

## THINGS TO STOP AND START STUDY EIGHT

### Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

*You and I can have closer fellowship if you know that I'm telling the truth and if I, in turn, know that you are doing the same. Truth cultivates trust.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**O**F all the bad habits we could address, few are more prevalent yet more acceptable than lying. And few are more destructive to our relationships and our integrity. As painful as it may be to hear, the U.S. is a nation of liars. One reliable survey reveals that 91 percent of Americans lie regularly.<sup>1</sup> The majority of Americans find it hard to get through a week without lying!

Unfortunately, Christians are not the exception. In their book, *Keeping Your Ethical Edge Sharp*, Doug Sherman and William Hendricks surveyed a large sample of Christians and concluded that “the general ethical conduct of Christians varies only slightly from non-Christians.”<sup>2</sup> These two authors discovered that Christians are almost as likely as non-Christians to falsify their income tax returns, steal from the workplace, and selectively obey the laws.

It is time for us to face it: lying is an ongoing habit that we must expose, analyze, and stop! We must *stop lying and start telling the truth*, and with God’s help through the guidance of His Word, we can do just that.



#### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Unlike humans, God never lies. It goes against His nature to lie, so it follows that when God became flesh, *truth* became flesh as well, as the apostle John reminds us:

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NASB)*



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2014, 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

Grace and truth flowed through everything Jesus did and said, so we can trust Him knowing that He will never lead us astray. Take a few moments to invite God to use His Spirit to “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13) and to help you walk with Christ in truth.



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul teaches us how to live truthfully in Ephesians 4:21–25. If you’re in a private place, read aloud the following verses about how to live truthfully. Reading aloud focuses our mind and tunes our ears to hear Paul’s emphasis:

*Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. (Ephesians 4:21–25).*



### Observation: A Biblical Appraisal and Analysis of Lying

Observation is the *Searching the Scriptures* method of looking in the text for contrast, comparisons, repetition, cause-and-effect, flow of thought, and other features that might help us understand the author’s intended meaning.<sup>3</sup>



## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

The word, *since*, signals the starting point from which Paul's thoughts flow. How does Paul's statement, "you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him," give the reader a foundation for what follows (Ephesians 4:21)?

Paul moves forward from this point, laying down commands like stepping stones on a path. In the space below, write the commands you see in verses 22–25.

Notice the small but crucial word, *so*, in verse 25. This word indicates results. The commands "So stop telling lies" and "Let us tell our neighbors the truth" (4:25), *result from* following the commands in 4:22–24. Do you see the progression? We "throw off," then "renew [our] thoughts," and then "put on" (4:22–24). One act follows the other until we are able to stop lying and start telling the truth.

In the interpretation phase of our study, we'll examine what these commands mean. For now, let's take a quick tour of other passages in the Bible that address lying.

### God's Appraisal of Lying

God addresses lying in the following verses. Observe what God says about lying and write down any reasons you can find for God's displeasure when His children deceive one another.



# THINGS TO STOP AND START

## STUDY EIGHT

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

### Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

*Psalm 15:1–3*

*Proverbs 6:16–19*

#### Paul's Analysis of Lying

Paul also wrote about truth-telling to the believers in Rome and Colossae. What did Paul teach in these passages below? Compare these verses to Ephesians 4:21–25. Do you see any repeated themes?

*Romans 3:10–13*



Copyright © 2014, 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S08  
4

## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

*Colossians 3:8–10*

Lies don't originate on the tongue but in the innermost parts of who we are. So, if we hope to break our lying habit, we must experience a transformation from the inside out. Let's examine how this process happens.

*The one who speaks the truth, speaks from a sincere heart. The tongue is like a bucket; the heart is like a well. The bucket goes down, lifts from the heart whatever is there and spills it out. —Chuck Swindoll*



### Interpretation: Understanding the Renewal Process

Paul urges us to throw off our old ways, renew our minds, and put on Christ's new ways (Ephesians 4:22–24). Commentator William Barclay explains the vividness of Paul's language:

[Paul] says, "Put off your old way of life as you would put off an old suit of clothes; clothe yourself in a new way; put off your sins, and put on the righteousness and the holiness which God can give you."<sup>4</sup>

Imagine the habits of our old life as an old tattered and stained T-shirt or as a pair of old rotten sneakers. Paul urges us to throw away the vestiges of our old life—not just set them aside for later use but toss them into the incinerator never to wear them again! And put on beautiful clothes befitting our new identity as God's children.

