

TELLING THE TRUTH
Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 9
Exodus 20:16
Rick Warren

A few weeks ago Time magazine did a cover story called "Lying, Everybody's Doing It". It starts off like this: "Lies, lies, lies. The current political campaign is erupting into a series of charges and counter charges of dishonesty and deception. All of which raises the question: Is anyone around here telling the truth?"

A recent survey of Americans said 66% of Americans say it's not wrong to tell lies. Only 31% agreed with the statement, "Honesty is the best policy." Dr. Leonard Keeler, inventor of the lie detector machine, has tested 25,000 individuals and come to the conclusion that human beings are basically deceptive. No kidding?

A little boy was caught lying by his dad. His dad said, "You know there are no liars in heaven." Son: "Dad have you ever told a lie?" "yes" "Mom? pastor Rick?" "yes" Son: Then I guess the only people that are going to be in heaven are God and George Washington.

How can we be honest in a dishonest world? How do I tell the truth?

God says lying is an intention to mislead and when you're just telling a half a truth you're telling a whole lie. You can lie by falsifying or you can lie by concealing. You need to tell the truth completely.

When you deliberately hold back half the truth, you're telling a partial truth, you're being deceptive. You can lie without even saying a word.

I heard about a teen age boy who was supposed to be home at midnight and came in at two a.m. in the morning, but everyone was asleep. He crept up the stairs and as he did so he hit a stair that squeaked and his dad woke up. "Is that you Bobby?" Yes "What time is it?" Before he could say a word the coo-coo clock struck twice. He said it was the most ingenious moment of my life when I stood there a coo-cooed ten more times.

II. HOW TO TELL THE TRUTH

There are four things God says about lying:

1. Tell the truth completely.

2. Tell the truth consistently.
3. Tell the truth lovingly.
4. Tell the truth tactfully.

1. TELL THE TRUTH COMPLETELY.

Proverbs 10:10 "Someone who holds back the truth causes trouble." He's talking about concealing. What kind of trouble? You cause resentment, mistrust, superficiality. You get into trouble by not saying what you mean and not meaning what you say.

When Kay and I got married, during the engagement period, we lied to each other, not overtly but lied by not facing the issues. There were major differences in our relationship that we were just ignoring. Since we lived in different towns and only got together on the weekends anytime we had a major problem we would just sweep it under the carpet. We didn't deal with it. We would just deal with it later. The bump in the carpet kept getting bigger and bigger.

If you don't face issues honestly eventually in a relationship it will explode. If you are not being honest about your feelings in your marriage you are undermining your marriage. God says tell the truth completely.

Proverbs 28:23 "In the end people appreciate frankness more than flattery." Circle the phrase "in the end". It may be unpleasant at first. You have an employee that's goofing off on the job and you have to reprimand them, you may have to fire them. They may not appreciate it then but if it helps them change their character it will help in the long run.

in theory we all agree that honesty is the best policy. But when it comes down to being honest will cause a confrontation we don't think it's such a good idea after all. God says, in the end people appreciate honesty. So tell the truth completely.

2. TELL THE TRUTH CONSISTENTLY.

Being honest 80% of the time is not integrity. It's like the little boy who cried wolf. Eventually you don't know whether the guy's telling the truth or not so you don't believe him at all. They may be telling you the truth 80% of the time but if they're not truthful all the time, how do you know if this is not in the 20% that's false. So you must tell the truth consistently.

The Bible says, "Let our lives lovingly express the truth in all things speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly." Honesty is to be a life style. I've got to be consistent.

Prov. 11:3 "People who can't be trusted are destroyed by their own dishonesty." Circle the word "destroyed". Dishonesty destroys. Nobody has a good enough memory to be a good liar. If you lie you have to remember what did you say to each person. If you tell the truth at all times you don't have to remember anything because you've always told the truth. Lying sabotages success. It destroys relationships. It damages character. God says don't do it. Tell the truth consistently. Every relationship is built on one word -- trust. Truth telling produces trust building. Deception destroys trust. If you are a dishonest person pretty soon you have no relationships, nobody can trust you.

