


Why Kids Lie and What the Bible Has to Say About it

Greg Lombard Rea M.Div.


- Bio-dad since 1990. Adoptive Dad since 2008
- Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Practitioner.
- Post-Adoption Support Specialist
- Enneagram Coach
- Former church pastor of 40 years.
- Acquainted with single parenting & the journey of grief.



Why Do Kids Lie? The problem is dysregulation

**“Regulated, Connected Kids who Feel Safe,
behave well. If they have the skills.”**
– Robyn Gobbel

“There is no behavior, for no reason”
– Tricia Sublet



The Seeds of Dysregulation

Trauma overbuilds the **“Fear Center”** of the brain

Upstairs Brain

Downstairs Brain

**Amygdala scans 8 senses –
“Am I Safe?”**


Brainstem Responds

Prefrontal Cortex

- Aware of others feelings.
- Emotional balance
- Pause before acting.
- Fear modulation,
- Empathy
- Aware of greater good.


Brainstem

- Heart rate
- Respiration
- Pupil Dilation
- Adrenaline/Cortisol to muscles



Why Do Kids Lie? The problem is dysregulation


1. **Developmental Stage - Human beings lie**
2. **Survival Mechanism**
3. **Lack of felt-safety** Fear of punishment (hit, injured)
Fear of breaking connection w/parent (neglect or abandonment) Lack of trust in the adult
4. **Lack of ability to stay regulated**
5. **Lack of understanding that lying is “a big deal”**
6. **Confabulation (a memory issue)**



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Confabulation:

- **Confabulation is a type of memory error in which gaps in a person's memory are unconsciously filled with fabricated, misinterpreted, or distorted information.**
- **It's better to look bad, than to look stupid.**
- **When under pressure, it's almost a given the correct story will not come out.**



What does the Bible Say?

A common quote, but...

9th Commandment


“Do not be a false witness against your neighbor.”

This commandment is not about lying in general but it is focused on **“lying”** in a trial, when a judge and jury are trying to determine the truth in a legal/civil case.
(The elders at the gate...)




Examples of Lying in the Bible

Genesis 12:10-16 Abram Lies in Egypt
Genesis 18:1-15 Sarah Lies to Angels/God
Genesis 20:1-9 Abram Lies to Abimelek
David Lies to Get Bread – 1 Samuel 21:1-5



Other Examples of Lying in the Bible

- Isaac lies to Abimelech
- Jacob lies to Isaac
- Jacob’s son’s lie about Joseph
- Bad things happen to truth-telling Joseph
- Egyptian Midwives lie to Pharaoh
- Rahab lies to the men of Jericho
- Ananias and Sapphira lie & die
- Numerous New Testament Letters speak against lying
- Jesus says his disciples are blessed when people lie **about** them.




How Shall We Respond to Lying?
Co-Regulation

Jesus’ Strategy – Help People Feel Safe!

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”
 - Jesus

1. Accepted people where they were.
2. Stayed Calm, Regulated & Non-judgmental
3. Connected: Met needs
4. Built trust, showing people that He was safe.

Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32; Luke 7:36-50;
 Luke 15:1-2; Luke 19:1-10




How Shall We Respond to Lying?
The Brain Science – Help People Feel Safe!

1. How do you define success?
2. Don’t ask direct questions to children who struggle with this issue, we are setting them up to lie.
3. Stay Calm/Regulated - Do your work, why is this a trigger for you?
4. Connect: Soft eyes; Warm voice; Few words; Non-threatening posture
5. What’s the need behind the lying? Lack of trust? Lack of felt-safety? Lack of knowledge or skill?
6. Redirect/Teach when everybody is feeling comfortable and regulated.



Other Resources on Lying

1. Robyn Gobbel Podcast: Lying As a Trauma Driven Behavior. <https://robyngobbel.com/lying/>
2. Robyn Gobbel Workshop: "Lying as a Response to Trauma" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxQvlpjRNwI>
3. Melissa Corkum Blogpost: <https://www.thecorkboardonline.com/2019/05/childhood-lying/>
4. Cindy Lee on YouTube



Contact Information

Greg Lombard Rea
 M.Div, TBRI Practitioner
 Post Adoption Support Specialist

Phone: 785-383-8100
 Email: greg@theadoptionconnection.com

Web & Social Media

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/adoptionfriend>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/adoptionfriend/>
- Web <https://theadoptionfriend.com/>

