

## Greetings!

I heard a preacher say, "I'm telling you the truth, and why do I say that? Because, I've been known to tell a lie!" Go ahead and say it. I know you want to, "Amen!". There are lies and then, there's the "exaggerated truth" which means that it's not really a lie, just the truth expanded upon. Right?

May I ask you, have you ever lied? Okay, I know that was a little straight forward, so let me ask you, how's your integrity doing lately?

## Man in the Mirror

When I can't stand being trapped inside my house any longer, I take a *sanity therapy* outing to the Bass Pro store, or as more affectionately called by my brother, "*Wally World!*". After a couple of hours checking out the new gadgets that'll help me become a better hunter and fisherman, I'm ready to reenter the world of the living.

Each time I pass through their doors I'm confronted with these words inscribed overhead, "Welcome Fishermen, Hunters, and Other Liars." I can't help but smile as I enter the doors knowing the stories I've heard from outdoorsmen over the years.

It's well understood in fishing circles that if you ask your *best friend* where they caught the *big one* you won't get the exact GPS coordinates; in fact you'll be lucky to end up in the same state! Not only will he give you the wrong coordinates, he will do it as if he is letting you in on his best-kept secret. I don't even bother to ask anymore.

I understand the "Fishermen" and "Hunters", but it's the "Other Liars" that bothers me! We've all come to believe that everyone lies, and because everyone lies, it's acceptable to lie. Hunters have come to expect that his buddies will greatly exaggerate the size of the rack on the buck that got away, and fishermen's hands are always spread at least six inches wider than the fish really measured. Beside we tell ourselves, "There's no harm done" when we expand upon the truth. It's not really being dishonest, is it?

Recently, I was asked if I had got a shot at a deer that day, to which I said "No." As the words passed through my lips I felt my blood run colder than the snow I was standing in. I had lied! Why? I'm not really sure. Maybe I didn't want to admit my inadequacy, or possibly I just didn't want to go through the many reasons I had gathered in my head as to why I had missed the deer. For whatever the reason, I lied. No harm done, right? Wrong.

I found myself wondering for days in a wasteland of disappointment in myself. I had let myself down, and worse I had disappointed the Holy Spirit within me. I repented to God, confessed to a friend and purposed in myself never to do it again! I even find it hard to write these words because inwardly I'm afraid of what you'll think of me. Integrity. I've always felt proud that I had it. Maybe that was the problem; I was too self-assured that I had integrity, and in a second it was gone.

It was no accident that I came upon this poem a day after telling my “harmless” lie.

“I have to live with myself and so,  
I want to be fit for myself to know.  
I want to be able as days go by,  
Always to look myself in the eye.  
I don't want to stand in the setting sun  
And hate myself for the things I've done.  
I don't want to keep on a closet shelf,  
A lot of secrets about myself;  
And fool myself as I come and go,  
Into thinking nobody else will know –  
The kind of man I really am . . .  
. . . I never can hide myself from me,  
I see what others may never see,  
I know what others may never know,  
I never can fool myself- and so,  
Whatever happens, I want to be  
Self-respecting and conscience free.”

In 1934 Dale Wimbrow penned these words from *Man in the Mirror (Glass)*

“When you get what you want in your struggle for self,  
And the world makes you King for a day,  
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,  
And see what that guy has to say . . .”

John gives an account of Jesus’ first disciples that I’ve always found a bit uneasy. We’re told that Jesus finds Philip, and that Philip finds Nathanael. When Jesus sees Nathanael coming toward Him, He says, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Various translations interpret “in whom is no guile” as “in whom there is nothing false”, “in whom there is no deceit”, and “a man of complete integrity”.

Nathanael says to Jesus, “How do you know me?” to which Jesus replies, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Do you see what I see? “How do you know me?” . . . “I saw you.”

Here's what I think I would hear Jesus say to me after *seeing* my recent failure, "I saw you standing in the deep snow when you lost your integrity."

Character is important, but without integrity you're not a person of character, you're just a *character!*

***And that's just a thought . . .***

### ***My Final Word***

Standing inside a church where I was the guest speaker, a group of us were discussing the difficulties of hunting the world's smartest bird. One *gifted* turkey hunter said, "Pastor don't ask me how many I've killed. I don't want to have to lie." All of us laughed knowing that the limit per season was one turkey and he had been hunting nonstop for weeks. I wonder now how Jesus would have responded. Would He have possibly knelt upon the carpet and arranged the lint to form the word, "liar"? On my next trip to Bass Pro I'm not so sure that I'll smile at, "Welcome Fisherman, Hunters, and Other Liars." I think I'll be more apt to repent instead.

I've been looking at the man in the mirror a lot lately. I wish I could say that everything I've seen I liked. But the reality is, if I were to ever say to you, "I'm telling you the truth!" it's because I've been known to tell a lie.

And that's the truth!

*Chris*

**P.S.** Sorry I missed last week's ***Just a Thought***. I was supposed to write *Man in the Mirror*, but I just couldn't bring myself to do it. Now that it's done, maybe next week's ***Just a Thought*** will be easier.

