

Contents of Set

Lies Women Believe

Lies Women Believe Study Guide

LIES
Women
BELIEVE

AND THE TRUTH THAT SETS THEM FREE



NANCY DEMOSS
WOLGEMUTH

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO



Foreword 10
Preface 12
Introduction 15

SECTION ONE: FOUNDATIONS

Prologue 27
CHAPTER ONE: **Truth . . . or Consequences** 29

SECTION TWO: LIES WOMEN BELIEVE . . .

CHAPTER TWO: **About God** 47

1. God is not really good.
2. God doesn't love me.
3. God is just like my father.
4. God is not really enough.
5. God's ways are too restrictive.
6. God should fix my problems.

CHAPTER THREE: **About Themselves** 65

7. I'm not worth anything.
8. I need to love myself more.
9. I can't help the way I am.
10. I have my rights.
11. Physical beauty matters more than inner beauty.
12. I should not have to live with unfulfilled longings.

CHAPTER FOUR: **About Sin** 91

13. I can sin and get away with it.

14. My sin isn't really that bad.
15. God can't forgive what I've done.
16. It's not my fault!
17. I can't live in consistent victory over sin.

CHAPTER FIVE: About Priorities 113

18. I don't have time to do everything I'm supposed to do.
19. I can thrive without consistent time in the Word and prayer.
20. My work at home is not as significant as the work or other activities I do outside the home.

CHAPTER SIX: About Sexuality 131

21. I can't tell anyone.
22. My sexuality is separate from my spirituality.
23. This is who I am.
24. God's standards for sex are out of date.
25. I have to have an outlet for my sexual desire.

CHAPTER SEVEN: About Marriage 159

26. I have to have a husband to be happy.
27. It's my job to change my mate (or children or friends or...).
28. My husband is supposed to serve me.
29. If I submit to my husband, I'll be miserable.
30. If my husband is passive, I've got to take the initiative, or nothing will get done.
31. There's no hope for my marriage.

CHAPTER EIGHT: About Children 195

32. I have the right to control my reproductive choices.
33. We can't afford (more) children.
34. I can't control/can control the way my children turn out.
35. My children are my number-one priority.
36. I'm not/she's not a good mother.

CHAPTER NINE: About Emotions 229

- 37. If I feel something, it must be true.
- 38. I can't control my emotions.
- 39. I can't help how I respond when my hormones are out of whack.
- 40. I can't bear being depressed.

CHAPTER TEN: About Circumstances 255

- 41. If my circumstances were different, I would be different.
- 42. I shouldn't have to suffer.
- 43. My circumstances will never change—this will go on forever.
- 44. I just can't take any more.
- 45. It's all about me.

SECTION THREE: WALKING IN THE TRUTH

CHAPTER ELEVEN: Countering Lies with the Truth 279

CHAPTER TWELVE: The Truth That Sets Us Free 289

Epilogue 301

Thank You! 303

Notes 305



TRUTH . . . OR *Consequences*

“Become a World-Class Violinist Instantaneously.”

“How to Play the Piano . . . Instantly!”

“‘Instant Health’ at the Flip of a Switch!” (ad for a kitchen appliance).

“Melt 10 Lbs. in 10 Minutes! . . . a Workout So Easy, You Do It in Your Pajamas!”

“Delivers So Much Peace of Mind It Should Be Covered under Your Health Plan” (ad for a popular car).

“Look Better and Feel Younger in Just Minutes a Day . . . the Key to a Healthier, Happier Life” (ad for an oxygen chamber, price tag: \$3,999.95).

*Y*ou’ve no doubt seen these kinds of outlandish claims on social media ads or at the checkout line in the supermarket. They’ve been around as long as there has been advertising.

And then there are the endless, more subtle, variations. Is it just me, or does it seem that “gluten free” is stamped on everything from celery bags to milk cartons today? Advertisers trying to get us to purchase their product based on a hollow promise. (I’m pretty sure celery and milk have always been gluten free!)

Our culture is riddled with deception. Sometimes it’s easy to see through the falsehood (as in the claim that one can become a world-class violinist instantaneously). Unfortunately, however, deception is not always easy to detect.

Deception in advertising appeals to our natural human longings. We *want* to believe that somehow, mysteriously, those unwanted pounds really could melt away in just ten minutes—no sweat, no discipline, no cost, no effort, no pain. That’s why we buy the pills, the diet drink powders, and the exercise equipment promoted on Internet ads.

A clever and cunning pitchman whose intention was to change Adam and Eve’s thinking about God and His ways designed the first advertising campaign. Satan’s objective was to drive a wedge between God and His creatures. He rightly assumed that the man and woman were not likely to support anything that appeared to be an all-out assault on God. He knew that, instead, he would have to subtly trick them, to deceive them, to seduce them by making an offer that appeared to be reasonable, desirable, and not entirely “anti-God.”

