

# Lies We Believe – Part One –

We are going to start a new series today, one that will take a look at the relationship between what we believe and how we live. It is entitled, "Lies we believe."

## 1. Crisis of Truth-

- a. We live in a society that has discarded the concept or notion that there is such a thing as "absolute truth."
  - i. Over the past 30 years, a subtle shift has been taking place in society that has moved from the belief that there is such a thing as truth to a point of view that says "there are no universal truths."
  - ii. At first it was subtle, with classes being introduced to our public school system that dealt with "values clarification."
    1. In these classes, the teachers would intentionally introduce what is called a "moral dilemma" for which there was no right or wrong answer.
    2. For example, if 8 people were adrift on a lifeboat that only held 6 people, who would you allow to drown. And they would list a variety of characteristics of the eight people to muddy the waters of the children's decision making process.
    3. As the children got older, these values clarification classes would embrace more and more difficult choices such as abortion, euthanasia, and even religion. The goal of the liberal educators was to erode the moral base and authority that the parents had over their child's life.
    4. In the educational curriculum called Quest, the following statement is made:
      - a. "A value is not a value unless a child has been given the freedom to choose from among competing values. If the child happens to choose a selfish, immoral, or even illegal 'value,' it must not be criticized as long as it is freely chosen. The value must be freely chosen. Anything taught from another source, such as home or church, is authoritative imposition, so it cannot be a true value"
      - b. The use of values clarification techniques results in alienation between children and parents. The whole process conveys the message that parents have no right to even attempt to shape the moral development of their children.
      - c. Children were taught to believe that parents were wrong to teach them that there are moral absolutes to guide their behavior. (Eagle Forum, No. 66, pp. 1, 2 and 4; parenthesis added for clarity).
      - d. The result: the child is led to the conclusion that truth is subjective.
      - e. And if truth is subjective, then there can be no ultimate authority, no ultimate "right" and "wrong," no ultimate ethical system.
      - f. If everything is subjective, where does the child turn for truth and guidance?
      - g. If all outside sources, such as parents and Christianity have been rejected as "authoritative impositions" then there is only one choice to which the child can turn - themselves!
  - iii. This is the foundation that was given to children through public schools beginning in the 1980's and continues today.
  - iv. It is the same deception that Adam and Eve were given in the garden.
  - v. It is the same struggle that the early Israelites in the time of the Judges 17:6 "*In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.*"
    1. There was no standard of truth, of right and wrong, so everyone did as they felt right in their own eyes.

2. The reason that I am doing this sermon series is because I have seen the difference believing a lie will make upon my life, and I have experienced first hand, the freedom the truth makes when I build my life upon the truth.
  - a. Some of you here probably have experienced something like this as well.
  - b. I will try to show you how deeply the lies we believe sink their roots into our lives and how they negatively affect our lives.
  - c. Our culture is filled with deception. And yet we long to believe the lies we are told.
    - i. We fall for them if they “push the right button” in us.
    - ii. From weight loss, to health, looking younger, to making money – the deception has a hook that is sure to snag you if you will listen seriously to their pitch.
    - iii. How many times have you gone to a sale that says, “Last chance to save!”
      1. What a lie! They will have the same sale next month!
      2. And its rarely ever a real sale. I recall Jennifer and I going to Sears on our way to go to Luby’s cafeteria, and we would always stop and look at the furniture section. Every week there would be a different sale, 10% off all stock, 15% off, etc. Funny thing though, there were these placards where they slip in the price for the item. The price at for this one item was \$399.00. But inside the placard were the old cards \$299. The next week, there was no sale going on but the \$299 price was now posted. This went on week after week as we watched the store play a shell game with their prices. The whole concept of a “sale” was nothing but a mirage to excite shoppers into buying something at a supposed discount.
    - iv. Deception in advertising appeals to our natural human longings.
    - v. That is why they do it.
    - vi. Subtly, sneakily, they ply our desires against our common sense.
  
