

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Grace Unleashed:  
The Book of Ephesians

PART

16

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Speak The Truth

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:25



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Well, it's so good to see you, Providence, and for all of you who call this your home, welcome back. Whether you're here in this room or if you're over in all the other venues, or perhaps even at home, welcome. We're really glad that you're here. This has been just a very encouraging week to me. Once a quarter, John Irwin, he sort of assembles a ... well a report is what it is, but it's just a simple picture basically of the health of the church, and it just kind of shows various vital signs that as a staff, as elders, we look at and we think are important. I'm just so encouraged. I'm so encouraged, not just from that report, because I knew what was there, but to your kindness, your investment, your sacrifice for people, your servant heart in this has been remarkable. How many of you serve with our children, with our students, and hospitality, your incredible generosity, your incredible support and trust and unity with each other, how you love one another so well, and I am thankful.

It's been an amazing week, just to be honest with you. I've been sick, and so that wasn't so great, but I was very encouraged. Then on the way in, for several weeks in a row now, actually for eight months, we've been in this venue and sort of spread into several venues just to come and to worship the Lord, and this is the first day that it's rained. On the way in, I'm driving on a Sunday in the rain, and God just once again reminded me that in every place in the Bible except one, and that was a pretty bad one, it was called the flood, and he said, "I won't ever do that again." But he said, outside of that, every time that we see rain, it's an expression of the faithfulness and kindness of God, that he would water the earth so that we could eat not only today, but tomorrow. I'm just very encouraged this day. It is great to see you as a family.

If you're a guest with us, we are grateful that you are here as well. If you know Christ, we pray that this time would truly encourage you to grow and to love Him even more. If you don't know Christ, we're thrilled that you are here, and we pray that this will be a time when you can learn more about who he is and what he has done on your behalf, on all of our behalf. It really is an amazing thing.

We love the Bible here. If you have one, if you want to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4. In our time we're actually going to only cover one verse, it's chapter 4 verse 25. Don't worry, I'll talk longer than it takes for me to read that one verse. But what we see over and over in this book is a picture of Christ. So if you have one, if you want to turn there; if you don't, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift. So I want to pause and pray for our time. So, if you would.

Father, we love you. We acknowledge you. We thank you, God, for your kindness that leads us not only to repentance, but your kindness that leads us to see your supremacy and your love and your mercy that's been poured out to us. I thank you for every person here, and pray, God, that you would use this time to encourage, that you would give us belief, that you would give us conviction, understanding, and even courage to apply this to our life. In particular, Father, as it deals with the issue of honesty and integrity, I pray, we pray, God, that you would root out dishonesty in our life.

I pray, Father, for those in the room, those of us who sometimes struggle so much to get out of a hole of our lying, I pray, God, that you would rescue today through your word. So we look to you, would you speak through weakness and help us to see the supremacy of Christ in this text? We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

You know, it seems, this day, this age of our own country and our own land, is it's hard to know who's telling the truth. We hear lots of reports about a lot of different things and it's really difficult to know, and it's because we just know that lying is just part of the fabric of our culture, being deceptive, being underhanded, flattery, sometimes just flat-out lying. The problem with all of this is that it's hard to know what's true and what's not true.

It seems to me that there's really only two ways for us as God's people, as believers seeking to represent Christ, there's only two ways, it seems, to stand out in a world that's so full of lies. One way is to take our own deception to new levels of darkness, basically, okay? So you see people who have done this, people who were intelligent, some people who had absolute gifts in certain areas, and yet because they allowed lying and cheating to take root in their heart, what we know them now as is, man, this is a liar, this is a cheater.

So you look at people such as Bernie Madoff, who stole billions of dollars from various investors, lots of investors. He made it his life legacy. We will never think of him without thinking about lying again. Lance Armstrong, an amazing cyclist, won cyclings, won signature events seven years in a row. He was loved by our country, and throughout, and even the years afterward, he was accused of lying and doping, cheating by taking drugs to enhance his own performance, one after another. He became very abusive to people that would seek to bring things to light. Now, all of a sudden, all seven of his titles were stripped, he was known now as somebody who is the only one who has won it seven times and had all seven titles stripped because of his widespread cheating and lying. We'll never think of him again in the same way.