Satan deceived Eve through a clever combination of outright lies, half-truths, and falsehoods disguised as truth. He began by planting seeds of doubt in her mind about what God had actually said (“Did God really say . . . ?” [Gen. 3:1 CSB]).

Next he led her to be careless with the Word of God and to suggest that God had said something that, in fact, He had not said. God had said, “Do not *eat* the fruit of the tree.” However, Eve quoted God as saying, “Neither shall you *touch* it” (v. 3).

Satan deceived Eve by causing her to question the goodness, love, and motives of God. His implication was: “Has God put restrictions on your freedom? Sounds like He doesn’t want you to be happy.”

The Truth is that God had said, “You are *free* to eat from any tree of the garden” (2:16 CSB)—except one.

The Truth is that God is a generous God.

In that entire, vast garden, God had posted only one Keep Out sign: “Do not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Furthermore, the one restriction God imposed was in the best interests of the couple and was intended to guarantee their long-term blessing and happiness. God knew that when they ate of that tree, they would die; their relationship with Him would be severed; they would become slaves—to Satan, sin, and self.

The Serpent further deceived Eve by lying to her about the consequences of choosing to disobey God. God had said, “In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die (2:17). Satan countered, “You will *not* surely die” (3:4). He flatly contradicted what God had already said.

The devil seduced Eve by offering her all kinds of benefits if she would just eat the forbidden fruit (3:5). He promised that a whole world of knowledge and experience would open up to her (“Your eyes will be opened”). He assured her that she would be equal with God—that is, that she could be her own god (“You will be like God”).

Finally, he promised that she would be able to decide for herself what was right and wrong (“knowing good and evil”). God had already told Adam and Eve what was right and what was wrong. But Satan said, in essence, “That’s His opinion. But you’re entitled to your own opinion—you can make your own decisions about what’s right and wrong.”

Satan deceived Eve by causing her to make her decision based on what she could see and on what her emotions and her reason told her to be right, even when it was contrary to what God had already told the couple:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food,
and that it was a delight to the eyes,
and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,
she took of its fruit and ate.

—Genesis 3:6

Eve took the bite. But instead of the promised rewards, she found herself with a mouth full of worms—shame, guilt, fear, and alienation. She had been lied to—she had been deceived.

As seventeenth-century Puritan pastor Thomas Brooks put it,

Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst; he promises honor, and pays with disgrace; he promises pleasure, and pays with pain; he promises profit, and pays with loss; he promises life, and pays with death.¹

From that first encounter in the garden to the present day, Satan has used deception to win our affections, influence our choices, and destroy our lives. In one way or another, every problem we have in this world is the fruit of deception—the result of believing something that simply isn’t true.

Satan holds out the glittering promise of “real life,” knowing full well that those who respond to his offer will certainly die (Prov. 14:12).

So why do we fall for his deception? Why do we go for the lure? For starters, Satan’s lies don’t come at us overtly, through talking serpents. Rather, they may be attractively disguised in a *New York Times* bestseller, a popular mommy blog, a movie, a TV show, or a catchy hit song. They may also surface subtly in a classroom with a brilliant professor or in sincere advice from a relative or friend, a therapist, or even a Christian writer, teacher, or counselor.

Day after day, we are bombarded with countless forms of deception that make their way into our minds, lobbed at us not only by our tireless enemy, the devil, but by this fallen world system in which we live and by our own sinful, weak flesh, all of which are at odds with God and the Truth and seek to seduce us.

Regardless of the immediate source, anytime we receive input that is not consistent with the Word of God, our antennae should go up. What we read or hear may sound right, may feel right, may seem right—but if it’s contrary to the Word of God, it *isn’t* right. If we could only see that the forbidden fruit—fruit that looks so ripe and tastes so sweet in the first moment—ultimately leads to death and destruction.

THE STRATEGY OF DECEPTION

Deception was—and still is—crucial to Satan’s strategy. According to Jesus, it is the devil’s very nature to deceive:

[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning,
and does not stand in 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

For reasons we don't fully understand, Satan chose to target the woman for his initial deception. Twice in the New Testament the apostle Paul reminds us that it was the woman who was deceived: "The serpent deceived Eve by his cunning" (2 Cor. 11:3); "Adam was not the one deceived, but the woman was deceived" (1 Tim. 2:14).

Some theologians believe there was something in the way Eve was created that made her more vulnerable. Others suggest that because God had placed her under the headship of her husband, once she stepped out from under that spiritual covering and protection, she was more easily deceived. Or perhaps it was because of Eve's softer, relational, responsive makeup that she was willing to engage with the Serpent.

Whatever the reason, the Deceiver approached and deceived the woman, and she fell for the ploy. She then seduced her husband to sin with her, and together they led the whole human race into sin (though Adam, as her head, was held ultimately responsible).

Since that day, every man and woman who has ever lived has been born with a propensity to sin and has been deceived by Satan's lies. He knows that if we buy into his deception, we will influence others around us to sin, and our sinful choices will set a pattern for subsequent generations to follow.

Sometimes, as was the case with Eve, Satan deceives us directly. And sometimes he uses other people as instruments of deception.

In the fifth chapter of Ephesians, Paul warns, "Let no one deceive you with empty words" (v. 6). Repeatedly, he challenges God's people to speak Truth to one another. When we are not honest with each other, we help the Enemy out, acting as his agents, deceiving and destroying each other.

According to the Scripture, we can even be deceived by spiritual leaders—those who have been entrusted with the responsibility of shepherding God’s flock and communicating the Truth to His people. Through the prophet Ezekiel, God addressed those leaders who were abusing their calling and their followers by failing to speak the Truth:

Because with the lies you have made the heart
of the righteous sad. . . ;
you have strengthened the hands of the wicked,
so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.

—Ezekiel 13:22 NKJV

This description isn’t limited to Old Testament spiritual leaders. There are respected “Christian leaders” and influencers today of whom the same might be said. They may not intend to deceive their followers—in fact, they may not even realize they are being deceptive.

Nonetheless, they “strengthen the hands of the wicked” by promising God’s blessing and grace to people who do not qualify because of their willful disobedience and unrepentant hearts. Their teachings help people justify . . .

- rage (“You’re just being honest about your feelings”)
- selfishness (“If you don’t look out for yourself, no one else will”)
- irresponsibility (“Your problems and your reactions have all been caused by others”)
- infidelity (“God wants you to be happy—it’s OK to divorce your mate and marry someone you really love”)

At the same time, they make “the righteous” feel “sad” or guilty . . . for taking responsibility for their own sinful choices, for demonstrating a servant’s heart, and for being faithful to their vows. They may also mislead their followers by preaching the law of God without pointing to Christ, who alone can fulfill the law. Doing this can leave people without hope and under chronic guilt and condemnation of works- or performance-based religion.

OPEN YOUR EYES

Many of us have unthinkingly exposed ourselves to deception, oblivious to the fact that we are being deceived. That is the very nature of deception.

One of my goals in this book is to urge Christian women to open their eyes and begin to evaluate what is going on around them—to wake up to the deception that is so pervasive. So much of our lifestyle is rooted in ways of thinking that simply are not true. The result is a house built on sinking sand. One lie leads to another and another and another.

It's tempting to mindlessly accept whatever we hear and see. We listen to music, radio, and podcasts; read blogs, magazines, and social media; watch movies; listen to advice; and respond to advertisements without asking ourselves:

- “What’s the message here?”
- “Is it really true?”
- “Am I being deceived by a way of thinking that is contrary to the Truth?”

Satan’s promise to Eve was tantalizing: “Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). Who could resist such an amazing offer?

The forbidden fruit was “*good* for food . . . a *delight* to the eyes . . . to be *desired* to make one wise” (v. 6). If it hadn’t seemed so attractive, do you think Eve would have fallen for the offer? If that fruit had been rotten and crawling with worms, would she have considered disobeying God? Probably not. What makes Satan’s offers so alluring and so deceptive is that they look so right.

The problem is that Eve didn’t stop to evaluate what was really happening. She didn’t take time to discern Truth from error. She didn’t stop to consider the cost and the consequences of what she was about to do. If Eve could have imagined the ugly, painful, deadly consequences of her choice—in her own life, in her relationship with God, in her marriage, in her children, in her children’s children, and (through the sin of her husband, who joined her in disobeying God) in every human being that

would ever live on the planet—do you think she would have listened to Satan’s lie and disobeyed God? I doubt it.

But how often do we make choices without stopping to consider the consequences that may follow? Many of us simply live our lives, responding to the people, circumstances, and influences around us—eating what we crave at the moment, buying the latest deals that pop up in our social media feeds, adopting the latest fads, and embracing the lifestyles, values, and priorities of our friends. It all looks so good; it feels so right; it seems so innocent. But we end up in abusive relationships, head over heels in debt, angry, frustrated, trapped, and overwhelmed. We have been deceived. We have fallen for a lie.

In an unforgettable example of this kind of deception, a mother of seven young children (five of them adopted) told me she was carrying on an illicit relationship with a man she had met on the Internet; she was seriously thinking of leaving her husband for this other man. As we met together one night at a mall (while her husband watched the kids), she acknowledged that what she was doing was wrong. “But,” she said of the other man, “he’s so good to me and to my children.”

For sure, there were issues in her marriage that had left her sad, emotionally thirsty, and vulnerable to the attention of another man. She felt that she had a chance to exchange sadness for happiness, that perhaps she would find a shortcut to solve the pressures and challenges she faced at home. But as I listened, it became clear to me that leaving her marriage would only set her up for new and greater problems.

