

INTRODUCTION

TRACKING DOWN THE TRUTH

We all know at least three liars. Just look in the mirror and each of them will be revealed: me, myself, and I (also known as the 'unholy trinity').

The psalmist tells us, 'All men are liars' (Ps. 116:11). Undeniably, this indictment of mankind is true. Lucifer's lie is what seduced and initiated the separation of man from God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:4-5)¹; and it has sadly served as our model of 'truth-telling' ever since. All of humanity repeats it routinely. There is no wiggle room here. It is a reality none can deny. Each of us is far from exemption. We have all told at least one lie, therefore we are all liars.

Worse yet, we have learned to disguise our lying. Today's dishonesty is delivered in an assortment of shapes and sizes. Look and see if you recognize any of them: there is the truth stretched (an ambiguous lie), a promise broken (a lazy lie),

1. 'The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

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plagiarism (a misleading lie), a fib (a little white lie), and an outright **BOLD-FACED** lie ('liar, liar, pants on fire!').

However the most dangerous and deceptive of them all is the half-truth—a kind of lie that is consciously and calculatingly misleading. There is a manipulative motive behind this crime. Something has been left out by the teller in order to deceive the hearer. J.I. Packer once remarked that 'a half-truth masquerading as the whole truth becomes a complete untruth.'² Yes, a half-truth is far more than an exaggeration or elaboration; it is a two-faced lie.

This occurs often when dealing with the truth claims of Scripture. Lies are told to turn maxims into myths. A 'truth-claim' is generated and predicated upon nothing but an individual's relativistic worldview—the ill-founded idea that truth is different for each person. What was once a sincere truth-seeking conversation quickly turns into a conversation stopper. When a half-truth is employed the dialogue is brought to a screeching halt. 'It may be true for you, but not for me.'³

With this in mind, I believe there are five major half-truths commonly used to deflect any-and-all consideration for the validity of the Bible, Christianity, God, Christ, and faith. They have been administered to persuade people (including myself) to discount and disregard the truth of

2. J.I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), 126.

3. For a helpful resource on responding to relativism see Paul Copan's book *True For You, But Not For Me* (Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers, 2009).

the gospel, by 'accepting too much [error] with too little discernment.'⁴

Much like what we see in our political landscape (regardless of where you lean), these half-truths have created a truth-denying society. Modern pluralistic lies are routinely regarded as truth without a single solitary rebuttal. The role of reason is being replaced by tainted presuppositions. There is a growing populous where error abounds and logic is in short supply.

The great preacher of old, C.H. Spurgeon, defined this search for truth as 'knowing the difference between right and almost right.'⁵ Reread that quote. Take notice of the disparity between the two, as it is profound. You might say, 'Well, at least you're close,' but close only counts in horseshoes and hand-grenades! No, we must get this right. It is the disparity between 'the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error' (1 John 4:6). And so it is my deepest desire to see God use these pages to deliver what is 'right' to you.

Perhaps that is one of the very reasons you are holding this little book in your hands. You are sincerely seeking the truth. Thank you for making such a commitment to do so.⁶ Turn the page to begin your reading journey. Each chapter will reveal a *half-truth*, then unveil the *whole truth*, followed by an explanation of its *whole meaning*.

4. John MacArthur, *Fool's Gold? Discerning Truth in an Age of Error* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 19.

5. Charles Haddon Spurgeon as quoted by Ligon Duncan in Tim Challies, *Discipline of Spiritual Discernment* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 1.

6. 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth... and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free' (2 Tim. 2:15; John 8:32).

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I have been praying for this moment. It is time that we expose together these five falsehoods to uncover what has been intentionally hidden. These half-truths have been used to keep us from learning the whole truth for far too long.