

The Truth About the Lie

by William Carrol

Defending God's character is essential to resisting the devil's lies and trusting in God's goodness and faithfulness.

Duration: 44:45

Scripture: Genesis 3:1, Hebrews 3:13

Topics: "Lies", "Defending God's Character", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

William Carrol delivers a powerful message titled 'The Truth About the Lie,' emphasizing that every lie from the enemy ultimately seeks to defame the character of God. He illustrates how Eve was deceived not just by a lie, but by a lie about the nature of God, while Adam, knowing the truth, failed to defend God's integrity. Carrol encourages believers to recognize the lies that distract them from God's truth and to defend God's character in their lives. He stresses the importance of understanding that temptation, persecution, and accusation are all tactics of the enemy to distort our view of God. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer and a commitment to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ and strengthen our faith against the lies we encounter.

Transcript

I have a message tonight and I can honestly say if I knew that I had only one message to preach and that was it, say God said to you or God said to me, instead of preaching week after week and time after time, you have one shot at this. One message to preach and that's it. If I had been given that from the Lord, this would be the message that I would preach.

This is, in my opinion, the most important word that God has ever given to me. He's given it to me a while ago, I've kind of touched on it in certain settings and so on, but it's a message that has been unfolding in my heart and I've been learning it in my life for a little while and I want to share it with you. So I'm going to ask you to give me your full attention because you might find that this message proves to be of some value to you and I believe that God is here to quicken these words to us, to cause us to not just understand them in theory, but to allow him to apply these things to us in practice.

Would you pray with me please? Father, in Jesus' name we simply thank you. We love you. We bless you.

We ask you to open our hearts and open our ears. Lord, we know that the enemy would not have us hear these words, but we know that these words are true and right and just. We ask that your glory be made

manifest as you speak your heart to us through your holy scriptures.

We love you. We bless you. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Praise God. I want to talk to you on the topic, the truth about the lie.

The truth about the lie. In the book of Hebrews, the third chapter and the 13th verse, Hebrews 3.13, it says in the New King James version of the scripture, but exhort one another daily while it is cold today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And in the New Living Translation it says, you must warn each other every day while it is still today, so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.

I want to talk to you as I mentioned on this topic, the truth about the lie. Now, you notice I'm not giving this the title, the truth about lies or the truth about a lie. I'm talking to you about the truth about the lie.

Because what I want to try and prove tonight is every lie that the devil tells and every lie that is told in general is ultimately one lie. One lie manifested in various ways. One lie expressed through various means.

One lie that seems to point in various directions, but ultimately points in one direction. Now, in order for us to grasp these concepts, we have to go all the way back to the beginning. And we have to see our first parents in the garden.

And we have got to see how the enemy brings his attack to them. Now, before we go back to Genesis, I want to remind you of what Paul said to Timothy with regard to that great trial. He says that the man wasn't deceived, but the woman was.

Now, what I want to suggest to you is that they both were deceived on a certain level, but Eve was deceived about the deception, about the nature of the deception, where Adam went into his sin with his eyes wide open. He knew exactly what the lie was, and he went in that direction anyway. I want to suggest to you that Eve was not simply deceived by a lie.

She was deceived about a lie. Let me make that more clear. When the enemy comes to Eve, he begins to talk to her about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And he says to her, did God really say that you are not to eat of this particular tree? And then he says, you won't actually die. God knows that on the day that you eat of that tree, your eyes will be open, and you will be able to discern for yourself what's good and what's evil. Now, the lie that comes to her, and the lie, the way it's received by her, centers around the fruit of the tree and around herself.

It's what the fruit is, and how that will affect me. And usually when the devil lies to human people, when he lies to us, he will try not just to lie to us, but then he will try to distract us from what he's actually lying about. So, we begin to think that he is talking about this thing over here, when he's actually talking about that thing over there.

So, with her, she saw herself and she saw the fruit. When she looked at the fruit and she thought it could make her wise, she partook. Adam, on the other hand, knew that the lie was not about the fruit, and the lie was not about the human person.

Ultimately speaking, Adam understood what we must always understand, that the lie is always ultimately about God. So, he says, did God actually say, you should not eat of this tree? And he's not questioning, ultimately speaking, her intellectual capacity to remember what God said, or to understand what God said. He didn't say, are you sure God didn't say this, or maybe he said that, or maybe he said the other thing.

He didn't question whether or not God said it. He questioned God's character. He questioned God's motives.

Let me tell you what God is really like, he said. Let me tell you why he said for you not to eat of this tree, which happens to be a really nice tree, if you look at it. And you were designed to be better than you are, if you think about it.

So, all of a sudden, she begins looking at the tree. And all of a sudden, she begins looking at the self, forgetting that the lie is geared toward the nature of God. So, she's not just believing a lie, she's believing a lie about the lie.

A lie that's intended to protect the other lie, the real lie that's over here. So, he begins to talk to her about herself, and he begins to talk to her about the beauty of the tree, and all of its attributes. And before you know it, she's caught up in some deception over here, and some distraction over here.

And then the other lie, the real lie, is slipping right through her, and going straight to her heart. In essence, the devil couldn't care less about the tree, couldn't care less about Eve. All he concerned himself was doing everything that he could to defame the name of God.

Doing everything that he could to get anybody who will listen to him to believe that God is a liar, to believe that God can't be trusted. I want to suggest to you that every single lie the devil ever tells, ultimately, will find as its goal the defamation of the character of God. But Adam knew that.

Eve was deceived. She got to looking at the tree. She got to looking at the fruit.

She got to looking at the self. The same way we do when the enemy comes and lies to us about a certain thing. We get caught up in the thing, and we get caught up in how that thing is going to affect us.

We get caught up in the thing, we get caught up in the self, and the lie about God just slips right through, unnoticed, undetected, under the radar. But Adam knew it. Adam understood that the lie was about the nature and the character of God.

He went in with his eyes wide open. Adam was given an opportunity in that relationship and in that particular struggle to defend the character of God, and he chose not to. Now that is the nature of sin.

When instead of defending the character of God, we offend the character of God. That is the nature of sin. The nature of sin is anything which is contrary to the nature of God.

That's why God can never sin. Because God can never be contrary to himself. Even if we deny him, he must remain faithful because he cannot deny himself.

He is infinitely what he is. That means that he is what he is to the nth degree, and there is no room for anything contrary to it. So God can't sin, but we can.

Every time the devil tempts us to sin, our only defense is to do what the Spirit allows us to do, to defend the nature and character of God. To say, no, I am not doing this, or I am not going here, or I am not going there, because it's contrary to the way of the Lord. Now Adam had an opportunity to do that.

When Eve came and said, look at this tree, so on and so forth, and look at this fruit, it's awesome, and it's beautiful, and it can make us like this and make us like that. Adam's responsibility in that case was to say, do you think God is lying to us? But he didn't do that. Now in you and in me is both these realities.

There is an Eve side and an Adam side in us, if you understand. There is always going to be a side of us that is distracted by the temporal or by the temporary thing that's in front of us, and then there's always going to be another element of us as Christian people that's going to say, but what's the real issue here? I want to suggest to you that every single time the enemy comes up against you, he will always try and bring a second level of deception. So if he comes against you with temptation, if he comes against you with persecutions or tribulations, if he comes against you with accusation, as we heard in the prayer today, if he comes against you with anything that would make you want to isolate yourself, anything that makes you want to lift yourself up, if he comes against you with these things, there will always be a deception about the nature of God that makes you want to buy into these things.

So the Bible says about the devil that he attacks by flinging arrows at us, but it doesn't just say he flings arrows at us. It says that he flings fiery arrows at us. Now that's important for you and for me to grasp because an attack of the devil alone is never going to be sufficient.

He is never just going to fling an arrow at you. For instance, if he flung at me or he flung at you the arrow of temptation as he did in this case, for the Christian person, when we are tempted, our first resort is to run to God and say, God, I am being tempted. Would you help me? Why? Because we believe something about God.

We believe that he is an ever-present help in time of trouble. We believe that we can find a covert under the shadow of his wings. We believe that he can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

We believe these things and so when we are tempted, we run to him. But what if the devil, instead of just flinging an arrow of temptation at us, what if he dipped it into the fire of this second level of deception? And so now the arrow is not just toward us, but there is another arrow that can't be seen. A fire that ignites this arrow that is against not you or me, that's not focused on what we're being tempted with, but it is against the nature and character of God.

So he says, when we try to run to God, wait a minute now, you don't want to run to God because he is so tired of hearing you weep about this same temptation over and over and over again. You don't want to come to the altar about this problem anymore because God is sick of it. God is exasperated with you.

God doesn't want to hear it anymore. God can't forgive you. God can't help you or God won't help you.

One time a leper came to Jesus and he had seen the power of the Lord and he knew what the Lord was able to do. But when he came to Jesus, he didn't say, are you able to help me? He said, if you are willing, you can help me. This was a person who was wondering whether or not God wanted to help him.

Because there was something about the character of God that he did not accept, something about the character of God that he bought a lie regarding. So it's not enough for the devil to tempt you or to tempt me. He has got to make you and make me feel like God is not there for us, that we cannot find a covert

under his wings.

We cannot find a hiding place in his compassion. If he comes with persecution, the same thing. Persecution is not enough by itself.

Because when we're persecuted again, we run into the arms of the Lord. God help me. God protect me.

God keep me. Because we know the scriptures that says that he is able to save to the uttermost. And we know the scriptures that says now unto him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before his glory with exceeding joy.

We know those scriptures and so we run to him in times of persecution and say, God keep me. So it's not enough for the enemy to just fling an arrow of persecution. He's got to dip it in that fire again.

That fire that says, but God has forgotten you. But God cannot be touched with the feelings of your infirmities. That God doesn't know what it is to be a friend of those who are weak and a friend of those who are needy.

That God doesn't understand your situation. That God is sitting in an ivory tower somewhere as opposed to the one who is able to say whenever Paul was persecuting or Saul of Tarsus at the time was persecuting the church. That God who was able to say not, Saul why are you persecuting my servants? Or why are you persecuting my church? But Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me? See the devil wants us to forget that.

And he wants to accuse God in our sight and to say when he throws persecution in our direction that God doesn't know anything about that. And when the enemy tries to overwhelm us with persecution, the last thing he wants us to do is to run into the arms of God. So he lies to us and says God is not there for you.

If he was there why would you be going through this? If he was there why would he allow me to do this thing? And so we forget the scriptures that remind us that every now and again the Lord will use the enemy to sharpen his saints and to cause us to become that much more dependent upon him. We'll forget the entire book of Job for instance and things like it because the enemy wants us to disbelieve God which is the nature of the lie and the nature of sin. Again if he comes to us with accusation and begins to tell you or me where we fall short or where we fail, begins to tell us that we didn't do what we knew we were called to do or that we did something that we knew we shouldn't do and he begins to tell us these things.

It's not enough for him to tell us those things alone because again we run to the Lord for forgiveness and we run to the Lord for keeping virtue and we ask the Lord to help us through the day. So what does he do with that accusation? Well he dips it into this fire of deception. He takes that temptation and dips it into the fire of deception.

He takes persecution and dips it into the fire of deception. He takes accusation and dips it into the fire of deception then he flings it so that when we are accused we feel that God must be the one accusing us. We feel that God must be the one condemning us and we feel that God must be the one who's looking away from us.

God must be the one who is numbering our failures and our faults and our sins and that's the only thing he ever sees in us. So that when we go into the prayer closet we stand far off from the Lord and we talk to him as though we're leaving a message on an answering machine because the last thing we want is real

live interaction because there's a chance he might actually see me. And so we ask him to take a dab of grace and put it on the end of a 10-foot pole and to touch us with it and we think that that's God's grace.

That he's just not going to kill us and we forget how much he wants to embrace us and how much he wants to interact with us and how much he loves us and how pleased he is with us because we are believing a lie about him not just about us. Yes the enemy is going to try to lie to you about you but it's not enough for him to do that because even if we believed that lie as long as we believe the truth about God we will still run to God and God will square everything away. So if I believe a lie if the devil accuses me of this thing or that thing and say I'm in a susceptible time in my life and I believe that lie and if I run to God, God will make everything clear to me.

But what if I believe about a lie about God? Then where am I going to go? So the enemy wants to keep us out of the prayer closet. He wants to keep us out of our Bible because we think that as soon as we open it it's going to condemn us. We think that as soon as we open it it's going to begin to count off our sins and our frailties and our failures and things of that nature and we have no idea when the enemy begins to lie to us that this book is waiting to be the means or a means through which the Lord embraces us and loves us and cheers us.

So the enemy comes with all kinds of lies. The great temptation in this particular instance a lie about the character of God trying to get this man trying to get this woman to partake of a tree that they were not supposed to partake of and he cited God's character as a reason that they should disobey. Now if you go to another garden, the garden of Gethsemane, you're going to see another type of temptation coming.

But now it's not to get a man to partake of a tree that God said not to partake of, it's to get a man to not partake of a tree that God said to partake of. Because now we find Jesus in Gethsemane and the Bible says that he's crying out to God and he's sweating profusely and he's weeping and his heart is breaking in his bosom and he's saying I am overwhelmed, amazed, despondent, and depressed even to the point of dying and he had to come to a certain conclusion that God's will is best. Now God's will is an expression of God's character.

Remember that one man that came to the Lord and said if you want to you can heal me. Jesus prayed a similar prayer to the Father. If there is any other way, if you can take this cup from me.

But then he took a golden opportunity and the opportunity was this, to stand in defense of God's character. To say even though this is tearing me apart, even though this is overwhelming me, even though I am being crushed under the pressure of it, I know that if this is what you want then this is the best thing. I know that if this is your desire then it is good.

See the temptation came to Adam and Eve. Yeah I know God wants this but why does he want it? Shouldn't you decide for yourself what's best? Shouldn't you sit as judges discerning for yourself what's good or what's evil? We have that all the way up until this day with ethical relativism and each person deciding in their own eyes what's right or what's wrong. You see that in the book of Judges.

Same thing, every man determining for himself what's right and what's wrong. This is nothing new. There will come a time in the life of every Christian person, not once, not twice, but thousands of times, when we are given the privilege of defending God's integrity and defending his character against the lie of the devil.

Hallelujah. In fact, every time you and I are tempted to believe a lie, every time we are weighed down with the issues of this life and the enemy comes to us to tell us in one way or another this same old thing, God has let you down, God has forgotten you, God has forgiven you. We have the right to stand in defense of God's name, just like Jesus did.

Temptation came to him, don't go to that tree. But Jesus understood, no, if God wants it, then it's good. If God wants it, then it's better than life.

If God wants it, then it's better than peace. If God wants it, then it's better than longevity. If God wants it, it's better than joy.

If God wants it, it's better than everything or anything that I have to forfeit in order to see this thing come to pass. For every Christian, there is an underlying joy, an underlying peace, a peace that passes understanding, and so on and so forth. But then there is an element of our joy and an element of our peace that is always being tested.

And if we believe the lie of the enemy, what he's going to say to us is, if God was who he said he is, would you have to suffer? Would you have to struggle? Would you be tempted? That's what the enemy came to Jesus about when he was in the wilderness way back then. When he said, if you're the son of God, then why are you hungry? He wasn't just talking about the nature of Christ. He was talking about the nature of God the Father.

If you are God's son, why are you suffering? It would be the same if somebody came to my daughter and said, if you are William's daughter, why are you going through this? It wouldn't be saying a whole lot about her character. It'd be saying a whole lot about mine. It would be saying a lot about what kind of a father would let his son in this wilderness for 40 days, starving and suffering.

Time for you to fend for yourself. That's the nature of temptation. If God is your father, why do you still want after this thing? Doesn't it say, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Why do you want if God is your father? If God is a good shepherd, why do you want? What Jesus did at Gethsemane was to say, it's not about my wants, not my will, but thine be done. Hallelujah. And if I want for anything in this generation, it is to see that great shepherd manifest as the great shepherd.