Proverbs 13:7 "Reliable communication permits progress." Sometimes people come to me and say "We're not making any progress in our marriage. We've been married 10 years... we've got the same old problems. We're just not making any progress."

I always say the same thing. "Somebody's not telling the truth." Maybe both of them. Or you're not facing it. When you're truthful and hang in there you make progress. You want to keep your marriage out of court? Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

But being honest does not mean being brutal.

3. TELL THE TRUTH LOVINGLY.

Eph 4:15 "Speak the truth in a spirit of love." Don't use the truth as a club. Don't beat people over the head with the truth.

Think of somebody you would like to help change. If you want to help somebody change you've got to remember two things:

1. People change easier and people change faster when you speak the truth in a spirit of love.
2. People always perceive truth without love as an attack. It doesn't matter if it is the truth. They resist it, become defensive against it, don't want to hear it, because they perceive it as an attack. You must speak the truth in love.

An old Arab proverb: When you shoot an arrow dip it in honey first.

How do I know if I'm speaking the truth in love? Ask yourself the question, Who am I trying to benefit from this? Am I trying to change them so things will be easier on me? Or am I really sharing this with the friend or loved one because I really care about them and want them to be the best they can be. If I'm

doing it for their benefit then that's speaking the truth in love.

"Speak only [circle "only"] what is helpful for building others up [not me] according to their needs [not my needs], that it may benefit those who listen [not that it may benefit me]."

4. TELL THE TRUTH TACTFULLY

Whenever you have a need to share a tough truth the solution is never deception. It is tact not deception. Consider: Who are you not being honest with? What problem are you ignoring in a relationship? What are you pretending is not there? What will you not face up to because you're afraid to face the truth about you or somebody else? The truth sets you free. But when you speak the truth you must speak it completely, consistently, lovingly, and tactfully.

"Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword. But wisely spoken words can heal." You have an option with your words: you can either hurt people or you can heal them. You can develop people or you can destroy them. You can build them up or you can tear them down. You can delight or you can devastate. He's saying your words have tremendous power. If you think about it, emotional wounds last longer than physical wounds. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" is not true. You need to share with tact.

When you speak the truth in love and with tact you can learn how to make a point without making an enemy. That's very important in saving your marriage, your relationship with your children, with people you work with.

Prov. 16:23 "Intelligent people think before they speak." Circle "intelligent". Contemplate before you communicate. Think it through. Put your mind in gear before you put your mouth in gear.

I would suggest that you plan your presentation. If there is something in your marriage or in a relationship that is a problem that you have not been willing to deal with, you need to set down and plan out your presentation. How could I introduce this in the best way? Choose the right time. Timing is everything. Don't lay it on them as they're going to sleep at night. Don't do it when they're tired, fatigued, hurried. Find the proper time to deal with the truth honestly.

If you'll do these four things, the Bible says you will begin to be an honest person. Speak the truth completely, consistently, lovingly and tactfully. The problem is we don't do that. Why don't we do that?

Matthew 12:34 "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." Jesus is saying the real problem is not my mouth but my heart. What's coming out of my mouth, these lies, are really an indication of what's inside of me. It's not what comes out that matters it's what's inside of me.

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, lying and slander." The heart of the issue when it comes to lying is an issue of the heart. This is the problem. If I am going to become a person of integrity, if I'm going to become an honest person, I have to deal, not with my lips, I have to deal with what motivates me to lie.

Now go back to point I.

I. WHY DO WE LIE?

Once you understand the motivation behind your lying, then you can deal with the real issue. Lying is not your real problem. It's the symptom of a deeper problem. I find it helpful to categorize lies by what motivates the different kinds. Augustine said there are eight different kinds of lies. Mark Twain said there were 869 different kinds of lies. How he got that I don't know. I've listed just five of them, What are the primary motivations for each of these lies?

1. The cruel lie. This is the kind of lie that is intentionally destructive and malicious. You tell it to get revenge. You don't like somebody. They've hurt you. They've hurt you for some reason so you're going to get even. You misrepresent them. You make up some lie about them. Politicians do this all the time. They spend money on ads to put out cruel lies. This is called slander. Slander means when you make up something about somebody that's not true with the intentional purpose of damaging their reputation. The Sadducees did this to Jesus. They just trumped up charges so they could hang Him on the cross. The cruel lie is an intentional mischievous lie.