Larry Nassar, some of us following the news today or this week, you've seen a man who was given a 175 year sentence in prison. He'll spend the rest of his life in jail. Over 20 years he manipulated and exploited people. He lied to people about who he was and what he was doing. He gained trust and sexually assaulted hundreds of young female athletes.

We will never think of these people the same way again. Their name will always be associated with this. To sort of stand out in a world full of lies, you can either do as they have done, and that is to take lying and deception to such depraved, obvious ways, or we can shine like a light in the darkness and be people who tell the truth. Nobody ever shone brighter in this world, in this way, than Jesus Christ. When Peter wanted to explain the sinlessness of Jesus, he says in 1 Peter 2:22, he says, "He committed no sin." And then to almost emphasize the amount of integrity and sinlessness that was in Jesus, that's not in us, he says, "And no deceit was found in his mouth."

Here Paul is in prison and he's writing believers, many of whom he'd led to Christ, living in modern day Turkey, called Ephesus. He wants, more than anything in the world, for people in this world to be able to see Jesus Christ in all of his glory, to love him and worship him and be saved and forgiven of their sins. He wants more than anything for people in this world to see the integrity and truthfulness of the Son of God more than anything, and yet, Jesus is in heaven, and he knows that, but he also knows that Jesus' representatives are on the earth, people who've been called with a calling to represent him on this earth.

What we find in Ephesians is three chapters where he's sharing with us, reminding the believers in the church about what the gospel is and what Christ has done within our heart, and then he turns a key and he says, in chapter 4 verse 1, he says, "Therefore, I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." And knowing that integrity and truthfulness was absolutely a part of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom we're supposed to represent, he says to us in verse 25, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."

A simple verse, but before we jump into it, I want to answer a pretty common question that any time you talk about lying seems to pop up in the hearts of people, and it's this, "Is there ever a time when it's right to lie?" It's an interesting question, isn't it? Some of you think, well, this is a church and he's a pastor, so he's going to say, "No, there's never a time." What I can say is this, is it is absolutely possible for a person if the fear of the Lord and the walk of faith to feel constrained in life-threatening situations, to oppose evil by lying. The reason I can say this of people is because we see it not only in history books, but we also see it within the Bible. I'm going to give you two examples.

During the Holocaust, there were people just like this family, the Shaffers. The Shaffers here, they're living in Holland, they're Dutch reformed Christians. They love Christ. They see the dignity of all human life written in the pages of scripture, inscribed literally upon every single forehead and every single person in the world. They know of a family in their village, a Jewish family, that is going to be hunted down, that is literally going to be captured and then killed. They made a choice, like many families at the time, to hide this Jewish family in secret walls of their house and in their rooms for two years. During that time there in Holland, the police came to their home, it says at least two or three times, and they directly lied about having Jewish people living in their home. Was it right? Interesting question. What I can say is that people of faith, if the fear of God, in life-threatening situations felt constrained to oppose evil by not telling the truth.

You see this also within scripture. You see in the first chapter of Exodus, there's this really evil pharaoh, okay? He's the king of Egypt. He wants to thin out the population of the Hebrews because he's seeing them as a threat. He tells the midwives that when you go to the home, when a Hebrew woman is about to have a baby, when you receive that baby, before they can see, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill the baby. If it's a girl, let the baby live. They have a choice they have to make. Life-threatening situations.

This is what the Bible says of that in verse 17 of chapter 1. It says, “The midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.” Well, pharaoh wasn’t so happy about this. He finds out not that they’re necessarily doing something or not doing something, but that the babies are not being killed. He comes and he asked. They say this to him. He says, “The Hebrew women, they’re not like our women. They push hard and fast and they give birth before the midwife comes to them.” What they said is basically, “Look, your plan is that we need to make it look like a stillborn child coming out to the Hebrew mom, so they tell him, “This is what happens. They call us saying, ‘Hey, it’s time,’ and before we get there, they’ve already had the baby. They’re holding it so we can’t do anything about it.”