3. Let’s examine what mechanisms were at work in the first deception mentioned in the bible.
  - a. Genesis 3:1-5 *1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.' " 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*
  - b. Genesis 3:6-7 *6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked;*
  - c. **His Method:**
    - i. Crafty, subtle and sly:
    - ii. Notice in v 1 it says that *the serpent was more crafty than any beast...*
    - iii. He didn’t try to assault God with criticism, but instead he worked to deceive them and seduce them by making an offer that was reasonable, desirable and not blatantly anti-God.
      1. Had he said, “God is a liar, he is no good and he just wants you to be his slaves” they probably would have walked away from the temptation to turn away from God.
    - iv. But Satan baited the hook and concealed it, and he got them to take it.
      1. His method for getting Christians who are walking by the flesh doesn’t even require covering the hook all the way.

2. When we walk in the flesh, we see the bait and we grab it because we have already surrendered our will to the flesh.
3. But when we walk by the Spirit, it is more difficult to get our attention.
  - a. Like we spoke about last week when we talked about “walking by the Spirit.”
4. When Satan tempts you, he doesn’t come right out and say “Hey, turn away from God.” Rather what he does is to distract you, disarm your guard, and try to your attention off of God.

**d. His Motive:**

- i. Satan desired to obtain them as his followers.
    1. No they didn’t consciously say, “Oh we want to be devil worshippers” but nonetheless, they became his followers when they believed his lies instead of God’s truths.
    2. You follow who you listen to and believe. They believed Satan and thereby turned away from God.
  - ii. Satan wanted to drive a wedge, to separate them from God.
    1. He desired to destroy the freedom they had with God and turn them into his own slaves.
    2. He wants to keep you from experiencing the best that God has for you. He knows that if he can keep you from experiencing God’s love in its fullest that you will be luke warm, discouraged, and ineffective.
4. What exactly did Satan do to seduce Eve?
- a. **He planted doubt** in her mind about what God has actually said (Gen 3:1) The serpent planted doubt in the woman's mind about God's motivation as they conversed about the trees in the garden. Satan was able to entice the woman by suggesting that God did not have their best interests in mind, that maybe God was trying to keep something from them in order to protect his power. The serpent simply **sowed the seeds of distrust** by suggesting that God might be withholding something very desirable from them.
    - i. Doubt -
      1. the Greek word for doubt is diakrino, which means to discriminate, hesitate, or to be at variance with oneself.
      2. James talks about doubt as being double minded, divided in interests.
      3. As you read this passage, she begins to doubt what Adam told her that God had said about the tree and even about God Himself.
      4. She begins to be torn between two interests – what God has said and what the devil is appealing to.
  - b. **He led her to be careless with God’s word** and to imply that God had said something that He had not.
    - i. What God actually said: Gen 2:16-17 *The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."*
    - ii. What Satan said: *"Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"*
      1. He works his method of doubt, testing her memory.
    - iii. Eve misquotes God, having gotten her information from Adam, 2<sup>nd</sup> hand
      1. *“God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”*
      2. The misquotation is taking what God said and adds to it. She has not handled the Word of God well, and now is a target.

