

# Problems With Falsehood

By  
Curtis Pope

The last two weeks have provided us with a powerful object lesson on the hazards of lying. Brian Williams, news anchor and managing editor for NBC Nightly News, was caught in lies he told over the years about his being shot down in a helicopter during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Apparently the incident did not take place, and others who were there exposed his inaccurate rendering of the incident. He also was exposed for lying about seeing a body float by his hotel in the French Quarter in New Orleans when no such high water occurred in that area. This and other falsehoods finally took their toll on his credibility to the extent that he has been put on unpaid leave for six months and his future with NBC is in doubt.

If such consequences of lies told can be evident in a world that cares little about biblical truth and ethics, how much more should this make us as Christians consider the damage that can be caused by not being entirely truthful. Let us briefly consider four problems inherent in falsehood.

1. Lying Distorts Reality: The word "truth" in the New Testament carries with it the primary idea of reality. Any lie distorts that reality, just as the mirrors in the fun house at the carnival distort the images they reflect. While this can be dangerous in the physical realm, it is especially devastating in the spiritual. Jesus said in John 8:32, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." In John 14:6 he claims to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and thus the only way to the Father. Jesus' mission was obviously to exemplify and expose us to reality in a world distorted by sin. Any dabbling we do in the

alteration of truth, adds to the cosmic problem rather than the spiritual solution.

2. Lying Compounds Itself:As all of us have discovered in lies we have told, further falsehood is required to cover up for past lies told. Notice in the last two weeks the compounding of lies Brian Williams had to tell of false conversations and events to cover up his initial lie.

3. Lying Ruins One's Credibility:As Williams' suspension shows, even the ungodly expect credibility out of those who report the news. Lying, as I instructed my children when they were younger, creates a situation in which everything that a person subsequently says is in doubt. A good reputation is so difficult to construct. One lie can destroy that which took a lifetime to build.

4. God Detests and Will Punish All Liars:As was mentioned before, God sent Christ to correct the spiritual distortions that Satan, "the father of all lies" (John 8:44), has used to mislead the world. Any lie puts us in league with the devil in constructing such distortions. Therefore in describing those who will inhabit the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, the Lord in Revelation 21:8 includes "all liars".

I realize that it is easy for all of us to think that "white lies" can be used simply to keep us out of trouble or enhance our image with no harm done. As the Brian Williams debacle displays, even in this world there are consequences for such distortions. It is therefore important for us as Christians to realize that even minor alterations in reality can hold dire consequences here and eternal ones hereafter.