

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
A Church Called Tov: Chapter 4
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Humans form stories in our minds to make sense of the world around us. *Storytelling engages not just people's intellect, but also their feelings: ... Further, people choose information sources with which they share personal biases and beliefs* ([Higgins, 2016](#)).

Source: National Library of Medicine

Lying is a form of storytelling when something goes wrong, to “spin a story” in our favor out of deceit, self-preservation, or self-interest.

Isaiah 5:18-20 (NLT2) *What sorrow for those who drag their sins behind them with ropes made of lies, who drag wickedness behind them like a cart! They even mock God and say, “Hurry up and do something! We want to see what you can do. Let the Holy One of Israel carry out his plan, for we want to know what it is.” What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.*

Signs to watch out for to prevent a toxic culture from taking root.

1. Discredit the critics

a. **Character** assassination – branding the truth tellers, victims, or witnesses as liars or undermining their credibility by casting doubt on them personally.

b. **Public** Rebuke

Matthew 21:12-14 (KJV) *And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.*

c. **Private** Rebuke

John 4:16-18 (KJV) *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

Jesus modeled appropriate addressing of sin to show Love, compassion, personal motive, and salvation, never personal or public **approval**.

2. Demonize the critics

Matthew 9:32-34 (KJV) *As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.*

a. Believers should **beware** calling other believers “demons”. No demon can possess a child of God.

3. Spin the story

The magician Michael Weber has affirmed that “whoever tells the best story wins”

Romans 1:18-19 (NLT2) *But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.*

a. God's justice operates on the **truth**, not on whoever tells the best story wins.

4. Gaslight the critics

Satan's tactics are effective, but they are not new!

Genesis 3:1-5 (NLT2) *The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."*

Gaslighting is the **manipulation** of someone into questioning their perception of reality.

5. Make the perpetrator the **victim**

Matthew 8:28-32 (KJV) *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.*

a. Abusers need a **person** to abuse, even if it has to become themselves.

6. **Silence** the truth

Exhaustive and prohibitive membership covenants are an example.

Silence itself, can be a false, truth-suppressing narrative.

7. **Suppress** the truth

Non-disclosure agreements and/or legal settlements that admit no fault or prohibit discussion.

Ephesians 4:25 (NLT2) *So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.*

8. Issue a **fake** apology

Fake apologies are not given out of confession or repentance like a true apology.

Fake apologies condemn the victim, appease the audience, attach excuses, and justify inappropriate behavior. (p. 79)

Exodus 8:8-15 (NLT2) *Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged, "Plead with the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people. I will let your people go, so they can offer sacrifices to the LORD." ...15 But when Pharaoh saw that relief had come, he became stubborn. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted.*