3. If Satan can get you and I to stop holding to God's word, to diminish its value or to minimize its importance, to mishandle it, to misunderstand it, to fail to remember or recall it, he will have disarmed us.
    - a. It is not a coincidence that the Word of God is called the "Sword of the Spirit".
    - b. Satan wants to disarm you because you will be most vulnerable at that point.
  4. Did you know that Southern Baptists are the most heavily and successfully recruited denomination by cults (such as Jehovah Witnesses, Mormans and The Way International)?
    - a. Why? We know just enough bible to be tricked, and not enough to repel error.
    - b. Only 55% of our congregation attends bible study any given Sunday morning...and that is high for most churches! Add in those who call themselves Baptists but don't attend a church and you get a picture of biblical literacy among us. It isn't good. **We are vulnerable!**
- c. **He caused her to question the goodness, love and motives of God.**
- i. *4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*
    1. He is trying to paint God as a cosmic killjoy.
    2. As if God doesn't want you to be happy. As if God's purpose is to make His creation into unhappy, unfulfilled slaves.
  - ii. One of the enemy's favorite tools is to get you to believe something untrue about God.
    1. He will try to get you to believe that if you lose a loved one, that God isn't concerned about you.
    2. He will try to get you to conclude that you are a failure because of that habitual sin, and that God will lose patience with you.
    3. He will try to get you to give up trying to pray because God doesn't care.
  - iii. The truth was God had said, "**You are FREE to eat from any tree in the garden but one.**"
    1. The truth: God is generous. Only one "Do not" sign existed in the garden.
    2. If you believe a lie about God, you will filter everything you read in the bible through that filter. You will be blind to the verses that describe God's patience, loving kindness, mercy and grace.
- d. **He deceived her about the consequences of choosing to disobey God.**
- i. God said, "**when you eat you shall surely die**" 2:17
  - ii. Satan lied, "**you shall not surely die**" (he contradicted what God had said).
    1. This is his most direct attack.
    2. Satan says that to us all the time. He hides the consequences of disobedience.
      - a. Your spouse will never find out.
      - b. Your boss will never know.
      - c. It won't make any difference.
      - d. You won't get pregnant, you won't get a disease, you won't suffer...
    3. He hides the consequences of the action by holding out a well concealed hook hidden beneath a blob of pleasure.
- e. **He seduced her with false promises and benefits** if she would eat.
- i. He tells her, "*You will have a world of knowledge and experience open up to you that you never had before. (your eyes shall be opened)*"

- ii. He tells her “You will be your own god.”
  - 1. 5 "*For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*" (You will be like God)
- iii. You get to decide for yourself right and wrong. (know good and evil)
- iv. God had already told them what was right and wrong.
- v. Satan said, “That’s His opinion, you are entitled to your own. There are lots of truths, that is just one point of view. Your truth is your truth.”
  - 1. It is this lure that keeps people from coming back to God.
  - 2. It is this lie that keeps people from receiving forgiveness from Jesus.
  - 3. It is the illusion that you get to be god of your own life, that you are the ultimate authority, and that you will not have to account for your life someday.
  - 4. When I share Jesus with people, the #1 reason people say that they aren’t ready to receive Christ is that they don’t want to give up “playing god” in their own lives.
  - 5. How about you today?
  - 6. Who really is god in your life?
  - 7. Are you willing to step off the throne?
- f. **Deceived Eve into making her decisions upon what she thought, saw and felt.**
  - i. Saw in the physical realm
  - ii. Felt in the emotional plane
  - iii. Thought in the intellectual arena.
  - iv. Even though it contradicted what God had said.
    - 1. It feels right. (not waiting until marriage)
    - 2. It looks sooo good. (French silk pie)
    - 3. It made sense.
    - 4. **How many times have you said this?**
  - v. *Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst, promises honor and pays with disgrace, promises pleasure and pays with pain, promises profit and pays with loss, promises life and pays with death.* (Puritan pastor Thomas Brooks)
  - vi. Why do we go for the lure?
    - 1. Because we don’t see Satan as a serpent but he comes disguised as a NY Times bestseller, a popular magazine, movie or tv show or a hit song. He might even pose as a relative or friend giving sincere counsel.
  - vii. What we hear or read can SOUND RIGHT, FEEL RIGHT AND SEEM RIGHT but if it contradicts God’s word, it is wrong.
  - viii. The forbidden fruit always looks so good and tastes sweet at the first taste, but turns sour in our stomach as sin promises pleasure that only lasts a season
- g. But Jesus said, “*the devil 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.*” (Jn 8:44).

