

Journey to the Truth

**A Biblical Study of Honesty
from Genesis to Revelation**

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GLOBAL INITIATIVE
REACHING **MUSLIM** PEOPLES

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from Genesis to Revelation***

by Fred Farrokh

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Dedication

To all Muslim-background believers in Christ who,
in this life, are walking with Jesus,
who is the Truth.

Foreword

The journey of discipleship is always a journey into truth, for our Lord Jesus himself declared, “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*” This book, *Journey to the Truth*, takes us by the hand and walks us carefully through Scripture to show that honesty is not a secondary virtue but a central mark of the people of God. From the first lie in the Garden to the glorious promise of a new creation where nothing false will enter, the Bible testifies that truthfulness is essential for life with God.

For Muslim-background believers, the theme of honesty carries an added weight. Many of us were raised in cultures where deception was rationalized or even praised when it seemed useful. Yet the gospel calls us into a kingdom where God himself cannot lie, where Christ is the Truth incarnate, and where the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. To follow Jesus is to be re-formed in His likeness, which means learning to renounce deceit and embrace truth in our innermost being.

This book is both timely and practical. It is timely because dishonesty erodes trust in families, communities, churches, and nations. It is practical because it does not merely condemn lies but points us to the grace of God that transforms liars into truth-tellers. The thirty short studies here allow readers to encounter Scripture devotionally—one passage a day for a month—while also engaging in honest reflection through discussion questions.

I am deeply encouraged that this work has been written with Muslim-background believers in mind, yet it speaks with power to every Christian who longs to walk in integrity. Each chapter shows us that dishonesty is not only destructive to human relationships but offensive to God, while honesty is a mark of His children. The repeated call of this book is not to rely on our own willpower, but to trust the Holy Spirit to reshape our consciences and align us with the Word of God.

My prayer is that as you read *Journey to the Truth*, you will sense the invitation of our Father to come out of hiding, to lay aside falsehood, and to walk in the light. May these pages strengthen your faith, deepen your repentance, and help you live in the freedom and joy of the One who is the Truth. Grace and Peace in Christ,

Nasser al'Qahtani
River of Life Network

Table of Contents

DEDICATION	iv
FOREWORD	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
INTRODUCTION	x
 PART I: HONESTY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT	1
CHAPTER 1	
THE FIRST LIE HEARD BY HUMAN EARS.....	2
CHAPTER 2	
AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?	5
CHAPTER 3	
HALF-TRUTHS	7
CHAPTER 4	
NO LAUGHING MATTER AND THE MERCY OF GOD.....	11
CHAPTER 5	
THE NINTH COMMANDMENT	15
CHAPTER 6	
AARON AND THE GOLDEN CALF SCANDAL.....	18
CHAPTER 7	
THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD	22
CHAPTER 8	
SITUATIONAL ETHICS: RAHAB AND THE HEBREW SPIES	25
CHAPTER 9	
TRUTH IN THE INNERMOST BEING	29

CHAPTER 10	
WHAT DOES A GOD OF LOVE HATE?	34
CHAPTER 11	
DISHONESTY AND DICTATORSHIP	37
CHAPTER 12	
THE UNBLEMISHED LAMB	40
CHAPTER 13	
THE DECEITFUL HEART	43
PART II: HONESTY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	45
CHAPTER 14	
CONFESSION: THE BUILDING BLOCK OF TRUTH	47
CHAPTER 15	
THE DECEPTION AT THE END TIMES	51
CHAPTER 16	
TRUE WORSHIP	54
CHAPTER 17	
THE CHAIN-BREAKING TRUTH	57
CHAPTER 18	
THE FATHER OF LIES	60
CHAPTER 19	
A GOD OF TRUTH	64
CHAPTER 20	
GOD IS SERIOUS ABOUT HONESTY	67
CHAPTER 21	
RELIGIOUS LIARS	70
CHAPTER 22	
THE GOOD CONFESSION	73
CHAPTER 23	
MOTIVES ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD	76

CHAPTER 24	
THE BREAD OF SINCERITY AND TRUTH	79
CHAPTER 25	
LAYING ASIDE FALSEHOOD	83
CHAPTER 26	
THE BELT OF TRUTH.....	86
CHAPTER 27	
THE PERILS OF SELF-DECEPTION.....	89
CHAPTER 28	
CONFESSION AND THE LIGHT	93
CHAPTER 29	
HONESTY IS A SALVATION ISSUE AFTER ALL	96
CHAPTER 30	
HEALING FOR THE NATIONS	99
AFTERWORD	102
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	104

INTRODUCTION

Why This Book Was Written

Though many Muslims are honest people, most Islamic societies suffer due to massive problems with dishonesty. Islam makes excuses for and, ultimately, rationalizes the dishonest human heart. Muhammad justified dishonesty and *taqiyya* (dissimulation and deception). Although there are some Muslims who genuinely desire to live free of deceit, many Muslim communities are so infected by dishonest face-saving measures and half-truths that the genuinely honest person seems to stand out as an oddity.

Dishonesty wrecks relationships. Trust can only develop in relationships in which honesty is also present over an extended time. Churches and fellowship groups are also impacted negatively where dishonesty runs rampant.

Honesty has emerged as one of the most important elements of discipleship for Muslim-background believers in Christ (MBBs). Therefore, MBBs must address this issue scripturally and with urgency.

Saved by Grace

We are saved by grace through the blood of the Lord Jesus, not by our own good works. We confess that in our flesh dwells no

good thing, so we rely solely on the blood of Jesus. We want to draw closer to Jesus who is the Truth.