As we talked over the next couple of hours, I begged her to realize that this man was not truly interested in her or her children. If he were, he would not be breaking up her marriage. If he really loved her, he would not be leading her to violate God’s law. I gently explained that the road she was on, though it seemed so appealing, would not lead to the freedom and happiness she was seeking. I tried to help her see that she was being deceived and that her only hope was to believe and embrace the Truth. The long pathway of confession, counseling, prayer, and recommitment to her marriage and children would not be easy. But

it would lead to a beauty that could not possibly be found in pursuing a shortcut.

THE PROGRESSION FROM DECEPTION TO SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

In the chapters that follow, we'll examine some of the most common and destructive lies women believe, but first let's take a look at how we become deceived and how deception leads to captivity.

Generally speaking, people don't fall into spiritual bondage overnight. They don't just wake up one morning and discover that they are addicted to food or have a temper they can't control. There's a progression that leads to enslavement, and it begins when we . . .

Listen to a lie.

That's how it all began in the Garden of Eden. Eve *listened* to the lies told her by Satan. I'm confident she had no idea where those lies would ultimately lead her and her family. Perhaps it didn't seem particularly dangerous just to *listen* to the Serpent—to hear him out, to see what he had to say. Listening in itself wasn't disobedience. But—and here's the key—listening to a viewpoint that was contrary to God's word put Eve in a dangerous position that led to disobedience, which in turn led to physical and spiritual death.

Listening to things that are not true is the first step toward spiritual bondage. That's why I believe it is so important to carefully monitor the input we allow into our minds and hearts.

My parents both came to know Jesus as young adults. From the time they married, they were eager to establish a Christ-centered home, based on the solid foundation of His Word. They didn't have the advantage of the many helpful resources that are available to Christian parents today. However, God gave them the wisdom and resolve to cultivate a climate in our home that was conducive to spiritual hunger and growth. My six younger siblings and I couldn't help but be "infected" by their love for Christ, His Word, His people, and His kingdom. They were intentional

about surrounding us with spiritually nurturing influences, and they were equally intentional about protecting us from influences that could be harmful to young hearts or could desensitize us to sin.

This approach to child rearing did not always make sense to us when we were kids. But how I thank the Lord today that my parents had the courage to say, “We are not going to knowingly allow our children’s lives to be shaped by the lies promoted in this world.” They earnestly desired that we would grow up to love the Word and the ways of God, that our hearts would be quickened by the Truth, and that we would embrace it for ourselves. Once they released us from that protected environment into the world, they prayed we would continue to walk in the Truth and to recognize and reject anything that was deceptive and untrue.

Today, as an older woman, I still have to guard my mind—to carefully choose the input I allow into my life and to reject that which promotes ungodly thinking. The world’s deceptive way of thinking comes to us through so many avenues—television, magazines, movies, music, friends, and social media, to name a few. A steady diet of these influences will shape our view of what is valuable, beautiful, and important.

There are no harmless lies. We cannot expose ourselves to the world’s false, deceptive way of thinking and come out unscathed. Eve’s first mistake was not eating the fruit; her first mistake was listening to the Serpent.

Listening to counsel or ways of thinking that are not according to the Truth is the first step in developing wrong beliefs that will ultimately place us in spiritual bondage. And once we have listened to the lie, the next step toward captivity is that we . . .

Dwell on the lie.

First we listen to it. Then we dwell on it. We begin to consider what the Enemy has said. We mull it over in our minds. We engage the Enemy in conversation. We contemplate that he may be right, after all. The process can be likened to farming or gardening. First the soil is cultivated—we open ourselves up to input that is contrary to God’s Word. Then the seed

is sown—we listen to the lie. Next the seed is watered and fertilized—we dwell on the lie.

And then, if we allow our minds and hearts to dwell on things that are not true, sooner or later, we will . . .

Believe the lie.

At this point the seed that has been sown begins to take root and grow. That's exactly what happened with Eve. First she listened to the Serpent's sales pitch. Then she considered it and engaged him in further discussion about it. Before long she believed that what he had told her was true—in spite of the fact that it clearly contradicted the Truth of what God had said. And once she believed the lie, the next step was a small one. Listen to the lie, dwell on it, believe it, and sooner or later you will . . .

Act on the lie.

Now the seed that has been sown, watered, and fertilized and has taken root begins to produce fruit. Beliefs produce behavior. Believing things that aren't true produces sinful behavior.

What we believe will be seen in the way we live. Conversely, the way we behave will invariably be based on what we believe to be true—not what we *say* we believe, but what we actually believe. “As [a man] *thinks* in his heart, so *is* he” (Prov. 23:7 NKJV).

The important thing to remember is that *every act of sin in our lives begins with a lie*. We listen to the lie; we dwell on it until we believe it; then finally we act on it.

Now watch what happens next. We reject the Truth and violate the Word of God one time in what seems to be just a little matter. However, the next time we are tempted, we find that it's easier to sin, and the next time it's easier still. We don't just sin once; we sin again and again and again until a groove has been worn in our hearts—a sinful pattern. Before we realize what has happened, we're trapped. A sinful stronghold has been established. Satan threw out the bait, we took it, and now he has reeled us in and made us his catch.