That’s not the truth. How did God deal with it? Verse 21 says, “Because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.” He blesses them. He doesn’t bless, as it says, the lying. It says because they feared God, and yet it was their deception that actually was the manifestation of saying, “We can’t do this, and so we have to say this.” As a pastor, it creates a real challenge. Are you giving me license to lie? What I can say is simply this, is to acknowledge that in the fear of God and the walk of faith, worthy saints have chosen in time to oppose evil by concealing truth from wicked men.

Having said that, let me shift our thoughts to the overwhelming biblical evidence and emphasis on God’s hatred of lying, and let me remind us that all of us, with very few exceptions, have lied the majority of our life in non-life-threatening situations. Most of us, the reality is not Holocaust and it’s not a pharaoh. We have less noble means, reasons of why we do our lying. Let’s look. Does God really abhor this? Proverbs 6:16-17 says, “There are six things the Lord hates. When he lines up the six, two of them are a lying tongue and a false witness who breathes out lies.” You turn to the end of the book, God is literally separating people between Heaven and Hell. Revelation 21:7-8 says this, “As for the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire,” which is a reference to Hell.

We need to listen today to this verse, verse 25, as though something were at stake in our life because God hates lying. We rarely, if ever, lied to save a life. God looks at every single one of us and in Romans chapter 3, he makes an evaluation of your heart, all of us, mine as well, and he says, “All,” that’s you and me, “have turned aside, and they use their tongues to deceive.” In other words, we are all part of that liar’s group. We have a problem, and internal problem, that manifests itself through this little hole right here, and God has a solution.

I want to show you what the solution is. To do so, I need to remind you of what we looked at last week. If you weren’t here, that’s okay, because I’m going to remind us, okay? Verses 17-24 is literally the template, or the key, that shows us how God helps us change, how God helps us grow. If you are in addiction of anything, whether it’s lust or pornography, or lying, or cheating, or anything, 4:17-24 gives you the blueprint of how God is going to move in your heart in order to help you change. What we saw there is three things. In verse 17-19, we see that God exposes darkness in our hearts.

You see God does this so that we can receive healing from the inside out so that we don't end up like a sink-hole that maligns Jesus.

What that means is this, is that we're going to see that what comes out of our mouth in deceit actually has a source that is deeper and darker within our heart, and if left there, if given a hospitable place within our heart, it literally will create within us patterns of behavior that raises the possibility that you publicly embarrass yourself, and if you are a Christian malign the name of Jesus Christ. It's a pattern that starts within the heart and it comes out the mouth.

The first thing God does in our life is this, he always says, "Okay, you see the symptoms, and they're significant, they're severe, but let's go deeper. Let's look at the source." The second thing we saw that he does in verse 20-21 is that God shines light into our hearts through Jesus. Nothing in Ephesians 4-6 can be done without you first hearing Jesus' voice calling you to trust Him. In the power of His spirit, when you do. He doesn't even expect you to be able to do it. This is written to believers. The first thing that must take place is that Jesus must speak truth into your life and deliver you from the prison of deceit before you can do this. I'll talk about that in a minute.

Then the third thing that we saw is this, is that God renews our imagination as we repent and obey. You see there in verse 22-24, it's almost as if once we have trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, we enter into Jesus' school of grace. He looks at us when we enroll and he goes, "So glad you're here. You're forgiven. You're saved, but you need to change clothes." He uses this metaphor of taking things off. It's our old flesh, our old self, the old patterns of the old people that we used to be before Jesus. Then in verse 24, he says, "I don't want you to run around naked. I want you to put some new clothes on." It says that these clothes are what God creates in true righteousness and holiness. He gives us this metaphor to talk about repenting, leaving sin and obeying God. To put off and to put on.

Then we looked a very, very important verse. A really important verse, and it's verse 23. It's the bridge between those two. There it says this, it says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The spirit of your mind is your imagination. With all of this in mind, I want you to watch now how this passage, verse 25, just one verse, literally mirrors the pattern that we just worked through just in the arena of telling the truth, being truthful as people. It's almost like a case study. He's saying, "Now, let's apply this to the area of our time."

