Sometimes it is easy to speak the truth and sometimes it is not. Have you ever been tempted to lie or say nothing when you know you should speak the truth? Perhaps you need to tell your parents something you’re hiding from them. Maybe you want to impress someone and you’re tempted to exaggerate. Perhaps a friend asks if you really believe the Bible, and you fear he may mock your beliefs. Sometimes people react to the truth. God can give you courage to speak what is true, even if it is difficult for you to say or difficult for the other person to hear. In Ephesians 4:15, God tells us to speak the truth in love so that we and others may grow in Christ. Depend on Him for the grace and power to walk in truth.
Truthfulness Overview

What Is Truthfulness?

*Read aloud, study, and discuss what truthfulness means and how it applies to life.*

The operational definition of truthfulness is *earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts.* When your life and words consistently communicate what is honest and accurate, others will learn that they can trust you and believe what you say. Being truthful means reporting details accurately and admitting when you are wrong. Telling the truth can be difficult and often requires courage and humility. Truthfulness is not only speaking facts with your lips, but also acting with integrity and avoiding secret sins, recognizing that God sees and knows everything. Honest people have nothing to hide because they have done what is right.

The opposite of truthfulness is deception. People may twist the truth in order to gain approval or avoid punishment. Deception often involves telling lies, stealing, or secretly doing what authorities said not to do. When caught doing wrong, a dishonest person may blurt out more falsehoods to cover up the initial offense. He misleads by leaving out important details, and may exaggerate, make excuses, or tell half-truths. A deceptive person might cheat on tests, making a teacher believe that the work is his own when it really is not. Although we are born with deceitful hearts, we can draw near to God and cleanse our hearts with His truth. (See *Jeremiah 17:9* and *James 4:8*.)

Where does truth come from? Can it come from within ourselves? Our human nature is to try to find our way on our own and define truth for ourselves. Some people say that truth is relative, which means they think what is right may vary depending on the situation. They attempt to create “their own truth” to justify themselves. However, truth does not change based on a person’s opinions and desires. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (*John 14:6*). Jesus is the Answer to our need for absolute truth. He has given His Word so that we can know what is right. God knows all the facts, even when someone tries to hide or suppress the truth. When Satan tries to make you think God is not trustworthy or that you are worthless, remember Satan is the father of lies and his goal is to distort reality and deceive you. Meditate on the truth. God’s Word says that God is faithful and that you are valuable to Him. The absolute truth of the Bible can set you free. (See *John 8:31–32*.)

God’s Word gives an accurate account of God’s character, of past and future events, and of God’s moral truth.

A mirage in the desert appears when hot air creates an illusion of water that is not really there. When a weary traveler does not find the water he is expecting, he realizes he has been deceived. Deception causes others to base decisions on misinformation to their own hurt.
Truthfulness in Scripture

As you read and study God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will become a radiant expression of Him. God will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

The Character of God

*We see examples of truthfulness in God’s character in the following ways:*

- **God’s ways and judgments are sure because He is the God of truth, with no error or injustice.** (See Exodus 34:6, Deuteronomy 32:4.)
- **God cannot lie. He has always told the truth and kept His Word.** (See I Kings 8:56, Psalm 119:160, Titus 1:1–2.)
- **God is all-knowing and omnipresent, meaning He is everywhere and nothing is hidden from Him. He is never deceived.** (See Jeremiah 23:24.)
- **Jesus, full of grace and truth, is the Truth.** (See John 1:14; 14:6.)
- **Jesus told the rich young ruler what he needed to hear, not what he wanted to hear.** (See Matthew 19:20–22.)
- **Jesus spoke accurately and never used His mouth to deceive.** (See John 18:37, Isaiah 53:9.)
- **The Holy Spirit is truth and guides believers into all truth.** (See John 16:13, I John 5:6.)

Truthfulness in My Life

*Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out truthfulness daily.*

- **How do lies affect my relationship with the Lord?** (See Psalm 101:5–7.)
- **What are the dangers of exaggerating my strengths or pretending to be better than others?** (See Proverbs 16:18; 29:23.)
- **What helps me to see myself accurately as God does and know what needs to change?** (See John 17:17, James 1:22–25.)
- **What does God think of lying?** (See Proverbs 6:16–19, Exodus 20:16.)
- **How can I overcome the temptation to cheat?** (See Proverbs 4:14–15.)
- **How does my truthfulness affect others?** (See Proverbs 14:25.)
- **What will help me recognize and reject Satan’s lies?** (See Ephesians 6:13–18, Psalm 119:104.)

**TRUTHFULNESS KEY VERSE**

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” Ephesians 4:25
Eli the high priest welcomed the couple who had traveled to Shiloh to worship the Lord. This year they brought their young son Samuel to serve God in the temple. Eli’s adult sons also served in God’s temple as priests. Sadly, however, they did not know or obey the Lord. As Eli’s sons offered sacrifices, they often stole portions of the meat that belonged to God and shared them with Eli. They threatened anyone who opposed them and even committed immorality with women in the temple. Eli knew of his sons’ sins and rebuked them but did nothing to stop their wrongdoing. He honored his sons more than God. During this time, God rarely spoke to anyone in Israel. Even though Samuel served God, he did not yet know Him.

