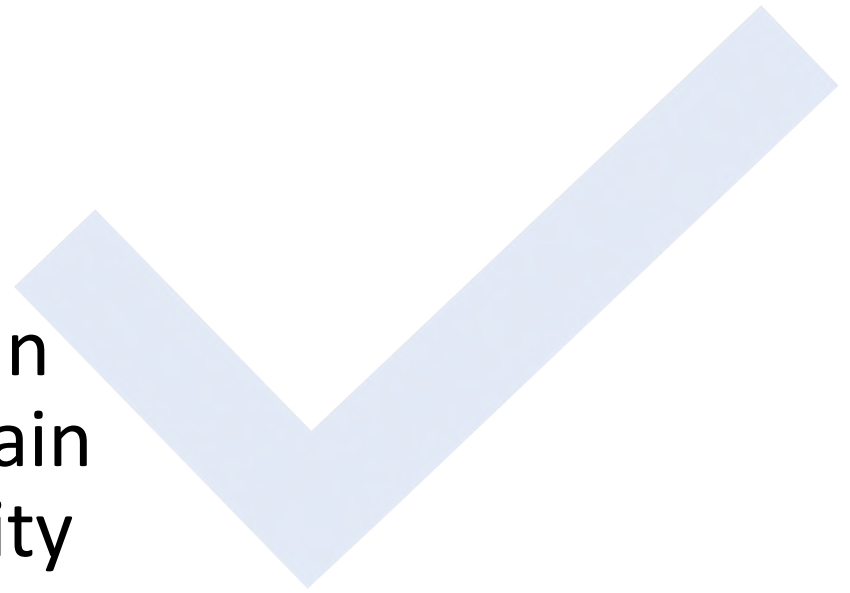


“Keeping It 100” and Telling the Truth!

Matthew 5:33-37



“Keep it 100” - Urban
Dictionary - To remain
dedicated to integrity
and honest effort,
with no malicious
motives; to be real





Matthew 5:33-37

Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows that you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.

All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Observations

- **Question: Do you think that there is a problem with dishonesty in the American Society today?**
- **There was a study published by the University of Massachusetts around 2002 that said this: 60% of the people in their study lied at least once during a 10-minute conversation (the average was two to three lies)**
- **The study suggested that lies told by men and women were about equal in number between the sexes but for different reasons:**