Jesus came to save sinners, not the self-righteous. This includes dishonest sinners like us. No one is perfect on this side of eternity, except the Lord Jesus himself. No one is saved by just being a little more honest. We all need the grace of God. As Paul testified about the Lord, “He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness’” (2 Cor. 12:9). The journey to truth, which we are about to embark on, is one of grace, not of willpower.

How People Change

Nicodemus, a religious teacher, visited Jesus one night because he was afraid others would find out about the meeting. In their conversation, Jesus shared that famous verse, John 3:16. Yet, earlier in the passage, Jesus shares important truths on how people can change. First, Jesus said that we must be born again. The new birth, or spiritual regeneration, is God’s answer to our sinful condition.

Second, Jesus tells Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit will transform believers: “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). What a beautiful and mystical picture of how the Spirit moves! Who can see where the wind is coming from? We can feel the wind and see it blowing through the trees. The wind drives the clouds, but we cannot see the wind itself. Likewise, the Holy Spirit brings new

birth and deep transformation within. Just as we struggle to describe the wind, we may struggle to explain how or why this transformation happens. Yet, the Holy Spirit, known also as the breath, inspiration, or wind of God, is much more real than the winds of nature.

How can the Spirit transform us? As Muslim-background believers in Christ, we have two major problems concerning the area of dishonesty. First, the hearts of human beings are inherently deceptive. The prophet Jeremiah describes our hearts as “more deceitful than all else and [as] desperately sick” (17:9). All humans are subject to this affliction.

Islamic conditioning drives our second major problem. It is not necessary to fill a book on Christian discipleship with references from the Qur'an and Hadith. Yet, Muhammad said, for example, “He who makes peace between the people by inventing good information or saying good things, is not a liar” (Bukhari 2692). Such a statement justifies dishonesty and intrigue.

Jesus told us to “repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). What does repentance look like in this area of honesty and truthfulness? This book helps us consider this question.

The Octopus of Dishonesty

Scripture tells us that “the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). Similarly, dishonesty attaches itself to all sorts of sins. People utilize dishonesty to try to cover up every type of sin. The sinful action comes first, then the person uses deception to deny it. One sin becomes two, and the whole sinful situation

soon spins out of control. Dishonesty acts like an octopus, pushing its tentacles everywhere.

We see a completely different picture with the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus built upon the Hebrew Scriptures and their emphasis upon honesty. He intended the body of Christ to be a truthful people, being transformed into His image by the Holy Spirit.

Defining Honesty and Dishonesty

Honesty is difficult to define precisely. Sincerity, integrity, genuineness, faithfulness, and reliability are related terms. Some may think of honesty as simply “telling the truth.” This is a good beginning, but people can arrange pieces of true information in a way they know is deceptive. Often, they leave out other pieces of true information needed to give an overall honest picture.

To clarify our objective, this book will focus on identifying and rooting out dishonesty, which is *the intent to deceive for the purpose of injuring others or promoting oneself, one’s family, or one’s group*.

Certain activities, such as military actions and sports, usually require each army or team to fake or deceive the opposition. An army will try to confuse the opposing army through decoys, feints, etc. The same holds true for sports teams. However, if they are playing within the established rules, this does not constitute the type of dishonesty being addressed in this book.

Our major objective in *Journey to the Truth* is to sensitize our consciences to the importance of honesty for MBBs. Greater awareness brings greater sensitivity. Our consciences must

increasingly align with the Bible, not with Islamic norms or with popular culture. Since we have been raised in Islam, which condones deception, we must press into the Holy Spirit so He can re-format and re-sensitize our consciences to align with the Word of God.

Let's embark on our journey, which has been organized through the Bible, chronologically. Not all Bible passages related to honesty are included in this study. The book only includes thirty studies so someone can read one per day and complete it in a month. Even since writing the first draft, I encountered many other verses on this topic, but I decided to leave it at thirty short chapters. In your own studies, I am sure you will find more scriptural support for the principles discovered in this short resource. To get the most benefit, please pause to ponder the discussion questions at the end of each chapter. These questions can also be addressed in small groups.

PART I

Honesty in the Old Testament

As Christians, we would be mistaken to think our journey through the Scriptures begins at Matthew 1:1. In fact, Jesus and the apostles—all of whom were Jewish—built upon the foundation of honesty laid by God in the Hebrew Scriptures. Please read these chapters carefully, since they form the building-blocks for Christian living and life in the body of Christ.

CHAPTER 1

The First Lie Heard by Human Ears

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!" (Gen. 3:1-4)

The first lie ever heard by human ears was blurted out by Satan to Eve. The serpent contradicted her. He guaranteed that eating the forbidden fruit would not result in death. Satan possessed a self-assurance that seemed to unsettle Eve. He indicted God himself as he explained, "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

Satan lied when he implied that God was insecure in the face of potential rivals. In fact, Satan wanted to be that rival to

overthrow God, yet he projected his own ambitions onto the recently created humans.

Genesis 3 provides believers in Christ much material to ponder: the entrance of sin, the fall of the humans, and the curses that followed. Some have wondered if the original sin of the humans was pride—wanting to be like God. Or was it fleshly desires, since the food looked good to eat? Or was it disobedience, since God had warned them about eating from that one specific tree? All of these explanations hold credibility.

One aspect of the Genesis 3 “Fall Story” often overlooked is the entrance of Satan as the “father of lies.” Moving from the beginning of the Bible to its conclusion, the serpent is identified as Satan: “The great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). In this verse, Jesus shows the Apostle John and Christ’s Church that the serpent is indeed the devil. Satan’s main method of operation is through deception.

