

# Living The Good Life: Lying

Pastor Todd Keller

March 17, 2024

## Opening Discussion

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

## Thought #1: The Prevalence of Lying

Spend some time reflecting on the sermon and sharing your thoughts. When you first hear the word “lying” or “dishonesty” what initially comes to mind?

Pastor Todd shared several statistics during his sermon. Take a moment to review those here:

- Americans tell an average of 11 lies a week.
- 13 percent of patients admit they lie to their physician.
- 30 percent of Americans lie about diet and exercise.
- American men tell 6 lies and American women tell 3 lies per day to their partner, boss, children, or colleagues.
- 70% of liars admit they would tell the same lies again.
- Research shows that some form of deception occurs in 2/3 of all conversations.

When reviewing these statistics, what stands out the most to you? Can you recall a recent experience where you found it challenging to tell the truth? What factors made it difficult for you to be honest in that situation?

How do you typically navigate situations where you feel pressured to lie or conceal the truth? Do you prioritize honesty even

when it's uncomfortable, or do you find yourself compromising to avoid conflict?

Have you ever experienced a situation where someone lied to you, and it left you feeling violated or betrayed? How did you handle that experience, and did it impact your trust in that person or others?

In what ways do you think our society's tolerance for dishonesty affects our personal relationships? Can you think of any examples from your own life or observations? How do you think cultural norms shape our attitudes toward honesty and deception?

## Thought #2: Why People Lie

**The reasons most frequently given for lying are as follows:**

- To avoid embarrassment
- To avoid guilt
- To avoid confrontation
- To get their way or prevail in an argument
- To avoid hurting someone's feelings
- To make themselves look better
- To convince others to do what they want

Reflecting on the various reasons people may lie, do any of these motivations strike you as more altruistic or selfless compared to others? Do any of them feel more self-serving or driven by personal gain? How do you navigate the tension of lying for personal benefit vs perceived altruism?

Can you relate more closely to any of the reasons people may lie? How do your own experiences and values influence your perception of honesty and integrity? Reflecting on your own behavior, have you ever found yourself justifying a lie based on what you perceived to be a noble or worthy cause?

**James Bryan Smith, author of *The Good & Beautiful Life* asserts that two main things drive us to lie:**

1. Fear of what will happen if we tell the truth
2. A desire for personal gain

Do you agree with these based on your observations of human behavior? How do you think understanding the underlying motivations for lying can help us cultivate greater honesty and integrity in our lives?

**Thought #3: Understanding the Deeper Need Behind Dishonesty**

**Read Exodus 32:1-6**

*“When the people saw how long it was taking Moses to come back down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. “Come on,” they said, “make us some gods who can lead us. We don’t know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt.” So, Aaron said, “Take the gold rings from the ears of your wives and sons and daughters, and bring them to me.” All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, “O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!” Aaron saw how excited the people were, so he built an altar in front of the calf. Then he announced, “Tomorrow will be a festival to the Lord!” The people got up early the next morning to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings. After this, they celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry.”*

Reflecting on the story of the golden calf, can you think of a time in your life when you were tempted to turn to a familiar habit (like dishonesty) in a moment of uncertainty

or fear? What insights does this reflection offer into the deeper reasons behind your actions?

Consider the feelings of abandonment or lack of clear direction experienced by the Israelites while Moses was on the mountain. Have you ever felt similarly lost or alone in your own life? How did these emotions influence your decision-making process, and were there times when you turned to less-than-ideal solutions for comfort or guidance?

Fear was a huge driving force behind the Israelites' call for a golden idol. Where do you see fear manifest in your own life, and how do you typically respond to it? Are there instances where fear has led you to make choices that you later regretted or were in opposition to your values?

In the story of the golden calf, Aaron succumbed to societal pressure and the influence of the people around him. Have you ever felt pressured to conform to certain behaviors or expectations, even if they conflicted with your own values? How does the environment you're regularly in impact this? How do you navigate these situations?

Considering the significant role familiarity, uncertainty, and fear play in dishonesty, how can we create environments that encourage openness, vulnerability, and trust? What role can this community play in cultivating an environment of accountability for honesty.

Questions for Pastor Todd Keller or Julie Burch regarding your REMIX group?

- Email: Todd [tkeller@collegechurch.com](mailto:tkeller@collegechurch.com)  
Julie [groups@collegechurch.com](mailto:groups@collegechurch.com)

\*\*\*Remember to record your attendance for the week. Thank you.

