

Different Ways of Deceiving

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1. Exaggeration

“All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward [crooked] or perverse in them” (Prov. 8:8 KJV).

- Do I exaggerate past accomplishments?
- Am I exaggerating the results or fruits of my efforts in serving the Lord?
- Am I overstating the truth by using words like “always” and “never?”
- Do I make sweeping generalizations about people or situations?
- Do I embellish details to make a story more humorous or interesting?
- Am I overstating (or understating) the seriousness of a situation in order to make a point or for greater effect?

2. Flattery

“Everyone lies to his neighbor; their flattering lips speak with deception” (Ps. 12:2).

(Flattery is saying things to others that you wouldn’t say behind their back. Slander is saying things about others that you wouldn’t say to their face.)

- Do I give insincere praise?
- Do I compliment another to enhance my own reputation in his or her eyes?

3. Lying

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful” (Prov. 12:22).

- Am I slandering someone—spreading false reports with the intent to inflict hurt?
- Am I answering direct questions with untruths in order to protect my reputation?
- Do I falsify time cards, employment applications, expense reports, or tax returns for personal benefit?

4. Misleading

“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men” (2 Cor. 8:21).

- Do I leave a false impression (even though my spoken words may be true)?
- Do I communicate facts selectively to influence others for my own purposes?
- Have I ever given misleading references to prospective employers?

5. Inaccuracy

“We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb. 13:18 KJV).

- Do I fail to verify the facts before repeating a story?
- Am I careless with regard to factual details of stories?
- Am I failing to speak precisely or to make sure that my words are literally true?

6. Deception

“Deliver my soul, O Lord, . . . from a deceitful tongue” (Ps. 120:2 KJV).

- Do I ever attempt to create a better impression of myself than is honestly true?
- Am I allowing people to say things that are untrue about another person while implying consent by my silence?
- Do I give the impression that I am more spiritually mature and committed than is actually true?
- Am I allowing my mate to believe that I am morally pure and faithful, when I have failed morally?
- Have I covered up sins of my past?

7. Hypocrisy

“Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart” (Prov. 26:23).

- Do I speak kindly to another while harboring hatred or bitterness in my heart?
- Do I praise another to his face while criticizing him behind his back?

8. Inconsistency

“For I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal. 3:6 KJV).

- Am I flip-flopping on issues, depending on my “audience?”
- Do I say what I know the other person wants to hear, rather than what I really believe?
- Do I put a different spin on matters, depending on who I am talking to?

9. Guile

“Blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit there is no guile” (Ps. 32:2 KJV).

- Am I maintaining hidden agendas and ulterior motives when dealing with people?
- Do I look for loopholes in a contract, rather than honoring the intent and spirit of the agreement?

10. Broken promises

“Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? . . . [He] who keeps his oath even when it hurts” (Psalm 15:1, 4).

- Do I promise to pray for someone and then neglect to do so?
- Do I agree to be somewhere at a certain time or to meet a need, but fail to do so?
- Am I failing to fulfill a financial obligation?