

INTEGRITY

"Do You Want Me To Be Honest With You?"

(Romans 12:17)

- Introduction:
1. Most of you have heard the above question asked at some point in your life.
 2. What this question indicates is that this person does not always tell the truth.
 3. Honesty or integrity is something that is desperately needed in our society.
 - a. Politicians.
 - b. Preachers.
 - c. Merchants.
 4. This lesson is designed to awaken our awareness of the need for integrity and to challenge ourselves to a greater degree of integrity.

I. IS HONESTY ALWAYS THE BEST POLICY?

- A. We have all heard the expression that "**Honesty is the best policy**", but is it really?
- B. Are there ever times when we should be "less than honest" in order for "**love**" to prevail?
- C. Quotation from the "**Reformer**" - We need to teach our children to lie. To lie judicially, and mercifully but never maliciously.
- D. Is honesty or integrity the best policy in the following scenarios?
 1. Situations that occurred on Boone's trail through the Cumberland Gap.
 2. Lie to a man who is seriously injured about the death of his spouse.
 3. Sacrificial adultery.
- E. "*Is adultery wrong? To ask this question is to ask a mare's nest question. It is a glittering generality, like Oscar Wilde's mackerel in the moonlight: it glitters but it stinks. One can only respond, 'I don't know. Maybe. Give me a case. Describe a real situation.'* Or perhaps somebody will ask if a man should ever lie to his wife, or desert his family, or spy on a business rival's design or market plans, or fail to report some income item in his tax return. Again, the answer cannot be an answer, it can only be another question. '*Have you a real question, that is to say, a concrete situation?*' If it has to do with premarital sex or libel or breach of contract or anything else (you name it), the reply is always the same: 'You are using words, abstractions. What you are asking is without substance; it has no living reality. There is no way to answer such questions." (**Situation Ethics: The New Morality**, Joseph Fletcher, pp. 142-143).
- F. (Romans 3:5-8).
- G. Such an approach would turn every commandment of God into a suggestion of God.

II. SELF DECEPTION AND INTEGRITY

- A. Certainly we would all be aware the fact that we can be dishonest with toward other people, and such is plainly condemned (Romans 12:17; I Thess. 4:11-12; II Corinthians 13:7; Psalms 15:1-2).
- B. However, it is not always realized that we can be dishonest with ourselves.
- C. Not that we are intentionally dishonest with ourselves, but through the process of self deception we may lack self integrity.
- D. The following are several avenues through which men are self deceived:
 - 1. **Conceit** (Galatians 6:3).
 - a. (Mark 10:42-45).
 - b. (Luke 14:7-11; James 4:10).
 - 2. **Unbridled Tongue** (James 1:26).
 - a. (James 3:8).
 - b. Distinction must be made between taming and bridling.
 - 3. **Spiritual Bondage** (Isaiah 44:20).
 - a. (Revelation 3:17).
 - b. (II Thessalonians 2:9-12).
 - c. (Ephesians 4:18-19).
 - 4. **Careless Hearing** (James 1:22).
 - a. (James 4:17).
 - b. (Matthew 23:3).

III. BIBLE STUDY AND INTEGRITY

- A. (Titus 2:7) We must have integrity when we approach the Scriptures.
- B. However, we may find that there is room for greater integrity.
- C. Often, people will place their faith in a man and the doctrines of men rather than in the word of God.
 - 1. Faith only.
 - 2. Inherit sin.
 - 3. Can't fall from grace.
 - 4. Baptism is unessential.
- D. But can we slip into the same trap?
 - 1. The Passover and the "Death Angel" (Exodus 12:12,23,29).
 - 2. The death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34:5-6).
 - 3. Elijah and the chariot of fire (II Kings 2:11).
 - 4. Esther and Mordecai (Esther 2:7).
 - 5. Jonah praying in the whale (Jonah 1:17-2:1).
 - 6. Wise men at the birth of Jesus (Matthew 2:11).
 - 7. Jesus falling under the weight of the cross (Matthew 27:32).
 - 8. Cain's Sacrifice (Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4).
- E. From these examples, I believe we can learn understanding.
 - 1. I will no longer say, "I can't understand how..."
 - a. Faith only (James 2:24).
 - b. Don't have to be baptized (Acts 2:38).
 - c. Can't fall from grace (Galatians 5:4).
 - d. Inherit sin (Ezekiel 18:20).

2. And we can be personally challenged to a greater degree of integrity.
3. We are not dealing honestly nor with integrity when we repeat something that we do not know.
4. (Acts 17:11-12).

- Conclusion:
1. God expects us to be honest and to have integrity.
 2. And we would do well to work on our honesty with other, with ourselves, and with our study and proclamation of God's word.
 3. (Psalms 15:1-2) **"Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart."**