

## Lying – 2

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**L**ying comes in many hues. There is the deep black of the “bald-faced lie,” a deliberate, calculated untruth told to gain some sort of advantage. This kind of lie cost Ananias and Sapphira their lives (Ac 5:1-10).

Lies also come in a lighter shade. We might be persuaded to tell a complete fabrication when frightened or threatened with embarrassment. Peter was caught off-guard during Jesus’ trial and did what he denied he would ever do (Lk 22:54-62).

A still lighter shade of lying comes when we repeat things about people or situations which are untrue. This could be called “tabloid lying.” Rumors often circulate which are embellished with sensationalism, half-truths and total fantasy. People who engage in such are less interested in *truth* than in wallowing in the mud of innuendo, spite, and character assassination. This is precisely the atmosphere that swirled about Jesus and ultimately contributed to His death (Mk 14:56-61).

Yet another form of lying is innocently called “stretching the truth.” This is usually done for effect. Over-exuberance to impress another or bolster a point being made might lead to exaggerating the facts. This may be far more common in our lives than we care to admit.

Half-truths are told with the intent to deceive or to cover one’s mistakes. When God sought Adam he replied, “*I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself*” (Gn 3:10). His answer was true but evasive; he did not want to admit the source of his newfound knowledge.

How shall we categorize the truth when it is relabeled for deceptive purposes? Manufacturers engage in this all the time. For example, one box of cereal listed “crystallized evaporated cane juice” as an ingredient – also known as *sugar*. Another food package boasted “Ready in seconds.” The cooking time was actually 10-12 *minutes*. Well, minutes *are* made of seconds, you know.

To avoid the trap of *telling* lies we must first *love and desire the truth*. We should be very attentive to our speech and insure to the best of our ability that our words are accurate. This may mean embarrassment if the truth does not reflect well upon us. Lying to cover our flaws will not change them. Only repentance can do that. To avoid the trap of *listening* to lies we must again *love and desire the truth*. We must be discriminating in what we hear and read, for we are accountable for believing lies (2 Thes 2:11-12; Mt 15:14).