

CHAPTER NINE

Half Truths and Whole Lies

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor ~Exodus 20:16.

INTRODUCTION

Saint Augustine stated, “All sin is a kind of lying.”¹ “The essence of lying is in deception, not in words; a lie may be told by silence, by equivocation, by the accent on a syllable, by a glance of the eye attaching a peculiar significance to a sentence.” ~John Ruskin (1819-1900)² We live in a society that has become inoculated against truth – from the highest offices in our nation to the darkest corners of our minds, lying has become the preferred alternative to the truth. Lewis Smedes writes in *Mere Morality*:

The "credibility gap" that once alienated the public from people in high places now seems to separate us from one another in all walks of life. Americans lie on their income tax returns to the tune of millions of dollars a year. Doctors fake reports in order to profit from Medicare patients. Prize athletes at great universities are kept eligible for competition through bogus credits and forged transcripts of academic records. Children soon acquire the cynical assumption that lying is the normal tack for TV advertisers. In the words of a Time magazine essay, ours is "a huckstering, show-bizzy world, jangling with hype, hullabaloo, and hooley, bull, baloney, and bamboozlement." After a while, people tend to expect not to hear the truth anymore; in 1976, a national poll showed that 69 percent of Americans believed that the country's leaders had, over the last decade, consistently lied to the people.³

Society's leaders have lied; and have shuffled the responsibility of teaching moral values to the schools and churches. To make our situation worse, we have allowed those same leaders to strip our teachers and education system of its absolute standard.

The Good News: Fifty-seven percent of public-school parents said in a survey that courses on values and ethical behavior should be taught by schools, while 34 percent felt that values and ethical behavior should be left to parents or churches and nine percent said it should be taught by both. Sixty percent of people believe that teaching values and ethics would be very effective in reducing violent behavior; 27 percent felt it would be somewhat effective.⁴

¹ Parson's Technology, Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Hewett, James S.; Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 456.

⁴ Princeton Religion Research Center, 1996; Ibid.

What are those *values and ethical behavior* being based upon? “More than 99 percent of the 7,700 readers surveyed in December 1994 want their children to have a firm set of values.”⁵ With such a clear majority of parents wanting a *firm set of values* for their children, it seems ironic that the Absolute Standard has been removed from the place they feel it needs to be taught most.

The Bad News: In the 1996 *Who’s Who Among American High School Students* survey, three of four students admitted to having cheated. Ninety-four percent said they were never caught and five of six caught were not punished.”⁶ “Eight out of ten high-school students admitted to cheating; furthermore, they say that their teachers often make it easy.”⁷

It is obvious from the above discrepancy between the *good news* and the *bad news* that students are being sent a mixed message. I fear that this malaise has crept into the Christian church, perhaps to a greater degree than we would like to admit.

A pastor ended one Sunday morning service by instructing his people, "I would like all of you to read the 17th chapter of Mark's Gospel before next Sunday." The following Sunday, true to his word, he asked the congregation, "How many of you actually read the 17th chapter of Mark's Gospel this past week?" Almost everyone in the pews raised their hands to signify they had indeed read that 17th chapter. The pastor then stunned his people by announcing, "Ladies and gentlemen, there is no 17th chapter of Mark." Then he proceeded to preach his Sunday morning sermon, which happened to be on lying.⁸

Lies have many forms, truth has only one! Would you be embarrassed if caught in a lie like that? What about the lies that we are *not* embarrassed about? What about the half-truths and exaggerations we become involved in? A “half-truth” isn’t a half-truth, it’s a whole lie. Myron F. Boyd said, “A half-truth is a dangerous thing, especially if you have got hold of the wrong half.”

What about gossip or slander, where we have not bothered to find out if what we are saying is true or not, but have indiscriminately repeated what we have heard! The Bible has a lot to say about truth and lies. The greatest deception ever fostered upon humanity and the reason for all our troubles is recorded in the opening pages of the Book of Books - the Bible. The “being” responsible for that deception is called the “father of lies, and a liar from the beginning” (John 8:44). That same Book concludes with another great deception. This time it is not one innocent individual who is deceived, but whole nations - perhaps most of the world. All through its pages are warnings and admonitions against lies contrasted with pleas for truth.

