

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

In your experience, how early do children start being dishonest?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

“The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, ‘Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?’

‘Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,’ the woman replied. ‘It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, “You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.”’

‘You won’t die!’ the serpent replied to the woman. ‘God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.’

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.” **Genesis 3:1-7 NLT**

“My people bend their tongues like bows to shoot out lies. They refuse to stand up for the truth. They only go from bad to worse. They do not know me,” says the Lord. **Jeremiah 9:2-4 NLT**

“Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies. Snake venom drips from their lips.” **Romans 3:13 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Dishonesty goes way all the way back to the very first sin on earth. From that point on, lying became common. People lie to make themselves look better. People lie to try to protect themselves from consequences. People lie to try to get something they want. In our day, lying is an epidemic from preschool through graduate school, from the home to the workplace. Trust is at an all-time low.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

What are 2-3 reasons people tell lies?

Is there an area of your life about which you are often not honest with other people? Is there an area of your life about which you are often not honest with yourself?

When you post about yourself on social media, do you tend to be honest, dishonest, or something in between?

Is there a lie you remember telling which you wish you could take back?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for being someone we can always trust. I also want to be someone whom people can always trust. Would you please show me the areas of my life in which I am not being honest? And give me the courage to start being honest in these areas of my life.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

If I were to guess 5 or 6 things that God absolutely *hates*, what would be on that list?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

“There are six things the Lord hates—no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family.” **Proverbs 6:16-19 NLT**

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.” **Proverbs 12:22 NLT**

“A lying tongue hates its victims, and flattering words cause ruin.” **Proverbs 26:28 NLT**

“The devil . . . was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.” **John 8:44**

“I weep with sorrow; encourage me by your word. Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions. I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations.”

Psalms 119:28-30 NLT

“But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.” **Colossians 3:8-9 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Hollywood often makes a sham out of honesty, integrity, character, and morality. Major movies show the thrill of a heist, or an affair, and lies to justify the end. Yet true worshipers of God honor the truth and share God’s disdain for lies and deception.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Why does God hate lies and deception so much?

There’s an especially destructive type of lie called “slander.” Slandering somebody means that you lie about them in order to hurt them in some way. Can you think of an example where slander really caused a lot of destruction?

Think for a moment about somebody in your life that regularly tells lies. What do you think it might take for that person to start hating those lies? Now, think about ways that you are sometimes dishonest. What will it take for you to start hating that dishonesty in your life?

In Psalm 119:28-29, the psalmist prays for God to “Keep me from lying to myself.” What are some lies you regularly tell yourself?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for loving me enough to tell us the truth. I pray that I would love what you love and hate what you hate. Because you love the truth and hate dishonesty, I too want to love the truth and hate dishonesty. Please show me where I have been dishonest and help me to welcome the truth into that area of my life, even when it is uncomfortable.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

People make commitments all the time. Some commitments are made casually (“Sure, I can do that”), and others are made with the utmost seriousness (“I promise to tell the whole truth...so help me God”). As followers of Jesus, which of our commitments should be taken really, really seriously?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: “Do not bring shame on the name of your God by using it to swear falsely. I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 19:12 NLT. “A man who makes a vow to the Lord or makes a pledge under oath must never break it. He must do exactly what he said he would do.” **Numbers 30:1 NLT**

“When you make a vow to the Lord your God, be prompt in fulfilling whatever you promised him. For the Lord your God demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows, or you will be guilty of sin.” **Deuteronomy 23:21 NLT**

Jesus said, “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.’ But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.” **Matthew 5:33-37 NLT**

“But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin...” **James 5:12 NLT**

Sermon Insights: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus raised the bar with anger, sexual sins, and divorce. Many people in Jesus’ day assumed that you only had to follow through on your commitments if you had sworn it before God. Yet, Jesus raised the bar for his followers and called us to practice radical truthfulness in a world of deception.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

What are some commitments you have made which turned out to be difficult to keep?

What’s your first reaction when you’ve promised to do something, but you find out later that it’s going to inconvenience you?

When Christians are no longer seen as dependable and trustworthy, what are some bad results that can happen?

