

## **The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth!**

*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*  
(Eph 4:25)

Walking in holiness, walking like Christ affects us in every area. Now, Paul is going to illustrate the ‘learn Christ to be renewed in your mind, put off the old and put on the new principle’ in a number of areas. Honesty, v 25, Emotions v26, 30-32, Integrity and work v27, Speech v29, 5:4, 5:12, immorality and covetousness 5:3. Tonight we want to look at honesty – putting off lying and speaking the truth.

One of the most integral parts of holiness is honesty. In fact, you cannot progress toward holiness without it. So at the top of Paul’s list of practical commands is do not lie, speak truth to one another.

Man lies because he has forsaken Truth. What is truth? God Himself is truth. Truth is simply reality. It is what truly is. It is reality without any misrepresentation, without any false interpretation, without any watering down or embellishing. And the fundamental reality is God. God is the reality. God is the reason, the source; God is the point of life.

*“For from him and through him and to him are all things.” (Rom 11:36)*

Therefore as man has forsaken truth, he increasingly embraces lies. Romans 1:25 tells us that man exchanged the truth about God for a lie. Because he refuses to turn to the light that he knows exists, because he refuses to retain God in his mind, everything he does and looks at and thinks about becomes part of a big lie - the lie that I can have my own life apart from God. Forsaking God, a man’s life is filled with lies - lies about God, about life, and especially about himself. It lies about who we are. It lies about what we have done. It lies about others – who they are and what they have done. It lies about God and life and meaning and reality. He lies to others. He lies to himself. And pretty soon – he believes his own lies.

Man, rejecting God as his life, uses lies to try and find and live life. The old man seeks advantage through lying. It seeks to protect itself, cover itself, hide itself, promote itself and enlarge itself through twisting, altering, changing or denying the truth. In fact, Jeremiah 17:9 says:

*“The heart is deceitful above all things” In other words, the single most recognisable trait of the human heart, is that it is a lying heart. It specialises in lying. Lying is not merely something the sinful heart does, it is something the sinful heart is.*

But I John 2:21 says something we might regard as the obvious and so miss the profound reality behind the verse. It says: no lie is of the truth.

No lie, no falsehood is part of God’s reality. And therefore, when you take part in it, when you lie, you are slipping deeper into darkness. You are not helping yourself at all;

you are getting further lost in a dark cave of your own making. Keep turning away from the light, keep rejecting it, and you will be so deep inside the cave of lies, you will never see the light again. The more you lie about yourself, others and God, the further you slip from what really is, and you will end up in eternal darkness. Jonah said something interesting when he said:

*“They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. (Jon 2:8)*

Lying is forsaking the light that will save you. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Rev 21:8)

God hates lying, because He hates distortions of His universe. His made the universe, and it operates in a particular way. He hates anything that distorts, warps and twists His reality. If you do not obey His instructions; if you do not believe what He says about yourself, about Himself, about others, you will malfunction and you will destroy yourself.

The walk of holiness is going to necessarily mean that we forsake lying, and embrace truth. We are to put off lying, be renewed in our minds with the knowledge of Christ as Truth, and we are to put on honesty. In order to help us to put off lying, we might want to take some time to identify what lying looks like in our lives. The Bible is giving us a simple command here – to put away lying. But it gives us many different examples of how lying manifests itself. If we can identify it, we can forsake it.

Our lies take different forms. Some of them depend on our makeup, on our relationship with God.

#### 4 kinds of lies:

The first kind of lie is the kind we are most familiar with – the **outright lie**. This is the blatant, no-holding-back denial of the truth. This is saying “No” when you know the truth is ‘Yes’. Or ‘Yes’ when you know it is ‘No’. Remember Peter, the night of Christ’s betrayal and arrest? They said to him, “You were also with Jesus!”

And Peter’s reply, “I tell you, I do not know the man!” - an outright lie. We like to think that we do not tell many of these outright lies. But there are other kinds of lies.