At first, Adam and Eve may have thought Satan was telling the truth because they did not fall over dead after they ate the fruit. However, they would later see death enter the picture as their son Cain murdered his brother, Abel. Adam and Eve, and all their children from that time until now, would eventually die. Often the dying process is a slow and painful withering away of a person who previously had been young and strong. “You surely will not die!” was an outright lie.

In addition to physical death, Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death. At once, their sins separated them from God. They even hid from God, who used to walk in the Garden and talk with

them. Adam and Eve, covered in sin and shame, hid from God: “They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8). Their nature changed and became fallen.

Our lives frequently mirror this picture. When we sin, we tend to run away from God. We become a basket-case of insecurity. The opposite option exists for us—to throw ourselves upon the mercy of the Heavenly Father, who extends to us total and unconditional love and acceptance in Christ. As MBBs, we must remind ourselves repeatedly of God’s unconditional love and grace.

This Bible study will also reveal a thread weaving its way through Scripture: *human insecurity leads to dishonesty, resulting in ruptured relationships with God and others*. Thankfully, Jesus would come to the rescue thousands of years later as the Second Adam, to crush the head of the serpent. When Jesus died as a substitute on the cross, He not only forgave our sins, but He also changed our nature. The blood of Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, opened the door to honesty.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we tend to hide from God when we sin, rather than run to Him?
2. What is the relationship between dishonesty and shame?
3. If you were in Adam and Eve’s shoes, what is one thing you would have done differently during Genesis 3? Why?

CHAPTER 2

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground." (Gen. 4:8-10)

Cain demonstrated the fallen nature flowing directly from his parents' sinful decision in the Garden of Eden. What a heartbreaking experience for Adam and Eve: one dark day they learned that one of their sons had killed the other!

Those who have studied Genesis 4 have often pondered the difference between the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel. Another relevant topic to consider is Cain's dishonesty in lying to God regarding the whereabouts of his brother's lifeless body. Instead of confessing his sin, he made a guilty, irritated or even sarcastic reply, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" Whether Cain's response was based more on guilt, irritation, or sarcasm, one thing is not in doubt; he lied to God.

We note also that God responded to Cain's sin as He did to Adam and Eve's sin. He asked all of them questions to which He undoubtedly knew the answers. To Adam and Eve, God's questions included, "Where are you?" and "Have you eaten of the tree I commanded you not to eat?" Of course, God knew where they were, and He knew that they had eaten the forbidden fruit. His questions gave them the wonderful opportunity to process their experience and to honestly confess their sins. Unfortunately, Adam immediately played "the blame game" by blaming both God and Eve: "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate" (Gen. 3:12).

Cain, fallen in nature, exhibited the same tendency. God asked him a question about his brother. God knew the answer but wanted to give Cain the chance to make an honest confession. Yet, Cain said he did not know the whereabouts of his brother.

Sinful Cain became dishonest Cain. He ruptured the relationship with his brother in the most permanent and tragic way. He murdered him in cold blood. His relationship with God was also injured. He responded to God's punishment with a loud complaint: "My punishment is too great to bear" (Gen. 4:13)!

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Cain lied to God? Did he think he could trick God? Did he not realize God knew the answer to the question?
2. What types of sin commonly cause us to be dishonest?
3. What type of sins usually "spin-off" into dishonesty?

CHAPTER 3

Half-Truths

Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."
(Gen. 12:10-13)

Abram married his half-sister, Sarai. Later, God would change their names to Abraham and Sarah. Although she was beautiful, she could not bear children. On two occasions, Genesis 12 and Genesis 20, Abram obscured the fact that Sarah was his wife. He stated, accurately, or somewhat accurately, that she was his sister. In fact, she was his half-sister. Abraham was telling a half-truth.

Did Abraham tell the half-truth with the intention of being honest or with the intention of being deceptive? The scriptural text makes it clear that Abraham prioritized self-preservation in this

case. Overall, Abraham was a good man with a beautiful, childlike trust in God. In this case, however, he tried to outwit everyone with a half-truth meant to deceive the Egyptians.

The Bible is candid. It does not hide the faults of its heroes, of whom Abraham is one. The Qur'an, on the other hand, gives an unrealistic picture of infallible prophets. Some Muslims complain that the Bible has downgraded the reputation of prophets, yet, the prophets presented by the Qur'an are not realistically human. Therefore, we cannot fully relate to them or learn from them.

Regarding Abraham, he seems to have gotten into an anxious habit regarding how he would identify his wife, Sarah. Later, in Genesis 20, Abraham hatched a similar scheme with Ahimelech, King of Gerar. Abraham introduced Sarah as his sister because he was afraid the King would kill him to take her as a wife. Abraham rationalized his approach to Ahimelech after his dishonesty was exposed:

Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife; and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'" (Gen. 20:11-13)

The question emerges whether Abraham's use of a "half-truth" was justified. True, Sarah was his half-sister, but Abraham used the "sister" introduction with the intent of deceiving people so that they

would not suspect her to be his wife. Yet she was indeed his wife! So, we observe here that Abraham harbored within his heart an intent to deceive for self-protection. This is the type of dishonesty we are trying to identify, expose, and avoid as Muslim-background believers.

The Bible completes the story with a picture of Abram's strength, not only his weakness. We read that Abram "believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Even though Abraham had a weakness in the area of slippery half-truths, he believed in God. For us, believing in the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of sins gives us great confidence: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Abraham's trust in God was later displayed when he was willing to offer his beloved Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Abraham passed a great test of faith. God provided the lamb for the offering (Gen. 22:8). God's mercy, intervention, and guidance allowed this whole narrative to progress, with Abraham growing in faith throughout.

