

From Pastor Ed: The 21 Day Wesley Challenge

This is day 19! Winding down, or winding up?

Remember that after worship Sunday we will have our final OT session for THIS series!

Day Nineteen Question Nineteen

Am I honest in all my actions and words or do I exaggerate?

Colossians 3:9-11

Wesley's question can help you evaluate your level of contentment with life. It can help you be true to your identity in Christ, remembering that Christ loves you for who you are as a child of God, not for what you do or have. And it can challenge you to reflect on your character, to discover how free you are to be content, be grateful, be you—and live inspired by your heavenly worth!

- The next time you are tempted to lie or exaggerate, stop to notice what is driving this temptation. Are you intimidated by the group or person you are with? Do you feel “less than” them in some way? Are you trying to impress someone?
- Is there a truth about yourself that you need to tell someone? Is there something you need to “come clean” about, some exaggeration or falsehood that takes more and more energy to maintain? Set aside some private time with that person or group, confess your truth honestly, and set yourself free.

Prayer: Jesus, you modeled honesty—from your birth to your death, burial and resurrection. I pray that honesty may become one of my most valued and tangible virtues. Amen.

Day 19 devotional 19: (thanks to Rick Renner renner.org)

Are You Guilty of Exaggerating the Facts Or Embellishing the Truth?

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.

— **Colossians 3:9**

The Bible has much to say about liars. If you have a tendency to lie, it is essential that you bring correction to this part of your life as soon as possible. But you may ask, “How do we define a lie? What exactly does the Bible mean when it says we need to stop lying?”

In Colossians 3:9, the apostle Paul said, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” The word “lie” is the Greek word *pseudomai*, which carries the idea of *any type of falsehood*. It can picture *a person who projects a false image of himself; someone*

who deliberately walks in a pretense that is untrue; or someone who intentionally misrepresents facts or truths.

In Greek, the word *pseudomai* is used in a variety of ways:

- *pseudapostolos*: describes *false apostles* (2 Corinthians 11:13).
- *pseudoprophetes*: paints a portrait of *false prophets* (Matthew 7:15).
- *pseudodidaskalos*: pictures those who are *false teachers* (2 Peter 2:1).
- *pseudochristos*: denotes those who are *false Christs* (Matthew 24:24).
- *pseudoadelphos*: plainly depicts a *false brother* (2 Corinthians 11:26).
- *pseudomartureo*: conveys the idea of a *false witness* (Matthew 19:18).
- *pseudologos*: denotes a *false word* or *one who speak falsehoods* (1 Timothy 4:2).

In every instance where the word *pseudomai* (“lying”) is used in the New Testament, it portrays *someone who misrepresents who he is by what he does, by what he says, or by the fact or truth he purports to be true*. It was in regard to this wrong behavior that Paul said, “Lie not one to another....” It is very important to point out that in Greek, the grammar conveys the idea of a *strong prohibition*, meaning this verse should be translated, “*Stop lying to one another....*” It implies that the believers to whom Paul was writing struggled with the issue of honesty in their lives.

Paul’s words to the Colossians could be interpreted like this:

“I command you to stop the practice of misrepresenting the truth, twisting the facts, projecting untrue images, or deliberately misleading others by giving them false information....”

Lying is a temptation that all of us have to deal with in our lives. Apparently even the Colossian church struggled so strongly with this problem two thousand years ago that Paul had to write and tell them to stop lying.

You may not deliberately set out to lie, but anytime you misrepresent the truth about your abilities; say something about another person that you don’t know to be true; slightly twist the facts to your advantage; or trump up a story about yourself or your past deeds to make yourself look better in the sight of others — you have fully entered into what the Bible views as “lies.” All this behavior was forbidden by Paul when he wrote, “Lie not to one another....” Paul’s words cannot be misunderstood or misinterpreted. This is a clear mandate to stop the habit of lying and to no longer give your consent to participate in any type of falsehood, dishonesty, deceit, fabrication, or misrepresentation of the truth in your life or in your conversation.

Truthfulness is important — so important, in fact, that it is the foundation of all successful relationships at home, at church, and at work. It is impossible to build trust in a relationship if you suspect that the other person is being dishonest with you.

But what if you are the one who dresses up or slightly misconstrues the facts to your advantage or to the disadvantage of others? Quit telling yourself that you’re just exaggerating a little or being dramatic. Maybe that’s how you try to rationalize your behavior, but God views it as telling falsehoods and says it should not be tolerated in your life!

Are there any areas in your life where you have permitted a little exaggeration? Have you ever misrepresented the truth about who you are, what you can do, what you have done, or what you have heard or think of others? Can you honestly say that the words you speak are accurate, or would you have to admit that you have been a little dishonest in how you report certain matters? *If you know in your heart that you haven't been totally truthful, what are you going to do about it now?*

If you have misrepresented the facts in the past but are willing to repent and change, God's Spirit will enable you to stop lying and to learn how to be more truthful.