⁵ Parents Magazine, June 1995; Ibid.

⁶ Educational Communications, Inc., 1996; The Institute for Global Ethics - Educational Statistics; <http://www.globalethics.ore/edu/edstats.html>

⁷ Reader’s Digest, October 1995 survey; Ibid.

⁸ Parsons Technology, Ibid.

LYING IN THE FACE OF THE TRUTH:

This Law takes on special significance in light of Jesus' crucifixion. True, there were other Commandments that were broken during that time, specifically *Thou shalt not murder* ... But this Commandment was the one that delivered Jesus unto death. This one flies in the face of reason. Murder could be seen as a crime of passion, because Jesus made them so angry; but here, they are using the law to break the law.

Deuteronomy 19:15-20 One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. ¹⁶ If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime, ¹⁷ the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. ¹⁸ The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against his brother, ¹⁹ then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you. ²⁰ The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you.

Matthew 26:59-60 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward.

Three hundred years before Christ, Plato predicted that if ever the truly good man were to appear, the man who would tell the truth, he would have his eyes gouged out and in the end be crucified.⁹

When the embodiment of truth appeared on the scene, He was falsely accused and crucified because He told the truth. Confronted and confounded by this incredible scene, Pilate echoed the cry of humanity when he said, "*What is truth?*" —John. 18:38.

For us to adequately understand the full meaning of truth we need to define a lie.

LIE: **1.** An assertion of something known or believed by the speaker to be untrue with *intent to deceive* **2.** something that misleads or deceives.¹⁰ ~Emphasis added.

Pilate's question, "*What is truth?*" is a question that man has been faced with time and again. Unfortunately, most do not turn to Jesus for answers. He said of Himself: *I am ... the truth* ... ~John. 14:6. Neither do they turn, as a rule, to God's Word which is truth. Of the Word of God, Jesus had said, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

⁹ Parson's Technology; Ibid. Elizabeth Elliot.

¹⁰ Webster's Dictionary

Instead of truly searching for absolute truth, man has tried to make truth relative. Consequently, we have numerous conflicts because what is deemed *true* in situation “A” is *not* considered *true* in situation “B”. Hence the rise and acceptance of situation ethics (situation ethics tells us that the right or wrong of an action is determined by the situation). Since almost every situation is different, there can be no set standard. *That* is a reason for the rapid moral decline in our generation.

God said: *Don't eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

Satan said: *Yeah, but the reason He said that is because He doesn't want you as smart as He is.*

The Law stated: *Thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

The Jewish Council sought out *false witnesses*, a blatant violation of this Law; but they needed *two* witnesses, because that is what the Law required. In their determination to have Jesus crucified, they wanted to be sure they were not in violation of the Law—go figure. The significance here is that in their attempt to use this Law to justify their actions they had to violate this Law to do so. Lying seems to rob its users of rational thought.

Where do you look for *truth*? Exodus 23:7 tells us to have nothing to do with a false charge. What we need to do is distance ourselves from falsehood as though it were an incredible precipice. How far away from “false” do we walk? How close are we to the Truth? How close are we to Jesus? If the *truth* were known, too many of us are too close to false and not close enough to the Truth!

Is it ever right to lie? In answering that question, we need to look at the source of our life—God. The Bible says it is impossible for Him to lie (Hebrews 6:18); and we are created in His image; therefore, it is never *right* to lie. To say otherwise is lending support to *situation ethics*—the situation determines the ethics. To believe in situation ethics is to deny that *truth is absolute!*

INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

This addresses our motivation. King David recorded an awesome truth about God's desires for us in Psalm 51:6 where he says, “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.” We should have no hidden agenda and no ulterior motive. We are supposed to be real.

Psalm 25:10 (KJV) *All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.* ~Emphasis added.