Meanwhile, we learn a lot from Abraham and Sarah. They struggled to trust God, as we all do. Often, we take matters into our own hands, rather than praying, trusting God, and moving forward under His direction. Despite their sins and struggles, Abraham and Sarah are listed in the Hebrews chapter 11 "Hall of Faith" for their trust in God.

Discussion Questions

1. Are half-truths better than full lies? Why or why not?
2. Given this Bible study about Abraham and Sarah, do you think they sinned? Please explain your reasoning.
3. How can our lies ever be forgiven?

CHAPTER 4

No Laughing Matter and the Mercy of God

Then they said to him [Abraham], “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” He said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?” And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’ Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” Sarah denied it however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.” (Gen. 18: 9-15)

The stories of the patriarchs feature several examples of women who were barren but then were enabled by God to bear important sons. Rachel was barren before the

Lord opened her womb. She then bore Joseph and Benjamin to Jacob. In the Bible narrative above, Sarah was barren.

This famous Bible story picks up at the Oaks of Mamre in Genesis 18. The divine angel of the Lord with two other angels went to visit Abraham and Sarah. When the Lord brought the good news of their upcoming son, Sarah laughed in disbelief; by this time, she was too old to have children.

For some reason, the Lord pointed out her incredulous laugh. Perhaps it was because Abraham would become the “father of the faithful” and one justified by faith. We do not know all the reasons God points out the sins of some but not of others.

Whether Sarah was more disbelieving or simply embarrassed by this great announcement, the result was that she lied about laughing. Sometimes we lie after having a long time to formulate an alibi or excuse. In this case, Sarah seems to have been taken by surprise. Then she lied and God called it out.

I recall a similar incident when I was 17 years old. I liked to play a sport called golf. I was playing in a tournament. My match ended so I decided to carry the bag of my good friend while he was completing his match. On one hole, he hit his ball into some trees, and we did not know where it landed. We went to look for it in the long grass behind the trees. His opponent seemed to be out of sight. Suddenly, I almost tripped on the white ball covered by the long grass. I reached down to see if it indeed was my friend’s ball. It was. In one second, I flipped the ball with my hand into a better position and called my friend to let him know that I had found his ball. I had cheated!

After the match, my friend's opponent confronted me. He said, "Fred, how's your toe?" I said I did not know what he was talking about. He responded that he had seen me kick the ball in the long grass behind the trees. I denied that I had kicked the ball. In fact, I had not kicked the ball but moved it with my hand. He scoffed and turned away.

Two years later, I became a Christian. Somehow that experience haunted me. I had intended to deceive and cheat in that game. The Holy Spirit prompted me to find the organizer of the tournament, as well as my friend's opponent. I called each one and apologized. They were a bit surprised since the incident happened a couple years prior. I told them that I had become a Christian and now realized what I had done was wrong.

Sarah's response to God's correction also instructs us. It is easy to pout and complain when God corrects us. However, God loves us as our Heavenly Father. Every responsible father must provide some discipline to his children.

Nevertheless, Sarah did not wallow in self-pity. Though she soon would be raising a toddler, she did not act like a toddler. She took the correction to heart. She allowed God to replace her unbelief with belief. Sarah is later listed in the Hebrews "Hall of Faith:" "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). Sarah's faith was boosted by the faithfulness of God.

Nine months later, Sarah would give birth to Isaac, whose name means "laughter." Abraham selected that name. Every time Sarah called Isaac's name, she had opportunity to remember how God

helped her proceed from disbelief and dishonesty to faith and joyful laughter. God is faithful and merciful to His children.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you faced a situation in which something happened so fast that you lied without even having time to think about a response? What happened?
2. Have you gone through situations in which it was not clear why God was working in a certain way, but afterward it became clear?
3. Have your Muslim friends and family laughed in disbelief about your Christian testimony? How might God's mercy turn them around as He did with Sarah?

CHAPTER 5

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
(Exod. 20:16)

God gave Moses ten main commandments for the Children of Israel. These provided the standard for worship, family relationships, law, and justice. The impact of the Ten Commandments throughout human history cannot be overstated.

The Ninth Commandment addresses lying. This commandment does not mention lying to God (who sees everything anyway) but bearing false witness against one's neighbor. In most courtrooms throughout the world, people must swear to testify truthfully. If not, they may be found guilty of perjury—lying under oath.

Lying has many implications for law, justice, and politics. We have heard regarding politicians, “They will say anything to get elected.” Yet, God does not say, “You shall not bear false witness against your political rival, or against your electoral constituents.” He emphasizes “one's neighbor.” The Ten Commandments underscore that lying destroys relationships. We cannot “love our neighbor” if we lie to our neighbor.

Lying destroys relationships between friends and neighbors. Likewise, if dishonesty spreads throughout society, that society will simply be unable to function well. People will call good evil, and evil good. Eventually, people will reward evil behavior and punish good behavior. Dishonesty is the root system of corrupt societies and unjust governments. Dishonesty flows from the roots to the branches like sap flows upward in trees. The fruit of such trees is bitter dishonesty, rather than the sweet, ripe fruit of honesty.

Proverbs also provides the clear contrast: “A trustworthy witness will not lie, but a false witness utters lies” (Prov. 14:5). The honest person is trustworthy, whereas dishonesty results in loss of trust. Christians may instantaneously forgive those who lie to them, but they would be naïve to immediately trust a liar. Trust takes time to build. Therefore, it is a precious commodity worth more than gold.

In conclusion, God instituted honesty as a part of the Ten Commandments, which comprised the very foundation of the divine law. Later, as our study reaches the New Testament, we will see that Jesus and His disciples were keenly aware of the importance of upholding this standard of honesty in the era of the church.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever watched a television court program in which one side must clearly be lying? What was your impression of the parties and the judge in the case?