If God is my shepherd, I shall not want. Why? Because all I want is God as my shepherd. You see? And so Jesus was able to say very clearly, it's not about me.

And if it's not about me, then everything, everything is about God. You know, you and I, we have only two levels that we act on, two levels that we really live on. There is either God as the center or there is me as the center.

If God is at the center, then everything that I ever want is there, so I can live the rest of my life for other people, for the glory of God and the souls of men, as Pastor Carter mentioned. But if God is not at the center, then I'm at the center and everything else and everyone else is subordinated to me. That's just the way it works.

Somebody tells me, though, I've elevated my children to idols and so on and so forth, or I've elevated my husband or my wife to an idol, or, you know, they're at the center of my life. I just kind of smirk and say, yeah, yeah, I know the bottom line. They're at the center because they happen to please you.

And if they didn't please you, they would not be at the center. Some other wife would be at the center, or somebody else's wife would be at the center. I mean, that's just the way it works.

Because if God is not central, we are. The enemy depends upon the fact that we put ourselves at the center, because if we put ourselves at the center, every lie he tells us, we automatically look at how it applies to us. But if God is at the center, every lie the enemy tells us, our first thought is, how does that affect God? And how does that depict God? And how does that describe God? And what does that lie say about God? So when the enemy comes with temptation, my first thought is, what is that saying about God, who is my provider? And when he comes with a lie about persecution, what does that say about God, who is my protector? See, my question is always, what is the devil really up to? What is the truth about the lie? Who is he really trying to hurt? Whose character is he really trying to defame? It's not mine.

What difference does it make? It's the God that I love, the God that I serve. And I'm going to do everything that I can to defend his honor. Now, I can do that, and you can do that from pulpits like this, and we can hand out tracts, and we can do it on the job.

But what about when the lies come to us? That's when it's hardest to defend God's honor. When the devil comes to you and say, or he comes to me and says, God has let you down. But he doesn't use that terminology.

He simply says, you don't have what it takes to live this life. Well, when he says to me, I don't have what it takes to live this life, well, that's a far-gone conclusion. I already know that.

So what is he saying to me? And God's grace is inadequate. God's grace is not even enough to help you. But I'm not going to believe that lie, not because I think myself to be this thing or that thing, but I know my God to be who he is.

Hallelujah. I know that my God is faithful. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. And so I take Jesus' example here, and I say, every time the devil comes against me, I see it as another opportunity to defend God's glory, to defend his praise. Jesus told his disciples, y'all come and watch how I deal with this thing.

Remember he called James and John and Peter. He said, y'all stand right here while I go over and I pray. Because he wanted them to see.

He wanted them to watch his example, and he wanted them to pray. He wanted them to be able to talk to him. That's basically what we do now.

We see Christ's example, but it's not enough for us to simply see his example. We have to interact with him. We have to commune with him by the Holy Spirit.

So the Bible says that the Holy Spirit is working in us, both the will and to do for God's good pleasure. Basically what's happening is the Holy Spirit is constantly revealing God to us in Jesus Christ. So what he's doing, and I'll say this as we close, is he's always drawing a picture of Christ so that whenever the devil lies to us, we have to compare what the devil is saying to what we are seeing.

So if somebody were to come to you right now and sit alongside of you and say, you know, I just saw Brother Will, you know, about five minutes ago, and he was walking down, you know, Ninth Avenue,

you're going to look at them like they're crazy because you're looking right at me. Or if they come to you and they say, yeah, I saw Brother Will, he's got a black suit on, you're going to look at them like they're weird because I'm standing right here. What the Holy Spirit does is he constantly presents God to us in Jesus Christ.

And if you are looking at God, then you're not going to believe any lies about God. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

So the devil's strategy is to get you looking at the tree, not that tree that Jesus was on, but on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To look at the tree and to look at the fruit and to look at the self and all this and all that, while the other lie just slips through, the lie about God. But what Calvary's tree does is it allows you to look at God so that you won't believe any lies about him.