One night as Samuel lay in bed, he heard a voice calling his name. Thinking it was Eli, Samuel ran to see what the priest needed. But Eli had not called young Samuel. When this happened three times in the same night, Eli realized that the Lord was calling Samuel! What message did the Lord give the boy? Would God give Samuel the courage to speak the truth and deliver the message, even if it was difficult?

**BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS**

Together, read I Samuel 3:8–21, and discuss the following questions:

1. **When Samuel heard God calling, how did he answer?** (See I Samuel 3:10.)
   - When do you listen for God to speak to you? (See Deuteronomy 6:6–7, Joshua 1:8.) Do you expect God to direct you through His Word?

2. **How would God’s message affect those who would hear?** (See I Samuel 3:11.)
   - Why can telling the truth at times be difficult or uncomfortable?

3. **What message did God give Samuel?** (See I Samuel 3:12–14.) Had God previously given this warning through anyone else? (See I Samuel 2:27–29, 33–35.)
   - What importance does God place on your example and words? (See Matthew 5:19, Proverbs 18:21.) Why should the words you speak agree with God’s Word? (See Titus 2:7–8, Leviticus 26:23–24.) What might people say that does not agree with God’s Word?

4. **What did Samuel do after God had spoken to him?** (See I Samuel 3:15a.)
   - Should you be eager to tell others what they have done wrong? (See Galatians 6:1.) Could that reveal pride and self-righteousness in yourself?

5. **How did Samuel feel about telling Eli what God had said?** (See I Samuel 3:15b.)
   - What should you do when you are afraid to tell the truth? (See Joshua 1:9.)

6. **What did Eli say to Samuel the next morning?** (See I Samuel 3:16–17.)
   - What may happen if you leave out details and only tell part of the truth? (See Luke 8:17.)

7. **How much of God’s message did Samuel tell Eli?** (See I Samuel 3:18.)
   - How should you respond when others ask you for information? (See Zechariah 8:16, Colossians 3:9.) When may it be wiser not to give information?

8. **What continuing ministry did God give to Samuel?** (See I Samuel 3:19–21.)
   - Why does God tell us to speak truth to one another? (See Hebrews 3:13.) How will your truthfulness affect your future? (See Proverbs 12:19, Luke 16:10.)
Memory Verse

EPHESIANS 4:25

Play the game together to help the children commit Ephesians 4:25 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”

EPHESIANS 4:25

MEMORY VERSE GAME

Clap-the-Word

Have everyone say the verse together three times. Next, select a child to leave the room while the rest of the children agree on a word they will clap instead of say when quoting the verse. The child reenters the room. He listens as the others quote the verse, and he tries to guess which word they clapped. Select another person to step out of the room and repeat the game until all the children have had a chance to guess a clapped word.

DOERS OF THE WORD

In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “be careful to speak the truth,” “not exaggerate so I look better than others,” or “clarify misunderstandings quickly.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ________________

__________________________________________________________________________

I ask that You would develop truthfulness in my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
Introduction

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the truthfulness key verse and definition as you fill in the crossword puzzle below. *Italicized* words fit horizontally and *underlined* words fit vertically. One word is already done for you.

**Ephesians 4:25**

“Therefore putting away *lying*, speak every man *truth* with his *neighbour*; for we are *members* one of *another*.”

**Truthfulness**

*Earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts*
Activity

THE TRUTHFULNESS GUESSING GAME

Introduction

During this character study we are asking the Lord to develop truthfulness in our lives. What a privilege to respond to the work He is doing to change us into the image of His Son! Today we are going to play a guessing game to show how others will be misled if we do not give them the whole truth.

When you only give some of the facts, others will have difficulty understanding the situation and reaching accurate conclusions. In contrast, communicating fully is giving all the facts. This helps others to clearly understand the situation so that they may make appropriate decisions.

Instructions

Silently examine each close-up shot and see if you can guess the bigger picture. Wait quietly until everyone has looked at all the pictures and has a guess in mind for each. Raise your hand when you are ready, and we will share our answers.

Answers may be found on page 13.
Christ Our Righteousness

You will need the following items: sticky notes, pen, and a white bed sheet.

The Bible tells us about God. He is the Creator of the universe and He is holy. God loves us and created us to have fellowship with Him. (See Revelation 4:11.) Select a volunteer who would not mind standing to represent the sin of all people. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God’s Law. Can you name some examples of sin? As the children answer, write their examples on sticky notes and place them onto the volunteer’s clothing (e.g., speaking unkind words, stealing, disobeying, doing good with wrong motives).

Because we have all sinned, and God is holy, we are eternally separated from Him. However, because God loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, Who died on the cross to pay for our sin and Who rose again to conquer death! Now we can have fellowship with God forever through Christ. (See John 17:3.) If we accept God’s gift of salvation, Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin, and His righteousness is put upon us! (See II Corinthians 5:21.) Remove the sticky notes and wrap the white sheet around the volunteer to represent Jesus’ robe of righteousness. Isaiah 31:10 describes what has happened this way: “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” In Romans 10:9–10, we are told how we can accept this gift: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation? If so, your sins are forgiven and Christ is living in you! Your new, inward identity is one of righteousness in God’s eyes. The more you realize that you are a new creature in Christ and walk in the Spirit, the more your outward actions will demonstrate Christ living in you. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, you can also say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” God gives us eternal life—sweet constant fellowship in the Spirit with our Savior—and then His righteousness is seen in us for His glory. (See John 15:4–10.)

