

Go in peace [5 minutes]

Conclude by having one person in your group pray this verse from the Psalms aloud:

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer (Ps 19:14).*

For the Coming week

Read chapter 7, “Learning to Bless Those Who Curse Us.”

The soul-training practice for the week will be praying for our competitors.

The Good and Beautiful LIFE

6

Learning to live without lying

WELCOME – Breaking the ice

OPENING TO GOD – Opening to God (5 minutes)

Read *Colossians 3:1-17* together

5 minutes of silence

Prayer to end the silence

Prayer to end the silence

*Open wide the window of our spirits, O Lord, and fill us full of light;
open wide the door of our hearts, that we may receive and entertain [you]
with all our powers of adoration and love. Amen.*

—Christina G. Rossetti, England, 19th century,

Soul training [10 minutes]

If you are in a group of six or more people, divide into small groups of three or four. Use the questions below to help you process your experiences of going a day without lying.

1. Which of the two exercises were you able to do this week? Describe what you did and how it felt.
2. What did you learn about God or yourself from the exercises?
3. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the soul-training exercises that have been done up to now. Which disciplines are you still practicing? How are they affecting you?

Engaging the Chapter [20 minutes]

The main idea of this chapter is that we lie when disconnected from the kingdom and are unsure of our protection and identity and care, but in the kingdom we can dispense with lying.

Read through the following questions before you begin discussion. Note any questions you especially want to discuss. Depending on your group size and the conversation, you may not have time to discuss all of these questions.

1. The author gives an insightful list of lies we often tell. They are: “Yes, I have read that book”, “Yes, let’s definitely get together soon.”, “He’s in a meeting.”, “She’s not home.”, “No, that outfit does not make you look fat.”.

As a group, add to this list by brainstorming lies we tell that seem harmless.

2. Two motives are given for lying: “in order to get what we want” or “to avoid something we don’t want” (p. 108). If you are comfortable, discuss with the group which of these motives is most common for you. Are there any other motives you would add?

3. In discussing Jesus’ narrative about lying, the author contrasts the “old law” with Jesus’ teaching. He writes, “The standard of righteousness in Jesus’ day was clear: You can tell lies and not be liable, but if you lie ‘under oath’ you are guilty. Jesus, as always, is aiming for something higher, for a new kind of person with a new kind of character. He is saying, ‘Under oath or not, those who live in the kingdom can and should tell the truth’” (p. 110). Put an “x” on the continuum to represent where you think the average person stands regarding lying. Then draw a circle for where you see yourself.

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Lie anytime always tell the truth

Explain the locations of the marks.

4. Have volunteers take turns reading aloud the first five paragraphs from “How Living in the Kingdom Can Cure Lying” on pages 112-113. Note the ways the Kingdom of God sets us free from lying. As a group, discuss how your experiences of God’s Kingdom has reduced lying in your life.

Engaging the word [25 minutes]

When this discussion has concluded, have one person in the group read aloud Colossians 3:9-10. In this passage, Paul refers to the “new self,” which can be seen as indwelt by Christ and as residing in God’s kingdom. The “old self,” which Paul invites us to take off, is isolated from God and God’s resources. As we put on the new self, lying is less necessary and less attractive because of who we are and where we are.

1. How does living in God’s Kingdom and being indwelt by Christ affect the necessity and attractiveness of lying?

2. What soul-training exercises have helped you take off your “old self” and put on the “new self” that Paul speaks of?

Experiencing transformation [20 minutes]

The author writes of “giving grace” with our words in the forms of “Kingdom encouragement” and “Kingdom kindness” (pp. 113-114).

Have your group divide into groups of two or three. Invite them to begin by silently reflecting on this last week, looking for times they could have spoken words of kingdom encouragement or kindness but did not.

Then with partners have them pray for each other, inviting the Spirit to open their eyes to future opportunities to bless others with their words. Encourage everyone to continue praying for their partners during this coming week.