

- I was at a conference all this week.
 - It was from Monday to Friday – intense, excellent, impacting.
 - I wanted to share something from this that impacted me greatly that I believe is a critical problem that many of us face that prevents us from living out of the fullness that Jesus gave for us.
 - To get us started, let's take a quiz. A True or False quiz.
 - Lying is one of the ten commandments.
 - Satan is called the "Father of Liars".
 - (OK, that was easy and got you warmed up. Let's try some more personal ones.)
 - Lying is always wrong.
 - I never lie.
 - I have lied to protect someone's feelings.
 - I tend to exaggerate a lot, even about small details which do not really matter.
 - (Those were a little tougher. Uncomfortable even. OK, just a couple more.)
 - I sometimes lie to myself.
 - I believe these lies about others, God or myself.
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- Lies can be devastating.
 - They can damage relationships.
 - They can ruin our reputation.
 - They get rid of trust.
 - We all know people who we don't trust or don't necessarily want to talk about because of their lying tendency.
 - Yet as devastating as this can be, the lies we believe can fundamentally alter the trajectory of our lives. The lies that we believe can impact everything we say and do.
 - Let me give you a couple of examples.
 - Sometimes is lie we are taught. We are a cosmic accident. It is not a theory. It is fact. If that is true, what happens in how we live? I struggle to find meaning. I am always trying to just be happy because really, that's all there is.
 - Sometimes it's more personal. "You will never amount to anything." "You were a mistake." "God could never love me."
 - And so our entire existence is impacted.
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- There is no one exempt from this. Every person battles with lies. And I am convinced that many of us this morning are still operating under a lie of some type.
 - So here's how I want to work with this today.
 - I want to look at why this matters, looking at the power of lies.
 - Then I want to look at how to identify the lies in our lives.
 - Finally, let's talk about what to do about those lies.

I. The power of lies.

- One time Jesus was talking to a group of Jews.
- These Jews had decided that the things Jesus was talking about seemed to be right. It resonated with them. They had decided that perhaps Jesus was worth following.
- Jesus told them something that we quote wrong all the time.
John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- This verse is totally misquoted. We hear the last part, but when Jesus said it, he was connecting the first and second thought.

- IF we hold to his teaching, the truth, and live out of it, THEN we will know it, not intellectually, but deep down and that truth will set us free.
- 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. . . 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.*
- Lies have power. Jesus was very clear that deceit is the native language of the devil and when we subscribe to his lies, we end up a slave to those lies. The opposite of the freedom that comes through the truth of Jesus is the slavery that comes through lies.
 - Lies form in our soul as a result of any of a number of reasons.
 - Specific events and experiences lead us to believe something. When I was young, I lived where it regularly got to -30 and -40 in the winter. I assumed everywhere was like this and everyone had to plug their cars in to keep them from freezing solid.
 - Woundedness or pain can create lies. Someone is abused and goes through life feeling powerless or worthless.
 - Sometimes it is the things that are said about us or around us.
 - Sometimes they come from Satan himself who whispers in our ears.
 - Other times it comes through the culture we live in and sometimes simply as a result of sin.
 - So here's the thing: whatever you agree with you give power to in your life. If you agree with the truth, the truth will set you free. If you agree with lies, lies will enslave you.
 - It can happen different ways.
 - A parent who says "You'll never amount to anything" leaves a child who fulfills that prophecy. Ends up adrift, no ambition, in prison
 - Or, they want to prove their parents wrong by working hard, excelling and amounting to something. Neither is freedom and both are a reaction to a lie.
 - One of the issues that prevents us from experiencing the health, freedom and maturity that Jesus purchased for us are the lies that we believe. They can't be ignored.

