

Telling Ourselves Lies

Drs Larry and Lois Dodds (2 of 3)



It is my understanding that all of us have messages hidden in us that are buried. I call these hidden heart messages. We don't know they are down there because they are painful. At some point, usually early in life, we buried those messages, but they give rise to pain. What Larry and I find out, as we work with people in ministry who get into depression, or perhaps into affairs, or into despair, or have a crisis about God and who He is, that usually at the bottom of the crisis is a lie. It is something that person came to believe very early and it is just not true.

If the lie wasn't about God, it may be about themselves. For instance, I have a friend, her mother told her when she was young that no one will ever love you. Now she believed this as a little child and that was very painful to live with, so she basically buried it. But even though it is buried there, it has great power in her life. So, when I love her, she doesn't trust it. She doesn't believe it because it is contradictory to the lie that's in her.

We have another friend who was a successful teacher overseas. She really loved her work, loved her life, loved the children. She went into this big depression, but she couldn't tell why. She didn't know what happened. As we began to ask God to show what the root of her depression was, she remembered hearing in childhood that her parents would actually say, "This is the girl who shouldn't have been born." This really seemed to be the heart belief that she had that was giving rise to her depression. Her mom had died, but she wrote to her father and said, "Daddy, this is what I remember, what did this mean?" She got back an amazing letter which really was the key to solving her depression. He said to her, "Well, Sweetheart, don't you realize, when we said that we meant that you were a miracle. Before you were born, the doctor said to your mom, "Don't get pregnant because you will die and your baby will probably die too." But then your mother became pregnant and the doctor said, "You have to have an abortion." Your mother said, "No, I won't do that, I'll take the risk and I'll trust God to have this baby." Don't you see? You are the baby who shouldn't have been born?" In her mind as a little child, somehow the only part she heard, the only part that stuck, was that statement, "This is the girl that shouldn't have been born." But when she knew the whole story and she could let go of the lie, she wasn't depressed anymore because the truth took root in her heart and she realized she was a miracle and loved to the extent that her mother risked her own life so that she could be born.

Now we get these heart messages from all kinds of sources—from kids who are mean to us when we are out playing, our parents who scream because they have a headache, maybe the pastor because he reads a piece of the Bible and we take it wrong. We get heart messages from many sources. The key thing is that we need to let God reveal them to us. When He reveals them to us as lies, we can replace them with truth. As long as the lie lives in us, however, it does give rise to the wrong kind of behaviour because we are always trying to protect our tender inner self instead of living out the right truth.

Another consequence is that these lies are corrosive. They are actually like eating ashes, as we read in Isaiah 44. When we eat ashes, it is going to put a whole in our stomach. Isn't it? When we believe ashes, lies, actually a lye and a lie is kind of same word isn't it. So when we have a lie in our hearts, it is corrosive and it damages our ability to love.

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So, we get into ministry with all the wonderful intention of loving everyone and then we find that it is really hard to do. I encountered this in Peru. I was very determined to love the Peruvians and actually it was very difficult. The tribal people who sat in the house; they spit on the wall. That was their custom because they thought it was pretty gross to swallow it. Then their kids would wet on my sofa and a lot of things were just not very loveable. So I discovered I wasn't such a good lover of people as I wanted to be and yet God began to show me that I had to have His truth about those people. Not their reflection on me, not their behaviour that reflected on me, but His truth. He said they were wonderful, worthy of being loved. So when we try to love people, but we have a heart full of lies, it is like having a leaky heart. When we do this in class, I like to illustrate that with a real heart and show how it leaks when it is full of holes. So every lie is like a little hole that empties out the love of God and the love of people. We can get filled up over and over, but if the lies are not removed and our hearts mended, we go on. We run empty and then we get emptier and emptier. We need to ask God to show us the lies that are within us, the things that give rise to sinful behaviour.

Another very hurtful outcome of believing the hidden heart messages is that they cause us to be defensive. When we are defensive we cannot love very well. If you think about a partnership, a marriage, or a close friendship, all of these require that we develop intimacy if they are going to be lasting. But if I'm hurting and I'm protecting myself, and if you're hurting and you're protecting yourself, we really can't get very close together because the defences created by keeping ourselves protected from a lie really do disturb our relationship.

Another outcome of believing the lie, of having these hidden heart messages, is that we not only build defences, but they're like a veil. They become like a veil, something that we wear over our eyes. We don't even know it's there, but we look at the world through this perspective. I have one scarf that has black dots on it. If you put that over your face, every person you look at has black dots. It's really amazing. You can't look at anything that doesn't have black dots. It reminds me of the veils women used to have on their hats in the forties. You might remember them if you are old enough. They had black dots at every inch section of the veil, so the world was very blackly spotted. Well, that's another outcome of our beliefs. If I believe that no one will ever love me and you try to love me? Guess what? I'm going to say to myself, "What does this person want from me? I know no one can ever love me so, what do they really want from me?" There can be a lot of stress so it makes it very hard to build a relationship. The veil that we view life from becomes a part of us. We don't know we are wearing it, but it colours everything we do.

So these lies that we believe have profound influence in our lives. What God wants is to replace those with truth. This is where the Holy Spirit is such a wonderful power within us because if we are willing, He will show us these lies. He will unveil them. He will help us get rid of our lies and get rid of our defences. He will help us to begin to believe the truth. In almost every crisis that is from an internal source, there is a lie at the centre of it. Something we believe that is not in line with God's truth. We have to ask God to show that to us and then to help us practice the truth of His Word.