

SERMON STARTERS

Truth Telling!

“You shall not bear false witness.”

Exodus 20:16

When we tell a lie we murder truth causing grief. An African proverb says, “The end of an ox is beef, the end of a lie is grief.” According to the book, *“The Day America Told The Truth,”* 91 percent of Americans lie regularly. “The majority find it difficult to get through a week without lying. According to the authors of this book, we lie and don’t even think about it; we lie for no reason. We just lie because we lie.”

When God said, *“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”* (Exodus 20:16), He was referring to testimony in a court of law. But the principle laid down in the command is broader than that. The underlying principle established in this 9th Commandment applies to any and every type of untruth.

“By the term ‘neighbor’ any human being is intended. Not only false oaths are here prohibited, but all which is false in fact, and tends to injure another is against the spirit and letter of this law.” (Adam Clark)

WHY IS TRUTH SO IMPORTANT?**1. BECAUSE OF GOD’S NATURE.*****God is truth.***

“All His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.” (Deut. 32:4 nkjv)

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God....” (John 17:3)

The Son of God is truth.

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life....”* (John 14:6)

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

“The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

The Holy Spirit is truth.

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” (John 15:26)

“When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...” (John 16:13)

God's Word is truth.

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17)

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...."
(Eph. 1:13)

"Study to show yourselves approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15)

What Do We Learn About Truth From God's Nature?

- God is true and any untruth is an affront to His holy being. This is extremely important for the followers of Jesus because it is on His faithfulness that our hope of eternal life rests. He will honor His promise that our sins will be forgiven because He is truth and speaks only truth.
- Since our Heavenly Father is the God of truth, His children should reflect His character by speaking and living the truth. The least deviation from truth becomes a lie.
- Jesus Christ is Truth in a body; the written Word of God is Truth in a Book. God's Word will keep us from sin; sin will keep us from God's Word. Jesus said, *"You are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."* (John 15:3) Regular exposure to the truth, which is the divine antidote for falsehood, will keep us telling the truth!

2. BECAUSE OF THE DEVIL'S NATURE.

"You are of your father the devil," Christ said to the Pharisees, "and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

He lied to our ancient parents in the Garden of Eden. Here is how it came about: Eve said to him, *"We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"* Then the serpent said to the woman, *"You will not surely die." (Gen. 3:2-4)*

What do We Learn About Truth From The Devil's Nature?

- The devil is a liar, and those who lie - do his work! Ever since the Garden of Eden, his strategy is the same — Lies! Lies! Lies! This is a serious matter.
- His lie, believed by Adam and Eve in the Garden, robbed them of Paradise on earth.
- His lies ever since have robbed millions of the Paradise of Heaven!

3. BECAUSE OF HUMAN NATURE.

Why does a person lie? We are the offsprings of Adam and Eve who disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and fell from favor with God. Since then, all humans have the fallen nature of Adam which is naturally opposed to God, truth, holiness, etc.

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts....” (Psalm 51:5, 6)

“Out of your heart come evil thoughts, murder, unfaithfulness in marriage, vulgar deeds, stealing, telling lies, and insulting others.” (Matt. 15:19)

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God” (Eph. 2:1-4)

What Do We Learn About Truth From Human Nature?

- Our sinful nature is deceitful and filled with untruths.
- Lying proves that we are sinners and in need of God’s salvation.
- Lying is always a symptom of our lack of faith in God.
- God wants us to be people of integrity.

HOW THIS COMMANDMENT IS VIOLATED

Some forms of lying:

Body language – “Gestures, movements, and mannerisms by which a person communicates with others.” Lying silently by body movements; consenting to that which is untrue being verbalized by another, by a nod of the head, a shrug of the shoulders, etc.”

Deception – “The act, fact or condition of deceiving or being deceived.” Synonyms: “Craftiness; fakery; subtlety; cunning.”

Distortion – “Falsifying a conversation, report, command, etc. purposefully.”

Duplicity – “Contradictory double-ness of thought, speech, or action; to hide one's true intentions by deceptive words or action.”

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 John 1:6). John gives a second example: “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20).

Exaggeration – “To expand or enlarge beyond the bounds or the truth.” Synonyms: embellish; magnify, stretch.

Fabrication – “To construct a lie or falsehood using one’s skill at misrepresentation; reconstructing the truth in order to weave an untruth.”

Falsification – “Intentionally untrue; adjusted or made so as to deceive; intended or tending to mislead.”

Flattery – “Insincere or excessive praise to try to win or keep another’s favor.” Synonyms: “Blarney; overpraise.”

Forgery – “*The crime of falsely and fraudulently making or altering a document.*”

Half-truth – “A half-truth is an untruth.” Tell “The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”

Hypocrisy – “Feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not; the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion; persons who say one thing but do another.”

Insinuation – “A sly, subtle, and usually derogatory utterance; a veiled negative reflection on one’s character or reputation.”

One day, on a ship, a mate who seldom got drunk was inebriated. The captain wrote in the log book, “The mate is drunk today.” The mate begged the captain to erase the condemning line, but he refused to. The next day the mate kept the books, and wrote, “The captain is sober today.” A true statement of course, but obviously intended to carry an insinuation.

Misrepresentation – “To give a false or misleading representation with an intent to deceive or be unfair.”

Pretension – “A claim of doubtful merit; a falsification of intention.”

Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. Peter said, “*Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?*” (Acts 5:3). They pretended that part was the whole. For this sin, they died.

Prevarication – “To deviate from the truth; to equivocate.” Synonym: “to fabricate.”

There are other forms of lying, of course. The above list is but the tip of the iceberg that has wrecked many a life.

GOD HATES LYING.

In Proverbs 6:16-19, we read: “*There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.*”

Notice carefully, lying is mentioned twice. In the first instance, it refers to lying in normal conversations; in the second instance, it refers to perjury. But God hates both kinds of liars. Such are “*an abomination to Him.*” God does not need our lie to accomplish His purposes. He is able to handle the truth, no matter what the consequences on earth might be.

Illust. Back in 1906, an earthquake shook San Francisco. Seven hundred died, three hundred thousand were left homeless, and twenty-eight thousand buildings were destroyed. An architect, evaluating the devastation, said that much of the destruction was due to “dishonest mortar.” There was too much cheap sand and not enough expensive limestone in the buildings.

Many lives are built with “dishonest mortar.” No one may know it until the storm blows, the rain descends and the earthquake comes!

HOW TO GET VICTORY OVER LYING

1. **Acknowledge that you are a liar.** (Those who lie are liars – “....all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone....” (Rev. 21:8)
How many sins make a sinner? How many lies make a liar?
2. **Confess this sin to God.** “He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).
3. **Cultivate a love for the God of truth.** “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deut. 6:5)
4. **Develop a love of the truth.** “Buy the truth and sell it not.” (Prov. 23:23) - “Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being....” (Psalm 51:6).
5. **Demonstrate a hatred for lies and lying.** “the Lord hates.... a lying tongue.... a false witness who utters lies....” (Prov. 6:16-19)
6. **Pray with David,** “Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, From a deceitful tongue.” (Psalm 120:2).
7. **Speak the truth!** “Lie not one to another.” (Col. 3:9)

THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT THE TRUTH IS TO TELL IT!

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