

Discussion Questions and Comments for Subscribe to the Shepherd

- Subscribe to the Shepherd is based on the well-known fable by Aesop called The Boy Who Cried Wolf. What are some ways these two stories are different and how are they similar?
- What are some lies people have told you?
 - How do you feel about the people who lied to you?
 - How do you know if they're lying to you or not?
 - Have you ever lied to someone else?
- Who are some online personalities who are known for “stretching the truth” or exaggerating to grow their followers?
- Who are some popular people you follow on social media?
 - Why did you decide to follow them?
- What do you want your online reputation to be?
 - How can you build a trustworthy reputation?
 - How can you damage your reputation?

- What are some negative consequences for lying?
 - What are some positive things that can happen when being honest?
- What's the difference between telling a joke and telling a lie?

Underhanded. Deceptive. False. Dishonest. These are adjectives that mean the same thing: lying. It goes by many names but no matter the name, it's still a sin. The Narrator in the story said "God hates lying." That is the truth! Proverbs 6:16-19 groups lying into a group of 7 things God hates. In fact, lying and the condemnation of lying is mentioned in over 100 verses in the Bible. How many verses about lying can you find? Many of them are found in Proverbs but you'll find some in Exodus, Psalms, Luke, and many more books in the Bible.

In the story, Max's lies led to a tarnished reputation and a loss of trust from people online. He almost lost some sheep over his lies. However, this is only a mild consequence. Small lies lead to bigger ones and more problems. Although the consequence for lying may not be immediate, every unconfessed lie will be judged by God and be exposed. Revelation 21:8 tells of the fate of all liars. Theirs is the same as those who have committed sins that are deemed worse than lying. Don't be in that group. It's best to confess your lies and any other sins you've committed to Jesus. Repent of them (or turn away from them) and believe in Jesus as your Savior. He will help you stay honest and be someone who is trusted as a follower of Christ.

You've probably heard the phrase "wolf in sheep's clothing" before. In other words, it means that some people look or act harmless but may actually have evil intentions. Jesus talks about this in the Sermon on the Mount. He warns us to judge people's actions to see if what they do matches up with the persona and words they use. You can read it in Matthew 7:15-20.

Fame is fleeting and fans/followers are fickle. Have you ever seen someone going viral for something they did and lots of people talk about them? After a few days, weeks, or months, people have forgotten about it. Some people become famous or considered a celebrity overnight. After a while, they don't get as much attention. Max trying to gain followers just to be popular led him to ignore warning signs about the wolf with the sheep, create a fake crisis, continue the lie, and nearly lose his defenseless flock. What little fame he got was quickly gone. Things like fame and riches aren't forever. Although those things are not inherently wrong, they're not things to devote our lives to. They are not worth compromising your morals and reputation. People think that being famous or wealthy will make them happy and fulfilled. True happiness and fulfillment only come when you base your life on something, or rather Someone, who never changes (Hebrews 13:8). If you follow Jesus, you will have all you need (Philippians 4:19), you will never be disappointed (Romans 5:5), and He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5).