

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.

A while back I would tell myself to put on my running shoes and jogging shorts. Many times I would run a couple of miles in the hot days of summer or the frigid days of winter. Even though I didn't want to run, I could tell that it was good for me. So my brain would tell my body to get over it. The whole body would benefit from the grueling exercise. After all, my blood pressure had become lower, my blood sugar level was lower, and I just felt better all the way around. Then one day my lower back and left leg began to hurt...a lot. About four months and many visits to the doctor had passed and I discovered that the source of my pain was a ruptured disc in my back. What seemed good for one part of the body was bad news for the body as a whole. When you have a damaged backbone, the whole body suffers. Sometimes there is no other choice but surgery to remove the part that is causing the pain.

Have you ever been lied to by another member of the Body of Christ? While we are not surprised by those outside the body who will lie, we are often shocked by those who know truth and tell lies. It is especially painful to be hurt by someone who knowingly and willingly tells lies. We, who are members of the Body of Christ, suffer corporately as well as a result of the lies. The whole body suffers the pain. Sometimes church congregations are damaged greatly by allowing such lies to go unchallenged. The church limps along in the spiritual realm, without power to effect change for the good of God's Kingdom.

In the midst of treacherous and hurtful lies, God is still the God of truth. He commands us to confront those who damage the body with grace and truth. When God's truth confronts the lie, spiritual surgery is practiced. The healing comes when repentance is practiced and forgiveness is offered. Though it is painful, it is often necessary to remove the damaging member so the body may be healed. In the end, God's truth will endure forever. Consider these points to ponder:

I. LYING TO ONE ANOTHER IS LIKE ONE PART OF THE BODY DOING DAMAGE TO ANOTHER. What could be the upside of a hand poking a finger into an eye? What could we hope to gain? We would have to stop moving because we had blinded ourselves. Self-inflicted wounds damage the body's function and purpose.

II. SPEAKING TRUTH TO OUR NEIGHBOR BUILDS UP THE BODY. Speaking truth is like the arm lifting weights to exercise the muscles of the back. When we speak truth, we become stronger and so do our neighbors. Examine yourself today. Are you speaking truth to the church and through the church? Are you speaking truth about the church and agreeing with what God says about the church? Confession to God can purify our hearts.

As you observe Labor Day here in our culture, take the time to labor with one another in the promotion and profession and protection of the truth of the church of the Living God. Church work is hard work but good work because it's God's work when we do His word!

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam