When Lying Feels Right
(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:
A. What does the world think about the morality of lying? It will be based, more often than not, on situation ethics.
1. Some believe lying is necessary: “This is an absurd moral, for you and I both know that sometimes not only is it good to lie, it is necessary to lie.” (Lemony Snicket)
2. Some lie to protect themselves from embarrassment or harm: “Lying is not only a defense mechanism; it’s also a coping mechanism and a survival technique.” (Monica Raymund)
3. Some lie to others for the same reason: “The thing about lying to your parents is, you have to do it to protect them. It’s for their own good.” (Sophie Kinsella)
4. Some believe that when lying is a kindness, it is acceptable. Tell a grieving family that their departed reprobate friend is in Paradise
5. Some believe that when lying will prevent harm, or keep someone out of trouble, or save a life, it is acceptable.
6. Some believe that when lying helps someone who is at a disadvantage, it is acceptable.
7. Some believe that when a lie makes someone feel better, it is okay.
8. Some believe that if a lie does no harm to anyone, it is acceptable.
9. Some believe that when a lie hinders or hurts an evil person, it is overlooked by God.

B. What does God say about lying? - Eph. 4:21-25

I. PUT AWAY LYING
A. For some folks, lying is a part of their nature that needs to be deliberately put aside - Col. 3:9
1. Lying is a part of the world’s ethics. It has never been part of God and His moral nature. It may be accepted by the world, but it is not accepted by God - Titus 1:2; 1John 1:5
2. We have to be set free from sin - Rom. 6:17-18
3. That means we put to death and bury the old man of sin - Rom. 6:6-7
4. And it means leaving the old man of sin in the grave - Rom. 6:1-2
B. We cannot speak truth until we stop lying; they are incompatible opposites - Prov. 12:17
2. Our words must be reliably truthful - James 5:12
   a. People who are truthful have no need to promise to tell the truth.
   b. People who lie will promise anything to get others to believe that they are telling the truth, adding a lie to reinforce the lie.
   c. They have brought themselves, by a history of dishonesty, into a position where everything they say is under suspicion.
C. We speak truth because of love - Eph. 4:15
1. Love is without hypocrisy; it is not an act - Rom. 12:9
2. Love not just with words, but in actions and in word - 1John 3:18
D. We speak truth because we are bound to one another - Rom. 12:5
   1. Lying, at its root, is a selfish act. It makes no sense to lie to ourselves, though nearly everyone does; and, often more to themselves than to anyone else. Still, it serves no benefit to anyone.

II. WHY DO PEOPLE LIE?
A. The liar thinks there will be a benefit to himself
   1. Ananias and Sapphira lied because they wanted the recognition without the cost - Acts 5:3-4
   2. Abraham lied about his wife because he thought it would save his life - Gen. 12:12-13
   3. Gehazi lied because he believed the foreign oppressor Naaman should pay for the prophet Elisha’s help - 2Kings 5:20
B. Some people lie instinctively to avoid trouble
   1. Peter did this when challenged - Luke 22:55-60
   2. We believe the harm that could come to us is greater and more important than the harm we do to our souls with our lies.
C. Others plan their lies with care; progressively self-destructive - Isa. 59:13-15
   1. Jeremiah criticized the powerful liars of his day - Jer. 9:2-8
D. Some will lie to bring harm to others
   1. Naboth was lied about to get him killed - 1Kings 21:13
   2. It was attempted against Jesus - Matt. 26:59-61
   3. It was done to Stephen - Acts 6:9-13
E. Still others lie out of habit
   1. Jesus said Satan’s native tongue was lies - John 8:44
   2. No faithfulness in their mouth - Psalm 5:9
F. Regardless of the reason for the lie, the outcome is still the same - Rev. 21:8