Don't miss how the progression got started:

***Every area of bondage in our lives
can be traced back to a lie.***

A seed is sown. It is watered and fertilized. It takes root. Finally it produces fruit—not just a single piece of fruit, but an entire harvest of spiritual bondage, destruction, and death.

MOVING FROM CAPTIVITY TO FREEDOM

Most of us have areas of our lives where we are held captive because we have listened to, believed, and acted on lies. How can we escape and begin to move toward freedom in those areas? Here are three steps to keep in mind as we begin to deal more specifically with some of the lies that lead to spiritual bondage and the Truth that sets us free.

1. Identify the area(s) of spiritual bondage or sinful behavior. Chances are, you already know what some of these are, but there may be others that are not as obvious. We're going to look at some common ones throughout this book. But right now ask God to start showing you specific areas where you are not free. The Scripture says, "Whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved" (2 Peter 2:19). Can you pinpoint any issues in your life that have overcome you?

- Are there areas where you are in physical bondage (overeating, disordered eating, substance abuse)?
- Are you in emotional bondage (anxiety, fear, depression, chronic emotional disorders)?
- Are you in bondage to sexual sin (masturbation, pornography, lust, fornication, homosexuality)?
- Is financial bondage (overspending, greed, stinginess) an issue in your life?
- Are there sinful habits that plague you (anger, lying)?

- Are you in bondage to the need for approval?
- Are you hooked on TV, computer games, social media, romance novels, or erotica (“sexy” stories designed to arouse)?

God may bring other areas of bondage to your mind. Once you identify those areas, don’t just try to eliminate them. That’s likely to be futile. In fact, you may have already tried to deal with these behaviors, failed, and been tempted to give up.

If you want to get rid of poisonous berries growing on your property, it’s not enough to go out and pick all the berries off the bush. More will quickly grow back in their place. The only way to permanently get rid of the poisonous fruit is to pull the bush out from the roots. That’s why this next step is so important.

2. Identify the lie(s) at the root of that bondage or sin pattern. What lies have you listened to, believed, and acted on? The answer to that question may not be immediately apparent—roots are generally hidden beneath the surface, and lies, by their very nature, are deceptive. We need the Lord to help us see what we have been believing that is not true.

In the pages that follow, we will identify forty-five lies that are representative of the countless different lies we may have allowed to take root and produce fruit in our lives. Ask God to show you which of the Enemy’s lies you have bought into—whether the ones in this book or others He brings to mind—and to help you repent of believing them.

Once you identify the specific lies you have believed, what next?

3. Replace the lie(s) with the Truth. This is so important. Satan is a formidable enemy. His primary weapon is deception. His lies are powerful. But there is something even more powerful than Satan’s lies—and that is the Truth. Once we identify the lies that have put us in spiritual bondage and repent of believing those lies, we have an effective weapon to overcome deception—the weapon of Truth!

Each lie must be countered with Truth. Where we have listened to, dwelt on, believed, and acted on lies, we must begin to listen to, meditate on, believe, and act on the Truth. That is how we can move from spiritual

bondage to true freedom—by the power of the Spirit of God. This process won't always be easy, but He will give us the grace we need each step of the way. And what joy we will experience as the lies are exposed, chains are broken, and we begin walking in the Truth.

As Jesus declared, it is the Truth that “will set you free” (John 8:32).

Remember the woman who was thinking about leaving her husband and children for a man she had met on the Internet? She had grown up in a Christian home and graduated from a Christian college. She knew a lot of Truth in her head. But at the time we first connected, she was deeply deceived and blinded. The Enemy had done a number on her thinking, and she was not ready or willing to listen to the Truth.

Long story short, over the next few years she continued going her own way and making one foolish choice after another, for which she and her family paid dearly. But God in His mercy continued to pursue her, just as He pursued Adam and Eve in the garden. Years later, this woman wrote and updated me on her journey:

Broken, feeling utterly worthless and alone, I finally began to seek Him again. I started reading my Bible, attending church, and praying. The change in my heart was nearly instantaneous. I pressed on, driven by the seeds of Truth planted in my soul.

The Lord miraculously and amazingly started removing the scales from my eyes! The God I thought I knew suddenly revealed Himself as vastly more mysterious and powerful than ever before. At the same time, He showed me the great depths of His love, compassion, and mercy. He was not only what my tired, weary soul had been craving; He was so much more!

Today He reassures me that He sees me as holy, perfect, and unstained through the blood of Jesus Christ. After nearly thirty-six years of running, I understand that all along He just wanted me to find my solace in Him. He has amazingly rebuilt all that I sought to destroy in my defiance. I now know that God's love is irresistible.

