

Truth-Telling and Its One Exception

Worthless, wicked people go around telling lies. Proverbs 6:12 (Good News Translation)

Scripture gives believers **five assertions** about truth-telling.

- **Assertion #1: TRUTH-TELLING IS BASED ON THE CHARACTER OF GOD.**

All your words are true . . . Psalm 119:160a (New International Version)

. . . the God of truth. Psalm 31:5 (NIV) and Isaiah 65:16 (NIV) (See also Psalm 43:3)

- **Assertion #2: JESUS TEACHES HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE TRUTH-TELLERS.**

But now I tell you: do not use any vow when you make a promise. Do not swear by heaven, for it is God's throne;³⁵ nor by earth, for it is the resting place for his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.³⁶ Do not even swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black.³⁷ Just say 'Yes' or 'No'—anything else you say comes from the Evil One. Matthew 5:34-37 (GNT)

Jesus' point: Whatever scheme you use to avoid the truth, takes you in Satan's direction, not God's.

- **Assertion #3: LYING HAS CONSEQUENCES.**

- Lying affects our relationship with God.

Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight. Proverbs 12:22 (New American Standard Bible)

- Lying affects our relationship with others.

A lying tongue hates those it hurts . . . Proverbs 26:28 (NIV)
(See also Psalm 52:2; 119:69; Proverbs 13:5)

- Lying affects the one who lies most of all.

"A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue breaks the spirit."
Proverbs 15:4 (GOD'S WORD Translation)

- **Assertion #4: TRUTH-TELLING IS POSSIBLE!**

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. Ephesians 4:25 (NIV) (See also 1 Peter 2:1)

Four Practical Actions Will Help Believers Tell the Truth

- Confront your fears.

Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?'"¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." Genesis 18:13-15a (NIV)

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Psalm 51:6 (NIV)

- Commit to the truth ahead of time. (See Ephesians 6:14)

- Think before you speak.

The godly think before speaking; the wicked spout evil words. Proverbs 15:28 (New Living Translation)

- Seek forgiveness when you fail.

Blessed are those who have a tender conscience, but the stubborn are headed for serious trouble. Proverbs 28:14 (NLT)

- **Assertion #5: THERE IS ONE EXCEPTION TO TRUTH-TELLING.**

We have no moral obligation to tell the truth to evil men if it will help them do evil.

The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."²⁰ So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. Exodus 1:19-21 (NIV)

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.⁴ So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man. Proverbs 3:3-4 (NASB)