

## Honest to God

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

*The Talmud tells the story of a king's two jesters whose sage and pithy wisdom were the talk of the kingdom. One day, in a philosophical mood, the king sent them on an errand. "Simon, my fool, go out and bring back the best thing in the world. And you, John, go out and secure for me the worst thing in the world."*

*In a short while both jesters were back, each with a package. Simon bowed low, "The best thing in the world, sire!" and unwrapped his package to reveal a tongue. John began to laugh and quickly unwrapped his bundle. "The worst thing in the world, O king," and he, too, presented a tongue.*

Speech is arguably man's greatest gift and at the same time his most dangerous ability.

*It is impossible to estimate the good it has done when great men and women have truthfully instructed and inspired others.*

*By contrast, we cannot measure how much evil the tongue has perpetrated, for falsehoods disguised as truth have destroyed reputations and even nations.*

*God devotes two of the Ten Commandments to the evils of false witnessing, the third and the ninth. These seem to be broken with impunity—sometimes even by those who are aware of their application—because the drives that motivate people to break them are so powerful.*

*"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"*

*Liars and lying abound.*

*Everybody knows that marketers lie about what products can do.*

*Books, magazines and movies feature liars of many different stripes.*

*The media and the public have caught prominent government figures from presidents on down lying about important issues.*

According to an article by Jan Mendenhall

*College kids lie to their moms in 50% of conversations.*

*Dating couples lie to each other a third of the time,*

*and spouses deceive each other in about 10% of major conversations.*

*Twelve percent of Americans lost their jobs for "misrepresentation."*

*A November survey conducted by the publishers of Who's Who Among American High Schools Students reveals that 76% of the students listed in their publication (supposedly the elite achievers) admit having cheated.*

*Two-thirds of these believe it is "no big deal" to cheat to get a good test grade—and 65% of their parents agree!*

We use a large number of euphemisms to soften the act of lying.

*Some are: duplicity, fabrication, evasion, stringing someone along, inaccuracy, exaggeration, fudging, rationalization, falsehood, "whopper," deception, misrepresentation, dishonesty, putting someone on, putting up a front and fibbing.*

*An Israelite Without Guile*

*John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"*

*Without deceit means "simple, without subtlety, candid and sincere."*

*Lying is such an integral part of the fabric of our lives.*

*Lying is such an integral part of the fabric of our lives that we have coined such expressions of mild disbelief as "Is that so?" and "Do you really mean it?"*

*We expect advertisers to exaggerate the quality of their products. We expect politicians to be crooked, to lie, to be evasive, to use their positions to become wealthy, and to make under-the-table deals with contractors or even crime figures. We expect policemen to be "on the take" and businessmen to give little in return for as high a cost as the traffic will bear.*

*A survey by the Joseph and Edna Josephson*

*A third of the high school students said they were willing to lie on a resume, job application or in an interview to get a desired job; about one in six high school and college students admitted they already had done so.*

*Four of five high school students and three of five college students said they had lied to their parents at least once in the past year.*

*National Hypocrisy*

*It appears that honesty is not considered an essential aspect of personal character.*

*Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*

*Deuteronomy 32:5 "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: perverse and crooked generation.*

*"What is truth?"*

*Without true values, civilization will not continue long but descend into revolution and anarchy.*

*God's Word, His doctrine, is true and faithful just as He is. It is a reflection of His nature and character.*

*Any society or family built on it will prosper and become great in godly terms.*

*Jesus' first coming left mankind without excuse regarding the eternal question, "What is truth?"*

*What credibility that gives to one's teaching!*

*A person can teach us a mathematical, grammatical, spelling, geographical, or historical truth, and what his character is like matters little.*

*But if a person teaches moral truth, his example, character, conduct, and attitudes are all-important.*

*Who wants to be lectured on purity by an adulterer or on honesty by a liar and thief?*

*Jesus lived what He taught with total purity and never a shadow of turning.*

*He was absolutely stable, firm, and reliable, the real, genuine representative of eternal life, the way of life that He will establish on earth at His return.*

*John 17:17 says that God's Word is truth. The Greek word translated "truth" is aletheia, which most closely resembles our English word "reality."*

*It means "the manifested, unconcealed essence of a matter." A living, saving faith depends upon the premise by man that God is true in His being and character.*

*The truth forms the basis for a person's conversion.*

*Ephesians 2:10*

*10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

*Why We Lie*

*Why do we lie? We lie to cover up; we fear that something we wish to hide will be exposed. We also lie to rise above our feelings of inadequacy or inferiority, or to lower a third party in the eyes of others. This latter reason tends to elevate ourselves in our own eyes and, we hope, in the eyes of others.*

*Consider the use of cosmetics in this regard. Makeup is frequently used to hide, to cover up what we consider to be inadequacies of beauty. But by whose standard are we inadequate? Are we really being a true witness of ourselves?*

*John 8:44 New International Version (NIV)*

*44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

*Revelation 21:8 King James Version (KJV)*

*8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

*Today's Challenge*

*Ask God to break the habit of lying and set you free in His truth.*

*John 8:36 New King James Version (NKJV)*

*36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

*Galatians 5:1 New International Version (NIV)*

*Freedom in Christ*

*1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*

*Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

## Conclusion

*Thinking that it is all right to lie is a very serious error for a Christian to hold. It shows a misunderstanding of God Himself.*

*Proverbs 6:17 says, "God hates the lying tongue."*

*Proverbs 12:22 says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are His delight."*

*Psalms 31:5 called God the God of truth. The psalmist wrote, "For the word of the Lord is right; and all His words are done in truth" (Psalm 33:4).*

*We also read in Leviticus 19:11, "You shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie to one another."*

*Proverbs 13:5 says, "A righteous man hates lying." Lying is and always will be wrong in the eyes of God!*

## Our Choice

**1 John 1:9 King James Version (KJV)**

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*