What is the motive behind that kind of lie? Jealousy, revenge, hurt, anger, hate, resentment. I think all of these things are motives behind it. Let's just summarize them under the term resentment. When I don't like you and I'm bitter against you and I'm angry, hurt or whatever and I get resentful then it will be very easy for me to offer a cruel lie just to get back at you.

2. The cowardly lie. This is the kind of lie you tell to escape consequences. You want to avoid punishment. You're trying to protect yourself, prevent pain. "My dog ate my homework." Adam told this kind of lie in the Garden of Eden, when he sinned, took it like a man and blamed his wife. When you don't want to get into trouble you tell a cowardly lie.

What is the motive behind that kind of lie? Fear is the motivation behind a cowardly lie. The Bible says the fear of man is a trap. When a person has an overwhelming personality and you just go along to get along -- kids do that. They brag about taking drugs when they haven't taken drugs. They're afraid that people won't think they're cool. The peer pressure. Or when you don't have the courage to say "no". That's a cowardly lie. Has someone ever asked you to do something and you said, "I just can't" when you really mean "I don't want to." There is a big difference between "I don't want to" and "I can't" -- it's called a lie. That's a cowardly lie.

3. The conceited lie. This is when you lie to impress. You're trying to create an image or cover up low self-esteem so you brag. Bragging and lying are first cousins. They go together. When you exaggerate and prop yourself up that's a conceited lie.

What is the motive behind that kind of lie? Insecurity. What comes off as pride and ego, when you pull away the layers is a very frightened, insecure person. If I don't think I'm good enough as I am then I have to puff up my resume (which studies say 40% of the people do). Or the fish gets bigger each time. You begin to tell these stories because it's not good enough just where you are. Really at the root of it is insecurity. This is the kind of lie we use when we try to hide our hurt. If somebody has hurt us real deeply and you say things like "That doesn't bother me" when it does. If somebody is making a threat and you say "Go ahead and leave and see how I feel" you will feel it. That's a lie based on insecurity.

4. The calculated lie. This is the kind of lie used to manipulate other people. We want our way. When we think I need to get what I want to get when I want to get it.

It can be motivated by greed or selfishness. This lie says, "This is what I want therefore I'm going to do whatever it takes to get it even if it means lie." Con men use this lie all the time. If you love money you will use a calculated lie to get it. It's basically selfishness -- I want what I want so I'll lie to get it.

5. The convenient lie. The convenient lie we tell because it takes effort to tell the truth. It takes energy, time to tell the truth. Do you kids ever ask you to explain something and you

don't want to take the time and you didn't want to get involved and just said something, a convenient lie. Because it takes time to explain. Or you don't want to get involved with something so you tell the officer, "I didn't see anything" when you really did. Or when you're too busy to check the facts you tell something you haven't really checked up on and it may just be false gossip. Did you know that to steal something is a crime. But did you know that to receive stolen property and then sell it and give it to somebody else, to pass on stolen property, is a greater crime than the actual crime of stealing it according to our law. It's a felony. Receiving stolen goods and passing them on is a greater crime than stealing. I think that's true with gossip. People give you stolen goods on somebody else and you pass it on, God says Don't do it.

The convenient lie we just do it because we just don't want to take the time. What is the motive behind that kind of lie? Laziness is the motivation behind the convenient lie. This is often called diplomacy. This is the kind of lie you tell in social situations. When you don't want to offend anybody. When you're at somebody's house, the time is dragging on and you say, "I'm sorry, we've got to get home. Our babysitter has a curfew." You'd rather say that than "Frankly, we're bored to tears here and we'd just like to leave."

Has anybody ever asked you to come somewhere and you didn't want to go and they really wanted you to come and you really didn't want to go. Finally you said, "Sure, I'll go" with no intention of ever going. The convenient lie is when you say, "You look great today!"... When we lie, we think we're doing the right thing at the time. But the Bible says in Psalm 34, "Would you like to enjoy life? Do you want a long life and happiness? Keep from speaking evil and telling lies."

