

BEING HONEST IN A DISHONEST CULTURE
Sermon Series: Building Godly Values That Last
Next Steps Devotional Guide
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Instructions: This devotional guide can be used individually, by families or in a small group as a way to reinforce the biblical truth you learned from the sermon. If you are using this at home, spread the points throughout the whole week. If you are using this in a small group, divide people up into sub-groups to discuss and share and bring them back to the whole group to share. Do not force anyone to share. Be sure to pray in your group.

1. Growing up as a child, I sometimes heard another child say to another child, *“Liar, liar. Pants on fire.”* If the surveys are right that 96% of all Americans lie regularly, telling at least 2 lies per day, and that the average person hears or sees around 300 lies every day, how can we know with certainty that anyone is telling us the full truth and nothing but the truth?
2. In Acts 5, we get a very traumatic display of how God hates lying. It involves a married couple by the name of Ananias and Sapphira. Take your Bible and read Acts 5:1-11. To what degree does this passage affect you to be honest?
3. We hear, *“The check is in the mail”*; *“The doctor will call you right back”*; *“It was good to see you”*; *“One size fits all”*; *“This hurts me more than it hurts you”*; or *“Your table will be ready in just a minute.”* These are sometimes lies we have just come to accept as part of life. Why and how do you feel when you hear one of these statements that may be a lie?
4. Dishonesty is a poison that slowly destroys us relationally and spiritually. When and where have you seen poison’s affects of being dishonest?
5. When you look at our culture, dishonesty is pushed and promoted. We see and hear it from politicians, from advertisers, from celebrities, TV talk shows, the news and etc. Do you ever expect a degree of dishonesty or untruthfulness in the church? Why or why not? Where have you seen it?
6. It doesn’t take long to see that part of our fallen nature is to be dishonest. Read in your sermon notes Jeremiah 17:10. How deceitful and wicked have you observed the human heart to be? Your own heart?
7. One of the dangers of being dishonest is it affects our spiritual life. Dishonesty is bigger than just the “lie” itself.
 - a. Take your Bible and read Ephesians 6:12. Dishonesty affects us spiritually. Based on Ephesians 6:12, how is this so?
 - b. Read Jesus’ words in John 8:44 in your sermon notes. Jesus says that the devil’s character is one of lying and dishonesty. We were created in God’s image, not the devil’s. Yet, many times we seem to emulate more of the devil’s character than’s God’s. Why do you think we do this?
8. Being dishonest has results. Because we have been lied to over and over, we question if what people are telling us is the truth. We’re skeptical. When and why were you skeptical of what someone said to you? Do you ever think people are skeptical of what you tell them? Why or why not?
9. Trust can be easily broken but it takes a longer time to rebuild it. In America, we no longer trust politicians, leaders, agencies of our own government such as the FBI, NSA, the CIA and others. Who is it that you distrust the most and why?
10. Truth and honesty created secure people and relationships. We long for the truth. This is why even today little children will say, *“Say, `Cross your heart and hope to die, stick a needle in your eye.”* Because we are frustrated, disillusioned, disappointed, shattered and insecure people, we reveal we have wounded souls. It stays with us for years.
 - a. Who is it that years later, when you see them or they are mentioned, you can remember how deceptive and dishonest they were to you? What did they do?
 - b. Read Proverbs 23:23a in your sermon notes. What is this verse saying in regards to the truth?
11. There are steps we can take to live a life of honesty and truthfulness.
 - a. Read Proverbs 14:9 in your sermon notes in point #1 under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”* How have you “worked at being honest?”
 - b. One of the steps towards an honest life is you have to ask yourself this question: *“Where am I being dishonest?”* On your sermon outline, you were given an inventory to help you with this. Which of these apply to you or none, which ones do and why under *“Where am I being dishonest?”*
 - c. In the inventory in your sermon outline is a second question: *“How am I being dishonest?”* Look at the list and which of these apply to you and why? If none, what does?

