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# THE DECEIVER

## Where do lies come from?

**Until that day, her life was almost a fairy tale**—a paradise of sorts.

That all changed when Tracey was sixteen and she encountered her own personal “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” She could have said no. She didn’t. After all, it was her own church-going father who was offering her the forbidden. Couldn’t she trust him? Shouldn’t she obey him? He said it was good. He said she would like it.

She reached for it. She took it. Crystal meth. Her life would never be the same.

Her relationship with her father took a romantic if evil twist. After months of using crystal meth together, they interacted more as boyfriend and girlfriend than father and daughter. He told her it was OK. He said he’d read in the Bible that God just wanted His people to be happy. She believed him.

But her heart knew differently. Our hearts often detect the lies long before our minds begin to process them. Depressed. Stressed. Lonely. When the drugs and drastically misguided relationship left her empty, the now-seventeen-year-old Tracey turned to the only comfort that was close. She began to read her Bible . . . aloud. This agitated her father, sending him into a passive fury every time she read it. He would leave the room angrily or give her the silent treatment until one day when he could not contain himself.

### a NOVEL IDEA

This book will talk a lot about Eve and how she believed the lie that took down humanity. Her story is probably familiar to you, but you’ll be lost if you’ve forgotten what in the world the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is or if you think Eve was made from Adam’s big toe. (Gotcha! Are you with us?)

We have a novel idea: We’d like you to read her story for yourself. Just open your Bible to Genesis 2:15 and read through the end of chapter three. Imagine you’re in the most beautiful garden ever created and sink into the drama of her story. We promise it’ll read like a . . . well, a novel!

“Do you have to read that *here?*” he huffed.

“I just want to be happy like you said. I want God to tell me what to do,” she responded.

Eyes wide and cheeks bursting with red rage, he turned to her and snarled, “I *am* god!”

That’s the moment Tracey knew. Everything within her wanted to run. She felt as if she might vomit. It was all so wrong, so evil, but she’d believed it. She admits:



*It was like this whole world of right and wrong was no longer shades of gray. It was in very loud, glaring, horrifying black and white. I knew things I wish I didn’t. And yet, I didn’t know what I believed about God.*

**Tracey aches to do things over.** To have done things right the first time. To go back to the life she knew before the lies blazed through her life and left it charred and barren.



## reality reading

This book is not fiction! And we didn’t want any of the stories we used to be fiction either. Though the story in this chapter is true, we’ve chosen not to use “Tracey’s” real name. We’d do the same for you! Throughout the book, if we use only a first name, you’ll know that we’ve changed the name.

Tracey had been lied to. Chances are, your story is not so extreme as Tracey’s. Maybe yours is a pattern of on-again, off-again friendships marked by “mean girl” moments. Constant fighting with parents who seem overcontrolling. Or an ache to have your parents acknowledge that you’re even alive. Secret, shameful habits. Plummeting grades. Patterns and relationships that once bothered you have come to seem “normal.” But the consequences of depression, confusion, and loneliness reveal that something isn’t right.

I (Nancy) received a letter one day from a young woman who had grown up in a Christian home and had been home-schooled; she even had a sense that God had a specific call on her life to serve Him. However, as her letter revealed, something wasn’t right. In fact, things were very, very wrong:



*I'm having a very hard time right now. Deep depression and anger and lots of different things have changed in me. I want to end my life or hurt myself really bad, even though I feel the Lord has a special thing for me to do when I get older. I hate my life and my family. It feels like it will never end and I will have to live like this for the rest of my life. We have been to many doctors, and no one knows what is causing this. . . .*



## FEEL LIKE THERE'S NO HOPE?

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for those aged 15 to 24.<sup>1</sup> We shudder to think that you may be struggling with such emotional bondage. Oh, how we wish we were there to hug you and tell you that there is hope. We're not just saying that. We mean it.

If you are struggling with thoughts of suicide, please reach out for help right now:

**Cry out to the Lord.** Ask Him to rescue you from any evil influences that are trying to destroy you.

**Talk to your parents, your pastor or youth pastor, or a mature Christian woman.**

Ask them to pray for you and to help you get through this rough time.

**Talk with someone live online** at [www.TeenHopeLine.com/talk/](http://www.TeenHopeLine.com/talk/) or call 1-800-394-HOPE (1-800-394-4673).

You'd never have guessed what was going on inside this girl by looking at her. As I read her letter, my heart ached and I wondered how many more young women in our Christian homes and churches are experiencing similar turmoil.

If you've turned over every rock looking for physical causes to your situation, it may be that you've believed one or more lies that have become deeply embedded in your thinking and have placed you in bondage.

Let's look at how our struggle with bondage began in the first place, so we can get you on your way to freedom. To do that, let's turn our attention once again to the first woman to fall for a lie.

As was the case with Tracey, Eve's problem began in her home—which actually *was* paradise. Unlike Tracey's story, the lie that radically changed the course of Eve's life did not come from the voice of her father; it came in the form of a challenge to words her Father, God, had spoken to her.

It came in the form of a lie.

## THE DEFINITION OF LIES

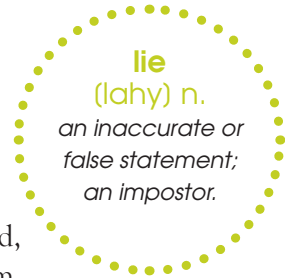
A lie is “a false statement with deliberate intent to deceive; an inaccurate or false statement.”<sup>2</sup> Another definition is “an impostor.” A lie is an impostor of the Truth. We often don’t detect lies because they camouflage themselves so well.