In a Nutshell

2. Our sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23).
3. God sent His Son, Jesus, to provide the way for our sins to be forgiven and for fellowship with Him to be restored (Ephesians 1:6–7). Jesus accomplished our salvation through His crucifixion on the cross, His burial, and His glorious resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3–4).
4. We can do nothing to earn salvation. It is a free gift from God that we receive by faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).
5. We receive that gift of salvation by confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9–10).
Hymn History

“Jesus Loves Me, This I Know”

Sing “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” and read about the truth of God’s love proclaimed by the hymn writer, Anna Warner.

Mr. Linden’s student was deathly ill and had called for his beloved schoolteacher. Responding quickly, the teacher came to the boy’s home. Entering the dimly lit, somber bedroom, the teacher tenderly lifted the young boy into his arms and began pacing back and forth. Little Johnny Fax, sickly and pale, gazed gratefully at Mr. Linden’s face and faintly whispered, “Sing.” The gentleman began singing softly:

Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak but He is strong.

Several more stanzas followed, then the final verse:

Jesus loves me, He will stay
Close beside me all the way.
Then His little child He’ll take
Up to heaven for His dear sake.

Thus, from the Victorian novel Say and Seal, the poem “Jesus Loves Me” was introduced to a world that would come to cherish its heartwarming truth.

The book, co-authored by sisters Anna and Susan Warner, was published in 1860, and it quickly became a bestseller. The poem penned by Miss Anna resonated with many readers.

Miss Warner and her sister had become writers due to what seemed a terrible misfortune to human eyes. Their widowed father lost his wealth in the financial Panic of 1837. As a result, the ladies were plunged into poverty. They sold their fine home and moved into the family’s historic summer home on Constitution Island near West Point Military Academy.

To support themselves, the two sisters began writing books and experienced success in this endeavor. Through the years, they trusted the truth of God’s Word. As strong believers, the sisters taught Sunday School classes for the West Point cadets for forty years. Following their deaths, the Academy honored the ladies’ steadfast, Godly influence on the young men. Anna and Susan Warner were buried with full military honors in the military cemetery at West Point—the only two civilians to ever receive that honor.

Within a year after the sisters’ novel Say and Seal was published, the noted hymn writer William Bradbury read Anna’s poem. He decided this literary treasure needed a melody.

Mr. Bradbury endeavored to write music for children’s hymns so that they could understand the truths of God’s Word. How can children know that Jesus loves them? Miss Warner’s poem declares that they can know because the Bible says so! The Bible is God’s Word—the infallible, reliable foundation of truth.

Mr. Bradbury added a chorus, set all the words to music, and published the hymn. Soon children all over the country were singing it. Christian missionaries carried it overseas. Since 1861, people of many nations have declared this truth: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!”
Jesus Loves Me


Yes, Jesus loves me!  This I know,  For the Bible tells me so;
Jesus loves me!  He who died  Heaven’s gate to open wide;
Jesus loves me!  He will stay  Close beside me all the way;

Yes, Jesus loves me!  I will henceforth live for Thee.
Yes, Jesus loves me!  They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me!  I will henceforth live for Thee.

Yes, Jesus loves me!  The Bible tells me so.

Lit-tle ones to Him be-long,  He will wash away my sin,
Thou hast bled and died for me,  Let His little child come in.

Yes, Jesus loves me!  Yes, Jesus loves me!

Music Notation:

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“And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him . . . ” (I Samuel 3:17–18).
Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

P
F U T U R E
T R M
A N T H E R
W I E
A N P F A C T S
B
L Y I N G
O C E
R C N R
T R U T H F U L N E S S
S P T N A G
E A R N I N G
T H
A U E B
K T
Y U R

Recommended Resources

- 2020 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar
- Hymns for the Family CDs
  (“Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 1.)
- The Power for True Success
- Understanding Spiritual Gifts
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- Character Sketches, Volumes I–III
- Achieving True Success
- Guard Your Heart
- The Lies We Believe That Cause Stress and Disease
- Speak Truth in Your Heart
  book by Sarah Mally
- Exposing the Lies of the Enemy
  DVD by Paul & Jenny Speed
- “A Hidden Agenda Behind Evolution”
  (Message by Dr. Jobe Martin, available at embassymedia.com.)
- “Accountability Partners With Your Parents”
  (Message by Dugger Family, available at embassymedia.com.)
- “Asking Questions in Pursuit of Truth”
  (Message by Tim Barton, available at embassymedia.com.)

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Hymn History Bibliography

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The Truthfulness Guessing Game Answer Key

1. Sunflower
2. Lemon
3. Leather Shoes
4. Peacock Feather
5. Spoon
6. Violin
7. Bread Slice
8. Five Dollar Bill
9. Seashell