Our motivation for *any* action should be the truth. We should have a genuine desire to see truth triumph. On the one hand, when we deal with lies, life can become incredibly complex; on the other hand, when we deal in truth, it is relatively simple. Lies have many shades ... truth has one. Truth is like purity, i.e. purity of water. Something that is pure means that it is without mixture. The minute something is added to our “pure” water the mixture is no longer pure. In the same way, truth is pure. The minute something is *added* or embellished, it is no longer the truth; and, the minute something is *taken away*, it is no longer the truth. Let us consider, for example, the chemical components of water. Water consists of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, written H₂O. If we take away one of the hydrogen atoms, we are left with the chemical component OH

which is hydroxide, a *completely different* element. If, on the other hand, we were to *add* an atom of oxygen, we would get H₂O₂, hydrogen peroxide - not recommended for drinking. In either case, what you end up with is completely different from the original and does not behave at all in the same manner as the original. So too with truth. When truth is added to or subtracted from, it is no longer the truth. There may be some of the same recognizable elements in the result that were in the original; but it is no longer the truth. It's not the same, and to assume that it doesn't matter could be detrimental to our health.

One of the things that is so frustrating about our present legal system is when a witness in court is sworn in with the words: “*Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?*” Then the attorneys get busy. All too often the answers given are only a partial picture of the truth; it’s no longer the *whole truth* but a partial truth, a half-truth.

EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

This is speaking of our practices. According to this Law, we are not to bear false witness against our *neighbor*. Who is our neighbor? According to the Miriam Webster Dictionary, a neighbor is “**1.** One living or located near; **2.** Fellow man.” Jesus dealt with a lawyer on this very issue. Let’s look at a passage from the Gospel of Luke to try and help us better understand this aspect of the Law.

Luke 10:25-37 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' ²⁶ 'What is written in the Law?' he replied. 'How do you read it?' ²⁷ He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ²⁸ 'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.' ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' ³⁰ In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' ³⁶ 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' ³⁷ The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Take special note of Verse 25. The Lawyer's purpose was not personal knowledge, but to test Jesus. In other words, he wasn't after the *truth*. He was trying to trip Him up. But Jesus didn't play to that ... rather He said, “What does the Law say?” One of the popular statements by Billy Graham is, “The Bible says” *This* needs to be our response ... what does the Bible say? Has God already

spoken concerning this issue or this dilemma? This parable points out to us, in graphic detail, the fact that our neighbor is our fellow man; and, we have an obligation to deal truthfully with them. Neither the Priest nor the Levite dealt with this man in a truthful manner - both sought to cover up their obligation to him by walking on the other side. The Law made specific provision for ministering to a neighbor regarding their animals. "If you see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help him get it to its feet." Now, if your neighbor's animal was important enough to God—how much more the neighbor himself? In our own day, we are just as guilty of non-involvement as those in the parable were.

A young woman was brutally attacked as she returned to her apartment late one night. She screamed and shrieked as she fought for her life, yelling until she was hoarse — for thirty minutes — as she was beaten and abused. Thirty-eight people watched the half-hour episode in rapt fascination from their windows. Not one so much as walked over to the telephone and called the police. She died that night as thirty-eight witnesses stared in silence. Another's experience was similar. Riding on a subway, a seventeen- year-old youth was quietly minding his own business when he was stabbed repeatedly in the stomach by attackers. Eleven riders watched the stabbing, but none came to assist the young man. Even after the thugs had fled and the train had pulled out of the station and he lay there in a pool of his own blood, not one of the eleven came to his side. Less dramatic, but equally shocking, was the ordeal of a lady in New York City. While shopping on Fifth Avenue in busy Manhattan, this lady tripped and broke her leg. Dazed, anguished, and in shock, she called out for help. Not for two minutes. Not for twenty minutes. But for forty minutes, as shoppers and business executives, students and merchants walked around her and stepped over her, completely ignoring her cries. After literally hundreds had passed by, a cab driver finally pulled over, hauled her into his taxi, and took her to a local hospital.¹¹

As we have seen, the implications of this Law about not lying are enormous. They go far beyond our concept of "little white lies" to the very heart of our dealings with our neighbors. There is a two-fold obligation.

