

# Letting Go of Lying

Hiram Kemp  
August 30, 2018



“You can’t handle the truth!” That famous line from the movie *A Few Good Men* is one we hear often. There is a huge kernel of truth contained in that statement—so many today cannot accept truth. As a result of being unable to handle or accept truth, many cling to lies. Lying is a very serious thing ([Rev. 21:8](#)), and it is very easy to do. Yet, “According to a 2002 study conducted by the University of Massachusetts, 60% of adults can’t have a ten-minute conversation without lying at least once.”<sup>1</sup> The same study found that by age four, 90% of children have grasped the concept of lying. The sad part is that we lie most to those who we claim to love most: 86% of individuals confessed to *regularly lying* to their parents, 75% to friends, 73% to siblings, and 69% to spouses.<sup>2</sup>

Why do we all have such a tough time with lying? One reason why people lie is because they do not see the benefits of telling the truth. Jesus said the truth makes individuals free, but we lie because we don’t believe what God has said about the truth ([John 8:31-32](#)). God cannot lie ([Num. 23:19](#); [Tit. 1:2](#); [Heb. 6:18](#)), and we need to mirror his attributes ([1 Pet. 1:16](#)). Likewise, lying carries eternal consequences ([Rom. 1:25-ff](#); [2 Tim. 3:1-9](#)). So how do we let go of lying?

## Recognize the Lie

The thing about lying is that most people do it on purpose. However, there are those who lie and do not even realize it (perhaps because it is so habitual, or because we have fooled ourselves). No matter how you try to cloak it, a lie is still a lie.

**Lies of Commission.** These are lies that are blatantly false statements. These types of lies are when someone purposefully tells a false statement in hopes of deceiving another ([Acts 5:1-4](#)). When the telemarketer calls you, and you say that someone is not home that really is, that is a blatant lie. The better thing to do is to say that you don't want to talk at this time or would rather not answer. To lie does not solve the problem, but rather complicates things. The prophet Elisha had a servant Gehazi who thought he had no other choice but to lie, and he paid the price for it ([2 Kings 5:25-27](#)).

**Lies of Exaggeration.** Exaggeration is “enhancing” a truth by adding lies to it. An exaggeration attempts to weave lies and truths together almost unnoticeably. When someone asks, “Did anyone show up to your child’s birthday party?” If you reply, “Yes, there were thirty kids,” but in reality, there were only twelve—you partly answered with the truth, but the exaggeration is a lie. Lies of exaggeration may seem innocent, but they are still wrong.

**White Lies.** Really, lies have no color—they are just lies. However, society calls seemingly small and unimportant lies little white lies. These lies are just as bad as the others. Sometimes people tell these kinds of lies when invited to a party and they don't want to attend or saying they saw a movie they really didn't. We cannot excuse this type of lying but must be willing to tell the truth even when it hurts, because lies hurt more in the long run. Concerning the power of truth, Leroy Brownlow said, “The truth does not spread as fast a lie, but it's weightier when it gets there.”

## Solving the Problem

Lies, even if they seem to help us, actually hurt in the long run. We can let go of lying ([Eph. 4:25](#); [Col. 3:9](#)). Someone has said that when you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything. There are probably many ways to let go of lying, like limiting our words ([Jas. 1:19](#)), being slow to make promises ([Eccl. 5:4-5](#)), and stopping trying to impress others ([John 12:42-43](#)). But there is one way to let go of lying that I think is best of all.

## Love the Truth

As long as we live, there will be the pull to lie, even about small things. We need to develop a strong love for truth so that we find lying repulsive. We cannot like the truth only when it suits us. Truth has to be our main pursuit so that we never compromise it for any reason. If we can make up our minds that we value truth more than comfort, convenience, or compliments, then we can always tell the truth.

How do we seek the truth? We need to look to the ultimate source of truth who is God, and His word, the Bible ([John 17:17](#)). The more of God's word we know and put into practice, the more heightened our view of truth will be ([Jas.1:21-25](#)). Are there parts of the Bible that we reject because they do not align with what we believe? Are there parts of the Bible or books of the Bible we reject because it condemns a practice we engage in? 'Picking and choosing' the difficult truths of the Bible we will accept is a sure way to incline oneself towards lying. On the other hand, if we would let go of lying, we need to love all of the truth and seek to put it into practice regularly.

"Buy truth, and sell it not; Also, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Prov. 23:23, KJV).

### Footnotes

1. Benjamin, Kathy. "60% of People Can't Go 10 Minutes Without Lying." Mental Floss. 7 May 2012. <  
<http://mentalfloss.com/article/30609/60-people-cant-go-10-minutes-without-lying> >. Accessed 29 Aug 2018.
2. Patterson, James. The Day America Told the Truth. Printice Hall Direct: 1991.