The key to "putting off and putting on" is letting "the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes" (4:23). The following chart lists some thoughts from our old life that lead to lying. What might be a correlating, Spirit-renewed thought of the new life? The first one is filled in as an example, and verses are listed to help you.



**Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging**

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

Lie-Prompting Thought	Spirit-Renewed Thought
“If others find out what I did, they will reject me.”	<i>Hebrews 13:5</i> “God will never reject me, no matter what I’ve done.”
“Exaggerating my accomplishments helps me get ahead.”	<i>Proverbs 16:18–19</i>
“Everyone lies to customers. It’s part of doing business.”	<i>Colossians 3:23</i>
“What people don’t know won’t hurt them.”	<i>Luke 12:2</i>
“I have to tell people what they want to hear for them to like me.”	<i>Galatians 1:10</i>
“The system is corrupt, so it’s okay for me to lie to avoid getting ripped off.”	<i>Proverbs 17:20</i>

As truths from the heart of the Spirit flow through our renewed minds, they surface as words in our mouth. The more we speak the Spirit’s truths, the more of the old life we toss aside and the new life we model. But it takes deliberate effort to stop lying and tell the truth.

*Please observe that a clean and holy life is not automatic once you’ve come to Christ. You and I are responsible to carry out this matter of personal holiness. You train yourself to start thinking thoughts that are purer than you used to think. You have the Holy Spirit living within you. He is there to prompt you. The renewed mind frees you from the bondage of an old nature. —Chuck Swindoll*



## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*



### Correlation: The Source of All Lies

In correlation, we look for other Bible passages that shed further light on the meaning of the passage. If the fountainhead of all truth is God, then from what spring do the bitter waters of deception flow?

To find the answer, read the following verse and summarize the points Jesus was making as He was talking to the Pharisees who were plotting to kill Him.

*For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)*

Our behavior reveals our spiritual heritage. For this reason, Paul pleads with those who follow Christ, “Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children” (Ephesians 5:1). We mouth the thoughts of the devil when we lie; conversely, we mouth the thoughts of our heavenly Father when we speak truth. How much better is that!



### Application: Three Suggestions for Breaking the Lying Habit

In his message, Chuck Swindoll offered a three-step plan to help us stop lying and start telling the truth. These steps guide us in the process of throwing aside the old habit of lying, letting the Spirit renew our minds, and putting on the new habit of telling the truth. Chuck’s plan includes questions to ask ourselves to help us evaluate the truthfulness of our speech.



## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*

### Before You Speak . . . Think Ahead

- *Is what I'm about to say the truth?*
- *Should I speak or remain silent?*
- *Do I feel under pressure to say something to please someone else?*
- *Am I thinking of cheating?*

### During Your Speaking . . . Ask Yourself

- *Am I saying this correctly according to the correct facts?*
- *Should I give someone else credit for my ideas?*
- *Am I exaggerating to impress others?*
- *Am I holding back something that I should say?*

### After You Speak . . . Consider This

- *Do I regret saying what I said?*
- *Should I correct or clarify what I said?*
- *How could I have said what I said in clearer way?*
- *Was I trying to hide something?*

Can you remember these questions the next time you are in a situation which might prompt you to lie? One idea is to write them on a card to carry with you so that you can review them from time to time. Breaking the habit of lying won't happen without a plan and intentional effort. Put this plan into action today!

*Do you really want to break the habit of lying? One person is the key: yourself. Coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit, any habit can be broken! —Chuck Swindoll*





## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, I invite You to send Your Spirit to scrub my mind clean of the thoughts from my old life and renew my mind with thoughts from the new life You have given me. Thank You for calling me Your child and giving me a new identity with Christ. Help me to trust You enough to say the truth, even if the consequences are difficult to bear. Keep me in Your care as I follow the truthful way of Christ. Amen.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth: What People Really Believe about Everything That Really Matters* (New York: Plume, Penguin, 1991), 45.
2. Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, as quoted in Charles R. Swindoll, *The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 25.
3. To learn about Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
4. William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, The Daily Study Bible Series, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 154.



# THINGS TO STOP AND START

## STUDY EIGHT

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

## Stop Lying and Start Acknowledging

*Ephesians 4:21–29*



### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Things to Stop and Start**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Leisure: How to Recharge  
without Guilt**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
booklet



**Rules for Running a  
Rewarding Race**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD message

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019–2020 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



Copyright © 2014, 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S08-  
10