We have a redeeming God who is making all things new. He is redeeming and making this woman new. And He wants to do the same with you and me, whatever our history may be, whatever lies we may have believed, and whatever consequences we may have experienced. His grace and love truly are irresistible.

LIES
Women
BELIEVE

STUDY GUIDE



NANCY DEMOSS
WOLGEMUTH

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

Introduction 8

How to Get the Most out of This Study 10

CHAPTER ONE: Laying the Foundation 11

Day One: *The Power of the Truth* 12

Day Two: *Knowing Your Enemy* 13

Day Three: *Opening Your Eyes* 15

Day Four: *Seeing the Progression* 16

Day Five: *Claiming the Truth* 18

CHAPTER TWO: Trusting God 21

Day One: *God Is Good* 22

Day Two: *God Is Loving* 23

Day Three: *God Is Enough* 25

Day Four: *The Law of Liberty* 26

Day Five: *Divine Delays and Denials* 27

CHAPTER THREE: Seeing Myself as God Sees Me 32

Day One: *Accepting God's Assessment* 33

Day Two: *Accepting Responsibility* 34

Day Three: *Yielding Rights* 36

Day Four: *Lasting Beauty* 37

Day Five: *Surrendering Our Longings* 39

CHAPTER FOUR: Understanding Sin 43

Day One: *The Truth About Sin* 44

Day Two: *Seeing Sin for What It Is* 45

Day Three: *Sin and Grace* 47

Day Four: *Taking Responsibility* 48

Day Five: *Victory Over Sin* 49

CHAPTER FIVE: Setting Priorities 54

Day One: *God's Priorities* 55

Day Two: *Jesus' Example* 56

Day Three: *Time in the Word* 58
Day Four: *Time in Prayer* 60
Day Five: *The Heart of Your Home* 61

CHAPTER SIX: Understanding God's Design for Sexuality 65

Day One: *Defined by the Savior* 66
Day Two: *Embracing God's Design* 68
Day Three: *Our True Identity* 70
Day Four: *Embracing Sexual Integrity* 71
Day Five: *Truly Satisfied* 73

CHAPTER SEVEN: Honoring God in My Marriage 78

Day One: *Expectations of Marriage* 79
Day Two: *Letting Go* 81
Day Three: *A Virtuous Woman* 82
Day Four: *The Power of Submission* 84
Day Five: *The Covenant of Marriage* 85

CHAPTER EIGHT: Raising Children 90

Day One: *The Blessing of Children* 91
Day Two: *Welcoming Children* 93
Day Three: *The Impact of a Godly Parent* 95
Day Four: *God-Centered Parenting* 97
Day Five: *Waving the White Flag* 99

CHAPTER NINE: Handling Emotions 104

Day One: *Discerning Your Emotions* 105
Day Two: *Controlling Your Emotions* 107
Day Three: *Expressing Your Emotions* 108
Day Four: *Facing Life's Changing Seasons* 110
Day Five: *Dealing with Depression* 111

CHAPTER TEN: Dealing with Circumstances 116

Day One: *Accepting Our Circumstances* 117
Day Two: *Purpose in Suffering* 119
Day Three: *Gaining an Eternal Perspective* 121
Day Four: *God's Grace Is Sufficient* 122
Day Five: *Living a God-centered Life* 124

CHAPTER ELEVEN: **Walking in Freedom** 128

Day One: *Surrendering to the Truth* 129

Day Two: *Walking in the Truth About God* 130

Day Three: *Walking in the Truth of Christ's Sufficiency* 132

Day Four: *Walking in the Truth by Relinquishing Control* 133

Day Five: *Walking in the Truth by Glorifying God* 135

Suggestions for Group Leaders 138

Thank you! 142

I'd Love to Hear from You 143



LAYING THE *Foundation*

IN A NUTSHELL . . .

The introduction, prologue, and chapter 1 of *Lies Women Believe* lay a foundation for understanding the power of Satan’s lies in our culture and in our personal lives, and for discovering the powerful Truth found in God’s Word.

Jesus came to give us abundant life. So why do we sometimes find ourselves living defeated, lonely, fearful, stressed-out lives? The problem is that we’ve believed a lie—or lies—from Satan’s arsenal. Not all of them, of course. In fact, we might be tempted to pride ourselves on not believing the Enemy. But there may be just one little lie hanging like a luscious piece of fruit that we have picked and eaten. Perhaps we didn’t see that it was a lie. It looked so innocent, even helpful. Or perhaps it was so tempting that we just couldn’t resist. In any case, we’ve discovered that even one “simple” lie can place us in bondage and keep us from experiencing the joyous, confident, peaceful life Christ offers.

If you’re experiencing bondage in any area of your life, I pray that this book will help you identify any lies you may have believed and the corresponding Truth from God’s Word. I hope you will come to see that none of Satan’s lies is harmless. We can’t give in to them and come away unaffected. We need to learn to discern those lies when we encounter them, to replace the lies with the Truth, and then to help others do the same.

