



WEEK 3 - Honesty

- The Shroud of Turin Exposed

If a face were painted onto a piece of glass, placed over the linen and left in the sun, the painting would cast a shadow on the cloth. Where the shadow lay, the cloth would remain dark. Everything else would bleach light. Whatever had been painted white would remain dark beneath, while what had been left dark would bleach light.

“I have been asked why a baptized Christian would want to undermine claims to the Shroud's authenticity. The answer is simple.

Christians are to abhor falsehood. And at the top of the list of falsehoods to abhor should be religious lies and all other forms of Christian hypocrisy.” (N.D. Wilson)

Jesus said that He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of Truth” (John 16:13). Moses wrote that “God is not man that he should lie” (Numbers 23:19). The Christian has this very same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead residing inside him or her. Therefore, if Jesus is the truth, Christians should love truth and abhor lies. “God is truth; we become true, and we love that which is true.” (Spurgeon)

Christians love the truth, therefore we should hate lies.

From a website called Live Science: “Here’s a lesson you’ve probably learned on plenty of occasions: People lie. We do it for many reasons (some malicious and others completely benign), but everybody lies sometimes. And we’d be lying if we said we knew why.

The truth is that scientists aren’t sure why humans tell lies, but they do know that lying

is common and that it is likely linked to several psychological factors.”

Scientists may not know why we lie, but theologians do. Let’s be nice and just say that the scientists are out of their realm of expertise here. Theologians aren’t going to let you off the hook as easily as the scientists.

Psalm 5:6

6 You destroy those who speak lies;
the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

In order to experience revival, times of refreshing that come from the felt presence of the Lord, our souls must be laid bare. We must be honest with God and with ourselves.

Honest with ourselves and God =
Honest with others =
Honesty produces trust =
Trust produces security.

Self-deception =
Dishonesty with others =
Dishonesty produces mistrust =
Mistrust produces insecurity.

Honesty sounds very black and white, but the human heart is much more subtle than we realize. We're capable of a deeper self-deception that most of us even know. When the Scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin and judgment and righteousness, He accomplishes this by showing us who we really are, what we're really afraid of and what we're really hiding.

It's useless to hide from ourselves and our fears of being exposed are baseless, because there is nothing that will remain hidden (Matt. 10:26). Coming to terms with yourself is the only way to come to terms with God, because God requires honesty. Honesty is simply truthfulness.

Are you truthful with yourself? Or do you lie to yourself? Sometimes we lie to ourselves simply by not facing ourselves. People lie to themselves to protect themselves. Self-deception always keeps truth at bay.

It is a prison, though. Hiding is a prison. Some of you have placed yourselves in emotional solitary confinement. You're around people at home and at work, but you are desperately alone, because you are hiding.

Sometimes a lie is nothing more than concealing the truth. It is for freedom that Christ has set you free. He wants to set you free today from self-deception, from waffling, in short, from lying.

Psalm 12:1-2

The Faithful Have Vanished

To the choirmaster: according to The Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

12 Save, O Lord, for the godly one is gone;
for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man.

2 Everyone utters lies to his neighbor;
with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

Well, the scientists get this much right — everyone lies. Today we're going to get to the root of self-deception. We're going to go back to Genesis where self-deception first entered the scene.

Genesis 3:6-13

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,

She saw it. She delighted in it. She desired it. All that is simply temptation. No sin has been committed yet, but that is what temptation

does — it gives you the sales pitch for disobedience.

For example:

So when the woman saw that her coworker was good for companionship and that he was a delight to the eyes and that he was desired to make her happy, she knew she had to leave her marriage. Even at this point, this is all emotional temptation. James tells us that this desire is what gives birth to sin. We engage in the illicit desire and soon partake of it.

In the same way that the businessman who has an affair with his secretary became a cliché of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, the woman who has an affair with her coworker has become a cliché of the 1990s and 2000s.

Temptation is the sales pitch. “Here’s why you need this. Here’s why you can’t live without this.”

Sin is the purchase.

she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Our behavior effects those around us. But here’s what happens. You’ve been influenced by someone, so you make a bad decision. Then you blame them for your decision.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

Their eyes were opened to the consequences of sin. Once you’re guilty, there is no erasing it. Guilt is the number one psychological problem that people deal with in everyday life. There is only one remedy for it.

And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And that ain’t it. Here we see the first instance of the self-help mentality. Look at any self-help scheme you find today and it’s the same result — it’s a covering that doesn’t get rid of the actual problem.

This is where hiding comes from. Dishonesty breeds isolation from one another and from God.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid

themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

So, instead of wanting to be in the presence of the Lord, they ran away from the presence of God. This is what guilt does.

Here is why revival is often opposed in the church — because it exposes who we are. They hid from the presence of the Lord. They didn't seek Him, they ran from Him.

Why would any Christian run from God?