2. We often hear of Christians “not being under the Law.” Does the Ninth Commandment still apply to us? Why or why not?
3. Think of an occasion in which dishonesty ruptured a relationship. How could honesty have prevented the relationship from breaking down?

CHAPTER 6

Aaron and the Golden Calf Scandal

Then Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?” Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, ‘Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.” (Exod. 32:21-24)

The focus of this chapter is Aaron’s intent to deceive. The Golden Calf Scandal marked the low point of Aaron’s admirable life of service to God. On this occasion, Moses had climbed Mount Sinai. When he did not return quickly, the people concluded that he would never return. They wanted to go back to Egypt. They wanted a god to lead them back into slavery.

This story highlights how dishonesty is used to cover up sin. The Children of Israel exhibited impatience, lack of faith, and

idolatry. Then, Aaron made the golden calf and credited it with leading the people out of Egypt!

Later, Moses returned with indignation. When Aaron recounted the story, he left out the part that incriminated himself! The true narration states:

Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and *fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf*; and they said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.’ (Exod. 32:3-4, emphasis added).

The text clearly points out that Aaron fashioned the golden calf with his own hand.

The Golden Calf Scandal teaches an important lesson about dishonesty. A common tactic we all use at some time is to arrange pieces of information so that we do not get blamed for something. I recall many years ago when I was working in an office setting. The department head was a very smart guy. Like any workplace environment, occasionally something would go wrong or someone would make a mistake. This man astutely arranged details such that he would not get the blame for the problem. The blame would fall to someone else.

Something similar happened in this account from Exodus. Aaron recounted the story to Moses in a way that was mostly true. The gold went into the fire; eventually, out came the calf. Aaron, however, conveniently omitted the fact that he had fashioned the

calf with his own hand! *Aaron's intent was to deceive*. His purpose was to save face.

Aaron acts as a mirror to reflect to us our own deceptive hearts. *The key emphasis of this book is sensitizing our hearts and then eradicating the intent to deceive*. Do we embellish what we have done in ministry? Do we take more credit than we deserve? Is our overall intent to deceive?

Though Aaron failed in spectacular fashion, we do not read of a chronic problem of dishonesty in his life. The Bible gives an overall excellent picture of Aaron, who served his younger brother Moses.

Aaron also became the head of a priestly line. That priestly line would offer sacrifices to God for the Children of Israel. The priests, like the rest of the people were prone to weakness:

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness (Heb. 5:1-2).

The lesson is clear: humans are beset by weaknesses. Lying is one such sinful tendency.

The Book of Hebrews also provides a clear remedy:

Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of

Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? (Heb. 7:11).

Aaron and his priestly sons, like us, were not perfect, but the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect One, would arise to save us from our sins.

Aaron, even dishonest as he was during the Golden Calf Scandal, would rejoice to know that an eternal high priest, the Lord Jesus, would offer an eternal sacrifice once for all—not for himself, but for dishonest sinners like us.

Discussion Questions

1. What would you have done if you were Aaron in the face of a rebellious people who seemed ready to mutiny and head back to Egypt?
2. Can you recall an incident in which you acted like Aaron—massaging the details of what happened with the overall intent to deceive?
3. Think carefully about your written and spoken ministry reports and testimonials. Do they give an overall accurate picture, or are they less than accurate?
4. Do we ever rationalize dishonesty with “ends justify the means thinking?”

CHAPTER 7

The Faithfulness of God

God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. (Num. 23:19)

People will take on the character of those whom they emulate. The same principle holds true regarding our relationship with God.

Islam gives a warped picture of the Almighty. Allah, in his absolute sovereignty, is not constrained by morality. If he limited himself, that would diminish his power. *Allahu Akbar*. One of the “most beautiful” names of Allah is *al-Makaar*, the Deceiver, or Scheming Planner. This poor character quality permeates Islamic societies and manner of thinking.

The God of the Bible allows himself to be limited by His own holiness. As an all-powerful deity, He could lie if He wanted, yet He does not lie. He is not like men, who are prone to lie. God is holy, so He does not lie or deceive. Since God does not sin, He does not need to repent.

Believers in Christ can rejoice in two important truths. God is holy and He is faithful. Compare this to Allah in Islam who is arbitrary—he can do what he wants. No one can predict what Allah will do or question him when he does it.

When we read the Bible, we see the true character of a holy and faithful God. This will inevitably affect the character of followers of Christ. God is never dishonest. Baalam, the person who said, “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent” (Num. 23:19), had a prophetic gift, but his character was far from excellent. He took payments such that he could be “bought” as a prophet. He encouraged the Moabites to ensnare the Children of Israel in sexual immorality since God would not allow him to curse the Israelites. He later went to live among the ungodly Moabites and would later be killed among them. Peter’s warning against false prophets includes a comparison to Balaam: “...forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15).

Balaam did not steward his prophetic gift with faithfulness. God had to correct him through a speaking donkey, yet God is faithful. He will never leave those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). God has given His word, and He is truthful about what He promises.

Believers in Christ emulate their God and Savior. Since this is so, should there be dishonesty ruling in our souls? Now is the time to take inventory of our hearts. God is not a man that He should lie. Are we like other men who lie?

The Holy Spirit transforms the character of believers in the body of Christ. The responsibility of believers is to submit to Him, and to be honest with Him. Discipleship is a journey of transformation. “We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a

mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Discussion Questions

1. Since the passage says, “God is not a man that He should lie,” does that excuse human weakness regarding lying?
2. How does lying impact your relationship with a holy God?
3. How does lying impact your relationships with others?
4. What lesson about the faithfulness of God have you learned today?

CHAPTER 8

Situational Ethics: Rahab and the Hebrew Spies

Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. It was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. (Josh. 2:1-6)

Life presents difficult situations. Oftentimes, people try to make the best choice based on two or more options, none of which seem optimal. For Muslim-background

believers, these difficult decisions may include: When should I tell my family I have chosen to follow Jesus? How can I honor my father and mother if they do not want me to walk with Christ?

The Bible provides the full scope of human decisions and emotions. Rahab was a prostitute living in the pagan city of Jericho. Perhaps she was already out on the street when the two spies sent by Joshua entered her city. These men had a single-minded purpose—to collect information.

The Bible provides us with the information needed to understand seemingly complex situations. Hebrews 11:30-31 tells us: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.”

Later, Joshua’s troops rescued Rahab as she faithfully followed their instructions by letting down a scarlet thread through her window. Eventually, Rahab married into the Hebrew nation. Her name appears in the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1:5).

With this biblical information, we can piece together Rahab’s story. Rahab was a sinful woman. In God’s providence, she met the two Hebrew spies and sheltered them. The Bible tells us she did this by faith in God. When the King of Jericho inquired about two men seen with her, she outright lied about the event. She described something that happened in a completely dishonest manner. She said that the men had left, but they were actually hiding on her roof.

The purpose of this book is to chronicle the importance of honesty in the Bible. How, then, can the Bible excuse such a blatant

case of dishonesty? How can we understand the “situational ethics” involved in this Bible narrative?

As we have noted earlier, our objective is to identify dishonesty as *the intent to deceive for self-preservation or to injure others*. In this case, it would have been easier for Rahab to tell the king of Jericho that she was housing the men. If she were found to be lying to the king, she would have surely been killed. If she told the king about the spies, then she may have preserved herself and injured the spies by causing their capture and death. For these reasons, Rahab did not exhibit the typical motivations for lying: self-preservation or injury to others, even though Jericho was ultimately conquered and destroyed.

Hebrews 11 gives another angle to Rahab’s motivation: somehow, she had come to believe that God was with the Hebrews. So, she was willing to risk her own life to help them. Rahab faced sure persecution, yet she chose the path of bravery and faith.

Indeed, the story of Rahab involves situational ethics. The difference between Rahab’s situational ethics, and the excuses people often make for lying were:

- She was not seeking self-preservation.
- She was careful not to injure her guests.
- It would have been easier to tell the king the truth, but she chose the more difficult option.
- She was motivated by faith in God.

In the end, she wisely chose the lesser of two evils.

Ultimately, the story of Rahab comes down to faith and motivation. This example can help MBBs facing complex decisions.

Discussion Questions

1. What is your overall assessment of Rahab?
2. Do Rahab's actions mean that anything done "in faith" is acceptable?
3. Have you faced a situational ethics incident that involved honesty? What was the decision you faced and how did you resolve it?
4. Do you quickly excuse dishonesty as "the ends justify the means?" If so, what can you do to become more honest?

CHAPTER 9

Truth in the Innermost Being

*Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.*
(Psalm 51:6)

David, throughout the ages, serves as one of the great heroes of the Bible. Muslims appreciate him as the author of *az-Zabur*, the Psalms. Who can ever forget the picture of the courageous shepherd boy slaying the giant Goliath? David was a worshipper of God, a warrior, and a poet. First Samuel 13:14 describes him as “a man after God’s own heart.” This verse is also quoted in the New Testament in Acts 13:22.

Given the strength of David’s relationship with the Lord, it seems tragic that David would fall into grievous sin that would threaten to break his relationship with God. However, that is exactly what happened.

After David had been king for a long time, he let down his guard. Instead of going with his army to battle, he stayed at the royal palace for a little “down time.” From the palace roof he saw a beautiful woman bathing. This was Bathsheba, the wife of one of David’s mighty men, Uriah the Hittite, whom David knew well (2 Sam. 23:39; 1 Chron. 11:41).

David called for Bathsheba to come to the palace and had sex with her. Later, she notified David that she was pregnant with his child. David had to be the father, since her husband was still off at war. At this point, David could have repented and confessed his sin to God and all other affected people. Instead, his mind began to race with ideas on how to cover his sin. He thought he came up with a plan by which he could get away with his sin.

First, he summoned Uriah back to Jerusalem, giving him leave of absence from the army. However, Uriah nobly refused to sleep at home, since his brethren were fighting in the field. David came up with “Plan B” to have the army withdraw from Uriah on the battlefield, leaving him exposed to be slain by the enemy. This is exactly what happened. Afterward, David called for the widow Bathsheba and married her. Their child, conceived out of wedlock, died.

Throughout this tragic episode in David’s life, we see dishonesty at work. David made a sinful decision, which led, unsurprisingly, to “bad fruit” in his life. In shame, he sought to cover up his sin with a dishonest scheme. First, he wanted to give the impression that Uriah would be the father of David’s own child. Second, he created a dishonest conspiracy on the battlefield in which the honest Uriah was killed.

The episode with David and Bathsheba illustrates how people use dishonesty to try to cover up any and every type of sin. David went to great lengths due to an intent to deceive. How his soul must have wrestled to have his faithful friend and soldier killed just to cover up his own sin. Though we may not have committed a sin so

final as murder, we are like David in using dishonesty to cover up our own sins, faults, and weaknesses.

The prophet Nathan rebuked David with a biting parable about a greedy man and his sheep. David was stung by the correction of God. He repented. In his repentance, he wrote Psalm 51, which includes the powerful verse: *“Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom”* (Psalm 51:6, emphasis added).

The Holy Spirit, speaking through his penitent servant David, shows us where truth resides—down deep in the innermost being, in the heart of hearts. Believers may hide this deepest depth of soul from others, but it is not hidden from God.