The second kind of lie is a **half-truth**. A half-truth is of course not a truth at all – it is a lie. When the teenager is asked by his mother, “Did you go to school today?” And he says, “Yes”. And what he means is, ‘Yes, I did go to school. I met two others there and then we sneaked away and went to the mall for the rest of the day.’ A half-truth. Abraham told a half-truth when the people of Egypt asked him about Sarah. Fearing they would kill him to get beautiful Sarah, he said, “She’s my sister’. Well, she was his half-sister, but he left the part out about being his wife. A half-truth is no better than an outright lie.

The third kind of lie is **evading the truth**. Do you remember when God asked Cain, “Cain, where is your brother Abel?” What was his response? He evaded the truth by

saying, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” When we try to avoid answering a direct question by many different methods – it is the same as an outright lie.

The fourth kind of lie is **exaggeration**. Exaggeration is when we try to make the truth seem more intense than it is, to build our case, to make our point larger than it really is. It might sound surprising to hear that even the godly prophet Elijah was guilty of this. When he had reached depths of discouragement, he cried out, “I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts:

*... for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (1Ki 19:10)*

Now did Elijah truly know if absolutely everyone had turned away from God? No, he didn’t. And in his desperation, he was careless with the truth. God told him He had seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah embellished on the truth, and God reproved him for it. Exaggeration is a kind of lie. Whether it be over exaggeration to make seem things larger, or under exaggeration to make things seem not too bad – either way it is a lie.

Those are the four kinds of lies. But there are many ways that we apply these kinds of lies. We do not simply lie in terms of answering questions. We lie to others in many different ways.

Consider eleven ways that we lie:

**Hypocrisy.** Hypocrisy is the putting on of a face. It is acting – acting out a part which you think will gain you respect or admiration or approval in men’s eyes. When we pretend to be something we know we are not, we are lying. Hypocrisy is a great danger in church settings, where our pride wants to appear spiritual and holy and godly to fit in, or appear more spiritually mature than the next man. The Pharisees were masters at this – praying on street corners, blowing a trumpet when they gave, looking sad when they fasted; they made their phylacteries broad and the fringes of their garments long. It was all an act - a lie. Jesus said of them:

*“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” (Mat 23:28)*

**Justifying.** Lying tries to make us look better. Somewhere, sometime in life we fail, we make mistakes, we lose, and we sin. And justifying is when we find any and every reason to vindicate ourselves. Though the fault is ours, and we know it is ours, and probably most others know it is ours, we justify ourselves. Remember King Saul? Whenever he was guilty of something – he justified himself. In I Samuel 13, he was guilty of offering a sacrifice which Samuel was supposed to offer. When Samuel arrived, he was displeased, and asked Saul why he had done it. “The people were scattered, and you were late – so I forced myself, and made the sacrifice.” Two chapters later, he is instructed to go and destroy the Amalekites, and leave nothing, and return with no spoil. Instead, they spare

the king, and return with cattle. Again, Samuel confronts, and the justification is – I decided to sacrifice these to God, plus it was the people that made me do it.

*“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.” (Pro 26:12)*

**Blaming** – Linked to justifying is blaming. This form of lying says – you cannot pin the fault on me – it was because of someone else. I was just the victim. What happened in the Garden of Eden? Adam said that the woman You gave me, she tempted me; Eve said, the serpent tricked me. Likewise do you remember when Aaron made the golden calf? Moses asked him, “How could you do this?” His reply:

*“‘Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.” (Exo 32:22-24)*

Lying lives in a world of blaming - blaming my parents, blaming my upbringing, blaming the past government, blaming the present government, blaming my boss, my wife, my husband. I am the victim; everything bad about me is the fault of others!

**Comparing.** This form of lying says – look at others, and then judge me. See, how bad others are. I am better. Or, see how strong the competition is, I can’t manage. Or, see, we’re all sinners; don’t judge me more harshly than the next man. It’s a false standard. We all know that each one of us will be judged individually. But we lie by trying to hide behind the faults of others, or by riding in on the success of another. Remember the Pharisee in Jesus’ parable?

*“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luk 18:10-12)*  
*For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (2Co 10:12)*

**Avoiding others.** This is a form of lying. When Adam knew he had sinned, and God came walking in the garden, what did he do? He hid away. When we avoid people, it can be a form of lying. I don’t want to be rebuked for my sin by that person, so I will just avoid them. I didn’t want to hear what is wrong, so I’ll just avoid church.

