
Words of Truth

“We Don’t Say Santa Claus Is Real, But We...”

By: Brian A. Yeager

As a young child I was told that Santa Claus was real. Each year, my mother had us make cookies for Santa and get milk for his reindeer. All of the gifts under the tree were “from Santa”. As my brother and I got older the lies grew to try and satisfy our questions. When my brother told me to pull on Santa’s beard at the mall, mom covered that one up by saying it was an elf because Santa was busy. I can remember a lot of lies my mother told me to cover up the fact that Santa was not real. I was crushed when I finally figured out he wasn’t real.

As most of you know, I didn’t live with my mother all of my youth. When I was fifteen I moved in with my father whom was a supposed preacher of the Gospel. I had two younger siblings from the marriage he was in at that time. My dad, a self-proclaimed man of truth, did not outright lie about Santa being real to my younger siblings. Instead, he took the approach of allowing them to believe whatever they wanted to believe.

As I grew older and got married, Katrina and I allowed Trevor to believe in Santa Claus. We thought it was harmless. Yet, we grew in the truth and realized that lying is always wrong (Leviticus 19:11, Psalms 119:29, Proverbs 6:16-19, Proverbs 12:19, Proverbs 12:22, Acts 5:1-10, Colossians 3:9, and Revelation 21:8). We realized that we had sinned in allowing our son to believe a lie just as we had sinned in propagating that lie. We had to repent of that (Luke 13:3).

During that time I, in ignorance, valued my dad’s counsel. I talked with him about what Katrina and I had thought about allowing Trevor to believe in Santa Claus. My dad reminded me of his policy of neither confirming nor denying the existence of Santa. His opinion was that we should allow Trevor to figure this out on his own. Katrina and I decided that we could not scripturally conclude that this was wise counsel. We would never allow Trevor to believe any other lies, why would we do so on the Santa lie.

Over the years I have dealt with much heartache over my parents being lost. Neither my mother nor father will be reasonable about their spiritual conditions. My mother has the lie at all cost mentality while my father has the leave it alone mentality. I got to thinking about this and realized that the approach my parents took with the Santa Claus lie is the same approach they take concerning everything that matters in life.

The Santa Claus Lie Mentality

Most will agree that lying is sinful. Thus, it is easy to show that people like my mother are wrong. Where people struggle is in seeing that allowing others to believe in lies is the SAME thing as

telling the lies. Those, like my dad, like to tell people what they want to hear (to a certain extent). The difficulty about such people is that they have some areas that they will stand for truth in, just not all. My dad will preach against mechanical instruments of music in worship being wrong, but he will allow puppet shows in the local church he works with. He knows that this is wrong as he preaches against using entertainment as a means to preach the Gospel, but he will not make the applications to the errors of the congregation he is a part of. He can teach on authority, but not apply it and that allows his conscience to be clear (falsely so).

We cannot allow people to believe lies. Consider an example concerning Micaiah the son of Imlah. The king of Israel had surrounded himself with prophets who were merely "yes men". That is, they told the king whatever he wanted to hear. Notice: *"Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king"* (I Kings 22:6). Though these four hundred men had told the king to go to battle, Jehoshaphat wanted to hear from another prophet (I Kings 22:7). When Micaiah was approached he was told to go along with what the other prophets had said (I Kings 22:9-13). Micaiah would not just go along to get along: *"And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak"* (I Kings 22:14). Micaiah exposed the lies of those false prophets and was sent to prison for it (I Kings 22:15-36).

Like Jesus (John 3:19-21 and John 8:12), we are supposed to expose darkness (Ephesians 5:11). We should be trying to turn people from darkness to light (Acts 26:18). The Lord said: *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another"* (Ephesians 4:25). The only time we should allow people to believe lies is when they reject the attempts to teach them the truth (Romans 1:16-24 and II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Christians are supposed to be honest in all things (Romans 12:17 and II Corinthians 8:21). Truth should be part of our character (Proverbs 3:3, Proverbs 13:5, and II Corinthians 4:2). We should all be able to say this: *"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"* (II Corinthians 13:8). Now, could you really make that statement if you take the position that you will just allow someone to believe whatever he or she wants to believe? Could you really stand back while someone falls for a deception if you love truth and hate darkness?

Don't trust people that are comfortable with any form of deception (Jeremiah 9:4-5). Those who will allow someone to believe a lie about Santa Claus will also allow people to believe lies concerning the Gospel. There are a lot of people like my dad who have convinced themselves that saying nothing is not wrong when others believe lies. Don't fall for that lie (Ezekiel 3:17-18)!

Conclusion

Do good people practice deception? Here is your answer: *"Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy"* (Proverbs 12:20). Whether it is the Santa lie or some other false doctrine, we should hate and abhor lying (Psalms 119:163). Godly people HATE them that regard [protect; keep] lying vanities (Psalms 31:6). Let's never allow deception to go unchecked. Let's realize that while some may like deceptions, the end result is never good (Proverbs 20:17). It is our place to be the voices of truth and reason in this world (Philippians 2:14-16).