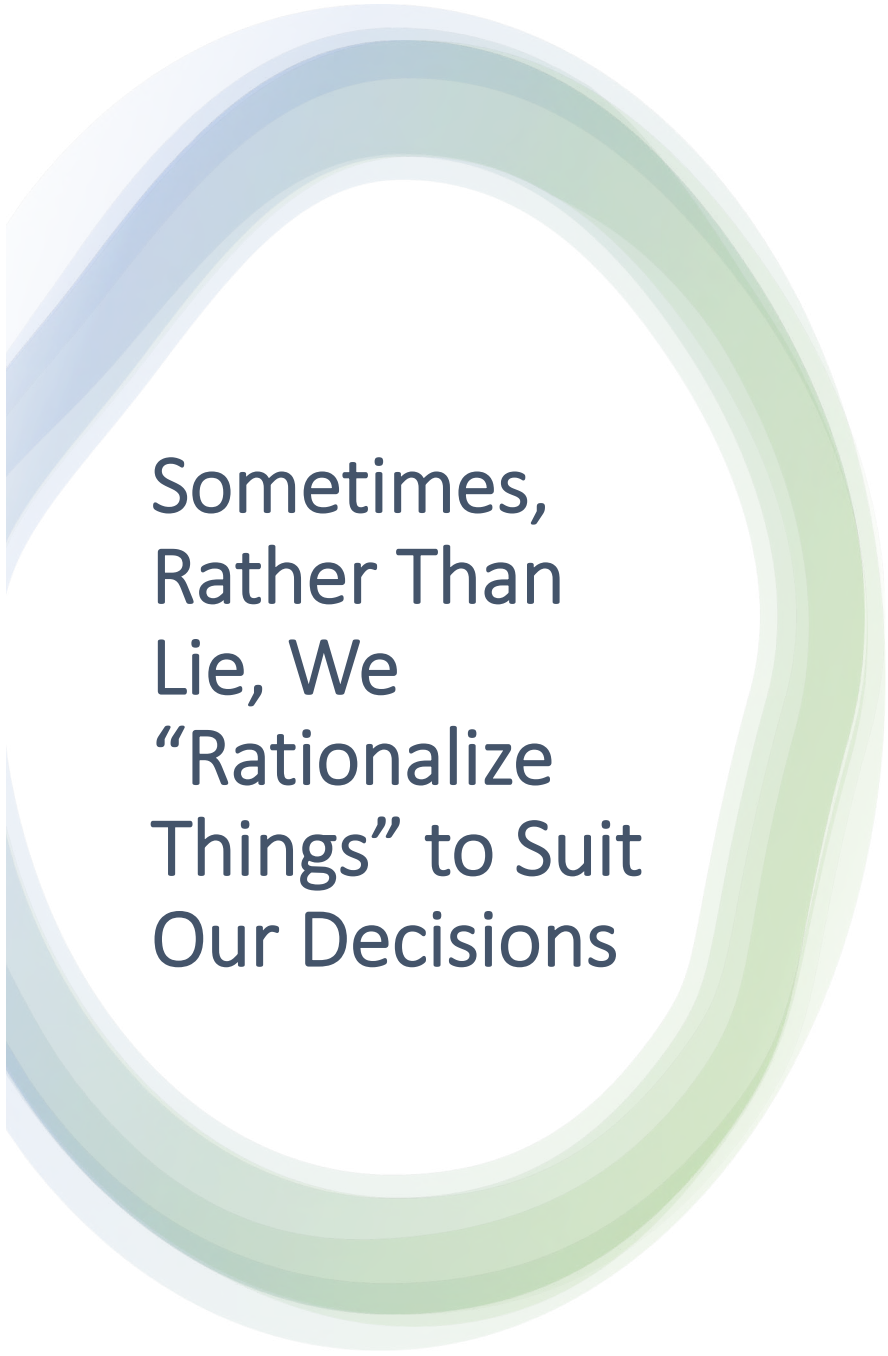
Women, generally, were “more likely” to lie to make the person they were talking to feel good

Men, generally, were “more likely” to lie to make themselves look better to the other person

But In General, Why Do We Lie?

- We lie to protect ourselves and avoid punishment
- We lie to gain an advantage that we think we don't have and need (put ourselves in a better position)
- We lie to get people on our side (change minds)
- We lie to escape blame.
- We lie to get out of something that we don't want to do; Ex. *Have you finished your homework?*
- We lie to make ourselves look better in the eyes of others (Ananias and Sapphira; Acts 5:1-10)
- We lie to protect other's feelings; *"They will feel bad if I tell the truth."*

Which Leads to the Idea That



Sometimes,
Rather Than
Lie, We
“Rationalize
Things” to Suit
Our Decisions

- By rationalizing, we can justify two “conflicting views” in our minds
- Remember King Saul in 1 Samuel 15:1-15 when he was told by Samuel the prophet that God wanted him to utterly destroy the evil Amalekites and all of their livestock
- But he spared the livestock and their king, lied about it, then rationalized why his thought process was better 1) *“I know what God ordered, but that’s what the people wanted”* and 2) *We spared them to sacrifice them to God!” vs 15*

Observations

- There are some actions that might be wrong, but technically they don't affect our self-worth or our ideas of honesty, so we rationalize to protect our consciences

I Wasn't Really Lying!

"I was just embellishing or exaggerating"

"I was just fudging the truth just a little bit"

"I was just leaving some stuff out" (bordering dishonesty)

- Dr. Anthony Fauci, former White House Chief Medical Advisor, said that he resigned his role as the President's point man in Infectious Diseases because he became worried about, "the normalization of untruths."
- The, "normalization of untruths" can lead people to do dangerous things, like ingesting or injecting dangerous disinfectants (make other bad decisions).