Dear MBB brothers and sisters, is it not time for us to cry out to God to transform us so that we are truthful in our innermost being? Will we continue to be dishonest schemers? I believe we yearn for something better.

It is possible to fake repentance and contrition. In Muslim societies, professional mourners specialize in bringing tears out of people who otherwise might not cry. Esau, the brother of Jacob, wept and wailed about his bad decision, but it was superficial. He was not repenting from his innermost being:

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he

sought for it with tears. (Heb. 12:15-17)

In Psalm 51, David demonstrates true repentance. He knows God's desire is that true worshippers would have truth deep down within. The deep well of truth in the innermost being causes the consciences of believers to be sensitive, such that they avoid sin.

However, no one on this side of eternity will remain sinless in thought and deed. Our goal must be to have internal love for Jesus, who is the Truth, and detest dishonesty and sin. For if dishonesty abides in our innermost being, truth cannot also abide there.

The good news is that the great Son of David, the Lord Jesus himself, died for our sins. On the cross, Jesus put to death our old sinful nature. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have a realistic hope of transformation from being dishonest to being honest people.

Discussion Questions

1. Muslims often complain that the Bible paints an unhealthy picture of the prophets because it includes their sins. Why do they make this complaint?
2. Put yourself in David or Bathsheba's shoes. What is one thing you would have done differently? Why do you feel that is important?
3. Is there a difference between saying honest words in front of others and having truth in your innermost being? If so, what is that difference?

4. As you compare yourself to David, how does this impact your appreciation for your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER 10

What Does a God of Love Hate?

*There are six things which the LORD hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:
Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,
A false witness who utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.*
(Prov. 6:16-19)

All believers encounter problems and insecurities. The remedy is almost always found in the total and unconditional love of the Heavenly Father. There is nowhere else to run, nowhere to hide. The best thing to do is to run into the loving arms of God.

The most famous Bible verse begins with, “For God so loved the world...” But could there be anything a loving God hates? Actually, there are quite a few things.

Recently, we started a video series called *Wasla*, meaning “connection.” The YouTube channel is by and for MBBs. We discuss important discipleship issues.

In a recent episode, guest speaker Hasan from Kosovo mentioned the verses noted above from Proverbs 6. Among the things that God detests are “a lying tongue,” and “a false witness who utters lies.” God puts dishonesty on His hate list twice for special emphasis. In fact, some of the other things which God hates typically involve dishonesty as a cover up, such as “hands that shed innocent blood” or “a heart that devises wicked plans.”

People utilize their tongues for eating, tasting, and speaking. In Proverbs, God describes habitually dishonest people as having “lying tongues.” James, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus, advises believers to watch their tongues closely:

No one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? (James 3:8-11)

Is self-control and willpower enough to control the tongue? Many centuries ago, Catholic monks took vows of silence. They then developed hand signals to communicate, which became sign language. Perhaps this method helps people to think before they communicate.

However, the Lord Jesus indicates where spiritual victory lies: “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart”

(Luke 6:45). The Holy Spirit can transform the human heart and fill it with good things.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, God desires truth in the innermost being. The love of God can penetrate deep into the human heart. If it does not, then dishonesty will inevitably overflow. If it does, then honesty and blessings will flow from one's heart into one's speech.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you find it harsh that God says that He hates a lying tongue? Why or why not?
2. With 0 being completely dishonest, and 10 being completely honest, how would you score your own tongue?
3. How does a lying tongue impact relationships? A family? The workplace? The church?
4. In what ways does your speech reveal that which lies deep within your heart?
5. How can you align your heart and tongue with the honest heart of Jesus?

CHAPTER 11

Dishonesty and Dictatorship

A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin. (Prov. 26:28)

Muslim-background believers can dig a lot of spiritual gold from the hills of Psalms and Proverbs. This section of the Bible has been named “Wisdom Literature” for good reason. The verse noted above is attributed to a section of comparative statements given by King Solomon under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The verse “a lying tongue hates those it crushes” has many applications. Dishonesty causes injury in all personal relationships, such as the family, school, and workplace. This chapter will focus on the application to leadership and governance.

Most Muslims in this world suffer under poor political leadership. In fact, good and just political leadership remains quite rare in the world. Muslim societies tend to be marked by tyrannical leadership. Even religious leadership of Muslim states, such as in Iran, Afghanistan, and Gaza, carry the marks of a dictatorship. Dictators crush the will, aspirations, and hopes of their subjects.

Solomon links dishonesty to this crushing, injurious spirit. One can easily observe dishonesty in “power hungry” people. They spin

lies as naturally as spiders spin webs. These dictators remain unaccountable and rarely relinquish power voluntarily.

Other scenarios exist in which dictators utilize propaganda to crush their subjects. Proverbs states that a lying tongue crushes those it hates. Dictators do not love their subjects, but rather only love themselves. Indeed, they hate their subjects, and do not lose sleep having people executed.

In many Muslim societies, the youth have become demoralized. Rather than leaving us in despair, the Bible provides a pivot into hopefulness. Isaiah prophesied about the Lord Jesus Christ:

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6)

Jesus continues to build His kingdom in the hearts of His disciples. The government of the kingdom of God rests on the strong shoulders of Jesus Christ. The next chapter portrays Jesus as the pure and truthful ruler.

Although we retain a bright hope for Jesus' eternal Kingdom, no one forbids us from trying to better our own societies. Do so if you can but listen closely to the voice of the Holy Spirit as to His call. "What does the Lord require of you?" asks Micah 6:8.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways have you observed political leaders using deceit to crush others?
2. What is your emotional reaction to these observations?
3. If the news provided by tyrants is mostly dishonest propaganda, how can you receive reliable information?
4. What hope is there for believers in Jesus who must live under tyranny and persecution?