Three areas, if you just wrote that down, they're going to closely resemble that, okay? The first thing you see in verse 25 is that God exposes the darkness of deceit and calls us to repent. He says in verse 25, "Therefore having put away falsehood." You see falsehood, hood, what is a hood? A hood is a place where literally a lot of people live and they associate with that one place. It's a representative home of many people. We use the same word neighborhood. If you are flying over and you live here, you notice that all of the houses, they're a little similar, and yet all the houses are a little different. Each one of them, though, associates themselves with being in that neighborhood. They're all a little different, and yet they say, "We're a part of this place."

Now, I tell you that because when he says here falsehood, falsehood literally then is a home for many different kinds of behaviors, all of which fit into falsehood. Does this make sense? He's not just talking about lying. What he's doing here is he's flipping on every light switch in the room in order to expose every deception in our heart. What behaviors is he talking about? Well, certainly it would include lying. When someone asks you, "Hey, were you there?" I was there and you say, "No, I wasn't there." Where we lie and where we distort the truth, where we say the opposite.

It goes farther than this. It can also be to give a false impression. Anyone ever done that? Give the impression that you're healthier or wiser or more Godly than you actually are? That you live more of this amazing life? I mean, if we all believed everyone's online profile, I mean we are one impressive people around here. The fact is, we routinely give less than a full perception of really who we are. It would certainly include cheating. Cheating on a test at school or cheating in a game or cheating on your taxes. It could also include unkept promises, where we say, "I will do this," and then weeks and months pass, we have not done it. Have we lied? No. We can always say, "Well, I haven't done it yet. I still will, though." That's not lying, but what it is is it jeopardizes the integrity of your lips by not keeping a promise.

How about to betray a confidence? Someone comes to us and they say, "Listen, there's something that's really near and dear to my heart that's bothering me and I want to confess my sin to somebody," and they do so and they say, "Now, please don't tell anybody." No problem. Well, if you go tell somebody, you may tell them the exact truth, this is exactly what they did, this is what they said, and you may be as precise as possible and you say, "I wasn't lying," and yet there is a whole behavior there that's mixed with falsehood because you gave the impression that you would hold that in confidence and you didn't. It could also include flattery. Flattery is when we speak the truth or when we lie to somebody about them, in the hopes that they're going to think a certain way about us or they're going to give us stuff.

Now, all these things, you see, are a part of falsehood. After telling us, notice in verse 22, to put off our old self, which is corrupted by deceitful desires, Paul tells us to put away falsehood. It's interesting, in the Greek, it's the exact same word. To put off and to put away, it's the exact same word. What he's doing is this, in the arena of falsehood, of our speech, he's giving one case study of saying, falsehood is simply the very first set of behaviors I want to put before you of things that are incongruent with being a believer in Jesus Christ, things that must go, things that we must repent about.

Now, let's trace, though, this deceit inward in order to treat the source instead of just the symptom. There's a reason we lie that God cares about deeply, not just that we lie. Why do we do it? Well, if we look at verse 17, 18, and 19 and you see those words that we looked at last week, what he says here is this, is that when we're far from God, whether we're an unbeliever or maybe we're a Christian but we're just far from God, we're just distant from here, what it says here is that that alienation from God, it creates within our own mind a darkness where we don't see everything like we should be seeing it. When our mind is filled with darkness, it creates an ignorance about things that are true and things that are real, like God's presence in our life. When we can't see those things, when our mind is darkened because we're far from God, we're more susceptible to Satan's temptation. How does he work? Jesus says in John 8:44, he says, "He's the father of lies." When he speaks, he speaks his native language.

In other words, Satan deceives us, and how he does it is he works on our desires. He knows that we want good ends, and what he does is he makes sin look good. He tricks us, and because our mind is darkened because we're far from God, we're more susceptible to what it says deceitful desires. In other words, we desire something because we think it's desirable, and yet we've been lied to. It's really not desirable.

Now, let's look at a few case studies of this, just to show you. You see within scripture, like in Acts chapter 5. In Acts chapter 5, Jesus has risen from the dead. People have seen him and believed in him and they're amazed. They are a church now and they come together. They're worshiping the Lord, and all of a sudden they look out and there's people in the congregation who has physical means. There's two people, Ananias and Sapphira, man and wife. They are people of means. They have some land. They say, "You know what we should do? We should sell that land and give the proceeds to the apostles who can give it to the people so that they don't have these physical needs anymore." What a great idea. What a generous thing.