Back in the garden, Eve met an impostor with a diabolical agenda. He wanted Eve to become his slave by rejecting God and His purposes for her life. The serpent craftily asked, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of *any* tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1b). That’s not exactly what God had said,

but it certainly sounded similar. God had told Adam (and Eve) they couldn’t eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan used a clever combination of half-truths and falsehoods *posed* as Truth.

He began by planting doubts in Eve’s mind about what God had actually said. When Eve told him that God had said they would die if they ate the fruit, he responded with a series of lies. He said, “*You will not surely die*. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and *you will be like God*, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4b-5). He wanted her to turn her back on God, to reject His Truth and to believe his carefully crafted lies . . . and she did.

And that’s exactly what the great Impostor wants you to do too.



## THE ORIGIN & PURPOSE OF LIES

The Bible tells us that Satan poses as an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Ezekiel 28 tells the story of how he asserted his claim to be like God. He is *the* Impostor. And his motives are malicious through and through, as Jesus Himself pointed out:

**“The devil . . . was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”** (John 8:44)

**Satan's native language is lying.** He speaks through different mouthpieces, sometimes using evil rulers, false religions, movies, TV, popular songs, or even friends to deceive us. But all lies originate with him.

Why does he lie to us? The verse cited suggests that his ultimate goal is our destruction. The ultimate fruit of his lies is death. We begin to experience the results of this “death” before our hearts stop beating. Look at God's words to the first man:

**“Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:17)**

What did God mean when He said they would die on the day they ate of the forbidden fruit? Eve clearly didn't die *physically* the day she first sinned. However, the moment she took a bite of that fruit, she did die *spiritually*—she was separated from God, who is Life.

The Tree of Life was now off-limits, and she was banished from paradise. She would now be a slave to her own sinful, selfish desires and choices. She would bear the consequences of living in a fallen,

broken world, rather than enjoying the eternal pleasure of life in Paradise. She and her husband would have to endure pain and hardship as they fulfilled their basic responsibilities related to family and work. With each passing year this hardship would take its toll on their bodies, and they would eventually experience physical death.

What a vivid picture this is for us.

The moment we believe and act on a lie, as Eve did, we begin to experience consequences. We become increasingly enslaved to false, destructive ways of thinking and living. Satan's ultimate goal is our destruction and death. Not just

## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD & EVIL

It was the tree in the dead center of the Garden of Eden, which God had told Adam (and indirectly Eve) not to eat. They could eat of every other tree, including the Tree of Life. When Adam and Eve chose to “have it their way” and eat from the one tree God said was off-limits, they lost their “freedom of choice.” They could no longer eat from the Tree of Life and were banned from the garden.

physical death some day in the future. He'd like to make you a part of his walking dead on this earth. Not free to enjoy God and life as He created you to live it.

## THE TARGET OF SATAN'S LIES

Satan targets women with his lies.

For reasons we cannot fully understand, Satan chose to target a woman for his first deception in the garden of Eden. Twice in the New Testament the apostle Paul points out that it was the woman who was deceived: "The serpent deceived Eve by his cunning" (2 Corinthians 11:3). "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (1 Timothy 2:14).

It may feel like a bad rap, but facts are facts. Satan obviously targeted Eve, perhaps thinking that if he could get her to buy into his deception, she would influence her husband to eat the forbidden fruit with her—which is exactly what happened.

Some theologians believe there was something in the way Eve was created that made her more vulnerable to deception. Others suggest that Satan may have approached her first in an attempt to overthrow God's created order by getting her to take the leadership that belonged to her husband.

Regardless, from that day to this, it appears that there is a unique sense in which Satan targets women for deception.

Satan targets your generation through more messages than any that has gone before it.

Movies, TV, magazines, Web sites, MySpace pages, text messaging, cell phones! With so many media, the messages that you are bombarded with are vastly more numerous than any previous generation has ever experienced. Never has a generation been exposed to so many messages through so many mediums.

The result?

Your generation has no single source of influence or Truth. Instead, you're likely to pick and choose pieces of philosophies and theologies from many different sources and create your own standard of right and wrong.



In fact, Christian researcher George Barna has coined the term Mosaic Generation to refer to you and your peers.<sup>3</sup> He chose it because you tend to take small pieces of information from many different sources and come up with your own sense of truth. He states that you are comfortable with the contradictory messages you receive from these various influences. Do you see a problem with that? We sure do.

A recent article in the *New York Times* observed the trend among today's teens to mix elements from many different faiths into their own concoction of belief. One Christian leader quoted in the article expressed his concern that there will soon be a mass exodus from the Christian faith as teens who have grown up in Bible-believing homes and churches become adults.<sup>4</sup>

**We would like for you to prove them wrong!** And we believe you can, if you'll stop mindlessly absorbing any and every message that comes your way. Let's start a movement that will buck and begin to change the current trend! Let's start looking to the One and only source of Truth.

We're here to spur you on in that movement, by fueling you with a passion to douse Satan's lies with the Truth. Before you start, there's something you should know about *your* role in these lies.

**Check out the next chapter.**