II. Identifying lies.

John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- The solution to the living from lies is living by the truth.
- We have to identify the lies, expose them to the light, and replace them with truth, so that their power is broken.
- The first step is self-awareness because we never rise above the level of our self-awareness. Hear me, self-awareness doesn't guarantee growth, but it the gateway to it.
- As a result, we must identify the lies in our lives. This is not easy.
- *"While other people's excessive attachments and personal falsity often seem glaringly apparent, it is never easy to know the lies of our own life."* (David Benner)
- So here are some tips to help us.
- Defensiveness – we need to continually reinforce the lies we believe. When we are defensive, or touchy, it dependably points us to false ways of being. (e.g., I have to be right)
- Pettiness – the thing that bothers me about others point toward the lies we live by (e.g., laziness bothers me, performance false way) (e.g., legalism – judgmental, why?)
- Compulsiveness – what we are compulsive about is generally what we most need (e.g., success) Compulsions preserve our false self.

- This process of identifying the lies in your life is Spirit led reflection. Ask him to show you. Writing it down as you do this can help.
- What were the things that your parents said to you regularly? (you'll never amount to much; or you are a child of destiny)
- What family slogans do you remember? Spoken or unspoken?
- Lies can develop through repeated experiences. (e.g., rejected/abandoned)
- Pay attention to your 'self-talk.' What are the things you catch yourself saying to yourself? Imaginary conversations? (background noise)
- Lies manifest themselves. (e.g., beneath a sin pattern, usually there is a lie) (e.g., anxiety – fear of conflict – my own journey) (see Merton quote – next slide)
- *"A current of useless interior activity constantly surrounds and defends an illusion... Man's intelligence, however we may misuse it, is far too keen and too sure to rest for long in error. It may embrace a lie and cling to it stubbornly, believing it to be true: but it cannot find rest in falsehood."* (Thomas Merton)

III. Dealing with lies.

- The problem with lies is that they are tough to discern because often they are unspoken. But lies are like faulty core values – and we live out our core values – good or bad.
- We act on our true beliefs – even if they are false.
- These lies often effect the issue of our value. We feel like our value is dependent on something other than God's love. We know it is not true, but the lie is so deep in us, we act as if it were true. For example:
 - The issue of my value is determined by my performance.
 - The issue of my value is determined by whether or not certain people love me.
 - The issue of my value is determined by whether or not I am in control.
- What we find is that most lies that we are believing fall into three categories.
 - Performance
 - People pleasing (in everyone, or only in certain people)
 - Control (being in control or simply controlling certain areas)
- So what do we do?

John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

 - Catch this. This is more than knowledge. If we simply knowing the truth in our heads, then only the second half of Jesus statement is necessary.
 - Lies that effect our identity are foundational lies. Trying to build a life off of a lie is like trying to construct a building on a faulty foundation. There will always be cracks. We must rebuild the foundation. You must tear down the old to reconstruct the new.
 - *The issue of my value is settled on the cross.* Nothing can diminish my worth. We have to reposition the value of God's love in our life. We have to stand on the true foundation of God's love.
 - How do you get back on the one true foundation and reposition the issue of your value?
 - Identify the lie (and it's manifestations, e.g., anxiety in conflict; feel anxiety – standing on wrong foundation; defensiveness on wrong foundation) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the lies that effect you. What makes you feel most vulnerable? What image of yourself are you most attached to? What are you most proud of? How do you use these things to fend off your feelings of vulnerability?
 - Replace it with a truth slogan. (e.g., value based on love) Recognize when you are standing on the faulty foundation and immediately reposition your value. (e.g., anger & core lie of control; abuse – I am safe at rest in my Father's arms)

- Allow the Holy Spirit to minister love. Quiet your soul and listen. (e.g., feel conflict/anxiety – go to God)
- Act in courage. Action moves knowledge to conviction. (e.g., meet with person, and listen without defending)

- Truth can set us free. But it means holding onto the truths as Jesus taught them. Hold on to them and live from them.
- We need to let God rewire our brain.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- This is a daily process. Not an event. However, sometimes it is helpful to take the lie to Jesus.
- It takes about two years of vigilant effort to renew your mind.
- This takes energy. It takes time.
- But if we hold to Jesus teaching, if we grab onto those truths. If we live from those truths, then those truths will sink deep into our hearts, into our lives, into our minds.
- We will know the truth and the truth will set us free.
- And the one who Jesus sets free is free indeed.