They go and sell it, then they come and they give a portion of the proceeds, but they lie saying that we've given you everything that we sold it for. Now, here's the problem with this. Had they just told the truth ... Let's just say they sold it for \$100 and they gave 80. Is that not still amazingly generous? They could've come and said, "Now, look, we sold it for 100 but we have this little debt or a bill, and so we took 20 of it. We sent it there, but here's another 80."



People would've said, "Wow, that's still very generous that you would part with your things in order to give to other people." What they had is they had a deceitful desire. Whether there was greed, where they wanted to keep some for themselves, or they wanted, for sure what they wanted, was the people to think that they gave everything. They both lied. Well, Peter looks at Ananias, and this is what he says, he says, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" Why has Satan got into your heart and tempted with you desires that you think are desirable but they're really not?

We see another example in Matthew chapter 21. This is one of my favorite ones. This is what happens, right? Jesus has just come into Jerusalem for the third time. He's come to die. He's come on a donkey, on Sunday. Everybody's celebrating. He goes to the temple and he sees they're selling all kinds of stuff. He starts overturning things. The next morning, the chief priest and the scribes, they walk up to Jesus and they say, "By whose authority are you doing these things?" In other words, did God send you to do this or are you just flying solo and doing what you want? Instead of answering the question, Jesus asks them a question, in order to test their heart. He said, "Well, let me ask you something first. John the Baptist baptists his ministry. Who gave him the authority?" In other words, did John come because he was sent from God or was John riding solo?

This is what happens, they go, "That's a good question. We'll be back." They come over in a little huddle. They're like, "Okay, what are we going to say?" This is the making of a lie. They're like, "All right, look, if we say it's for God, but none of us were baptized by John. We all thought he was a freak. We all made fun of him. If we say it's from God, we're going to be proven wrong in front of all these people. We can't do that." Then someone else says, "Wait a minute. If we say- There's only two options, either is or isn't. If we say he's not from God, all the people here, they all think he was from God. They may hurt us physically."

They come back and they say, "We don't know." Jesus, who's in total control, he goes, "Well, then I'm not going to tell you either." It's an amazing thing. What I want you to see is simply this, when we lie, there are always reasons that are deeper and darker than our lie itself. When you lie, there is literally breadcrumbs going back to the heart of worst scenarios, a worse condition than whatever it is that you're saying or not saying.

Providence with application, let's remain fiercely inhospitable to any known falsehood. I love that Paul commands these believers. That's why he says, "Having put away falsehood," he knows they're doing it. He's acknowledging it. I see it. I see that when you lie, you confess it. I see you telling the truth. I see you doing these things and I simply urge you to excel still more. You see 1 Psalm 39:23-24 says, "God would you search me and see if there's any grievous way in me?" If you ask God to search your heart and you see within your life any trace of deceit lounging on the couch of your life, I want to encourage you first trace it to its source and then throw it all out the door. Confess it. Repent it. Take off those clothes that will ruin your life and that will potentially malign the reputation, the glory of our Savior, Jesus.

God exposes the darkness, the deceit, and calls us to repent. The second thing is this, is that God unveils the truthfulness of Jesus and he calls us to obey. He says, "Let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor." You have to ask the question, how is this possible? If we're constantly being lied to by Satan with desires that are not desirable, how are we ever going to get out from that track? The answer is God must act, which is exactly what God did. He sent his son to the earth. Jesus Christ, when he was on the earth, he looked out and he says, "I want you to know something. I am the way and the truth and the life."

This is what Paul means when he writes in verse 20 and 21, "That's not the way you learned Christ, for the truth is in Christ." You see, Jesus never lied, and yet after dying on a cross for our sin and our lying and rising from the dead, he invited us to believe in him and if we do believe in him, it says that he will forgive us of our sin. He'll give us his righteousness, but he says he'll also fill us with his spirit. In John 16:13, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the spirit of truth.