**Changing the subject.** Now there certainly is a time to change the subject. But when someone is pinpointing a sin and a fault in our lives and we try to change the subject to get the attention off the needed change in our lives– that is lying. Recall the Samaritan woman who spoke to Jesus. Jesus had just exposed her last lie. He said, Go and fetch

your husband. She replied, "I don't have a husband". To which Jesus said, "You're right, you don't – you've had five, and now you're just living with a man". Now her lies were exposed – she knew she couldn't hide anything from this prophet. So what does she do? She changes the subject:

*"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." (Joh 4:20)*

From the discussion of her immorality she turns the subject to the current debate between Jews and Samaritans of where one should worship.

**Criticising, False Witness, Slander.** A perverse form of lying is to lie about someone else, to gain advantage for ourselves. This can be the outright false charge we lay at other's feet, or it can be the subtle, "Have you heard about so-and-so, so sad." One thinks of the Pharisees again. How they arranged for false witnesses at Jesus 'trial. How they, during his ministry, said things like, "He casts out demons by the power of Satan" or "He was born of fornication". These are lies aimed at discrediting, bringing down another to gain personal advantage.

**Flattery.** If gossip, or slander, or criticisms are lies that you will only say behind their back and not to their face, then flattery is lying that you will only say to someone's face and never behind their back. It is saying nice things you don't mean so as to gain advantage. To say how beautiful something looks when you don't think so; to give a compliment you don't really mean; to praise someone when you would never praise them in their absence. The adulterous woman of Proverbs 7 is said to be a master of flattery.

**Boasting.** Some animals have the ability to puff themselves up, so as to look much larger than they are. Boasting is much the same thing. It is saying that I'm a lot smarter, wiser, stronger, more beautiful than you realise. I am richer, more popular, more powerful, and more successful than you thought. I puff up my image to make it much larger than it is. And because I make it larger than it is – it is a form of lying. Nebuchadnezzar and the adulterous woman:

*"With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him." (Pro 7:21)*

**Manipulation.** Another kind of lying is to manipulate. That is, to use one tactic to gain another. Delilah with Samson is an example. She wanted the secret of his strength to gain money and favour with the Philistines. So she manipulated him with her beauty and with statements like:

*"And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth." (Jdg 16:15)*

A final form of lying is...

**Deceiving/breaking promises.** When we tell someone we will do something, but plan to do something else, it is a lie. When we tell someone something is one way, when we know in truth it is another – it is a lie. The sons of Jacob were upset with Shechem, and his people (Hivites) who had defiled their sister, Dinah. So they promised those men that Shechem could marry her, if they were all circumcised. They agreed, and when the men were incapacitated after being circumcised, Simeon and Levi went into their city and slaughtered all the males. It was deception, a broken agreement. When we do that, in any form, we lie.

So we lie in many ways – hypocrisy, justifying ourselves, blaming others, avoiding others, changing the subject, criticising or slandering, flattering, boasting, comparing ourselves with others, manipulation, deceiving. This we do with outright lies, as well as half-truths, evading the truth or exaggeration. Lying is not something we simply do. It is something we are. Apart from Christ, we will live a lie.

The reason I have spent so much time detailing what it looks like, is because we even lie about our lying.

Now, recall that we said last time that unsaved man acts the way he does because he has not seen something, he does not know something. We saw it is that he does not see Christ. His sinful behaviour comes from an ignorance of Christ. In the same way, lying in all these areas comes about from a lack of exposure to Christ. If we are to put off lying, we must be continually exposed to Jesus Christ.

To come to a place where we put off lying and put on truth, we must have our minds renewed by continually embracing Christ as the Truth. Jesus did not say I know the truth. He did not say, I teach the truth. He said – I am the truth. What did He mean by such a statement? All facts, all pieces of information find their context and thus their true meaning in Jesus Christ. Remove Christ, and all information becomes a lie. This is why John describes God as light. Light reveals what is. Remove light, and you do not know what is right in front of you. Remove Christ and all the things in the universe are in darkness.