**5. Lets look at the role lies have in our lives----**

- a. Our lives are not generally built on truth.
- b. Someone treats us a certain way and we make assumptions about ourselves!
  - i. It starts from our earliest days. If a parent loses patience with us, we assume that there is something defective about ourselves. We don’t realize that the problem is their problem not ours.
  - ii. Abused women fall for this lie, believing that they are defective as their husband hurls insults and lies at them. “You’re no good” “You always burn the food” etc.
    - 1. The problem is not you. It is with the one who is demanding from you.

- iii. Saw Jane Fonda talking about her mother. She had internalized her mother's anger toward her as a teenager as being about her, as if she was somehow so flawed, broken and useless. But she came to realize that her mother's anger wasn't about Jane but about herself.
  - iv. I believe that we all have lies we believed from somewhere in our lives that affects the way that we live and relate to others.
    - 1. Prov 23:7 'as a man thinks in his heart, so he is.'
    - 2. We need to unravel the lies.
6. Lets take a quick look at how a lie becomes a part of our lives:
- a. James 1:14-16 *Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers.*
  - b. **We listen to the lie!**
    - i. When you hear a lie like "you are worthless" don't let it in the doorway of your mind.
      - 1. Don't listen. Stop it at the doorway.
      - 2. Resist at the threshold of your mind. .
      - 3. Especially when you know where it is coming from!
      - 4. Turn it off before it accesses your will, emotions and mind.
    - ii. When I plant a garden, the first thing I do is to cultivate the ground, that is, I break it up so the seeds I sow will find root.
      - 1. This is what the enemy does when he gets us to LISTEN.
      - 2. He is tilling the soil so that we will receive the lie.
  - c. **We dwell on the lie.** – This is where we begin to consider what the enemy has said.
    - i. You might be struggling with the thought that you are worthless. Someone may have even said it to you, or perhaps you experienced rejection at work or from a friend. You FEEL worthless. So now, you are dwelling upon the lie.
    - ii. You mull it over, engage in conversation, contemplate it.
    - iii. This is where Eve talked back to the serpent.
      - 1. But in so doing, he is sowing the seeds of doubt, of his lies.
      - 2. The next step is almost automatic.
  - d. **We believe the lie** – it takes root and grows.
    - i. You add up the count... 1 plus 1 equals 3. My mom said I was worthless, my boss reprimanded me, my friends didn't call me, yup, I am worthless.
    - ii. A seed only needs to be in the moisture and warmth of the ground for a short time when it will begin to germinate.
    - iii. It will grow.
    - iv. With a lie of the enemy, they grow quite quickly like a weed.
  - e. **We act on the lie** –
    - i. The lie is producing fruit when it becomes action.
      - 1. If you wait until this point to try to resist, you will fail!
    - ii. Believing things that are untrue produces sinful behavior.
    - iii. Behavior like depression, beating up on ourselves, taking a drink to numb the pain.
    - iv. We act on what we believe.
7. Every area of bondage in our lives started with a lie. .
- a. **Every Addiction started with a lie.**
    - i. Example of bondage: Physical (eating, substance abuse) emotional (anxiety, fear, depression), sexual (I won't even mention these), financial (debt, greed, stinginess), habits – (anger, lying, excessive tv, books or diversions). Do you have a need for approval, a victim mentality, shyness. The list goes on and on.

- ii. Satan has a field day keeping us from experiencing God's very best by feeding us lies.
- 8. Lets become overcomers!
  - a. If you want to get rid of poisonous berries on your property, you don't go out and pick all the berries off the bushes. They will only grow back. It isn't enough to cut it down, because the roots are still there and they will grow back. You must pull it out by the roots!
  - b. 4 Steps to overcoming a lie: (to pulling it out!)
    - i. **Identify the Lie**
      - 1. What have you listened to believed and acted upon that led to where you are now? Roots are beneath the surface so they aren't obvious.
      - 2. Lies are hidden and deceptive. Ask God to reveal what is unseen to you.
    - ii. **Reach the point where you want change.**
      - 1. More than anything else, even above prestige, comfort, respect. As long as you value other things above freedom, you will remain in bondage.
      - 2. If you aren't sick of being sick and tired, then you won't want freedom. You will be content to be sad, depressed and to get all of the benefits and attention associated with it.
    - iii. **Replace the lie the with truth**
      - 1. John 8:32 *you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*"
      - 2. In the coming weeks, as we address the many areas of our lives where we believe lies, we will replace the lie with a truth.
    - iv. **Turn it over to Jesus today.**
      - 1. He alone can set you free from your past.
      - 2. He can free you from the bondage of the lies you have believed.