When we trust Jesus Christ, we see the perfect picture of a trustworthy person. When we trust him, he sends his spirit to live within us in order to convict us when we're not trustworthy and truthful people. See, friends, what I want you to see is it is the voice of Jesus and it's the story of Jesus that can guide us out of the prison of deceit. I used this illustration last week, but if you're in a prison called deceit and you keep trying to escape and you keep finding locked doors and you keep getting trapped again and again and again, there's one escape route. The only way to escape is literally to hear through the intercom a voice speaking to you, "30 feet, turn left," and that person is Jesus Christ.

If you hear my voice but you do not hear his voice through my voice or through this word today saying, "Trust in me," I want you to know that you have absolutely no resource within yourself to pull this off. You can try, but the problem is, instead of loving the truth, you'll simply try telling the truth. I want to show you why that's not going to work. You see, Jesus, he never lied and yet what we find is that when we expose ourselves to the voice of Jesus, in particular in the stories of Jesus, we keep finding liars and manipulators and deceivers engaging with Jesus. What we find is that they see in Jesus a superior pleasure, a superior promise and person to the place to where they go, "Man, I want to part with this in order to receive this, in order to receive Jesus." As God intervenes in their lives, Jesus keeps speaking hope into ours.

Let me show you the expulsive power of a superior pleasure. That's what we're really talking about here, okay? Years ago, my second son, his name is Caleb, he was just a little, bitty guy. We were in a house and he couldn't see over the counter in the kitchen. I was in there. He just reaches up on the counter and he just happens to grab, literally, the handle of one of those big knives. He's just holding it. I look at him and think this is not a good idea. I walk toward him. Well, he thinks, hey, dad wants to play chase. He starts running with the knife.

I'm like, no, we can't do this. He thinks this is fun and he thinks this is something that's of value. I look over and on the counter there's a little baby Snickers bar. I pick it up and I said, "Son," and he stops and he goes, "I'll trade you." At that moment he found an expulsive power. I don't want to hold onto this knife anymore if I get that.

It's the same thing with Jesus and your lying. When you see in Jesus a beauty of integrity, of being trustworthy, of being truthful, when you see in him superior promises that says, "When you are trustworthy, this is what I'll do in your life. This is what I'll protect in your life," it has an expulsive power in our own deceit to say, "I don't want to do this anymore." Application. Let's keep one eye on Jesus as we speak the truth. What do I mean by this? What I mean is this, is that every single one of us, we're living in real life situations that we're looking at. As we're looking at real life situations, trying to figure out what to say, I want to encourage you to keep one eye on Jesus. As you're looking at your work situation, wondering if you should lie, see Jesus. See his truthfulness, his integrity, his justice. See his face. See his pleasure in you. See his ability to listen to all of your conversations. See his ability to deliver people who tell the truth.

Parents, I want you to know that it's really important for us to teach our kids in the same way. You see, most of us as parents, we've taught our kids how not to lie, and how we do it is this, we say things like, "You're a [inaudible 00:36:54]. They're going to think low of us. You're better than that. If you lie, you may get in trouble. If you lie, people won't trust you so much." All of which motivate telling the truth, but none of which motivate loving the truth.

What we want, as people, is this, if we love the truth, we will tell the truth because our love is bound in the heart. See, if our heart is filled with Jesus' voice and his story, our words will be filled with truthfulness. Another shorter way to say it is this, a heart full of Jesus has no room for deceit. Do you see today in Jesus a superior promise and pleasure? If you do, you have power this afternoon not to lie, not to flatter, not to manipulate, not to break your promises, not to malign the name of Jesus whom we represent.

The third and last thing is this, is that God renews our minds with the benefits of honesty, the benefits of honesty. You remember the bridge in verse 23 between putting off and putting on. This is so practical and so important right now. I hope you'll listen. He says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." I said earlier that the spirit of our mind is our imagination. How this works is this, God comes to us and he says, "Don't lie." Okay, so let's just apply it to our taxes. Don't cheat on your taxes. Then you get tempted. It's time to fill it our and you look at receipts and you're like, "Well, that's not really a business expense, but it's close. I could probably throw that one in there. I could flat out just say, 'Yeah, I gave this much money, I just didn't.'" We can all lie on our taxes. When you get tempted, the outcome will depend on your imagination.