*In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*  
(Joh 1:4-9)

To embrace Christ as the Truth is to seek to know everything in light of Jesus Christ. Who am I according to Christ? Who is God according to Christ? Who goes to heaven or hell according to Christ? What are humans like according to Jesus? It is to see myself, eternity, the world, others, literally, **in light of Christ**.

Where do we find life through the eyes of Christ? Where do we find all things as lit up by Jesus Christ? In the Word of God. Forsake this Book, and you switch off the light of reality. Love this Book, meditate on it, take it in, and you are saying – give me the truth about myself, about God, about others.

The problem is that to embrace Christ as truth will highlight some uncomfortable things about yourself. To embrace Truth – what Christ says, means to accept what he says about you, without turning back. It means you embrace the painful reality. It means you will have to confess and forsake sin, be vulnerable and exposed. Notice the connection between light, and honesty, and lies and darkness:

*“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1Jo 1:5-10)*

Not wanting to face the truth about ourselves is the single biggest reason why people do not get saved, and why they do not grow in the faith. Lies are more soothing to your conscience.

*“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (Joh 3:19-21)*

Embracing truth can be painful. Plato said, “We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.”

Now if I continually live in the light of His Word, seeking to know myself as He reveals it to my eyes as I seek to hide nothing from Him, as I embrace His righteousness as my security and boast – why would I want to deceive other men? If Christ is ever before me, I am seeking to please Him and reflect His likeness back to Him, what possible advantage can I get from lying to men? The truth is, when the fear of God is small in our eyes, then the fear of man will be big. When the fear of man is big, we lie. When the fear of God is big, we tell the truth. We lie because we are afraid of other men. We are afraid they will expose us. We are afraid they will reject or ridicule us. We are afraid they will harm us. So we lie to cover, protect and advance ourselves. There is no need to do that when you embrace Christ as your covering; Christ as the one who accepts you; Christ as your protector, vindicator.

And one of the important reasons to tell the truth is given here in this passage- we are members of one another. We are members of the same body – the body of Christ, the Truth Himself! Picture the damage, the injury that would occur if the members of your physical body lied to each other. Picture your hand touching the top of a burning hot stove, but your hand telling your brain it's room temperature. Well, you will have severe burns. Picture your stomach telling your brain, I'm not hungry, when it is in fact starving. The fact is, your body always speaks truth to itself, because it is part of the same body. If we are all members of the Truth Himself, for us to hide and deceive and pretend and flatter and boast and slander is completely unfitting. We are those who have come out of the darkness of deception. Truth is our environment. It is what we deal in. We seek to preach the truth, know the truth, and share the truth – so nothing could be more contradictory than for believers to lie to each other.

Put off the grave clothes of deception. The new man in you loves reality. It loves what really is. It desires truth about God, self, the world, other people, and life. So we have our minds renewed as we continually receive and reflect Christ – the Truth Himself. We then put off lying in all its forms. And we then put on speaking truth to each other. Speak the truth in love. Claim ownership for what is mine. Don't draw attention toward myself or away from myself for selfish reasons.

In place of hypocrisy – sincerity

In place of justifications — confessing and forsaking

In place of blaming - accepting blame where real, claiming ownership for my sin

In place of avoiding others – being vulnerable

In place of changing the subject – we can talk things out

In place of comparing - we focus on our walk with God

In place of criticising, false witness and slander - speak that which edifies

In place of boasting - praise others

In place of flattery – praise truthfully

In place of manipulation - seek to serve others

In place of breaking promises/ deceiving – ‘swears to his own hurt’

Satan, the destroyer, is at heart, a liar. His whole existence, since his fall, is a rejection of God and His truth; He pursues his own lies, and seeks to spread them to others.

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (Joh 8:44)*

There is no truth in him. He embraces nothing of God, nothing of God's light, nothing of reality as it is. He is totally absorbed by his own darkness. When we lie, we are on his ground. Lying is the devil's stock and trade. When we deal in lies to ourselves, to others, to God, we are just where the Devil wants us.

On the other hand, Jesus Christ said, “I am the Truth. If we want to know and love God, we must make truth, no matter how uncomfortable it can seem, or lifeblood. We must



continually live in a way that says I want the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”

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