

March 1, 2026—“*Putting Off Falsehoods*”

I feel like today, we're entering into a bit of a good news / tough news kind of conversation. The good news is: we don't have two chapters of very difficult text and confusing literary style to grind through—like the last Revelation passage I was assigned. Today, we're actually focusing on a *single* verse—from a *letter* in the New Testament—that is completely straightforward and practical to apply. Simple... Yay!

The tough news, at least from my perspective, is that this one verse we're going to look at today is arguably more difficult to apply to our lives than the entire two chapters we last looked at in Revelation. When we dug into Revelation chapters 15-16 (which you can go and re-watch online, if you're interested), we encountered a passage that wasn't about future events, but contained images to represent the past. The images didn't reveal an angry God, but a sacrificially-loving Jesus. And its purpose, instead of invoking fear (which many mistakenly assume the book of Revelation seeks to do), it inspired faith. In that text, we were inspired by the love of Jesus for all of us!

Today's text is far more practical—which, to me, is what makes it much more challenging. As part of our journey towards Easter, where we consider all that Jesus was willing to *give up* for us—because of His love—we're asking ourselves what we need to give up in order to experience that love to a greater degree in our lives. And after last week's intro, laying down the most fundamental building block of giving up our self-orientation—our me-first sense of entitlement—today's topic serves as the very next most critical piece in the puzzle of experiencing a greater degree of love in our lives. So turn with me to chapter 4 of the book of Ephesians to dig into this challenge together.

I'm going to read four verses, because the three preceding verses give the context to the single verse we want to camp out on today. Starting in verse 22, it says:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Paul is using a clothing metaphor to describe the transformation Jesus intends people to experience through His supernatural work in their lives—putting off your old way of life, in order to put on more of the Way of Jesus and His love. Paul then concludes with a “therefore”, and lists four practical ways our lives should start looking differently.

The first of these four practical expressions involves what's translated here as “putting off falsehoods”—that's what we're going to focus on today. What's interesting is that the Greek word (in the original language) that's translated here as “falsehoods” is the word “pseudos”, where we get the English word “pseudo”. So this passage is talking about a lot more than just lying; Paul is encouraging his readers to get rid of anything and everything in their lives that is pseudo—that is living in non-reality.

And, notice, that as an expression of the both putting off the old self and putting on the new, Jesus-like self, this first practical application pairs putting off falsehoods with speaking truthfully. In order to experience and express more of Jesus' love, we need to both put off the ways we live pseudo-lives, and put on a greater degree of truth, especially in the way we related and speak to one another. To flesh that out, I want us to consider four practical ways in which we can put off pseudo-reality and put on truth.

The first (and most obvious) way we can put off falsehoods is by **putting off evading the truth**. This is where we know reality exists, but choose not to share it.

For sure, the most direct way we evade truth is through lying. Proverbs 12:17:

An honest witness tells the truth, but a false witness tells lies.

Putting off falsehoods involves refusing to evade the truth in what we say, and putting on more honest speak with each other. And while I seriously doubt that telling someone to stop lying is going to get them to immediately stop lying (because I'm pretty sure we all already know it's wrong), consider a few of the deeper dynamics of dishonesty.

The first is how detrimental it is to our relationships. Lying doesn't just hit at the surface—like other detrimental speak can; it quickly and fundamentally fractures trust. And trust functions as the very root of relationships, let alone those that seek to experience and express love. In his famous business book *The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team*, author Pat Lencioni [ranks](#) them in terms of importance. And at the core of team dysfunction—which we can certainly apply to other relational dynamics in our lives (friends, family members, classmates, co-workers, etc.)—absence of trust makes any other levels of experiencing relational connection impossible. The point is: lying isn't "no big deal"; the way it quickly and completely can shatter trust makes it one of the single most detrimental dynamics of relationships. Lying completely sabotages love.

Second, consider there are other ways to misrepresent the truth with our words than a bold-faced lie. We can exaggerate the truth, or twist the truth to manipulate to say just what we want. Or—often the most painful—we can withhold truth. All of these we often choose to do, because it's more comfortable to evade the truth than share it.

Beyond that, though, another aspect of putting off falsehoods involves **putting off denying the truth**. This is when you're actually confronted with reality—you're exposed to something that isn't pseudo—but still attempt to ignore it. Proverbs 15:31:

Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise.

A wise person receives the exposure to reality as something that is life-giving, and implements the reality in a way that corrects them. Receiving that exposure to truth, and changing in the direction of that truth, is a critical act of love in our relationships.

