

Goals

There are certain behavioral issues that we often take for granted or do not pay attention to. These are very basic but essential aspects of our lives as Christian: honesty, dealing with greed and anger-management. At the very least, we have to be good examples and a light to the world concerning these issues. More simply, as Christians who bear the special status as God's children, we have to glorify His name and uphold certain biblical principles.

It is important to let our students know that these issues, albeit fundamental, are important to our lives, before God and men. The lessons will give them a peek into what the Bible teaches about these issues. But ultimately, the teacher's support and guidance must be present to help the students live out these principles.

unit 4

Teacher Devotional

Faithfulness in little things is a great thing. This saying is so true! In our spiritual lives, we have probably realized this for ourselves. For example, it is always easy for us to fast and pray for many hours during student theological training seminars or spiritual convocations. But, how many of us can actually sustain a lifestyle of such fervor everyday? The true test of our faith towards God is not about what we do during such events organized by the church. True faith comes from our every little act and thought in our daily living. The true test of our spirituality is in the way we deal with others. Let us not deceive ourselves or be deceived. Let us strive to lead a life as a true Christian, demonstrated as we live a life guided by the words of God.

Live a True Christian Life

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Col 3:17)

Lesson 10

Honesty Counts

Listed Scriptures

Rom 8:5; Eph 4:15; Ex 20:16, 17; Prov 4:23; Rom 12:3; 1 Kgs 21:1-25; Jn 13:21-30

Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable our students to understand that cheating is not just stealing and that there are other kinds of cheating, big or small.
- 2) To help our students assess their own character.
- 3) To help our students resolve not to compromise their character.

Memory Verse

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." (Rom 8:5)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Proverbs 28-30

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



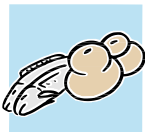
Due to the nature of this lesson, there is no Bible background information available.



“Honesty” is a word that we don’t hear much of nor use nowadays. Either people assume that honesty is a given, and everyone is honest, or we’re living in a world where returns and gains outweigh all other considerations, and we simply don’t think honesty fits into anyone’s picture anymore. The latter is probably true. As Christians, we must uphold our integrity and in all our dealings with people, we must be honest.

Today, we’ll take a look at this topic. Let’s first define what honesty means to you. Specifically, in what aspects of life is honesty relevant? (Let students respond.) We will keep in mind all your responses as we go through today’s lesson. We will see if there are areas you haven’t thought of concerning what it means to be honest.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Honesty in...

The Bible does not give us specific commandments that we have to be honest but, from various other teachings, we know that honesty is a very important virtue in the sight of God. Let’s look at some Bible references regarding honesty.

A. Speech (Eph 4:15)

- What does it really mean to be speaking the truth with love? Does that mean we should indiscreetly tell everyone everything there has to be said? Would that be considered a loving act?
(As best as we can, without contradiction to the truth, we should speak honestly and truthfully. But, there are some things that do not need to be said or known, and we need to have wisdom to know when to keep our mouths shut sometimes. For example, if someone has done something embarrassing but it does not affect the church, there is no need to let anyone else know. By

not publicizing it, we are not being dishonest. It is just simply something that does not need to be shared.)



B. Money/Things/Goods (Ex 20:16,17)

- What does it mean not to bear false witness?
(It means we do not say anything that is not true, as far as we know for sure.)
- The 9th commandment (to be truthful in our words) is often lumped together with the 10th (to not covet) as one teaching. What do you think is the relationship between honesty and covetousness?
(Often, we exaggerate things or slip into half-truths if we have something to gain. With many cases of dishonesty, there are some gains to be attained. Hence, the Bible teaches us to speak the truth and not covet.)
- Read: “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim 6:9, 10). Do you think greed for money and honesty can co-exist? What are some situations where a person’s greed for money might have caused him to be dishonest?
(Greed is when you desire more than what you are entitled to. It is hard for honesty to co-exist with greed because to gain what we do not deserve, we often have to use dishonest means.)
- Can you think of a biblical character whose greed for money led him or her to lie?
(Jezebel, Judas Iscariot, Ananias/Sapphira)



C. Our Hearts (Prov 4:23, Rom 12:3)

- What does it mean to keep one’s heart with all diligence?
(It means to make sure our thoughts and plans are properly controlled and according to God’s teachings.)
- Why is “keeping one’s heart” so important?
(All actions stem from an idea, or a thought, inside our head or our heart. Hence, we have to guard our hearts if we want to keep ourselves from sinning.)

- c. Do you think honesty is one important aspect of “keeping one’s heart”?
(Of course.)
- d. Why is honesty important to the “issues of life”?
(Honesty affects many other actions – like what we say, and what we do and how we interact with others.)
- e. Why is it important for us to be honest with ourselves (ref Rom 12:3)?
(If we are not honest with ourselves, we may get bitter about a lot of things, especially when we compare ourselves with others. That may lead to further unhappiness and even sin against others. Being honest with ourselves also means we can come before God with a true heart to repent.)
- f. What does it mean to be honest with ourselves with regard to our faith and spiritual life?
(We need to know if we’re true to God. Outward appearances can be deceiving. We may be good Christians in the eyes of others because we go to church and work a lot for God. But, what are we in truth? What are our thoughts, our words, our actions? Only we know ourselves best. We have to self-examine constantly so we can improve all the time and be a true Christian.)



