ungodly influences!

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 Lamb's Book of Life. Rev 22: 27 NKJV