See, if you and I vividly imagine enjoying a vacation like this one, if it's purchased from your falsified tax return, there's a possibility that you may say, "Wait a minute, if I could imagine being there for a week or value integrity. It's just a little lie. It's just an extra zero," there's a possibility that you may lie. If, however, you vividly imagine Christ being maligned, there's a possibility, a strong possibility, that you won't.

See, whatever captures our imagination will govern our behavior. What he tells us, he says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Literally place yourself under the waterfall. I talked about this last week. It's like a shower. You turn the showerhead on. It has power to cleanse you, except if you're not under it, all the water goes down the drain. It's the same thing with the Lord. He says, "Be renewed." Literally position yourself to where God can renew the imagination of your mind when it comes to telling the truth. You may not know this, but you've already done that today. You've sat now for 35 minutes and you've heard me talk and the word of Christ's superior promises to you, how he's better than lying. If you and I will vividly imagine this, it will literally change our life.

What I want you to see, we're almost done, is this, I want you to notice what Paul gives our imagination to think about as incentive of why we should tell the truth. The last phrase of verse 25 says, "For," or because, "we're members one of another." He says we're a body, we're interconnected. If you ever notice how you believe every part of your body, you assume it's not lying to you, which is why when you're on a mountain road and your eyes see a left turn, you turn left instead of right. Just imagine what would happen if your eyes lied to you. You'd drive off the side of the mountain.

Have you ever thought about the fact that you and I, we are, I mean, absolute students of our pain indicators in our body and we just assume our body's not lying to us, which is why you will literally inject a chemical into your mouth in order to deal with a headache you're convinced you have. Why? Because you believe the parts of the body. What Paul is saying is this, we're a body. How we interact with one another can't be different. When someone says they have pain, we all have to believe it unless they keep lying about their pain. What he's saying is how in the world can we love one another and pray for one another, trust one another, if we're lying to one another? The incentive is what could take place in a body if we all told the truth? Imagine how powerful our witness would be in the world if we all told the truth. Imagine how centralized we would be in terms of the mission that God has given us if we didn't have to worry, if we didn't have to remember what we said because we just always told the truth.

This is what he's saying. Application. Let's imagine Jesus being glorified in the honesty of our interactions. Let's imagine Jesus, when you're having your conversations, imagine him being glorified in the honest of your interaction. This will stir the imagination of your mind. When tempted, the outcome is going to depend on your imagination. If we vividly imagine the gain from our lying, we may do so and hurt the body, hurt us, and even malign Christ.

If we would imagine God's observance of every single conversation and God's glory, Jesus' glory in this church, and we would vividly imagine our trust and love for one another growing up, we would likely tell the truth because whatever captures our imagination will govern our behavior.

Providence, I encourage you, first of all for those of you who have never heard Christ say, "Trust me," he's speaking to you today. Trust him. Believe in him. If you will, he will forgive you of all of your sins. Once you know Christ, tell the truth. When you don't, confess your sin. Repent them. Let's fix our eyes on Jesus and let's be honest with one another. Let's keep imagining and then help other people in our life, in our body, imagine the blessings of integrity in the face of deceptive desires. We can do this, and we can do this because Jesus Christ is with us. We've heard him. We've seen him. His spirit lives within us, so let's walk as men and women, boys and girls, of truthfulness.

Let's pray together. Father in Heaven, we thank you for your amazing kindness to us. We thank you, Father, that you reveal to us not only where we have struggles, but why we have these struggles. God, I pray that you would deliver us this week from these deceptive desires. I pray, Father, that you would help us to see and imagine the value of telling the truth in every situation. I pray, Father, that you would give us wisdom, even as we go through challenging situations in a fallen world, maybe even life-threatening situations, would you govern our behavior by your spirit. God, I pray, Lord, that our life will glorify you and that we would represent you and your integrity and your truthfulness in the way that we talk and live.

God, I now pray that as we worship you, not only in our giving but our seeing, pray, Father, that you would encourage our hearts, pray that you would help us to speak the truth to one another, to imagine, imagine the day when we will stand before you, face-to-face, and see you. Imagine the day when all of our sin is taken away. Help us to imagine that to the place to where we give you our life, help other people to see and love Christ, the Savior and Lord. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.



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