

June 9, 2006

Encouragement for Today

“She Lied!”

Luann Prater, Proverbs 31 Speaker Team Member

Key Verse:

Genesis 18:15, “Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, ‘I did not laugh.’ But he said, ‘Yes, you did laugh.’” (NIV)

Devotion:

Sarah gives me hope. She is standing right in the presence of the Almighty...and SHE LIES! In His infinite grace instead of sending a lightning bolt to singe her tongue, God confronts her with THE TRUTH. Can you imagine? Being caught telling a bold face lie to the Maker of the Universe? Seems unthinkable! But we do it every day.

When you peek back at Sarah’s life, you will find she was much like you and me. Her influence over her husband and circumstances was chilling. Decisions she made without checking first with God’s plan have rippled through generations! God had promised to make Abraham the father of many. When Sarah felt she had given God just about enough time to get the job done and still saw no results, she decided it was time to take matters into her own hands. After all, if you want a job done, give it to a woman, right?

She tells Abraham to sleep with her maidservant—and he does! Can anyone see what is naturally coming next? When her plan works and the maidservant gets pregnant—she gets mad! The result of this unplanned pregnancy became the father of the Arab nations, and God’s planned pregnancy became Israel.

We all have Sarah tendencies. We all make decisions that have a ripple effect on others. At first we trust God and believe He is going to do great things with our lives. Then when it takes a little longer than we anticipate, we help God out by jumping in with our own plan that seems right to us (Proverbs 16:25).

Usually almost immediately, we can see this decision was a mistake, but instead of admitting we were wrong, we get mad and often blame someone else or worse yet, God. When the Lord then pricks our heart with a soul-searching question, in self-defense mode, we lie.

My girlfriend calls it being a duck. She says I look calm, cool and collected on the outside, but I’m really paddling like crazy below the surface. On the surface no one can see the battle that is taking place inside our hearts or minds. The pattern generally breaks down like this:

Trust - We trust God.

Doubt – We allow stinkin' thinkin' to creep into our mind.

Action – We make a decision without filtering it through God's plan.

Anger – We get upset when our plan unravels.

Lie – We don't admit we're guilty of not fully trusting God.

Regret – We eventually regret that we didn't wait on God.

Of course, God forgives and forgets our sins, but how beautiful might we become and how much pain might be thwarted if we stop this Sarah-cycle after the first step? Trust God.

My Prayer for Today:

Father, we are all like Sarah at times. We face days with our own set of worries and wants. Today Lord, help us to lean on You for our understanding and trust You fully. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Keep a tablet and jot down any thought that causes you to doubt God. Refuse to take any action until you have collected your thoughts on paper, and then have prayed over them at the end of the day.

Ask God to search your heart and reveal those areas that are keeping you from His will in your life. When His perfect light shines on those areas, ask Him to forgive you and to set your feet on His path.

Write on a Post-it note, "I will Trust God Today" and stick it on your bathroom mirror. Begin each day by claiming this promise and believing that God's plan is far better than anything we can devise.

Reflection Points:

When was the last time you felt regret? What decisions led to that moment?

How often do you take control of situations? Are you waiting for God's timing?

Why is it so important to be right?

Power Verses:

Psalms 9:10, "Those who know your name will trust in You, for You, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You." (NIV)

Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (NIV)

Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." (NIV)

1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

Colossians 3:9, "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices." (NIV)

Additional Resources:

Racially Obedient, Radically Blessed, by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_radicallyObedient.htm

What Happens When Women Walk in Faith, by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm

Fear, transcript of P31 Radio Show

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/radiotrans_050106.htm