Jesus said that what's in your heart is what's going to come out of your mouth. So the heart of the issue is the issue of the heart -- if my heart is filled with resentment then I'm going to find myself telling lies. If my heart is filled with fear and worry then I'm going to find myself telling cowardly lies. If my heart is filled with insecurity then I will find myself easily telling conceited lies. If my heart is filled with selfishness I will end up telling calculated lies to get what I want. If my heart is filled with laziness I will find myself telling convenient lies.

So what's the solution? The only way to stop lying, if you want to be a person of integrity, is to get a new heart. Jesus specializes in heart transplants. He says, Let me fill your heart with love instead of selfishness and joy and peace instead of hate and confidence instead of insecurity and energy and power

instead of laziness. Jesus said I am the truth. The closer you get to Jesus Christ the more you're going to love the truth and speak the truth, the more you're going to live the truth. Because Jesus said I am the truth.

So how do I break this habit of lying?

In the first place, the beginning of honesty is the confession of dishonesty. That's the starting point. If you really say, "I want to be a person of integrity. I want to break this bad habit I've got of either cruel lies and gossip, cowardly lies, or conceited lies or bragging, whatever. I want to break this habit in my life, starting with first saying "God I'm a liar. I admit it." How many lies does it take to be a liar? One. You're a liar. God I'm a liar and I admit that I don't always tell the truth, sometimes I tell half truths. You ask Christ to forgive you and give you the power to change and say put a new heart in me. It won't happen overnight. But He will begin to replace the deception with truth as you begin to let Christ more and more control your heart. You do that by making a choice and saying, God help me to be more interested in character than in reputation. If you're more interested in reputation you'll lie to build your reputation. Reputation is what other people think you are. Character is what you really are. Reputation is what you want everybody to believe. Character is what you are in the dark. Reputation is what impresses people. Character is what impressed God. Character is what lasts for eternity. When you say God I'm more interested in character than reputation, then you'll tell the truth even if it's not good for your reputation because you know in the long run for eternity its building my character. You ask God to help you, put a new heart inside of you.

Then I would encourage you to get some support. If you're really serious about this ask one person to hold you accountable. Say, Help me with my speech. Help me to be honest. God says, if you want to live a long life, a life of joy, peace and not guilt He says keep from speaking evil and telling lies.

I would challenge you to take a calculated risk and begin speaking the truth to people this week. Do it in a loving and tactful way.

TELLING THE TRUTH
Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 9
Exodus 20:16
Rick Warren

Exodus 20:16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

"Would you like to enjoy life? Do you want long life and happiness? Then keep from speaking evil and from telling lies."
Ps. 34:12-13 (GN)

I. WHY DO WE LIE?

Type	Motive
• The cruel lie.	
• The cowardly lie.	
• The conceited lie.	
• The calculated lie.	
• The convenient lie.	

II. HOW TO TELL THE TRUTH

1. TELL THE TRUTH _____

"Someone who holds back the truth causes trouble."
Pr. 10:10 (GN)

"In the end people appreciate frankness more than flattery."
Pr. 28:23 (LB)

2. TELL THE TRUTH _____

"Let our lives lovingly express the truth in all things - speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly."
Eph. 4:15 (Amp)

"people who can't be trusted are destroyed by their own dishonesty."

Pr. 11:3 (GN)

"Reliable communication permits progress."

Pr. 13:17 (LB)

3. TELL THE TRUTH _____

"Speak the truth in a spirit of love."

Eph. 4:15 (GN)

"(Speak) only what is helpful for building others up,
according to their needs, that it may benefit those who
listen."

Eph. 4:29

4. TELL THE TRUTH _____

"Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but
wisely spoken words can heal."

Pr. 12:18 (GN)

"Intelligent people think before they speak."

Pr. 16:23 (GN)

"There is a right time and a right way to do everything."

Eccl. 8:6 (GN)

The real problem

"For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of"

Matt. 12:34 (GN)