

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. Numerous surveys reveal that almost all Americans admit to lying regularly, yet few see this as a problem. One author commented that "Lying has become a cultural trait in America; it is embedded into our national character."
 - a. In your opinion, how big of a problem is lying and dishonesty in our culture? What are some specific ways where the problem of dishonesty has resulted a harmful decay in aspects of our culture and the way we relate to each other?
 - b. Why don't most people see this as a serious problem? Why have we grown to accept this level of dishonesty as being normal?
 - c. Surveys reveal that the vast majority of people admit that they lie on a regular basis, while at the same time considering themselves to be extremely honest. Why is there a disconnect between the fact that most people admit they lie on a regular basis, but still consider themselves to be extremely honest?
 - d. In an honest self-assessment, how honest are you? What would your family say about your honesty? What about your co-workers? Your friends?
2. How has our culture redefined the concept of lying and honesty? What forms of lying and/or deception are commonly accepted in our culture, and why?
 - a. What is the difference between not lying and telling the truth?
 - b. What forms of dishonesty do you struggle with the most?
 - c. What common strategy for trying to justify dishonesty (post-modernism, moralism, relativism, or legalism) do you see being used most often? What strategy are you most guilty of using in your own life?
3. The Bible does not teach that we are to never make a vow to God, but that we should not make any vow lightly, and that God expects us to fulfill any vow we make. Look at Numbers 30:2 and Deuteronomy 23:21. Do you believe that these verses still apply to us today? If so, practically what are these verses calling you to do?
4. While we minimize the seriousness of our "little white lies," how seriously do you think God takes the problem of lying?
 - a. Read and respond to Proverbs 6:16-19
 - b. Read Acts 4:32-5:11. What made Ananias and Sapphira's sin so severe?
 - c. Is lying always wrong, in every situation? If not, what would be the exceptions?
5. Have you ever listened to or participated in a discussion of the question, "is it ever OK to lie," and is it ever right to withhold part of the truth?
 - a. If you have, to what degree were the answers based in scripture and to what degree were they based only in personal opinion?
 - b. What scriptural principles should guide us on this question?
6. Should we always tell the whole truth? Can you think of an example when a person told the truth in a harmful and destructive way? Read and respond to Proverbs 10:10-21 and Proverbs 12:13-23.
 - a. Ephesians 4:15 calls us to speak "the truth in love." Can we fail by speaking the truth, but doing so without love? If so, what does this look like, and how can we avoid this?
 - b. Does speaking the truth in love ever call us to be deceptive in our speech? Please explain your answer.