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

“I’m not talking about a magic formula that will make problems vanish; I’m not offering any shortcuts to an easy life, nor am I promising the absence of pain and difficulties. Life is hard—there’s no way around that. But I am talking about walking through the realities of life—things like rejection, loss, disappointment, wounds, and even death—in freedom and true joy.” (pp. 18–19)

EXPLORING THE TRUTH . . .



THE POWER OF THE TRUTH (pp. 15–24)*

DAY ONE

REALIZE

1. Read John 10:10. As you think about your life, would you say you are experiencing the abundant life Jesus came to give? Or do you find yourself just coping, surviving, or struggling along? Explain.

REFLECT

2. Look at the list of words on page 16 of *Lies Women Believe*. List below any of those words that describe your current season of life. Add other words of your own if needed. (If you are not currently dealing with these kinds of feelings but you know someone who is, describe how you think she is feeling. You can use this study to learn how to help her and others who are struggling.)

3. Look at the list of words on page 18 of *Lies Women Believe*. Write below the words (or any of your own) that you would like to describe your life.

4. Read John 8:31–36. What do you think Jesus meant when He talked about being free? How do you know He did not mean being free to do anything we want to do?

5. Read Galatians 5:1 and John 14:6. What (Who) is the Truth that sets us free?

*Unless otherwise indicated, page numbers correspond to pages in *Lies Women Believe* (updated and expanded version, 2018).

RESPOND

6. The woman whose story begins on page 21 said she had “given up hope” that she could ever be completely free from the moral habit that had kept her in bondage for years. Is there any area of your life where you have given up hope that you can be set free?

7. How would you like for your life to change as a result of this study?

Lord, I want to grow through this study. I pray that You will show me any areas where I'm in bondage and reveal any lies I've believed that are holding me there. Show me the Truth I need to know so I can be truly free. Amen.



KNOWING YOUR ENEMY (pp. 27–32)

DAY TWO

REALIZE

1. What do the following verses tell you about Satan and the way he operates?

John 8:44

2 Corinthians 4:4

2 Corinthians 11:14

Ephesians 6:11–12

1 Peter 5:8

2. Which of these characteristics do you see in the Genesis 3 account of Satan’s temptation of Eve?

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

“Regardless of the immediate source, anytime we receive input that is not consistent with the Word of God, our antennae should go up. What we read or hear may sound right, may feel right, may seem right—but if it’s contrary to the Word of God, it isn’t right.” (p. 32)

REFLECT

3. Why do Satan’s lies often appear good and attractive?

4. What are some of the forms Satan’s deception takes in our culture?

5. How can you discern the difference between Truth and deception? How can you keep from being deceived by Satan’s lies?

RESPOND

6. We will be more vulnerable to deception if we’re not regularly meditating on God’s Word. What “good” things can keep you away from consistent study of the Word?

7. How can you raise your awareness of the Enemy and his attempts to deceive you?

Lord, I know that Satan is a real enemy and that he would like to make me ineffective for You and Your kingdom. Help me to stay in Your Word and to remember that no matter how powerful Satan may be, You are infinitely more powerful! Amen.



OPENING YOUR EYES (pp. 32–37)

DAY THREE

REALIZE

1. Read Genesis 2:15–17 and 3:1–13. What seemingly good thing did Satan offer to Eve? Why did she think it was a good offer?

REFLECT

2. Make a list of the primary sources of input you have coming into your life (e.g., movies, books, friends, social media, a counselor).

3. How careful are you about evaluating that input and seeking to discern Truth from error? Check the statement below that best describes you:

- I have been heavily influenced by the culture and other “voices” around me and don’t generally stop to evaluate what I hear and see in light of God’s Word. I am not discerning when it comes to Truth and error. (If this is true, you may not even realize that it describes you!)
- I am careful in some areas but not in others. I need to grow in spiritual discernment.
- I evaluate the things I hear and see through the grid of God’s Word and carefully consider the consequences when tempted with wrong choices. (According to Hebrews 5:14, the ability to discern between good and evil is a mark of spiritual maturity.)

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

“It’s tempting to mindlessly accept whatever we hear and see. . . . How often do we make choices without stopping to consider the consequences that may follow? Many of us simply live our lives, responding to the people, circumstances, and influences around us. . . . It all looks so good; it feels so right; it seems so innocent. But we end up in abusive relationships, head over heels in debt, angry, frustrated, trapped, and overwhelmed. We have been deceived.”
(pp. 35–36)

4. Describe a time when you made a wrong choice without stopping to consider the cost and the consequences.

5. Identify the lie that Satan used to lead you to believe that you (or others) would not be affected by the sin.

6. What truth from God's Word could have helped you walk away from Satan's lie?

RESPOND

7. Ask God to help you grow in your ability to discern good from evil and to make godly choices. Ask Him to show you if there is any area of your life where you are currently being deceived by input that is contrary to the Word of God.

