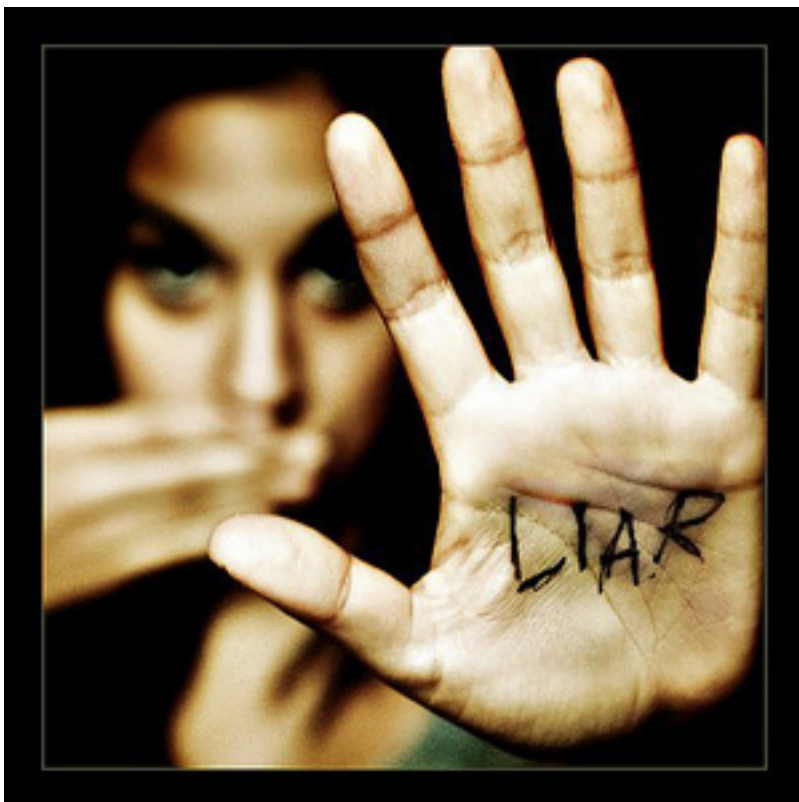


Thou shalt not lie: Learning life's hard lessons

Written by Marcia Humphrey
Friday, 18 March 2011 14:11



One of my three little blessings told a lie. In fact, my child told a series of lies over a couple of days before confessing, under threat of further negative consequences (*I won't go into further details; just use your imagination, then multiply by two*). It all started when the child took something without permission (*a bunch of candy-she was authorized to take a few pieces*). Although that was bad enough, when we asked the child about it, there was complete (*convincing*) denial (*imagine that!*).

My husband and I saw the lying as an even greater offense than the first. We tried to get our young lawbreaker to understand an important lesson: if you develop a reputation as a thief and liar, then no one will trust you, nor will they believe what you say-even when you decide to tell the truth. While we recognize that all kids and adults lie to varying degrees, we want to help our young ones to learn the value of truthfulness and integrity, and practice living by those standards.

We explained it like this; a peaceful life follows the upright, but "high drama" follows liars and schemers (*my added twist on a bible verse in Proverbs*). We want the lesson to stick for all the children, as they watch their sibling being sentenced to the *Daddy and Mama Correctional/Rehabilitation Program*.

Through (*usually*) loving discipline, our goal is to help our entire family learn and do what's right, humbly admit when they are wrong, willingly make amends, and always remember that they are

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valuable to God and to us. If you have a challenging situation with your kids, grandkids, (or with yourself), maybe our approach might inspire you with ideas of how to address and root out negative habits today in order to prevent larger issues later.

Confession—our wrongdoer had to confess to us. In addition, our child had to write a letter of apology, stating why the actions were wrong and unacceptable. Next, our offending child was taken to the bank to withdraw money to replace the candy-plus some extra money for (*biblical*) restitution. The letter and items were later presented in-person to the friend and the friend's mom.

Accountability—our kid was then required to call seven family members, inform them of the situation, and ask for prayer. In addition, to the needed prayer, every family member encouraged our child and assured our young one of continued love and acceptance.

Reflection—my husband and I have had many conversations with our child about this matter. They include discussions on lessons learned, good decision-making, self-control and prayer. Our entire family has discussed the impact our individual actions can have on the entire family.

In our American culture, lying almost seems stylish. Often, liars are celebrated for “beating the system.” The truth is, at some point, the things that are done in darkness, will come to light. The female singing group, En Vogue, was right on the money, with their song, Lies. In the lyrics, I hear a challenge and warning for all of us.

*I'll live my life a different way
Refuse to let myself become a victim
Getting caught up in a vicious web of lies, they can hurt you
And destroy you, you watch out for lies, just a devil in disguise...*

I want to offer a personal challenge to you as well. Go online and find the lyrics to Lies, or better yet, buy the song, and support the En Vogue divas. Read the lyrics to yourself, your kids, and your nephews, and discuss some of the messages of the song. You may be surprised to learn that the song contains many biblical scriptural references.

For our family, the bible is our training manual and the truth on which we build our lives. Our own frailties and shortcomings, as individuals, keep us humbly seeking God's grace, as parents, while extending grace to our three (mostly) wonderful blessings! □ *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. Prov.22:6.*

Enjoy!