- d. In your sermon notes in point #1 under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”*, read Ephesians 4:15 and Proverbs 26:28. What are these verses saying to you about dishonesty?
 - e. There is a third question we have to ask to move towards a life of honesty: *“Why am I being so dishonest?”* In your sermon outline there are selections. Which of these apply to you and why/ If you say, *“None,”* which others do and why?
12. If you want to work at being right and truthful with others, you have to taken an honest evaluation of your gains and losses. Read Proverbs 13:21 in your sermon notes in point #2 under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”* What is the point of this passage to you and why?
 13. God blesses us when we are honest and truthful. Read Proverbs 13:21 in point #2 in your sermon notes under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”* How would you explain to someone this concept that *“truth chases the righteous”*?
 - a. One of the ways God blesses our lives for being truthful and honest is He develops our character. Reputation is what you think about me or what I think about you. Character is what I really am when no one's looking. When no one is looking, who would God say you really are and why?
 - b. Read Proverbs 20:7 in your sermon notes in point #2-a under the heading, *“How Does Bless Us When We Are Honest?”* How would you say your level of honesty and truthfulness blesses your children, or your family or your friends and why?
 - c. In your sermon notes in point #2-a under the heading, *“How Does Bless Us When We Are Honest?”* Read both Matthew 16:13 and Matthew 16:15 under the heading, *“How Does Bless Us When We Are Honest?”* What is the difference in these two questions and the impact on Jesus' disciples and why? And on us today?
 - d. Read Ephesians 4:15 in your sermon notes in point #2-b under the heading, *“How Does Bless Us When We Are Honest?”* Being honest helps us grow spiritually with God. When I am dishonest, I am not facing the sin that is keeping me from growing spiritually? What sin is that for you and why?
 - e. We live in a world of security. From passwords, to locks, to cameras, to monitoring systems and etc, people pay big bucks for security. Read Proverbs 11:6 in point #2-c under the heading, *“How Does Bless Us When We Are Honest?”* When we are honest, we do not have to look over our shoulder. For you personally, what are the costs if you are and are not honest and truthful and why?
 - f. Read 1 Chronicles 29:17 in your sermon notes in point #2-c under the heading, *“How Does Bless Us When We Are Honest?”* In what areas would you say you need to change and why?
 14. Another step we need to take to become more honest is love God and pursue a growing relationship with Him. Why? If God is invading my life, it will be harder for me to be dishonest because the Holy Spirit has my ear, not that deceiver and liar, the devil.
 - a. Read David's words in Psalms 51:6 and Psalms 140:13. What does David write that has to do with taking the right steps to becoming more honest and why?
 - b. Read Proverbs 19:23 in point #2 under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”*, Do you think people today hav a “fear” of the Lord? Why or why not? Does your life show that you do? Why or why not?
 15. A fourth step we can take to be more honest and truthful is actually practice being more honest and truthful. Read James 1:22-23 in point #4 in your sermon notes under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”* What does this passage say to about your own level of honesty and truthfulness?
 - a. God rewards honesty. Read Proverbs 2:7 in point #4-a under the heading, *“God Rewards Honesty.”* Based on your level of honesty and truthfulness, would you say God is your shield. your protection, and your guard? Why or why not?
 - b. God rewards honesty. Read Proverbs 11:5 in point #4-b under the heading, *“God Rewards Honesty.”* When we are honest and truthful, God shows the way. He removes roadblocks, barriers we can't see around and walls we cannot climb over. God directs us. Where have you seen God do this in your own life?
 - c. God rewards honesty. Read Proverbs 12:19 in point #4-c under the heading, *“God Rewards Honesty.”* Lying, being dishonest, and being untruthful drains us emotionally, relational and spiritual energy we need. We just run out of gas. Yet, God has promise to help us keep going when we are honest and truthful. When and where have you seen God do this in your own life?
 16. Read John 14:6 in your sermon notes in point #4 under the heading, *“What Are The Steps Toward An Honest Life?”* The word “the” is in all caps and each qualifier is capitalized (Way, Truth, Life). The reason is in the original Greek New Testament this verse was written to stress the truthfulness about Jesus. There is no other way, truth or life to God or to heaven or any meaning in life. Is this being exclusive? YES! When the topic of heaven, truth, meaning, and purpose come up in conversations, are you truthful with others about this exclusivity? Why or why not?