Part 2

Case Studies

Honesty and greed often cannot co-exist. Dishonesty often leads to grave consequences – to others and to one-self. We shall now take a look at two case studies from the Bible where the downfall of the characters stemmed from their greed and dishonesty.



A. Jezebel Frames Naboth (1 Kgs 21:1-25)

- a. Did Ahab need an extra vineyard?
(He had the desire, but not a real need for another vineyard.)
- b. Why did he want to have another vineyard?
(He wanted to convert it to a vegetable garden because it was conveniently located next to his palace.)

- c. What was the plan that Jezebel came up with to help Ahab secure Naboth’s vineyard?
(She would get people to frame Naboth, saying that he had blasphemed God and have him sentenced to death.)
- d. What was God’s reaction to the plan of Jezebel?
(God punished Jezebel and wild dogs ate her corpse.)
- e. What do the endings of Jezebel and Ahab tell you about the gravity of their sins?
(Ahab died in battle. Bearing false testimony is a great sin in the eyes of God.)



B. Judas Iscariot (Jn 13:21-30)

- a. At the last supper, the Lord Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. He did not exclude Judas, whom He knew was going to betray Him. If you were Judas, facing your master who stooped down to wash your feet, what would your feelings be then?
(Guilt-ridden, perhaps change my mind about betraying the Lord.)
- b. Do you think Judas had a chance to turn from his evil plan to betray the Lord Jesus at that moment? Would the Lord Jesus have forgiven him? What would have been the reaction of the other disciples?
(Yes, the Lord Jesus is full of compassion and if Judas had repented at the last minute, he would have been forgiven.)
- c. If Judas had confessed and changed his mind, God would still have fulfilled salvation through another way. Why do you think Judas caused himself to become the one who would go down in history as the betrayer of Jesus Christ?
(Greed for money. He was overcome by the idea and did not try to cleanse his heart of the evil plan.)
- d. What lessons does the decision of Judas have for you?

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

In what ways do we have to be honest?

2

What does it mean to “speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15)?

3

What is the relationship between greed/covetousness and honesty?

4

What was the end like for those people who tried to gain through dishonesty, like Jezebel and Judas?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



More Than a Dime

Lead a short discussion before the following story is shared (the teacher should make sure students do not read the story before this discussion):

Questions to think about:

1. *What would you do if the cashier at a department store gave you extra change?*
2. *What are the factors you consider when making a decision like that?*
3. *Do you think the amount matters? If it is just a quarter, maybe you would keep it. But if it is a few dollars or more what would you do?*
4. *What do you think are the potential repercussions/implications of your decision?*

Here is a story about honesty in what most people would consider a very trivial thing. But as the saying goes, “Faithfulness in little things is a great thing.” The same can be said for honesty. We will see how one little dime can bring about great implications.

Several years ago, a pastor moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him ten cents too much change.

As he considered what to do, there alternately appeared to him little angelic figures sitting on his shoulders and whispering instructions into his ears. One said, “You had better give the dime back. It would be wrong to keep it.”

On the other shoulder, a voice said, “Oh forget it. It’s just ten cents. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company already gets too much fare. With the millions they collect everyday, they will never miss it. Accept it as a gift from God and keep quiet.”

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the front door, and handing the driver the dime, he said, “Here. You handed me too much change.”

The driver replied, “Aren’t you the new pastor in town? I have been thinking lately about going to church somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you ten cents too much change.”

When the pastor stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, and held on, and said, “O God, I almost sold Your Son for ten cents.”

(By Alan Johnson, “Romans – The Freedom Letter”)

Questions to think about:

1. *After reading this story, do you think your responses to the questions in the discussion earlier would be different now? Why?*
2. *With respect to the two angels, whose opinion do you agree with more? Why?*
3. *Imagine a different scenario: If the driver is not someone who was out testing the pastor, do you think your answer to the second question would be different? Why?*
4. *Can you think of other scenarios where honesty can be so crucial? In groups of two or three, come up with situations where honesty is very important. Explain the situation and the factors needed for consideration.*



As a conclusion to today's lesson, let us read a well-known story. It is a story many of us have heard about when we were young children. Many of us have at one point or another been told that we should always be honest. As we grow older, life becomes more complicated and it sometimes become harder for us to be honest. But let us always retain a childlike pureness, no matter how old we grow, for that is beautiful in the eyes of God. May God help us to always be honest and truthful.

When George Washington was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a hatchet of which, like most little boys, he was extremely fond. He went about chopping everything that came his way. One day, as he wandered about the garden amusing himself by hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he found a beautiful, young English cherry tree, of which his father was most proud. He tried the edge of his hatchet on the trunk of the tree and barked it so that it died. Some time after this, his father discovered what had happened to his favorite tree. He came into the house in great anger, and demanded to know who the mischievous person was who had cut away the bark. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Just then George, with his little hatchet, came into the room.

"George," said his father, "do you know who has killed my beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden? I would not have taken five guineas for it!"

This was a hard question to answer, and for a moment George was staggered by it, but quickly recovering himself he cried: "I cannot tell a lie, father, you know I cannot tell a lie! I did cut it with my little hatchet."

The anger died out of his father's face, and taking the boy tenderly in his arms, he said:—

"My son, that you should not be afraid to tell the truth is

more to me than a thousand trees! Yes, though they were blossomed with silver and had leaves of the purest gold!"

Surely our honesty towards men and before God will be praised by our Heavenly father just as George Washington's was praised by his father!