

## The Road Back to the Truth

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term benefits, such as escaping punishment or looking good in front of someone else. But the long-term effects are not so pretty. Stress to your students the long-term effects that lying can have, both practically and spiritually. If your students are caught lying, chances are that their punishment will be more severe. Lying also hurts relationships and destroys trust. Have them think about times they have lied to parents or friends, and what the consequences were in terms of their relationship.

On the spiritual side, lying can only lead us away from God. God is truth, and if He lives within us, we should always tell the truth. What can God have in common with lies?

A true test of honest living is what happens when no one is looking. Often teens are so accustomed to making life easier for themselves that they don't perceive simple lies as wrong. Share with your teens that honesty is risky and usually takes more work than dishonesty. Yet the payback is freedom and peace — freedom from having to hide, and peace with others and themselves.

The irony of living honestly is that as teens live it, they will have more self-respect. Dishonesty erodes; honesty edifies. If you can encourage your teens in a diet of honesty, they will learn to hunger for it.

## Being Thankful People

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by Wayne Goff

"Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude." — **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

*"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"* **Ephesians 5:20.**

*"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* **1 Thessalonians 5:18.**

There is nothing more beautiful than a truly grateful, appreciative person. They make others want to do even more for them because they do not expect it. Those who feel "entitled" do not endear themselves to others, but rather exasperate them. There is a desire to **keep from helping** those who moan, groan and cry about their pitiful station in life! On the other hand, those who receive while expecting little or nothing, are a blessing to be with and to help. One day, they will return the favor as they are able — either to you, or better yet, to the future needy, as they "pay it forward." Ralph Waldo Emerson was right, but he was only mimicking God's Word.

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