

"O LORD, who may
abide in Your tent?
Who may dwell on
Your holy hill? He who
walks with integrity,
and works
righteousness, And
speaks truth in his
heart."
Psalm 15:1-2

Liar! Liar! Pants on Fire!

Integrity - Psalm 15 - Inner Integrity

"I was not lying. I said things that later on seemed to be untrue." – Nixon discussing Watergate.

We lie everyday. If not to those around us, then to ourselves. No, it doesn't really make any sense, but we do it anyway.

We tell ourselves that we don't really need to apologize for snapping at that friend- maybe they didn't even notice.

We tell ourselves that that huge bowl of ice cream is a normal serving size, isn't it?

We tell ourselves that saying a quick prayer on the way out the door and glancing at the Bible verse we have laying in our car counts as spending quality time with God. Right?

We tell ourselves that little mistruths such as these are not a problem, as well, don't we?

What was the most recent lie that you told yourself?

The breakdown of integrity in our lives begins when we fail to be truthful in our hearts. When we choose not to have internal conversation of reliability, firmness, and faithfulness, we instead are speaking words of self-deceit to our inner man.

So how do you know if you are having a problem with truthfulness in your heart? Here are some ways that we compromise the truth in our hearts and minds.

1. Explanations - compromise the truth. You know how it goes. Sometimes you get caught in a wrong deed, a bad situation, as we all do. How do you explain it? Do you deal with it head on, with total honesty, or with half-truths?

2. Excuses - deny the truth. Someone has said "an excuse is just a lie wrapped in reason". The reason we make excuses is to make ourselves not appear as bad as we really are.

3. Exaggerations - stretch the truth. We use exaggerations to make ourselves look better than we are.

Which of the above ways of deceiving yourself are you guilty of?

All three: explanations, excuses, and exaggerations point to the fact that there is a problem with speaking truth in the heart. How can we avoid this? How can we really be people that speak the truth in our hearts?

There are many things that Christians may deceive themselves about. List a few that come to your mind.

Now let's examine five common areas about which Christians deceive themselves.

1. Reality of Sin - I John 1:8 "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." This verse is to Christians, confronted with an issue of sin in their life. When the Holy Spirit pricks your conscience by still small voice you can ignore or deny it, or say "it's not me". But the reality is that in this flesh we will always struggle with sin; to begin to think the struggle is not there is self-deception.

2. Results and consequences of sin - Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked; A man reaps what he sows." We all many times act like we believe that sin does not have any consequences. But none of us are above the consequences of sin. You will reap that which you sow, even if it is much later on.

3. High regard for self - Galatians 6:3 - "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing he deceives himself." The proud person deceives himself and is headed for destruction.

4. Application of the Word - James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Those who listen and do not obey deceive themselves and are Satan's delight because they push people away from the Lord. These people are hypocrites that bring reproach on Christ's name.

5. Use of the tongue - James 1:26 "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." The tongue is a fire. That's why God put such a premium on controlling the tongue – because the tongue reveals what is in the heart. Words of gossip, slander, and malice reveal a heart full of hatred, violence, and pride. Can you understand your own heart? No, it's so desperate and wicked that even the heart that has been transformed by the power of God still has a propensity toward deception if we walk in this flesh. But let me encourage you. We're not left to ourselves to solve this difficult problem of speaking the truth in our hearts.

Have you been deceiving yourself in one of the above areas? Which one or ones?

God has given us a gift called self-examination. God will help, for He would not call us to do this without providing for us the means to accomplish it. We can't do it but He can (2 Peter 1:3). God has commanded us to examine ourselves as the means to speak the truth in our heart. (I Cor. 11:28). So how do we examine ourselves? Here are four practical avenues of self examination.

The Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the Word of God is sharper than any two edged sword that pierces the motives and intents of the heart."

*"But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup."
1 Corinthians 11:28*

“Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.”
Psalm 141:5

“Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprove to a listening ear.”
Proverbs 25:12

Prayer. God’s Word is full of prayers, prayers that go to God and say, “*God, examine me.*” It would seem foolish for God to teach us to pray that way if he wasn’t going to honor that kind of praying, right? (Psalm 26:2)

The Spirit of God. Romans 8:27 “Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

The reproof of others. This is the most painful of the four avenues! It took a prophet putting a finger in the face of David to speak the truth in his heart. Sometimes if we are really interested in speaking the truth in our hearts we have to be open to reproof.

Are you willing to have your blind spots exposed? Are you open to that?

The person who speaks truth in his heart says, like David. I don't want to refuse reproof, I want it. If you're serious about speaking truth in your heart, say to a good friend, “Will you be candid with me, will you love me enough to even hurt me if you need to so that I will be a person of honesty?”

Do you want to be blessed by God? Are you the true believer who enjoys the presence of God? The one experiences power and intimacy with God? If you do, you must be a person of integrity, and the core of integrity is speaking the truth in your heart. The genuine believer is not a self deceiver, but one who has internal conversation that is always firm, reliable, and faithful in their inner man, their heart.

Don't be a liar. Start telling the truth to yourself.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?
