

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 61: Ancient wisdom for modern dilemmas

Topic introduction

Today, we are chewing on a thought-provoking segment from The World and Everything In It. In the Legal Docket segment on February 26, Jenny Rough and Nick Eicher talked about “degrees of truth.” They examined two legal cases connected by a single question. What is a lie? And is it ever okay to tell one?

Key terms and resources: lie, truth, testimony, neighbor, omission, commission, righteousness, good/evil, shalom, Corrie ten Boom, Rahab and the spies (Joshua 2), TV series: Person of Interest, Film: The Dark Knight

Questions

What is a lie? What is a lie of omission? What is a half-truth?

Are there ever times when it's permissible, or even good, to lie? Explain your answer.

How and where do we define what is good (“okay”)?

Where do we define what is required of us regarding honesty and lies?

What do we lose when we shorten, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor,” to just, “You shall not lie”? What does “false testimony” mean? What does “against your neighbor” mean? What does the law require of us?

What are sins of omission and sins of commission? Give examples.

What dilemma is presented in the stories of Nazis and the Holocaust? What dilemma did Christians face? What do you know about those stories? What does it mean to “bear false witness against my neighbor” in this situation?

Is it ever evil to lie to an evil man? Explain your thinking. What biblical stories help you navigate this difficult question? (Consider Joshua 2.)

How does Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere help us understand the depth, breadth, and height of what is required by the Lord's righteous law? What is different about the “letter of the law” versus the “heart of the law”?

What do we learn about our hearts and our need when we consider Jesus' teaching?

Activity: Take each of the commandments in turn and run them through Jesus' elevating statements in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5): "You have heard it said ____ but I say to you ____."

If murdering is breaking the law, how is keeping an individual from taking another's life an act of love?

Is one law inferior to another? Explain.

What do we understand about the commands the Lord has given us and where do we increase our understanding (across the scope of scripture)? What else informs our thinking, beliefs, and actions?

Scriptural anchors/provision

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? — Micah 6:8

For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him. — Genesis 18:19

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