Negatively: *do not bear false testimony* ~Exodus 20:16.

Positively: *speak the truth in love* ~Ephesians 4:15.

Speaking/doing the truth in love to our neighbors is not an option but an obligation. It becomes very easy then, and even dangerous, to focus on just one aspect of our obligation, and to leave out the other. When the other obligation is left out, we fall into the trap of becoming *busybodies*. Remember the other obligation? It has to do with our *motivation*. Both Paul and Peter address this issue. Paul spoke to the Christians at Corinth regarding being approved as ministers of God. He speaks of that approval coming because of *the Spirit ... by unfeigned love and by the word of truth*, (2 Corinthians 6:6 & 7 -KJV). Peter states, "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the

¹¹ Improving Your Serve, by Charles Swindoll

truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22)

Many times, we as Christians are guilty of living by a double standard. We have an attitude about things in the Word of God that is described best by Bob Phillips, founder of the “Come Up Higher” ministry, he said, “Many Christians view the Word of God like it's a cafeteria, where they pick what they like and discard what they don't like.”

I remember a time when some Christians were discussing the swift rise of the homosexual movement in this country. The discussion then turned to the rising acceptance of homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle *within the church*. A Scripture was quoted - either Leviticus 18:22 or 20:13 - where God is describing homosexuality as an abomination. A third person, overhearing the scriptural inference about homosexuality being an abomination quipped, “So is lying, but you don't see a phobia among Christians directed against people who lie.” Caught! Proverbs 12:22 (KJV) says, “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.”

We have the privilege of being in right relationship with God because God saw the truth of our situation and spoke the truth about our need. “He that knew no sin became sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” The Living Word, the Truth of God became flesh and died in our place, so that we could be and do the right thing. Truth is right; lies are an abomination.

SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

In this Section, we will be dealing primarily with spiritual deception or spiritual blindness. Read Genesis 3:1-7 for a better understanding of the difference between universal and personal blindness.

There are several types of blindness that we need to distinguish. There is a universal blindness brought into humanity through the sin of Adam and Eve. There is also an involuntary blindness “And so death passed upon all men”. This is the kind of blindness that is transmitted from one to another without the *conscious* awareness of the recipient. Finally, there is personal blindness, the kind brought by Adam, through deliberate action.

VOLUNTARY BLINDNESS “for that all have sinned.”

Whether blindness is voluntary or involuntary, the results are the same. Adam and Eve went from *seeing* spiritually to *seeing* worldly: “...the eyes of them both were opened...” (Genesis 3:7). They went from *knowing* God to *knowing* themselves: “...and they knew they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.” ~Verse 7. A good principle to learn here, from their attempt to cover their nakedness with leaves, is that we can't adequately cover a lie with a minimal amount of truth! The sad result of this sin is that Adam and Eve exchanged something precious and eternal for something temporal. In a split second, they traversed the immense gulf from *loving* God to *being afraid* of Him. “...and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ... 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” (Genesis 3:8,10). From this stage of their “cover-up”, we learn that we can't hide a lie in the

midst of truth. There is only one way to deal with a lie - expose it! Adam and Eve became *spiritually blind* because of deception - a lie.

Much fault has been found with Eve's first response to the serpent's inquiry. I think she had the right idea. She said, "...Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die". She was so conscious of the Command not to eat that she set some additional parameters to keep from slipping. The *lie* came from the Serpent, "You shall not surely die, ...you will become like gods".

When we are born, we are born *spiritually blind*. That blindness is involuntary. If we *remain* spiritually blind, then that blindness becomes voluntary. Here's a good story to illustrate this truth.

Lost in the jungle, a man sought desperately to find his way to safety. His strength was ebbing fast as the insects and stifling heat did their deadly work. Suddenly he heard what he thought to be a bell tolling in the distance. Believing he was nearing civilization, he struggled bravely onward; but he never seemed to draw closer to the sound. Finally he fell to the ground exhausted, never to rise again. The mysterious bellbird had claimed another victim! This story is related in detail by G.B. Robeson. He says that many a traveler in the heart of the rain forest of Central and South America has been led to his death by the uncanny call of this seldom-seen bird. Its enticing, reverberating "toll" produces an almost overpowering temptation to seek its source.¹²

Similarly, Satan employs subtle devices to ensnare us. As lost souls seek to disengage themselves from the vines of sin, they are allured by the tempter's "bell" ringing in the distance. "At last," they think, "I've found a way of escape," and so, following the call of the evil one deeper and deeper into the jungle of despair, they are eventually lost for eternity. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."

Many are following the deceptive call of the devil's "bellbird" because it "seems right" to them. O that they might realize the truth of these words before it is too late, "But in the end it leads to death". Christ, who declared that "No man comes unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6), is the only One who can lead poor wanderers to the promised land of salvation and safety.



The Truth is found in the following verses:

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

1 Samuel 15:29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.

Hebrews 6:17-19 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

¹² Parson's Technology; Ibid.

¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain;

Both universal and personal blindness are curable: We are born blind but we don't have to remain blind.

“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree...”

“He who knew no sin became sin for us...”

“Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.”



Acts 5:1-11 is the biblical account of two individuals in the early Church who were caught lying. Ananias and Sapphira were severely disciplined so that the whole Church could see the impact of lying on God's covenant people. I want to explore this incident further to try and gain some insight into our present walk.

THE OBVIOUS FACTS OF THIS SITUATION

There are several things that are obvious to us after reading the biblical account of Ananias and Sapphira. First, it appears that they are guilty of a pre-meditated conspiracy. They had originally agreed to give the price of the land to the Church. That was a commendable thing to do. It was not required that they do that. However, once the land was sold, they conspired together to just give a portion. As a result of their “lie to the Holy Spirit,” severe punishment came upon them.

THE OBSCURE FOCUS IN THIS SITUATION

There are, on the other hand, some things that are not so obvious, even though they are mentioned outright. Perhaps the reason for that is we are too busy being shocked at the extreme measure of the discipline and trying to rein in any emotional thoughts that would cause us to question God's justice.

First, we need to know that the instigator of this act was Satan. He planted a seed in their minds, and that thought took hold and resulted in an action that was a lie against the Holy Spirit. It was a lie against the Holy Spirit because they had said they would do a certain thing *for the church*, and the Church is where the Holy Spirit is actively manifesting God's will and God's power. What would happen if He meted out the punishment for the things we say we are going to do and “change” our minds to suit ourselves? Just a thought.

After that thought was put into the hearts of both Ananias & Sapphira, *they* allowed it to take root and produce the lie. They conspired to defraud the Church, and, ultimately, the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it happened this way:

Scene: There is great excitement about what God is doing in this local Church; and, Ananias and Sapphira were caught up in that excitement. Many individuals were opening their homes, placing everything they owned at the disposal of the new Christian community. Not wanting to be left out Ananias boldly committed the full sale of their property to the Church. Perhaps there were those who were impressed by this great gift. Soon the money was in their hands, and as they counted it out they began to have second thoughts. “Wow - what are we, nuts? The Church doesn’t need that kind of money. Let’s give a part now, invest the rest, and that way we can continue to tithe and be good stewards of this blessing.”

It wasn’t a blessing; it was a test! However we may envision that scene unfolding, the true mettle of their heart was tested, and their period of reflection became the incubation period for Satan’s seed-suggestion to lie to the Holy Spirit. They failed on the follow-through. They started out with the best of intentions. They had the ability to follow through with those intentions, but they chose rather to defraud the Holy Spirit than to suffer loss themselves. They failed to grasp the truth that God will not be in debt to man. They failed to implement the truth of Psalm 15 that speaks of the marks of kingdom living: Psalm 15:4 “...He swears to his own hurt and changes not” (KJV). In other words, when a commitment is made, it’s to be adhered to. Both Ananias and Sapphira made a commitment; but, when the crunch came, they chose to deceive. That deception was the fruit of Satan’s seed. The devil didn’t *make* them do it. He just suggested it! What commitments have you and I made that we have not followed through with? We sing, “*I Have Decided To Follow Jesus*,” and spend more time following the dictates of the world or our own desires than we do following Jesus.