Jesus said, “Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’” Why is it important for followers of Jesus to be realistic and honest about what we will follow through on?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, it is tempting to overcommit because we want to be as helpful as possible and look as good as possible. Yet, overcommitting can lead to dishonesty, as we end up not following through on our commitments. Help us to “say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’” We want to be people who are honest and trustworthy. Help us to have wisdom to know what to commit to and courage to follow through on our commitments.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Can you think of a time when telling the truth cost you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: *Background: Two kings, the king of Israel in the North and the king of Judah in the South, decided to join forces in order to recapture a town. The king of Israel (Ahab) was a follower of Baal, but the king of Judah (Jehoshaphat) was a follower of God. King Ahab’s prophets of Baal were telling him that the battle would go perfectly. Meanwhile, King Jehoshaphat wasn’t convinced until they heard from a prophet of God ...*Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, “Why, of course! You and I are as one. My troops are your troops, and my horses are your horses.” Then Jehoshaphat added, “But first let’s find out what the Lord says.” So the king of Israel summoned the prophets, about 400 of them, and asked them, “Should I go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should I hold back?” They all replied, “Yes, go right ahead! The Lord will give the king victory.” But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there not also a prophet of the Lord here? We should ask him the same question.”

The king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, “There is one more man who could consult the Lord for us, but I hate him. He never prophesies anything but trouble for me! His name is Micaiah son of Imlah.”... Then Micaiah told him, “In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the Lord said, ‘Their master has been killed. Send them home in peace.’” “Didn’t I tell you?” the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. “He never prophesies anything but trouble for me.” . . .

“Arrest him!” the king of Israel ordered. “Take him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. Give them this order from the king: ‘Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!’” But Micaiah replied, “If you return safely, it will mean that the Lord has not spoken through me!” Then he added to those standing around, “Everyone mark my words!” **1 Kings 22:6-8, 17-18, 26-28 NLT.** “Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who...keep their promises even when it hurts.” **Psalm 15:1, 4 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Can you think of a time when you decided not to tell the truth because you knew it would be unpopular to share it?

In addition to the story of Micaiah (1 Kings 22), can you think of 2-3 more examples when telling the truth came at a great cost?

In order to be able to tell the truth even when it costs something, we have to be able to truly *love* the truth. What are some of the reasons why disciples of Jesus can genuinely love the truth?

Ephesians 4:15 tells us to “speak the truth in love.” Is there anybody who needs to hear important truth from you, spoken with love?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, your Word tells us to speak the truth in love. Even when we speak it in love, however, there are people who don’t like to hear the truth—even when hearing that truth would help them tremendously. So, please give us a genuine love for people, and give us the courage to speak the truth that people need to hear. If there is somebody who needs to hear from me today, please bring this person to mind and give me the opportunity to help them know the truth which sets them free.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Knowing the truth is important. Speaking the truth is important. But what’s just as important is to *live the truth*. What is dangerous about just knowing and speaking the truth, but not actually living it?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: “Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord.” **Psalm 119:1 NLT**

“He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.”

Proverbs 2:7 NLT

“People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed.” **Proverbs 2:21 NLT**

“The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them.” **Proverbs 20:7 NLT**

Jesus prayed to his Father, “Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.” **John 17:17-19 NLT**

“Grace, mercy, and peace, which come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ—the Son of the Father—will continue to be with us who live in truth and love. How happy I was to meet some of your children and find them living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded.” **2 John 1:3-4 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Tony Evans says, “Faith is acting like God is telling you the truth.” If we really believe God, then we will believe the truth, speak the truth, and *live* the truth. Our lives will be integrated as wholly devoted to God, instead of fragmented pieces that don’t fit together. Another word for a life that is integrated together is “integrity.” As Psalm 119:1 explains, joy comes to people who live in integrity.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Can you think of anybody in your life who knows the truth but refuses to live it out? What’s your advice for that person? Now, take a moment and think about yourself. When you know the truth but decide not to live it out, what should be your advice to yourself?

What are 2-3 areas of your life that are not integrated with each other? In other words, are there times when your words don’t match up with how you live? Are there times when you know God’s truth but you refuse to submit to it?

Consider one of the areas of your life in which you are not living in integrity. Can you spend some time and confess this area of your life to God? Ask God to reveal one step you can take to having integrity in this area.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, I want to be able to live a life of integrity. When I know the truth but don’t submit to it, I make unwise decisions. When I speak the truth to others but don’t live it out in my life, I become a hypocrite—an actor who is just pretending at the real thing. It’s tiring to live a life that isn’t one of integrity. I want to be made whole. In the words of 1 Thessalonians 5:23, I want to be made “holy in every way” in my “whole spirit and soul and body.” Would you make me a person of integrity, through and through?