

Leaders' Notes

Dear Growth Group Leader:

This subject is a good one for one important group dynamic: transparency. If we really want our group members to grow closer to each other, to God and to grow in maturity, we need to promote transparency. Transparency is the idea that we allow others we trust to know who we really are. I'm not suggesting that we should tell everybody we meet everything about ourselves. That is not necessary or even healthy. What I am suggesting is that we need to be comfortable enough with a few trusted people (hopefully you are building that trust in your group) so that we can be real with each other.

You can't really force honest and open friendship in your group. So what can you do? The best thing is to model it yourself. Do you trust the members of your group? Have you talked about confidentiality recently? Try to be as open as your level of trust and comfort will allow. If your group members are trustworthy, it will show over time and others will be able to open up as well.

Blessings,

Pastor David

Freedom of truth

Exodus 20:16

Why we lie

We lie to make ourselves look better.

Acts 5:1-5

We lie to make others look worse.

James 3:2-12

Why we shouldn't lie

God hates lies.

Proverbs 6:16-19, Proverbs 12:22, Proverbs 19:9, Revelation 21:8

Lies become a habit.

Psalms 101:7

Lies destroy relationships.

Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 3:9

Home Bible Study

Freedom of truth

Getting started

1. Was there anything in the sermon that made you think or that you wanted to discuss with the group?
2. How would the world be different if everybody told the truth.

This is an exercise in thinking about how much deception there is in our world. I think 90% of the commercials on TV could not be aired. We would have a lot shorter political speeches. A lot of love letters would have to be edited.

3. Do you think there are times when it is okay to lie?

The only thing I can think of is the story from Corrie Ten Boom. Her sister was such a committed Christian that they were all afraid that she would tell the truth when the Nazis came to find out where they were hiding the Jews. And she did. They put a rug over the trap door and then put a table over it. When the soldiers asked her sister where the Jews were, she said, "Under the table." The family burst out in nervous laughter and the soldiers thought they were making fun of them. They left without finding the trap door. I think I would have lied to the Nazis in order to save lives. Or I would refuse to answer any questions so that I wouldn't be forced to choose between lies and lives.

Going deeper

4. Read John 14:6. Jesus didn't say he knew the truth or that he told the truth. He said he *is* the truth. What do you think that means?

When you investigate Jesus' life, you get to know the Creator of the universe. He is the source of everything. To know him is to know the ultimate meaning of everything.

5. Read Matthew 5:34-37. What does the passage say about the level of integrity Jesus commands for his followers?

We should consider ourselves already under oath even when we are not. We should be so honest that we can say, "I will not take your oath because it is unnecessary. The only president who did not take an oath of office was Richard Nixon because he was a Quaker. His legacy did not show that an oath was unnecessary.

6. Read Ephesians 4:20-25. What is the first change in our lives that shows that we have "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"?

The first thing that we should do to be like Jesus is to put off falsehood and speak truthfully.

7. What does being members of the same body have to do with speaking truthfully?

If we are all part of one body, then we should not have any deceit between us. The hand shouldn't lie to the brain and the eye shouldn't lie to the foot. The point is that we are all in this together. Our destinies are intertwined and we should be willing to be honest even when it is hard.

Putting it into practice

8. Do you think you could put off falsehood and speak truthfully? What steps would you have to take?

We need to be resolved to tell the truth even when we think it would be easier on us to make something up. We need to learn to value the truth over our own perceived self-interest. Although, speaking the truth is really in our own interest as the sermon taught us.