

Lying in Wait

Who may walk on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity . . . and speaks truth in his heart.

Psalm 15:1-2

When dealing with our young children, we sometimes forget what we're up against: the deceit that is a natural part of a child's heart.

It's intriguing that when God identifies seven things He really hates (see Proverbs 6:16-19), two of the seven concern deceit: "a lying tongue" (verse 17) and "a false witness who utters lies" (verse 19). Deceit seems to fall into two major types:

1. *Lying*. Every one of our children lied to us. Multiple times. Some of them lied about lying! When children are tempted to misrepresent the truth and are caught, they must be disciplined. Whatever amount of protesting and defending they choose to make, they must ultimately admit wrong and receive the penalty for their deceit. It was an automatic spanking for our children under the age of eight or nine. The older children were grounded.
2. *Habitual craftiness*. This murky, constant shading of the truth can create exhaustion and a sense of hopelessness in a parent. You may look into the sweet eyes of your little one and see the makings of a crafty riverboat gambler. One way to get through to this child is to share situations from your life where you stepped into a deceitful snare. Talk about the consequences that resulted. Help your child see that everyone is capable of this sin—even you—but no one escapes the damage it causes. You will need to help this child experience the full pain of his or her lies. Do not shield your child from the consequences.

Deceit is a natural reaction that starts early in life. Be ready for it in your children. Train them with ample doses of God's Word and remind them who they are ultimately dealing with.

Discuss

How have you been burned by your own deceit? If you're detecting a deceitful streak in your children, what is your game plan to address it?

Pray

Pray that in leading your children toward honesty and truth-telling, you will be modeling and internalizing it yourself.

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