

# Parenting a Lying Child, Part 1 | how to teach a liar

## I. The Nature of Lying

- **Lies don't exist if truth doesn't exist.**
  - Liars don't submit to truth, but for something to be a lie, truth has to exist, and if truth exists, there are significant implications in all of our lives.
  - There is no right or wrong if there is no God. But if God is Who He says He is, then absolute truth absolutely exists.
- **Lies are the opposite of truth.**
  - According to Merriam-Webster, the first definition of the verb *lie* is "to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive." Of course, that's a lie. It's an untrue statement. However, their second definition of the verb *lie* is "to create a false or misleading impression."
  - And the second definition of the noun *lie* is "an untrue or inaccurate statement that may or may not be believed true by the speaker or writer."
  - If we limit our definition of lying to *deliberate* attempts to *knowingly* deceive, we're setting ourselves and our kids up for disaster.
- **Lies exist because sin exists.**
  - John 8:41-47; Jeremiah 10:8; Romans 1:21-32
  - Satan is the father of lies because he was the first to believe a lie and to tell a lie, but — unlike humanity — Satan is not merely completely depraved, he works out that wickedness *in full*. So, he was both the first liar as well as the most depraved liar. This makes him the father of lies and liars.
  - What was the lie Satan believed? Satan believed that he could exalt himself to God's status. We can only assume from the Scriptural account that this lie started first in Satan's own heart, but he clearly was not aware of the impossibility of the falsehood, because he acted on it. Satan's own self-deception is the very genesis of all lies.
  - Lies, falsehood, and deceit are the very root of all sin. That is the liar's problem. Everyone who lies has first believed any number of lies. In fact, it's impossible to lie without first believing at least one lie. Whether they are deliberately deceiving or they are deluded, it's the result of their falling into the delusion that a falsehood is reality. This is the reality of the liar and the lie.

## II. How We Teach Our Kids to Lie

- **We tell our kids to lie.**
  - Thieves and miscreants who actually and unashamedly encourage people to lie in the worst ways obviously fall under this category.
  - But we do too if we ever encouraged our kids to give a false impression about something.
- **We lie.**
  - We don't just teach our kids how to live by telling them what to do. We teach them how to live by modeling for them how to live. Ron Hamilton used to say, "Your talk talks, and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks."
  - Our children see us lie to deceive. Every time you lie to your kids, they either know you were lying or will likely one day know that you lied.
  - Our children see us lie because we're deceived.
    - We say things that aren't true because we believe it to be true.
    - We make claims about things we honestly don't know to be true or not.

- And every time we model for our kids that it's okay to deliberately or unintentionally say things that aren't true — as long as it fits our purposes — you never actually have to tell them it's okay to lie. They'll learn it just fine.
- **We don't deal with our children's lies the way we should.**
  - **We don't do our due diligence to keep our kids accountable to the truth.**
    - Sometimes we do this because we're ignorant.
    - Some personalities can't bring themselves to consider for a moment that someone would lie to them, so since that eventuality is a million miles away for them, they're not even thinking that they need to ask some important followups.
    - Sometimes we don't deal with our children's lies because of ignorance, but sometimes it's pure laziness.
    - But when we don't deal with our kids' lies by pushing for truth and keeping them accountable, we're allowing them to believe that lying has value. It allows them to stay out of trouble or get something they want.
  - **We don't give appropriate Secondary Consequences when we know our kids have deliberately lied.**
    - Sometimes we do this because of ignorance — we don't know how to deal with the issue, so we don't.
    - But others of us are just lazy. It's not that the child might be lying, and we need to keep them accountable, we know the child is lying, but we just don't want to deal with it.
    - Sometimes it's ignorance, and sometimes it's laziness, but other times it's fear. Some parents are so incredibly afraid of what their kid will do if they confront them about their lies, that they just let the lie go. But this is just another variant of laziness.
    - But when we don't give our kids appropriate consequences when they deliberately lie, we're the ones lying. We're lying to our kids about how life works. We're lying to them about the destructive nature of sin, we're lying to them about the supposed benefit of lying.
  - **We allow our kids to continue in self-deception.**
    - I have found over and over again that too many Christian parents don't address falsehoods as long as the child didn't *intended* to deceive. The untrue statements are viewed as mere mistakes or a misinterpretation or they're excused away in some other manner. It's only when the child knowingly lies that the parent sees it as a problem.
    - But God says that we shouldn't bear false witness . . . period.
    - Every time we see our children believing a lie, and we don't correct their thinking, we're teaching our children to embrace falsehood. Since every intentional deception starts with self-deception, when we allow our kids to continue in self-deception, we're setting up our children to embrace intentional lying and every other sin that grows from self-deception . . . and that would be all of them.
    - And — just like the other ways we teach our kids that lying isn't so bad — we teach our kids that self-deception is okay because of ignorance and laziness.
    - We are doing our kids a massive disservice when we allow them to speak their own reality into fictional existence. We're setting them up for failure — not just by making it easier for them to start deliberately lying in the future, but also in every relationship they ever have. You can't have a close, thriving relationship with someone who can't function in reality.