Observations

- The problem with pervasive fudging, embellishing, and leaving important facts out purposefully, is that it creates a culture in America like we are in now
- A culture that is packed with dishonesty and lying as “*a normal way of conversing!*” (thus the Mass. Study)
- The more lies there are in society, the more difficult it is to navigate through our culture to determine what is the truth (when it becomes normal to lie with no guilt)
- Having watched this country go through the Covid nightmare, and having lost family members and church members to Covid; at a certain point, you just want our leaders and those who have responsible platforms to tell the truth (people died because of fake news)
- Wearing a mask actually became a sign of a political persuasion rather than medical protection

The Problem is This:

- “Lies” about important matters flood our newsfeeds and social media every day (left wing vs. right wing)
- What happens is even faith-based people become too quick to share misinformation, whether it is true or not
- If the “inaccurate news” is “sensational news” we’ll spread it anyway (we become the shock jocks)
- Of course, sharing lies goes all the way back to the beginning. Remember when Satan brought the misinformation/fake news to the Garden of Eden?
- *“Did God really say that you would die if you eat of this tree? You won’t die but in reality you will be like Him.”*
- Adam and Eve took a bite from his lies and now we know “the rest of the story!”

Truth Telling Had Been Distorted By The Pharisees To Suit Their Desires

- They knew what the Old Testament said, Lev. 19:12
Do not swear falsely by My Name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.
- God says don't invoke my name when you make a solemn promise or give an oath to someone as a guarantee that you will fulfill your promise.
- The Pharisees wanted to follow the law but also live and speak the way they wanted
- So they rationalized that, *"As long as I don't actually swear by God's name, I don't have to keep my promises."*

Observations

- So during the time of Christ on earth, oath taking had become “lie making.”
- Instead of promoting confidence, it generated a degree of skepticism
- Instead of promoting the integrity of the person, swearing became a sign of deceit
- The feeling was, *“as long as I don’t use God’s name in it, it’s ok NOT to keep my promise.” “It is not as binding”*
- We raise our right hands and use a stack of Bibles to stand for our credibility. Why? Because in our society, our simple word is not to be trusted.
- The religious writer John Stott said that having to swear in our society has become, *“pathetic confession of our own dishonesty”*

Jesus Addresses the Need for Christians to Be Persons of Integrity (100%), Without “Flashing His Name” to Announce Our Honesty!

*But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all; either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by the city of Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply ‘Yes or No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.
Matthew 5:34-37*

- Note: Jesus is not talking about making valid oaths and solemn affirmations (He took an oath at His trial, Matt 26)
- He’s saying we need to remember that God is everywhere and in every conversation; Psa. 139;7-10
- If you think you can figure out how to make lying ok and make breaking promises acceptable, without the penalty of judgement, nothing is further from the truth. Matt. 12:36, “.... every idle word men speak ...”

Questions for You to Consider

- Are you a person that strives for honesty and truth in daily conversation?
- Do you rationalize often? “I’m not technically lying”
- Can people trust what you are saying as the truth?
- Do you have to add a kind of oath to get people to believe you? *“I swear to God, I’m telling you the truth”*
- Can you be trusted to keep your promises?
- Are there any promises that you need to, *“follow through with?”*
- Have you kept your promises to God?

Becoming a Truthful Person

“Examine Yourself” 2 Corinthians 13:5

- **Look for the cracks** - Spend some time looking at the major areas in your life (home, work, church) and identify anywhere you may have truth issues
- **Identify Patterns** - are there certain areas where you struggle with the truth (subjects where truth is a weakness)
- **Face the Music** - Be willing to admit your mistakes and apologize to those you may have hurt. Don't run from the truth
- **Rebuild Yourself** - After facing up to any past actions, develop a plan, with prayer, that will make you a more truthful person; Philippians 4:6

The Plan of Salvation



Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38

