

6. Note the characteristics of a godly person as described in Psalm 15. How many of the things there deal with integrity?

To be Christian is to be honest. Christians should not use expressions like “Just let me be honest with you for a moment”, or “...to tell you the truth...”

7. How does God feel about people lying? (NB. Prov. 6:16-17; Rev. 21:8)

8. Is lying simply a matter of saying the wrong things? (1Jn. 4:20)

There is hope for those who have fallen into lifestyle of deceit. It is something that needs to be confessed (James 5:16), then renounced (turn your back on it). God’s promise is that He will wash us clean from such a lifestyle (1Jn 1:6-9). It is then up to us to walk in the truth (Jn. 8:32).

Amen.

LIVING DIFFERENTLY

Part Six

This study series on the Beatitudes is designed to show us how Christ expects us to live. Nicky Gumble has written on the Beatitudes in his book “Challenging Lifestyles”. He refers to them as the most challenging pursuit any person can engage in. He makes mention of the incredibly high standard that they set. As we study these, let’s remind ourselves that we can not possibly attain to these standards without God’s help (Gal. 2:20).

HONEST TO GOD

Read Matthew 5:33-37

No one likes being lied to. We especially don’t like it when we are lied to by those we ordinarily trust. One day my son came into the house and Kim asked him what he had been doing. He said that he hadn’t been doing anything. She asked him whether he had touched Daddy’s motorbike. He said “no”. Then Kim told him to go and look in the mirror. Around his lips was the black soot of a motorbike exhaust pipe! While that episode of attempted deception may be humorous, there are times when deception can be deadly.

We all know that the Law says not to lie. But the danger that Christians face is that they strive to be technically correct, while they actually end up being deceptive. We must be careful with expressions like, “Drop in anytime”, or “If there’s anything I can do for you, just let me know”.

Jesus set the highest standards of honesty for His followers, and He still wants us to be honest to God (and to men).

REPRESENTING THE TRUTH

There are many words that spring to mind when we describe God. Words like: *holy*, *awesome*, *omniscient*, *omnipresent*, and *just*. Strangely the word “honest” doesn’t seem to feature very often when describing God.

1. What does Hebrews 6:18 say that makes God so different from any person?

What God says, He means. Nothing He says is meant to give any other impression than the truth. We know that He has commanded us not to lie (Ex. 20:16). But human nature loves to go to the outer limits of we can get away with. So we end telling things to other people, that while not “lying” the truth has been misrepresented. This is done by pastors, when they meet together and tell each other how they and their churches are going. It is done by congregational members to their pastors, when the pastor asks how they are going with the Lord, prayer and Bible reading. It is done by Christians when they sing songs to God. It is done by parents to their children. And it is definitely done by children to parents.

2. “If you don’t eat your crusts, your hair won’t grow curly!” “If you’re a good girl this year, Santa might come at Christmas and give you that toy you’ve been wanting”. What are some forms of *deception*, not out and out lies, that parents often tell their children?

Can we live in this world, so full of deception and falsehood, and live a life of integrity and honesty before both God and man?

What Jesus Had To Say...

Firstly, Jesus said that we should be honest with our intentions (5:33).

3. What does Deuteronomy 23:21-23 caution? (Eccl. 5:4-5)

Making promises or oaths is unnecessary for the Christian (James 5:12).

4. According to Jesus in Mat. 5:37, why is this so?

There are times when making a vow is valid. These times are associated with the making of a covenant. This was usually a life long agreement, that carried certain penalties if it was broken.

5. When we came to Christ, you made a vow to Him. What does the Bible say we should do about that vow? (Ps. 50:14)

When Yonggi Cho was becoming a Christian, he was suffering from tuberculosis. He made a vow to God that if God healed him of his TB he would become a preacher. God did heal him. Yonggi Cho honoured his vow and went to AOG Theological College to train to be a pastor. And the result was that he went on to be used by God to build one of the world’s largest congregations with Yoido Full Gospel Church growing to several hundred thousand members.

CHRISTIANS ARE HONEST

Imagine if we lived in the kind of world that Jesus is prescribing. A world where there was no murder (because people didn’t even get angry with each other), no adultery (because people didn’t lust immorally), and no deception! In this kind of world there would be no need for police, locks, prisons, courts, or contracts!