Anyone ever seen one of [these](#) before? This represents some truth I once tried to deny. A few years ago, my wife Becky started to tell me that I had “dog breath”. I pushed back since I couldn't sense anything myself, and because I flossed and brushed regularly. But she pushed harder, and encouraged me to ask my dentist about it. At my next appointment—after encouraging me that I had the gums of a 20-year old—I asked them what was going on, and they explained how certain bacteria sticks to your tongue, and can't be removed just by your brush. And they introduced me to one of these, that immediately took care of the issue. (Now, that doesn't mean I never have coffee breath, or garlic breath—but at least Becky no longer has to deal with my “dog breath”!).

When it comes to the other aromas our lives exude, we're often tempted to do one of two things. One is to downplay the impact we're having on others. The other is to divert the impact we're having on others, by redirecting the attention to our intention. There's often a difference between our *intent* and our *impact*, and love (remembering its others-orientation from last week) focuses on our impact. And when we discover our impact isn't love, putting off falsehoods means correcting in a loving, life-giving way.

This leads to perhaps the most pervasive way we live pseudo lives, where putting off falsehoods means **putting off advocating half-truth**. Proverbs 18:2 says:

***Fools find no pleasure in understanding but
delight in airing their own opinions.***

This proverb is helpful because it distinguishes between true understanding and our own opinion—appreciating that our individual, personal perspective (as real and strong as it feels to us) is often quite different from a more complete understanding of reality.

This is very difficult to discern in relationships—especially relationships in distress or conflict—because, for the most part, what we feel is real. And because what we feel is real, we assume that our feelings are the truth of the matter—in part, because they are. The wisdom of this proverb distinguishes between what is *wholly* true, and what is the *whole* truth. Often, unfortunately, we get stuck in the rut of championing our fractional reality (because it's wholly true) instead of embracing in a posture of humility and curiosity to understand the whole truth—and the degrees to which we've caused harm in a relationship or muddied the waters of someone else's experience of love. Resolving conflict—and experiencing more love—is more than convincing someone of *your* reality; it's about understanding, owning, and resolving *their* reality as well.

Failure to do this keeps us stuck in what's known as “triangulation”. Because our brains track with story, our reality often gets processed in three characters: a victim, a villain, and a hero or guide. Often, we get stuck because our wholly-true portion of reality defines us as the victim and someone else as the villain. Yet often, the whole truth *also* includes us functioning as their villain in ways they've been the victim. Only when you seek out and embrace the whole truth, can you reconcile and recover love.

Which, to me, leads directly into the final kind of falsehood we ought to put off: that involves **putting off forgetting the Truth!** When you consider the reason we evade the truth, deny the truth, or champion only half-truth, it's because doing the opposite is more than uncomfortable. It triggers big feelings like fear, guilt, or shame. And, because we don't want to deal with feelings like fear, guilt, or shame, we settle for the pseudo-realities in our lives. But this is the very basis on which this text is rooted:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Remember the context of this verse—and the old vs. new self we're to put off and on? Where it says our old selves are “corrupted by its deceitful desires”, the word for “deceitful” is also the word “pseudos”. The very feelings that most drive our resistance to embrace a greater reality and a greater experience of love are, themselves, not ultimately real! We can't let those false forces of fear, guilt and shame guide our lives.

Instead, the Apostle Paul encourages an alternative in his conclusion to this text:

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children.

What makes it “safe” to embrace reality is not necessarily the difficult reality we should embrace. (Sheila Heen says, “There is no such thing as a diplomatic hand grenade.”).

What makes hard truth safe to absorb is the *context* of Jesus' unconditional, unchanging love for you—way beyond what the false realities of your fear, guilt, and shame say.

So, if we can anchor ourselves in how Jesus sees us (not as our greatest failure, but as unconditionally adored), can we put off the falsehoods of living a pseudo-life, and embrace the kinds of truth that allow love to flow to a greater degree with the people around us? Shifting from the double-negative of putting off falsehoods, can we:

1. **Tell the truth:** don't lie, exaggerate, manipulate, or omit
2. **Face the truth:** don't downplay or divert (focus on *impact*, not intent)
3. **Seek the (whole) truth:** don't triangulate with an incomplete narrative
4. **Embrace Jesus' Truth:** remember who you are because of Christ!

One action step we could all consider taking today would be to have a conversation with someone with whom you wish a greater degree of love would flow, and consider: *what truth would they most like you to hear?* Maybe that'll reciprocally open the door to the inverse question of: *what truth do you most need to share?*

A final encouragement from today's passage: appreciate that this text doesn't just apply to your spouse, or kid/parent, or best friend (those the very closest to you):

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

This is a way that forgiven and free followers of Jesus Christ are intended to relate to other forgiven and free followers of Jesus Christ—because of who we are together as a result of Jesus' forgiving and freeing work. This kind of reality isn't to be rare or unique to our closest relationships; Jesus' vision is that it would become common to all of our relationships across His spiritual family. So, let's each ask ourselves: what truth do we need to most embrace today, in order for Jesus' love to more lavishly flow among us?!