

The Dogged Truth

A clergyman was walking down the street when he came upon a group of noisy boys surrounding a dog. Concerned for the dog's welfare, he went over and asked them what they were doing.

The oldest boy replied, "That dog's just an old stray. We all want him, but only one of us can take him home. So we decided that whoever can tell the biggest lie gets to keep him."

The clergyman was taken aback. "You boys shouldn't be having a contest telling lies!" he exclaimed. He then launched into a 10-minute sermon against lying, beginning, "Don't you know it's a sin to lie?" and ending with, "Boys, when I was your age, I never told a lie!"

There was dead silence for about a minute as the boys looked very downhearted, their gazes fixed on the ground. Finally the smallest boy, heaving a deep sigh, said, "All right, let him have the dog."

Monday – True or False

"As a matter of honor, one man owes it to another to manifest the truth." Thomas Aquinas, 13th c. Italian philosopher and theologian

1. Please read Exodus 20:16. What does this verse bring to mind?
2. Now look at Colossians 3:9-10 and 1 Peter 2:1. According to these passages, what types of things may constitute being false with those around you?
3. What warnings are given in Proverbs 10:9-10? How do they apply to your daily life?

Making it Personal: Examine the way you deal with others and ask God to guide you in integrity and truth.

Tuesday – Truth

"Where I found truth, there found I my God, who is the truth itself." Augustine of Hippo, 4th-5th c. North African bishop and theologian

1. Please read John 14:6. How do these characteristics of Jesus go with one another? How do they relate to Exodus 20:16?
2. In Psalm 31:4-6, the psalmist identifies God by the title God of Truth. How would this aspect of God's nature be of help to the psalmist in the situation he was facing?
3. Consider John 14:17, 15:26 and 16:13 along with 1 John 4:6 and 5:6. How does John refer to the Holy Spirit in these verses? If we want to keep in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), what does this characteristic of God's Spirit mean for us?

Prayer Focus: Ask God the Spirit to lead you, your church, and God's people everywhere into truth.

Wednesday – Consequences

"We never deceive for a good purpose." Jean de la Bruyère, 17th c. French moralist, Les Caractères

1. Please read John 8:31-47. What does Jesus say about those who do not belong to God? What insight does it give us knowing that Satan is called by Jesus "the father of lies"?
2. According to Revelation 21:6-8 and 22:12-15, what comes to those who belong to the father of lies?
3. What assurance is given in John 10:27-30 to those who belong to Jesus?

Making it Personal: If you belong to Jesus, thank God now for his promise to keep you with him for eternity. If you do not yet belong to Jesus, consider yielding your life to him now.

Thursday – Consistently Truthful

"No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage-ground of truth." Francis Bacon, 16th-17th c. English philosopher

1. Please read Ephesians 4:14-16. What benefit comes from speaking truthfully? How are we to do this? When have you seen this done effectively?
2. In Ephesians 4:17-32, how do you see truthfulness and integrity woven into each caution and promise?
3. Verse 30 speaks of grieving the Holy Spirit. Keeping in mind what you read Tuesday about the Holy Spirit's nature, why would these things grieve him?

Making it Personal: Is there anything you are doing that you think is grieving the Holy Spirit? Take opportunity to confess this to our God of mercy and truth.

Friday – Lovingly Truthful

"Truth demands confrontation; loving confrontation, but confrontation nevertheless." Francis Schaeffer, 20th c. American philosopher and theologian

1. Please read Ephesians 4:15 and 4:29. What do these verses bring to mind?
2. How do Proverbs 12:1, 12:18, 16:21 and 16:23 identify the effect of truthful counsel? Would you rather be on the receiving end or the giving end? Why?

Digging Deeper: Read 2 Samuel 12:1-13. How do you think David felt about Nathan's words of truth? What insight does 1 Chronicles 3:4b-5 give you into David and Bathsheba's later relationship with Nathan?

For the Weekend: Read Genesis 18:1-15, paying close attention to God's interaction with Sarah in verses 13-15. Also, read Genesis 21:1-7. What do these passages tell you about God's graciousness to those who belong to him? What insight does it give you into your own relationship with God?