- **Misconceptions about God. "He's angry with me."**
- **Mistrust of God.**
- **Hidden sin that they want to keep.**
- **Fear of what will happen if you fully surrender.**
- **Fear of facing yourself.**

John 3:20

20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

All of the above are really the fruits of mistrust. Again, dishonesty breeds mistrust and mistrust breeds insecurity. Whereas honesty breeds trust and trust breeds security.

9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

Here is the grace of God calling to us. We run because of our sin. God pursues because He is love.

10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

Fear of punishment. This is why people avoid God and the gospel and church and fellowship. Fear of punishment is a legitimate fear, but it's a fear that lacks the bigger picture of God who has expressed perfect love through the gospel of Christ, which casts out all fear.

When people become aware of God's presence they are often afraid. When people come under conviction, because the Word of God begins to uncover their hearts, people become afraid. "The secrets of his heart are disclosed." (1 Cor. 14:25) Fear often makes us run away. We don't want to be exposed.

11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

"Is that maybe why you feel guilty?"

Moment of truth — God has asked us a direct question. He knows the answer, of course, but the question is a teaching tool that we might learn something about ourselves.

This is one of the things I do like about the study guide we're using — it asks some probing questions, questions we might not take the time to ask ourselves, questions that bring to the surface things we might be hiding from ourselves. Things that block the flow of the Spirit in the Christian life.

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

"It's really your fault, God."

Proverbs 19:3

3 When a man's folly brings his way to ruin,
his heart rages against the Lord.

There you have it. You've been influenced by someone, so you make a bad decision. Then you blame them for your decision.

Now, is what Adam said a true statement? Well, it's a partially true statement. Unfortunately, a partial truth is a lie. Now we

could take time to unpack the nuances of lies, but I want to hone in today on this idea about lying to ourselves.

Adam was avoiding a truth about himself. That's why his partial truth is a lie, because it helped him avoid the truth about himself.

Loving the truth doesn't give you justification for saying rude things to people. "How do you like my new haircut?" "You look like a Hobbit." "That's not nice." "Well, you asked. I'm only telling the truth."

There is a thing called tact. Tact means you find a way of not saying exactly what you think when it will only hurt someone's feelings. Is having a bad haircut a moral issue? No. So, you're not helping this person hide from a moral truth about himself.

- But don't get sidetracked with philosophical debates about the nature of lies. This is about you lying to yourself. This is about you coming clean before God.**

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

It's kind of true, but she avoids taking responsibility for her actions. This is the crux of honesty. Will you come clean? Will you take responsibility for your sin, confess it and forsake it?

Psalm 32

Blessed Are the Forgiveness

A Maskil of David.

32 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

This is the blessed position of the Christian. The Christian is called a Christian because Christ has covered you with His death on the cross. Your sins are forgiven. Clean slate. Completely guiltless before God. That is the blessing of your position before the angels in heaven and humanity on earth.

That's justification — your positional righteousness, meaning the very perfect life of Christ has been applied to you. In God's eyes you are as righteous as Christ because you are covered with His righteousness. That's justification. It's your position before God because of what Christ has done.

Now, the Holy Spirit's goal in sanctification is to move you in real life (your condition) closer to your position in Christ. In other words, it's about the uncomfortable outworking of practical holiness in our lives.

2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity,

When you're in Christ the Lord counts no sin against you. That's the blessing of redemption. That's justification by grace alone. But it leads to something because God has placed His Spirit inside of you.

and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

God is true, so we become true. Now we're entered the gritty realm of sanctification, of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. This is where He probes us today concerning honesty. "In whose spirit there is no deceit."

Ray Ortlund has a wonderful insight. He points out: We cannot deceive God. Twice in the Acts God is called "the Heartknower" ([Acts 1:24](#); [15:8](#)). But we can deceive ourselves.

A deceitful heart doesn't know its sins because it doesn't *want* to know.

But an honest heart says, “I’m listening. I’m open. Tell me the truth.”

3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

The Christian who is hiding, who is covering sin, which is lying to yourself, is going to feel this weight. There isn’t going to be joy and freedom.

And if you’re not a Christian, when your understanding of guilt is removed from God’s revealed will (the Bible) then you feel guilty over all sorts of things that have no bearing on true guilt. And you try to eliminate guilt feelings through all sorts of psychological tricks. Your feelings of guilt are without a compass. So, you have no idea of where to go to get rid of false guilt and deal with true guilt.

5 I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;

I did not cover. I didn’t hide in some sort of modern day fig leaf. I was honest with myself based upon what God has told us that is true about ourselves.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;

At a time when you may be found. This expresses the idea that God’s presence is more apparent at times. When God’s presence is manifest, it’s a season like no other. Seek Him to find His presence. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Here is the Lord’s ultimate goal for you in honesty.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Psalm 16:8-11

8 I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.

11 You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.