

THINGS TO STOP AND START

Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

Ephesians 4:21–29

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Of all of the attributes human beings can display, one seems to point more directly to our Creator. When we speak *truth*, we are most like God—who is Truth. On the flip side, when we *lie*, our character stands in stark contradiction to His.

Of all the bad habits we could address, few are more prevalent yet more acceptable than lying. And few are more destructive to our relationships and our integrity. As painful as it may be to hear, ours is a nation of liars. One reliable survey reveals that 91 percent of Americans lie regularly. The majority of Americans find it hard to get through a week without lying.

Unfortunately, Christians are not the exception. Believers are just as likely to falsify their income tax returns, commit plagiarism, bribe to obtain a building permit, shift blame onto someone else, illegally copy a computer program, and steal from the workplace. It is time for us to face it: lying is an ongoing habit that we must expose, analyze, and, ultimately, stop! As we shall see, when Paul wrote to the believers in first-century Ephesus, he put it straight: “So stop telling lies” (Ephesians 4:25 NLT).



LET'S BEGIN HERE

As the embodiment of deity, truth is the language of Jesus. When the Son of God clothed Himself with humanity and came to speak the Father’s message of salvation, He came as the Word—the most faithful word the world had ever experienced. Jesus, who existed eternally with the Father and the Spirit, brought to our dark world *light* and to our lie-infested existence *truth* (John 1:9, 14).

Satan, the would-be usurper of heaven’s throne and one bent on destruction, only speaks the language of duplicity (8:44). When Satan met our first parents, Adam and Eve, in paradise, he lied (Genesis 3:1, 4–5). But his wasn’t just a small white lie. He brought into question the very word and character of God. Just like with every lie since the fall, when we speak the language of Satan, we cause others to question God’s goodness and holiness.

Quotable

*If you want
to have an intimate
relationship with
the Lord God,
speak truthfully!*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Before us two paths emerge: the path of truth and the path of deception. Let's walk through the pages of Scripture to learn what God has to say about lying and why we must abandon the duplicitous path that leads to destruction.



Correlating Scripture's Message on Lying

In order to understand what Scripture as a whole has to say about a particular topic, we must correlate its truth by comparing passages of Scripture. In the correlation step of searching the Scriptures, we try to find the harmony between the passage we're studying and other parts of the Bible. Because the Bible is an inspired Book by one divine Author, it tells one unified story with unified teachings on many topics. The Bible is its own best interpreter, and the correlation step can help us find connections between verses and passages in Scripture that shed more light on the particular passage in question.

We can think of correlation as making a journey from the inside to the outside of a series of concentric circles. First, in the innermost circle, we look for related verses within the same Bible book we are studying. The second circle points us to parallel passages that can shed light on our passage. (This step will only apply if we are studying 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and the Gospels.) In the third circle, we research the same topic we are studying in other books written by the same biblical author. In the fourth circle, we use a cross-reference resource to locate the same topic within the same testament and then in the Bible as a whole. Fifth and finally, we can read our passage in different translations, paraphrase the passage on our own, and check reliable commentaries to confirm our interpretation.

As we begin searching the Scriptures to correlate Paul's message in Ephesians 4:21–29, let's look at some verses in the innermost circle—related verses within the same Bible book we are studying. Read Ephesians 4:11–16. What does this passage tell us about the characteristics of lies? What effect does truth have on the quality of our relationships?

Next, read Ephesians 2:1–6. Knowing that Satan is the father of lies, what is at the heart of deception? How has God's mercy changed you? How can His grace help you speak truth?



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Let's move on to the third concentric circle of correlation. (The second circle doesn't apply in this case because Ephesians 4:21–29 does not have a parallel passage.) Read the following verses from some of Paul's other letters and briefly comment on what you learn about lying:

Romans 1:21–25

Colossians 3:5–9

2 Thessalonians 2:8–12

Titus 1:1–2

As we move to the fourth circle, let's examine what the New Testament as a whole says about lying. Read John 8:31–47, in which Jesus pinpoints the sources of truth and falsehood. What is the connection between the truth and freedom? Compare Jesus' teaching to Ephesians 4:21–29.



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Read Acts 4:32–5:11. What was the penalty for lying? Do you think the consequences were too harsh? Why, or why not?

In his sermon, Chuck Swindoll illustrated the next step of correlation: how to examine related Scriptures in the Bible as a whole. In regard to Psalm 15:1–2, Chuck said, “You want to have an intimate relationship with the Lord God; stop lying. . . . The Spirit of God is heartbroken, living in your life, knowing that you’re saying things that you realize are not true.” While reflecting on Psalm 15:1–2, have you experienced the truth of Chuck’s statement in your life?

Next, read Proverbs 6:12–19. How does falsehood undermine fellowship with your friends and family? How does Proverbs 6:12–19 help you better understand Ephesians 4:21–29?



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Finally, let's step into the outermost circle of correlation and read Ephesians 4:21–29 in different translations. You can go to www.Biblegateway.com to read different versions. After you read the passage in at least three different versions, paraphrase Ephesians 4:21–29 on our own.

After completing the process of correlation, check reliable commentaries for additional insight into Ephesians 4:21–29. For example, you can read the section on this passage in Chuck's commentary, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Galatians and Ephesians*.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I pray that You will invade the secret places in my heart and reveal any patterns of deception in my life. Make my thoughts pure as You are pure. Father, please help me to begin living in the light and truth today. In the name of Jesus, amen.



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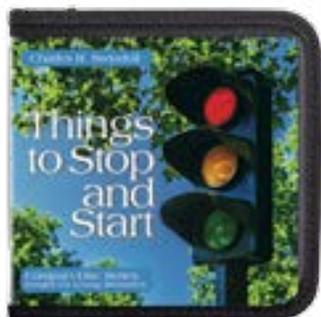
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Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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