



Living the Jesus Way

Session 3:

How to Live With Integrity

Matthew 5:33-37 (NIV)

“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne;³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.³⁷ All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” Matthew 5:33-37

The Sermon on the Mount wasn't given as the way of salvation for the lost, but as the way of life for the children of the kingdom. The essence of Discipleship. Transforming a disciple's life.

Class Notes:

Session 1: ‘Worship the Lord’s Day’ Jesus is the center of our worshiping life.

Session 2: ‘How to Handle Anger’ Anger out of love is a righteous anger. Anger out of hurting is an unrighteous anger

Session 3: ‘How to Live With Integrity’

“We live in a culture in which the truth is often the first casualty of interactions between people. We have an incredibly elaborate system of lawyers and contracts and notaries and binding signatures to ensure that we do what we say we will do, at least when it’s perceived to be important enough. And none of it makes people any more truthful. In fact, most people don’t even believe truth is an objective reality.” *Bible.org*

Question: Is there an absolute to measure truth and integrity, or is everything relevant to ‘whatever’?

And, then the corollary question would be: “What happens if there is not an absolute to measure truth and integrity?”

And, then for some the question might become: “What’s the use of living to an objective standard?”

1. What's going on in Matthew 5:33-37
 - i. Jesus is confronting the corrupt system of oathtaking and reminds us that God sees the whole of our lives.
 - ii. He is not abolishing the law but goes back to the original purpose behind the law which was to ensure truthfulness.
 - iii. The whole system of oathtaking had become corrupt and was being used to avoid telling the truth. Honest people do not need to resort to oaths, but that doesn't mean we refuse to take oaths

Mark Twain

- “Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest.”
- “Laws control the lesser man...Right conduct controls the greater one.”
- “Principles have no real force except when those principles are well-fed”

2. What integrity is not: Integrity is not a form of legalism.

3. What is integrity?

- i. Old Testament: The Hebrew word translated “integrity” means “the condition of being without blemish, completeness, perfection, sincerity, uprightness, wholeness.”
- ii. New Testament: “Honesty and adherence to good works; being blameless before the Lord in attitudes, plans, purposes and actions as believer”
- iii. Being blameless in a New Covenant sense means:
 - a. confessing and turning from all our known sins through God’s grace and faith in Jesus Christ;
 - b. receiving God’s cleansing of us from our known and unknown sins;
 - c. sincerely aiming to obey all known aspects of God’s revealed will by the power of the Holy Spirit; and
 - d. Being blameless is a result or fruit of God’s grace and our faith. But being blameless is not a condition of salvation

4. Lives That Showed Integrity

- i. Job: Job 1:1 “There was a man in the land of Oz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.”
- ii. Hebrew midwives in Egypt: Exodus 1:17 “But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.”
- iii. Paul and Barnabas: Acts 14:12-15 When the people of Lystra desired to deify them and they refused.
- iv. George Bates
- v. Jesus: The New Testament

5. Lives That Showed a Lack of Integrity

- i. Micah: Judges 17:2 Micah steals one hundred pieces of silver
- ii. Ahab: 2 Kings 21:2-16 Ahab confiscates Naboth’s vineyard
- iii. Ananias and Sapphira: Acts 5:1-10 They lied to the Holy Spirit about the property they sold

6. What Can Integrity Look Like In Our Lives?

- i. Live a consistent life without compartments
 - a. God goes in this segment, but not in this segment.
 - b. Serving others goes in this segment but not in this segment.
 - c. Making a distinction between our public and private lives.
- ii. Speak the truth without deception or manipulation- integrity of word
 - a. Our word means something.
 - b. Read verse 5:33 God allowed people to make vows using his name to reinforce their commitment, but once made, such vows had to be kept. Exodus 20:7 and Deuteronomy 5:11 for example
 - c. Verse 37 is broader than only using ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a question; not to be taken too literally; Jesus Himself responded to the oath of testimony at His trial-we should not fall into the trap that the Pharisees fell into. This is about taking truth and honesty back to the basics.
 - d. What do we do when we are undercharged at a store”
 - e. If you promise to keep a secret, keep it
 - f. What do we do when someone forgets the money, they loaned us?

7. Cultivate a pure heart without faking it - integrity of heart

- i. Sobering thought Matthew 12:34 “...out of the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks.
- ii. Love God with all of our hearts: Deuteronomy 6:5, 11: 13 and others
- iii. Don’t harden our hearts against God Hebrews 3:4-16
- iv. Guard your heart. Proverbs 4:22-24
- v. Being blameless when do one is looking
- vi. Be real by:
 - 1. Repenting
 - 2. Enjoying God’s favor
 - 3. Aiming high
 - 4. Living by the spirit

“Only those who follow Jesus and cleave to him are living in complete truthfulness.... Complete truthfulness is only possible where sin has been uncovered, and forgiven by Jesus.... The cross is God’s truthfulness about us, and therefore is the only power which can make us truthful.....truth cuts false fellowship to pieces and establishes genuine brotherhood.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The challenge is to live with our whole lives surrendered to the lordship of Christ.

“When Jesus is Lord of our beliefs, opinions, ambitions, standards, values, and lifestyle, then we are integrated Christians. Then integrity marks our life. Only when he is Lord do we become whole.” John Stott

Discussion Questions

1. What does John Stott's quote on the previous page mean in your life?
2. What does it mean to you to be blameless? How can you strive to become more blameless?
3. Who are examples in your life of people with integrity
4. In our Christian communities, how can we help each other to live with integrity and be role models for others?
5. What are some of the challenges to integrity faced by Christians in our society today? How could these obstacles be overcome?
6. Jesus said, "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'." (Matthew 5:37). If you were to follow the intent of this teaching, what difference would it make in your everyday life?
7. Jesus sets the bar very high in this area. He is "a man of integrity andteach(es) the way of God in accordance with the truth." (Matthew 22:16) Why do you think this is? How can we try to achieve a level of integrity that is closer to Jesus?
8. Have you had any recent experience of dishonesty in others? How did it make you feel?
9. What opportunities have you had recently to show integrity?