And every time the devil tries to lie to you, you put up the shield of faith. Every time he tries to throw one of those fiery darts, the shield of faith basically says this, I believe God. It says, I know him.

Every time an hour tries to come, the shield of faith, faith in the character of God. I'm not talking about some abstract force where you can believe for a car. I'm talking about knowing who God is.

So whenever the devil tries to lie to you, you can say, I know better than that. He's standing right in front of me. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. So David was able to say, because the Lord is at my right hand, I will not be moved.

I won't be lied to. Now tonight, I want us to resolve in our hearts to allow the Holy Spirit to continue to draw a picture of Jesus in our eyes, in our minds, in our hearts, so that we will not believe the lie. You and I cannot avoid temptation.

We cannot avoid persecution. We cannot avoid tribulation. We can't avoid those times when life gets a little rough and tough and so on and so forth.

This is not the thing that we preach here at this church, but we don't have to believe the lies that come with them. It doesn't mean the devil's not going to lie to us. I say we don't have to believe them, which means we don't have to fall to temptation, even though we can't avoid being tempted.

We don't have to crumble under persecution or under tribulation. We don't have to accept the accusation, even though the enemy is called the accuser of the brethren. There's somebody in this room saying, Brother Will, I'm tired of believing the lie.

Now, I've been distracted. I've looked at the tree. I've looked at the fruit.

I've looked at my own heart. I didn't realize that the lie ultimately was about God, and I'm at a place in my life where I want to take every opportunity I can to defend God's honor and defend His praise and defend His name and defend His revealed character. If God is speaking to you this evening, and you just want to pray, you just want to resolve to allow the Holy Spirit to do what He does, reveal Christ more and more, and you're saying, I'm just tired of believing the lie.

If that's you, I'm going to ask you to come and pray with me in front of this auditorium. Let's stand together as a body, and if God is speaking to you, you want to pray. You're tired of believing the lie.

You're saying, if the devil's going to fight me, we're going to do it up front. Everything is going to be clear. We're going to fight toe to toe.

We're going to fight head to head, and I'm not going to fight in my own strength, but the Spirit of God is going to help me every single step of the way, and you come. We'll pray together in the name of the Holy Savior. Amen.

Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

I just want to read you that scripture that we started with again, and then we'll pray together in Jesus' holy name. Hebrews again, it said, you must warn each other every day. This is something the Holy Spirit has got to tell us every day, because none of us are immune to this.

None of us are immune to these lies. We need each other to encourage each other, to strengthen each other, to remind each other. He said, while it is still today, so that none of you will be deceived by sin, and then this is the part that we talked about tonight, and be hardened against God.

That's the nature of the devil's lie, to harden us against God, to harden us against his heart, to harden us against his Spirit, to get us to believe things about him that are not true. Today, we resolve to allow the Holy Spirit to do that which he's already resolved to do. If we're to make God any promises, it's the promise to receive his promises that are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, and to just let him draw a picture of Christ in our eyes, so that everything the enemy tries to tell us has got to square against that image or fall flat on his face before it.

Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we give you glory, we give you honor, we give you praise. We bow our hearts before you because you are God. We bow our hearts before you because the Holy Spirit has made us to understand that you are worthy of all praise.

We bow our hearts before you because Jesus Christ made us worthy of acknowledging your worthiness. Somehow, Lord, you've chosen to make us to understand that you are good and that your mercy endures forever. We thank you for the privilege, Lord, of being a defense of your glory and of your praise.

Thank you for allowing our lives to defend your character, to defend your integrity, to make it known in this world that there is God and that this God is a great and a holy God, a righteous and a pure Savior. Lord, we thank you that every time the enemy attacks, it is another golden opportunity for us to bear witness to your goodness and to your glory and to your praise. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. And we can say sometimes to our own hearts what Jesus said to his inner circle, come and watch me pray. Come and watch me believe.

Come and watch me give glory to God. Come and watch me bless him. Come and watch me praise him.

Come and watch me honor him. Come and watch me trust him. Spirit of God, help us.

We have nothing in ourselves but you. You are our God. We love you.

We bless you. We thank you. In Jesus' holy name, we pray.

Amen. Amen.

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