

Discovering our Purpose

Lay aside falsehood and speak truth
(Eph. 4:25)

Intro: Last week we looked together at the attitudes and consequences of two very different lifestyles or walks, the walk of the Gentile or pagan and the walk of the Christian. In Ephesians four Paul helps us understand God's purpose for us by urging us not to walk like the pagan world about us. But in addition, he gives specific imperatives, put in contrast so that we can clearly see the difference between the conduct of the world and the conduct of the church among the world. He shows how to "Take off the grave clothes and put on the grace clothes".

Lie not but speak the truth

Lying is very much a part of our modern society. There may have been a day "when a man's word was his bond". But no more!

Lying A Way Of Life

Lying seems to be a way of life for many people. The book *The Day America Told the Truth* says that 91 percent of those surveyed lie routinely about matters they consider trivial, and 36 percent lie about important matters; 86 percent lie regularly to parents, 75 percent to friends, 73 percent to siblings, and 69 percent to spouses.

[Our Daily Bread, August 28, 1992](#)

Lying is even encouraged as the norm in human development.

A USA Today poll found that only 56% of American teach honesty to their children. And a Louis Harris poll turned up the distressing fact that 65% of high school students would cheat on an important exam. Recently a noted physician appeared on a network news-and-talk show and proclaimed, "Lying is an important part of social life, and children who are unable to do it are children who may have developmental problems." [Our Daily Bread, Sept. 23, 1991](#)

Our society has been so characterized by dishonesty that the dictionary has five words for lying:

Lie--straightforward words of dishonesty

Prevaricate--to evade the truth, quibble, dodge

Equivocate--use words in more than one sense in hopes listener will be mistaken in understanding

Palter--to play fast and loose with the facts

Fib--telling a falsehood that is "trivial" or "insignificant"

Why people often are dishonest

Lies of vanity--to boost our image or status with men--cf.

Ananias and Sapphira

Lies of flattery--to administer to the vanity of others and usually to promote our own self-interest--Cf. Tertullus in Ac. 24:2-6

Lies of convenience--to prevent embarrassment, justify neglect, shirk responsibility, or to gain selfishly in some way--Saul in 1 Sam. 15:21

Lies of fear--to avoid consequences of actions--Cf. Peter Mt. 26:69-75

Lies of malignity--to cause harm to others, injure another's reputation, to get revenge--Those told on Jesus or the apostles to excite people against them

No matter how men lie or why they lie God says "lay aside falsehood" (speech or action that is intended to deceive another).

Eph. 4:25

Col. 3:9-11 Our renewal is patterned after Christ. Can you imagine him lying? He was the Lord of truth and taught men to tell the truth! (Mt. 5:37)

Not the minor misdemeanor many think:

Abominable to God--Prov. 6:16-19

Contrary to His nature--Tit. 1:2; but, very much a part of Satan's character--Jn. 8:44

Let every man speak the truth with his neighbor

As Christians we are to put on the new man pattern after Christ. And that means speak truth with neighbor (here neighbor is fellow-believer, but not in a way that implies dishonesty with others is acceptable)

Our relationship with brethren is especially reliant upon truth!

By speaking the truth we can build trust and confidence in one another!

By speaking the truth we can communicate our needs to one another!

By speaking the truth we can resolve problems and forgive one another!

Why we should tell the truth!

Paul gives us that incentive by reminding us that we are all a part of one body. In this sense we are members one of another! Can you imagine the condition of the body when the brain sends dishonest signals to another part of the body. The dreaded disease of leprosy involves the parts of the body lying to the brain, failing to tell to truth. The whole body itself is destroyed. So it is with the body of Christ. Our total spiritual growth is effected by the honest exhortation of each of us, Eph. 4:14-15.

And remember that when we speak the truth we do so in love! Love without truth is hypocrisy. Truth without love is brutality. There is no reason to be insensitive and brutal with others in the name of honesty.

Conclusion: Our call to be a Christian challenges us to walk the walk in the world of increasing dishonesty. Sure, everybody does it!...except the person who wants to follow Jesus Christ...except the person who wants to fulfill God's purpose for the church. Let's show the world the difference!