Won't you turn it over to Jesus today?

You don't have to carry it any longer.

Lay it down. Let Jesus replace the lie with His truth.

God does care. He loves you. Won't you let Him into your life today?

Let's pray.

Joh 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

Joh 14:17 - ...even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

Joh 15:26 - But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me;

Joh 16:13 - When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Joh 18:37-38 - Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

1Jo 5:7 - And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

1 Tim 2:3-4 This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Ephesians 1:6 "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

**Apatao** - to cheat, beguile, deceive

**Kenos** – (empty) empty, vain, devoid of truth of places, vessels, etc. which contain nothing of men empty handed.

**disobedience** - a-patheo (patheo = to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe) negative particle (a) is added to the beginning to make it mean "to disobey"

cf Colossians 2:4 "I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument"

**Delude** (para-Logizomai) Logizomai means to accurately reckon; para means to place something alongside it to change = to "reckon wrong"

**Persuasive argument** Pithanologia – pith-analogia – (persuade through words)

Ezekiel 13:22 "with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked (by not telling him to repent and turn) that he should not return from his wicked way by promising him life."

Teachings justify anger, selfishness, irresponsibility, infidelity.

Teachings use legalism as a stick.

Spiritual Abuse.

- a. Where is the Plumbline?
  - i. If there is one thing that is needed today in our society it is a plumbline.
    - 1. A plumbline exists for two purposes:
      - a. It reveals what is straight, true, and perpendicular.
      - b. It exposes that which is crooked, askew, and deformed
    - ii. Against this ideology of relativism, the Bible stands with its absolute standards of truth.
      - 1. By it we may test all of our convictions and conduct.
      - 2. The Bible is a book of absolute values, and in it God is not vague or elusive about what is right and wrong.
      - 3. Christ's instructions were absolute.
      - 4. The Ten Commandments are absolutes.
        - a. They were not engraved in sand but on tablets of stone to signify their permanence.
        - b. They are certain, unchanging and applicable to every age.

postmodern" generally refers to the criticism of absolute truths

They don't ask, "What is a bat" but rather ask, "What is it like to be a bat?"

Emphasis is upon subjectivity instead of objective, measurable facts that we might call truth.

Relativism, Moral relativism, take center stage.

Even goes so far as to deny our existence is "real"!

Is Christian revelation, and Christian experience today, access to a reality by which the adherents of all language games are to be judged, or not? Acts 17:30-31 suggests it is.

It is a worldview that denies all worldviews ("stories"). In a nutshell, postmodernism says there are no universal truths valid for all people. Instead, individuals are locked into the limited perspective of their own race, gender or ethnic group. It would exclude missionary movements because you are "imposing" your own perspective on another.

Although postmodernists tend to reject traditional morality, they can still be very moralistic. They will defend their "rights" to do what they want with puritanical zeal. Furthermore, they seem to feel that they have a right not to be criticized for what they are doing. They want not only license but approval. Thus tolerance becomes the cardinal virtue. Under the postmodernist way of thinking, the principle of cultural diversity means that every like-minded group constitutes a culture that must be considered as good as any other culture. The postmodernist sins are "being judgmental," "being narrow-minded," "thinking that you have the only truth," and "trying to enforce your values on anyone else." Those who question the postmodernist dogma that "there are no absolutes" are excluded from the canons of tolerance. The only wrong idea is to believe in truth; the only sin is to believe in sin.