

Discipleship Series for New Believers

Lesson 7: Honesty with God

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Honesty with God-Why

A new believer can experience more rapid spiritual growth if they learn to be honest with themselves and God. A lot of times in the church Christians have a tendency to hide their weaknesses completely from others. Therefore, new believers think they are the only ones who don't have it all together yet. I think the result of a Christian hiding all traces of their struggles and problems in discipleship does more harm to new believers than good. The new believers end up becoming discouraged because they can never measure up to the standard of perfection set before them.

Therefore, an important ingredient to spiritual growth is not to pretend to be something we are not before God. He cannot change us as much as He desires if we lie to Him and ourselves about where we are at in our relationship with God. God wants us to be honest with Him when we do not know how to pray, hear His voice, etc. He desires that we admit our inability rather than go on in our flesh pretending we know what we are doing when we do not. When we humble ourselves before God and admit these things to Him, then He can truly teach us how to pray and hear His voice. The alternative is settling for a counterfeit we work out in our flesh which will not bring life to ourselves or anyone else. God is not angry at us when we admit to Him honestly where we are at in our relationship with Him or tell Him the sins we need Him to help us with in our lives. He desires truth in our inward parts (Psalm 51:6) so He can change us into His image.

Honesty with God-How

Honesty before God is so important because when we are pretending, we are settling for a lame counterfeit of what God truly has for us, and we are being religious. However, God has more for us in this life than a pale imitation of Christianity. He wants us to truly know Him and be clothed with His righteousness and power. He wants us to put down all our facades and really be spiritual. God does not get angry at us when we admit our failures to Him or our need for Him. All He really desires from us is honesty. Being truly spiritual begins with acknowledging before God where we are really at with Him instead of pretending to be something we are not. Jeremiah 3:12-13 illustrates this point so clearly. It states, "'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the Lord; 'I will not cause my anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the Lord; 'I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,' says the Lord." God knew exactly where His people were. He knew it was a place of sin, and all God asked of them to heal them was that they would honestly acknowledge their sin before Him. This is all He ever asks of us. An example of this is parents who catch their children doing something wrong. Then when the child is caught in the act they lie about what they were caught doing and say they did not do it. The parents are not pleased

that the child disobeyed them, but they are usually even more upset that their child lied to them also. The same is true with God. If we are doing something wrong, He wants us to come to Him and acknowledge our sins so He can help us change.

Revelation 3:14-22 is about the Laodicean church. The Laodicean church is a picture of people who were not honest before God. The Lord said of them that they would say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," but in reality they were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." This is the counsel God gave them to change and that God would also give to others who have deceit in their heart before Him. He said, "I counsel you to buy gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve...therefore be zealous and repent," (Revelation 3:14-22).

Oftentimes, when we are not honest before God, we are not only trying to deceive Him about where we are at but also ourselves. We might be telling ourselves and God that we are okay, but God is going to have to uncover our nakedness because He loves us. He is going to have to show us how spiritually bankrupt we are. But if we repent and lose the counterfeit of deceit we have been holding onto, then we can have the real thing. He can cover our nakedness and open our eyes to see spiritual things from Him. He can give us true gold refined in the fire instead of something that only resembles spirituality but is not. All we have to do is be honest with Him about where we are at and repent of pretending. We need to tell Him we do not want to settle for a counterfeit we made ourselves, but we want everything real He has for us.

John 1:43-51 is about a man named Nathanael in whom Jesus said there was no deceit. Jesus also told him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these. And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" Jesus was showing us what He promises to a heart that will be open and honest with Him. Nathanael had no deceit in His heart. He was not trying to pretend to be someone he was not. He was open and honest. He did not pretend before men or God. And the Lord promised from that point on Nathanael would have an open heaven. This is a promise to those who will be honest about who they are before God. They will be able to speak to God and whatever they need in their lives, God will provide it for them.

The Scripture from the Beatitudes echoes a similar meaning. Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." A pure heart is definitely one without deceit. If we have a pure heart, God will be able to reveal Himself to us. He will not have to resist us because of the pride of our hearts when we say we have no sin. But since we are being honest with Him, He will cover us with the blood of Jesus and with His grace and mercy, and He will show Himself to us.