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Speak Truth

Genesis 20

“The President tells lies,” chortled headlines in tabloids and tribunes in 1998. In columns of fine print we later learned more than we ever wanted to know about why. It’s easy to fling the whole story into the corner with disgust. But when I examine my own words and motives, I have to ask some sobering questions: What should I say to my elderly “uncle” about the *real* results of his chest x-ray? What would I say if ordered, “Recant, or die”?

GROUP DISCUSSION. Do you think a lie is ever justified? Explain.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What situations tempt you to say what is less than true? When you consider what makes these situations tempting, what do you discover about your motives?

Abraham was on a long journey through dangerous territory. He had a convenient agreement with his wife. *Read Genesis 20.*

1. What is your initial reaction to each character in this story?

2. What does Abraham’s lie in verse 2 reveal about his values?

3. Study God’s words in verses 3 and 6-7. How does God show that he cares for the various people touched by Abraham’s lie?

4. What do these statements reveal about God’s values?

5. How does Abimelech show more concern for godly values than Abraham did?

6. What do you think of Abraham’s reasons for lying to Abimelech (vv. 11-13)?

7. What circumstances do you face that make truth-telling difficult?

8. How might a serious look at your motives help you decide how much to say—and not to say?

9. Look at God’s instructions to Abimelech in verse 7. How did Abimelech go beyond even what God asked him to do (vv. 8-16)?

10. Abimelech said to Sarah, “You are completely vindicated” (v. 16). What do you think Abraham, Abimelech and Sarah each learned from this experience?

11. What harm have you seen come from failure to tell the truth?

12. What forms of self-discipline would you recommend to someone who wanted to become more truthful?

Thank God for the ways that he represents truth—that his Word is truth (John 17:17). Bring to God specific areas where you fail to tell the truth. Ask his forgiveness and his help.

Now or Later

Study Psalm 15. What different areas of truth-telling does this psalm address?

What encouragement do you find here to speak truth?

The apostle Paul wrote these hopes for his friends at Ephesus: “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). Consider several of the areas where speaking the truth is hard for you. In view of this verse, what can you say in that setting that is both truthful and loving?