

1 **Honesty**

- Is it still the best policy?

2 **Introduction**

- Sad to say, most people lie and do so regularly.
- According to a recent survey, people bend the truth on an average of 1.65 times a day.
- In fact, most lies can be placed in three categories.
 - Lubricating Lies - Are those lies we use to keep the conversation moving, such as when we say, “I’m doing fine.”
 - Logistical Lies - “I’ll be there soon.”
 - Charitable Lies - “Of course that doesn’t make you look fat.”

3 **A Whopper of a Lie**

- Of course, most day-to-day lies do not rise to the level of the whopper told by a postal carrier named Cathy Wrench Cashwell.
- According to The Atlantic magazine (September 2013), she appeared on the show The Price Is Right, raised her arms, grabbed the wheel and gave it a spin.
- So what was the problem with that?
- Five years earlier, she had filed for workers' compensation, claiming that she had been injured on the job.

4 **A Whopper of a Lie**

- She said that her injury left her unable to stand, reach and grasp as part of her job -- skills which she demonstrated quite well on The Price Is Right.
- The tape of the game show caught her in her lie, as did the pictures she posted on Facebook showing her riding a zip line on a Carnival cruise.
- Indicted in federal court for worker's-compensation fraud, she pleaded guilty.

5 **People Lie**

- Clearly, people lie.
- We may not tell big lies that land us in federal court. But we're not as truthful as Honest Abe in the Geico commercial.
- So is it permissible to tell a charitable lie -- what is sometimes called a “white lie?”
- Or is every lie a violation of the ninth commandment, You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (Ex 20:16 NIV)?

6 **Sam Harris**

- Sam Harris believes that we should never lie.

- In a short book called *Lying*, this neuroscientist makes the case that we can “radically simplify our lives and improve society by merely telling the truth in situations where others often lie.”
- This is true even with white lies, which we tell for the purpose of sparing people discomfort.
- These are the lies that most often tempt us, because they seduce us into thinking that we are being good people when we tell them.

7 **Sam Harris**

- What may be a surprise for you, Sam Harris is a prominent atheist.
- However, in his study of lying, he is right in line with the ninth commandment.
- He makes the case that most forms of private and public evil are rooted in lying.
- Adultery, financial fraud, and government corruption are all connected to a willingness to lie.

8 **The Ninth Commandment**

- “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor,” says God to Moses and the people of Israel.
- God is saying that people should not distort reality, especially in court.
- The truth should not be twisted in order to serve our own interests, or to advance a political agenda.
- On a public level, propaganda should never be used to cover up or distort the truth.
- God knows that truth-telling supports the vitality of the entire community, and that our honesty should always be radical -- in the sense of being at the center of our life together.

9 **Just Tell the Truth**

- In his book, Harris says that lying is the intentional misleading of others when they expect honest communication.
- It always takes a toll on relationships, even when the deceptions are minor.
- Harris reports on research that suggests “that all forms of lying—including white lies meant to spare the feelings of others—are associated with less satisfying relationships.”
- So, if you want a good relationship with your spouse, your children, your colleagues, your neighbors and your friends, then do one simple thing: Tell them the truth.

10 **Most Common Fibs (Men)**

- Nothing’s wrong, I’m fine.
- I had no signal.
- It wasn’t that expensive.
- I’m on my way.
- I’m stuck in traffic.
- Sorry, I missed your call.

- You've lost weight.
- It's what I always wanted.

11 **Most Common Fibs (Women)**

- Nothing's wrong, I'm fine.
- I don't know where it is, I haven't touched it.
- It wasn't that expensive.
- I've got a headache.
- It was on sale.
- I'm on my way.
- Oh, I've had this for ages.

12 **Lies We Tell Ourselves**

- If I could just X, then my life would be amazing.
- If I had more time, I would do X.
- If I say or do X, people will think I'm stupid.
- If I just say or do X, then that person will finally change.
- Everything is great or Everything stinks.
- There's something inherently wrong or different about me.
- I would change, but I can't because of X.
- I can't live without X.
- I know what I'm doing.

13 **Telling the Truth**

- If you really love the people around you, tell them the truth.
- Don't hide information that would help them to make changes and improve their lives.
- Don't encourage them to keep walking in directions that are going to hurt or disappoint them.