*Father, open my eyes so I won't be deceived by Satan's lies.
Sometimes a course of action seems right when I don't stop to think about Your Truth or about the consequences that could result. Teach me to consider my choices in light of Your Word. Amen.*



SEEING THE PROGRESSION *(pp. 37–40)*

DAY FOUR

REALIZE

1. From pages 37–39 in *Lies Women Believe*, what are the four steps that take us from initial deception to bondage?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

2. Look again at Genesis 3:1–13. What did Eve do that matched each of these four steps that led her from deception to bondage?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

REFLECT

3. As long as we live in this world, we can't completely isolate ourselves so that we never hear any lies. What's the difference between "hearing" lies and "listening to" them?

4. Read Philippians 4:8–9. Why is it so important to be selective about the input we allow to come into our minds and to choose to expose ourselves and listen to the Truth?

NOTE FROM Nancy

"There are no harmless lies. We cannot expose ourselves to the world's false, deceptive way of thinking and come out unscathed." (p. 38)

RESPOND

5. Review the list you made on Day Three—the sources of input that you allow to come into your life. Is there anything on that list that is exposing you unnecessarily to deception?

6. What steps can you take to better protect your mind and heart from Satan's deception?

*Lord, please show me any ways that I have made myself more vulnerable to Satan's lies by the kinds of influences I choose to allow into my life.
Help me to fill my mind and heart with the Truth. Amen.*



CLAIMING THE TRUTH *(pp. 40–43)*

DAY FIVE

REALIZE

1. What are the three steps that will help us move from spiritual bondage to freedom?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

“Satan is a formidable enemy. His primary weapon is deception. His lies are powerful. But there is something even more powerful than Satan’s lies—and that is the Truth.” (p. 41)

REFLECT

2. How does the Truth counter lies?

3. What does the Bible say about Truth in the following verses?
Psalm 33:4 _____
Psalm 51:6 _____
John 8:32 _____
John 17:17 _____
2 Timothy 2:15 _____

4. Read John 14:15–17 and 16:13. What is the Holy Spirit’s role in helping us discern and walk in the Truth?

RESPOND

5. Can you identify any specific area(s) of bondage in your life—areas where you are not walking in freedom? (See pages 40–41 in *Lies Women Believe* for examples of common types of bondage.)

6. “Every area of bondage in our lives can be traced back to a lie” (p. 40). Ask God to help you during the course of this study to discover what lie(s) you have believed that may have placed you in bondage. Also ask the Lord to show you the Truth from His Word that counters Satan’s lies.

*Lord, I pray that You will show me clearly any lies I have believed.
Then show me the Truth that will set me free. Thank You for Your Word and for Your Holy Spirit,
which point me to the Truth. Help me to walk in Your Truth today and every day. Amen.*

WALKING TOGETHER IN THE TRUTH . . .

1. Why is our understanding of Truth so important?

2. A popular theme in our culture is that there are no absolutes. “All truth is good. Whatever truth works for you is good for you, and what works for me is good for me.” While on the surface that appears quite tolerant, where does this kind of thinking ultimately lead?

3. Describe some lies that are widely accepted as Truth by our society. What are some ways these lies influence people’s choices, and how can they be destructive?

4. List three or four widespread problems in our world and discuss how each could be the result of deception.

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

“From that first encounter in the garden to the present day, Satan has used deception to win our affections, influence our choices, and destroy our lives. In one way or another, every problem we have in this world is the fruit of deception—the result of believing something that simply isn’t true.” (p. 32)

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

"[Satan] knows that if we buy into his deception we will influence others around us to sin, and our sinful choices will set a pattern for subsequent generations to follow." (p. 33)

5. Can you think of any women in the Scripture who were deceived and who then influenced others to sin? (Need some help? Take a look at Genesis 3:6 and 16:1-6.)

6. Discuss some ways women in our day have been deceived. How has that deception influenced their own choices and the choices of others?

7. Share one or more ways that you have opened yourself up to deception in the past by choosing to expose yourself to input that is contrary to the Truth.

8. What are some illustrations of Satan's offers that women today find appealing? (Keep in mind that the things Satan tempts us with are not always inherently evil. The fruit that Eve ate wasn't bad or sinful in and of itself—in fact, it was something God had created. What made Eve's choice sinful was that God had said not to eat the fruit.)

NOTE FROM *Nancy*

"The forbidden fruit was 'good for food . . . a delight to the eyes . . . to be desired to make one wise' (v. 6). If it hadn't seemed so attractive, do you think Eve would have fallen for the offer? Probably not. What makes Satan's offers so alluring and so deceptive is that they look so right." (p. 35)

9. Share a choice you were tempted to make that looked appealing and seemed right but was contrary to God's Word. If you fell for the lie, describe any negative consequences that resulted.

10. Read together Acts 17:10-12. What did the people in Berea do in order to discern the Truth? How can we avoid being deceived and become more discerning about the input we receive?