Those that pretend to an inspiration of the Spirit, in imposing upon the church their own fancies, either in opinion or practice — that say they are moved from above when they are carried on by their pride, covetousness, or affectation of dominion, belie the Holy Ghost.¹³

We say: “I’ll go where you want me to go” ... but when the day of reckoning comes, we add “As long as it’s not to Mayer, Arizona or Africa or across the street to my neighbor”. We may say to God, “I’ll say what You want me to say” - but when the time comes to speak out for Jesus, we add “Just don’t ask me to speak to so-and-so”. We make all sorts of commitments to God; but, when we are faced with the reality of our words, we have ‘second thoughts’. We’re not speaking of those times that we may forget, or that have been rendered impossible by circumstances; but we are speaking of those times when, after reflection, we just don’t feel like it. Is it any wonder that God has not trusted us with more? We have not been faithful in these “little” things. What has kept you from following through? Was it circumstances beyond your control or further reflection?

Satan wants to keep us from doing the will of God. Satan wants to bring deception into the church. How successful has he been? From the state of many Christian churches in our nation, while he is not assured victory in the war, he is winning far too many battles. Matthew Henry says:

¹³ Matthew Henry's Commentary

It is often of fatal consequence for people to go a greater length in profession than their inward principle will admit of.¹⁴

We need to be more conscientious in doing what James said, "... be swift to hear and slow to speak."

What is Satan's Purpose?

The same as it was in the garden of Eden. He wants to rob us of our intimacy with God. He does that with lies. A lie prohibits true intimacy; the truth promotes it. God, in an attempt to become intimate with us, has told us the truth about ourselves and about Himself. What He expects from us is the same consideration that we deal truthfully with Him. How many times have we done the opposite? How many times have we tried to convince God that we love someone when the reality is they tick us off. Why not just tell Him that? Look at it. Isn't it absurd to be anything less than truthful with God? I remember an incident from my childhood. One of my brothers (I have three) had just walked across the freshly waxed kitchen floor. My mother had spent hours on her hands and knees stripping and re-waxing that floor. There were muddy footprints going from the back door across the kitchen to the basement door. So, Mom went down to the basement to see who the guilty party was. There he sat in front of the TV, muddy boots still on his feet. Mom asked him if he had just walked across the kitchen with muddy boots. He said "No"! The proof was right in front of both their faces - she graciously pointed that out to him. He continued to adamantly deny it. We look at that and say, "Come on..."! Talk about being caught with your hand in the cookie jar; yet, in much the same way, we try to fool the omniscient God.

Satan's sin was pride. He wanted to be God. He wanted to take God's place. Consequently, pride is one of his biggest weapons of warfare against humanity; and pride is nowhere more evident than in man's purposed independence.

It's my pride that makes me independent of God. It's appealing to feel I am the master of my fate; I run my own life, I call my own shots; I go it alone. But that feeling is my basic dishonesty. I can't go it alone. I have to get help from other people, and I can't ultimately rely on myself. I am dependent on God for my very next breath. It is dishonest of me to pretend that I am anything but a man, small, weak and limited. So, living independent of God is self-delusion. It's not just a matter of pride being an unfortunate little trait and humility being an attractive little virtue, it's my inner psychological integrity that's at stake. When I am conceited, I am lying to myself about what I am. I am pretending to be God, and not man. My pride is the idolatrous worship of myself, and that is the national religion of hell.¹⁵

~Author unknown

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Parsons Technology, Ibid.

Prayer for Forgiveness:

Dear Lord, I know from Your Word that one of the magnificent names of Jesus is *Truth*. I know, too, from Psalm 25, that all Your paths are mercy and truth. I desire to walk in Your way ... the way of truth, because truth sets us free. Teach me Your way, O Lord, and forgive me for walking in my own way. Help me, please, to always speak the truth, both by my life and from my lips because You desire truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6). Thank you for showing me the truth about lying, in Jesus' name, Amen.

In the next Chapter, we will see the *root* cause of our breaking these Commandments.