14 **Telling the Truth**

- Again according to Sam Harris . . .
 - Do not tell a struggling actor to keep trying when you know that he is a lousy actor -- his efforts should really be put into something else.
 - Do not make up an excuse about why you cannot meet a friend for dinner -- if she discovers your lie, she will have a hard time trusting you in the future.

- Do not withhold constructive criticism about a project from a friend or a colleague—sparing others “disappointment and embarrassment is a great kindness,” says Harris.

15 Easier to Tell the Truth

- BTW - The New International Version of the Bible provides a unique translation of the ninth commandment, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
- This focus on testimony reminds us of the importance of testifying accurately in court, and how it is so much easier to keep your story straight when you tell the truth.
- “One of the greatest problems for the liar is that he must keep track of his lies,” says Harris. “This can require an extraordinary amount of work—all of which comes at the expense of communication.”
- In short, the truth is easy. Lies are a lot of work. If you want to relax and feel comfortable with the people around you, tell the truth.

16 Lying Affects Our Relationships

- Lying clearly affects our relationships with other people, and it can make it easy for us to violate most of the other Ten Commandments.
- A young person who habitually deceives his parents is not going to be able to abide by the fifth, "Honor your father and your mother" (v. 12).
- A spouse who breaks the seventh commandment, "You shall not commit adultery" (v. 14) usually spins a web of lies.
- Murder, theft, covetousness -- these sins usually involve lying to ourselves and others as well.

17 Our Relationship with God

- Lying can affect our relationship with God, because God wants to have an open and honest relationship with us.
- The first three of the Ten Commandments deals with our relationship with God -- the first challenges us to put God first, the second prohibits the worship of idols, the third prohibits the misuse of God’s name.
- All of these commandments are meant to draw us into a personal relationship with God, and all of them are undermined by dishonesty.
- Honesty is at the heart of our relationship with God, just as it is at the core of our connections to people around us. Without honesty, all these relationships suffer.

18 The Father of Lies

- One of the harshest statements that Jesus made is found in John 8, when He describes the Prince of Darkness, Satan—the Devil. He says, . . .
- He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44 NIV)
- So then all lying comes from Satan and all who use lies are actually speaking in the language of hell.

19 **Motives in Lying**

- People who lie, do so for the following reasons.
 - To make themselves look good.
 - To keep themselves from looking bad.
 - To make others look bad.
 - To deceive and take advantage of others.

20 **Ananias & Sapphira**

- Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. (Acts 5:1–2 NIV)
- Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:3–4 NIV)

21 **Ananias & Sapphira**

- Ananias’ and Sapphira’s sin wasn’t that they held back some of the money from the sell of their property.
- It was that they implied or lied that they had given all of the proceeds from the sale.
- In other words, to make themselves look good, they lied and did so in the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- They took hold of Satan’s invention—lying and used it to enhance people’s opinion of themselves.

22 **Elymas the Sorcerer**

- But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? (Acts 13:8–10 NIV)
- So then, children of the devil are full of all kinds of deceit, trickery, and lies and will not stop seeking to pervert the truth.

23 **Satan’s Work**

- The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. (2 Th 2:9–10 NIV)
- The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. (Rev 12:9 NIV)
- He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. (Rev 20:2–3 NIV)

24 **The Fate of Liars**

- He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. (Rev 21:6–7 NIV)
- But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. (Rev 21:8 NIV)

25 **The Consequences of Lying**

- It is time consuming - The more we lie the more we have to lie.
- It breaks trust . . .
 - With others, which is always hard to earn back.
 - With God, which separates us from His presence and love.
- It places us in the company of Satan himself, who through lying has brought death to the earth along with all sorrow and hardship.

26 **Put on the New Self**

- Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. (Col 3:5–6 NIV)
- You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Col 3:7–10 NIV)

27 **Be Honest with God**

- Surely you desire truth in the inner parts. (Psa 51:6 NIV)
- When we are honest with ourselves and honest with God there is something special that happens—we find grace.
- In other words, those who are able to humble themselves before the Lord and talk honestly to Him about their struggles, failures, and sins; they will not be disappointed.

- However, if we lie to ourselves and deceive ourselves that everything is fine, we may do ourselves a major disservice.

28 **Conclusion**

- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. (Psa 51:10–12 NIV)
- When we humble ourselves before the Lord, He will lift us up!