



Sermon Discussion Guide

"To Tell The Truth" God's Top Ten for Building Strong Families

Part 9
March 25, 2012

God has given us the Ten Commandments and we have been looking at them over the past nine weeks. Whenever God has a negative command, He always has a positive purpose behind it. He always has a reason. It is not to cause you pain. It is for your protection. God says when you play by the rules you win. We need to know what is right and what is wrong - the parameters in life - "God's Top Ten for Building Strong Families."

We began this series looking at the first commandment, "*You shall have no other gods before Me.*" (Exodus 20:3). The 2nd commandment: "*You shall not make any idols. . .you must never bow to an image or worship it in any way.*" (Exodus 20:4-5 LB). The 3rd commandment says, "*You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misused His name.*" (Exodus 20:7 NIV). The 4th commandment says, "*Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. . .*" (Exodus 20:8-10 NLT). The 5th commandment says, "*Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land. . .*" (Exodus 20:12 NIV). The 6th commandment states, "*You shall not murder.*" (Exodus 20:13 NIV). The 7th commandment, "*You shall not commit adultery.*" (Exodus 20:14 NIV). The 8th commandment, "*You shall not steal.*" (Exodus 20:15 NIV). Today we look at the ninth commandment, "*You shall not give false witness against your neighbor. . .*" (Exodus 20:16 (NIV)).

Open your group with a prayer. This is only a guide - select the points you want to discuss.

As we move into full swing of political campaigning this year, I am sure we will hear more charges and counter charges of dishonesty, deception and false promises. All of which raises the question: Is anyone telling the truth? A recent survey of Americans said 66% say it's not wrong to tell lies. Only 31% agreed with this statement, "Honesty is the best policy." Human beings are basically deceptive people.

Read Psalm 34:12-13 What does this verse promise if a person keeps their lips from telling lies? How would you define a 'long and good' life?

Lying: to **mislead**, **falsify**, and **conceal** the truth.

God says lying is an intention to mislead - like telling half the truth. You can lie by falsifying the truth or concealing the truth. When you deliberately hold back half the truth you are being deceptive.

Can you lie without saying a word? Share an example of misleading the truth. Share an example of falsifying the truth. Share an example of concealing the truth.

So why do we lie? Once you understand the motive behind the lying, then you can deal with the real issue. Lying is not the real problem but a symptom of something deeper. So what are the motivations for each of the following lies?

A. WHY WE LIE

- the **cruel lie**

Define a cruel lie. How is it like slander? What's the motivation behind a cruel lie?

- the **cowardly lie**

Define a cowardly lie. When would a person tell a cowardly lie? Describe the first recorded lie in the Bible. What's the motivating factor behind a cowardly lie?



- **the conceited lie**

Define a conceited lie. When is someone most likely to tell a conceited lie? What is this person trying to accomplish? What's the motivating factor behind the conceited lie?

- **the calculated lie**

Define a calculated lie. What kind of behavior is expressed through this kind of lie? What is the motivation behind the calculated lie?

- **the convenient lie**

Define the convenient lie. Why does it take effort to tell the truth? Describe a situation where a convenient lie would be easy to tell.

B. HOW TO TELL THE TRUTH

1. Tell the truth completely

Read Proverbs 10:10. What is Solomon talking about? What kind of trouble can be caused by concealing the truth? What do we hope to accomplish by not saying what we truly mean?

Read Proverbs 28:23. What does '*in the end*' have a reference to? Why is it sometimes unpleasant at first in dealing with the truth? In theory we all agree, "Honesty is the best policy"; but in reality it may cause confrontation. How does Proverbs 28:23 apply?

2.. Tell the truth consistently

Why is this factor so important in relationships?

Read Ephesians 4:15. How does this verse reinforce a foundational truth that honesty is to be a lifestyle?

Read Proverbs 11:3. How can dishonesty 'destroy' people? What does it take to be a good liar? Why does lying destroy relationships? Truth telling produces trust building. Explain that statement.

Read Proverbs 13:17. How does this verse build a strong family? A strong marriage? What does it take for a marriage relationship to begin healing?

3. Tell the truth lovingly

Read Ephesians 4:15. Describe an experience where truth was used as a club to beat someone up. How productive was it? If you want to help someone change you remember these two things:

- people change easier and faster when you speak the truth in a spirit of love.
- people always perceive truth without love as an **attack**.

How do I know if I'm speaking the truth in love? What questions should I ask of myself?

Read Ephesians 4:29. How does this verse reinforce the value of speaking the truth in love?

4. Tell the truth tactfully

What questions should I consider when I am telling the truth tactfully?

Read Proverbs 12:18. From this verse, what choices do I have as I speak? What power do words carry?



"Sticks and stone may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Describe how words could wound deeply. Is it more difficult to make an enemy than to make a friend with the use of my words? Explain.

Read Proverbs 8:6. How will I know when it's the 'right time' and 'right way'?

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

Read Matthew 12:34.

The real problem is not my **mouth** but my **heart**. Why is this true?

Read Matthew 15:19. The heart of the issue when it comes to lying is an 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'm going to find myself easily telling conceited lies.
- If my heart is filled with selfishness then I'm going to find myself telling calculated lies.
- If my heart is filled with laziness then I'm going to find myself telling convenient lies.

Take a moment to review any assignments/challenges made during the personal application and commitment section of your previous meeting. Seeing God at work in the lives of those who commit to him is essential for growth.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

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 says, let me fill your heart with love instead of selfishness; let me fill your heart with joy and peace instead of hate; let me fill your heart with confidence instead of insecurity; let me fill your heart with energy and power instead of laziness. Jesus said, "I am the truth." The closer I get to Jesus Christ, the more I'm going to love the truth, speak the truth and live the truth.

How do I break the habit of lying? The beginning of honesty is the confession of dishonesty. Admit to God you are a liar. Ask Christ to forgive you and to give you the power to change and put a new heart in you. Ask God to help you be more interested in character than in reputation. Character is what will last for eternity.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Goals for this Week's Study

- To understand why we lie and the different kinds of lies and their motivating factors.
- Learn four ways to tell the truth.
- Come to value the real problem in dishonesty and desire to become a person of honesty.



Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60–90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group you may choose one of the following options:
 - One section of questions;
 - One or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to the five purposes are helpful to develop balance and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can bring your group to an awareness of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.