

Genesis Series #7: Whole Truth

Genesis 12:10-20 (TNIV)

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

14 When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. 15 And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

17 But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" 20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Matthew 5:33-37 (TNIV)

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes,' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Facilitator's Guide

Facilitator's Tips

"Two questions that we asked leaders were: How much time do you spend on average preparing the lesson for your small-group meeting? and How much time do you spend on average praying for your small-group meeting?"

Much to our surprise, the research revealed absolutely zero correlation between time spent preparing the lesson and whether the group was growing in any way. In other words, when you statistically compare hundreds of leaders spending two hours preparing their lessons with hundreds of leaders spending five minutes preparing their lesson, there is no difference at all between those two groups in whether their groups are bringing more people to Christ, adding new members, or producing more leaders.

But there are very high correlations when it comes to whether the group leaders are praying for their meetings.

Most leaders reported spending significantly more time preparing their lesson than they did praying for their meeting. They didn't realize that the time spent preparing their lesson or questions makes little difference, while time spent praying for their members and their meeting makes a big difference. Apparently things depend more on God than on you. Or, put another way, it's more important to prepare your heart than it is to prepare your notes.

How about you? Do you spend more time lining up your lesson, or do you take more time praying for others and inviting God to work in your meeting?

I'd like to challenge you to try an experiment for the next three meetings. Take more time praying for your members and asking God to work in your meeting than you take preparing your lesson or discussion. I think you'll see a noticeable difference in how your meetings go.

This discovery changed a lot of things for me. I spend significantly more time praying as a small-group leader now and less time going over the group lesson ahead of time. What we learned also changed how our church does small-group leader training. We spend less time training people how to prepare for and lead a discussion and more time teaching people how to grow in their relationship with the Lord."

-Adapted from SmallGroups.com

Genesis Series #7: Whole Truth

START IT

- What's the biggest lie you ever told when you were a kid?
- What's the biggest lie you've fallen for?

STUDY IT

- Read the Genesis passage. What's the story? Make observations.
- Why did Abram go to Egypt? What were his assumptions about Egyptians?
- In what ways does Abram benefit from his lie?
- How does God respond to Abram's lie? Why might God be upset?
- Read the passage from Matthew. What is an oath? What is a vow?
- Why does Jesus say not to make a vow or an oath?
- What does Jesus instruct us to do?
- What makes it difficult at times to let your 'yes be yes'?
- Why is it tempting to lie? Why is lying normal in our society?
- What does Jesus want for us as we communicate together?

LIVE IT

- What areas or people in your life do you need to confess a lie to?
- What would you need to believe in order to "speak the truth"?
- What's challenging about always telling the whole truth?

PRAY IT

- To become people who are unafraid of the truth- telling it and receiving it.