CHAPTER 12

The Unblemished Lamb

*Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.
By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was
due?
His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. (Isa. 53:7-9)*

The Holy Spirit gave Isaiah an amazing vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 53 provides the clearest Old Testament description of the Savior. Believers can benefit from a line-by-line study of this chapter.

Isaiah states that there was no deceit in the mouth of the Lamb of God. He would be completely honest. He would not intend to deceive. What a Savior!

In the previous chapter, Proverbs portrayed dishonest tyrants who crush those they hate. Isaiah 53:9 contrasts this with the Lamb of God who “had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.” Jesus is the exact opposite of most wicked rulers on this earth. He was not a deceiver. He was not *Allahu khayrul makireen*, “Allah the best of deceivers,” as the Qur’an calls its deity.

As sinners, we understand that our motives are often mixed. We often attempt to deflect blame through telling half-truths. Jesus, however, is perfect. For this reason, we can rejoice that God imputes the righteousness of Jesus onto believers: “*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Cor. 5:21, emphasis added). Brothers and sisters, that is an exchange almost too good to be true. This is very good news!

As we draw near to Jesus during this lifetime journey, His character will “rub off on us.” The more we are with Him, the more we will become like Him. The Holy Spirit will transform us. When we get to heaven, there will be no more lying or deceit. Just honesty and joy!

If this Bible study has left you concerned about dishonesty in your heart, that is a sign the Holy Spirit is bringing helpful conviction. Most people simply do not care whether they are honest, they simply care about whether they get caught being dishonest. This is not the way of Jesus Christ. He desires truth in the innermost being. Be encouraged, not discouraged. The children of God are being transformed day-by-day.

Discussion Questions

1. Isaiah 53:9 mentions violence and deceit in the same verse. Why do these often go together?
2. Lambs tend to be helpless. Why does the Bible describe the Lord Jesus in this way?
3. Why did Jesus' sacrifice need to be sinless like an unblemished lamb?

CHAPTER 13

The Deceitful Heart

*The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?
I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give to each man according to his ways,
According to the results of his deeds. (Jer. 17:9-10)*

Many animals rely on deception. Lions and tigers lay in the tall grass. Then they move slowly through it to stalk their prey. Foxes are infamous for being sly. They catch smaller animals by stealth.

However, none of these are as deceptive as the human heart. While animals may use deception for survival, the Bible describes the deceitfulness of the human heart as a form of sickness. Desperately sick. Stage Four terminal illness.

Who can understand the deceitfulness of the human heart? I recall an Iranian man who went into business with a colleague. However, he later found the colleague tricked him and left town with all his money. Does this type of story sound familiar? Thank

God that the crisis caused the first man to visit a church, where he eventually got saved!

Many people marry but later regret having married that person because they were deceived. The person may have put on a good front or good face for a time, but then the real person became evident. The deceiver successfully hid his or her real heart condition from the future spouse. Online dating multiplies the possibilities for deception.

Jeremiah tells us that the Lord searches inside this same heart. While people may trick others for a time, God is able to see the depths of the human heart. As David stated, God desires truth in the innermost being.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you feel Jeremiah's assessment of the human heart is pessimistic, optimistic, or realistic? Please explain why.
2. Babies seem to be born with innocent hearts and minds. When does this change? Why?
3. Islam does not hold to the doctrine of human sinfulness. How does this impact one's relationship with God?

PART II

Honesty in the New Testament

When God incarnated himself as the man Jesus Christ, people beheld Truth incarnate. Everything true, holy, and perfect about God became manifested in Jesus. Though we are sinners with a human tendency toward dishonesty and deception, we are comforted by our sinless and true Savior and Deliverer, Jesus Christ.

As we move into this New Testament section, we observe that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record sixty instances of Jesus saying, “Truly, I say unto you...” John narrates another twenty-five occasions with the wording, “Truly, truly, I say unto you.”

The Greek term here for “truly” is borrowed from the Hebrew word: “Amen.” Amen means “true” or “faithful.” “Amen” is used in almost every language. When someone is speaking or preaching and we say, “amen,” we mean, “Yes, I agree with you. You are telling the truth. Keep going.” The concepts of confession and amen work together like a hand and a glove.

Interestingly, Jesus did not say, “Powerfully, powerfully, I say unto you...” Neither did He say, “Eternally, eternally, I say unto you...” Although Jesus’ words were both powerful and eternal, He chose the manner of speech, “Truly, truly, I say unto you...” From

this, we can conclude our Lord wanted to emphasize truthfulness, as well as to shape the thinking and consciences of the disciples.

CHAPTER 14

Confession: The Building Block of Truth

Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 10:32)

Jesus introduced the New Testament term “confession,” which provides the building-block for honesty. Something within us may tell us to stay as far as we can from confession. Is it not criminals who are asked to confess to a crime? Is it not sinners who must confess their sins to a priest behind closed doors? Surely, we do not want to be criminals or sinners, do we? A closer investigation shows why the word “confession” should be beloved by Christians. The term is not automatically bad.

The Greek verb for “confess,” as used in Matthew 10:32, is *homo-logeo* with the roots for “same-say.” The Blue Letter Online Bible defines *homologeo* as “to say the same thing as another, i.e. to agree with, assent.” The term “con-fess” comes into English based on the Latin roots for “with-say.” Jesus teaches that God is truthful, and believers must say the same thing God is saying to likewise be truthful.

In this context, Jesus taught us to testify that He is Lord and Messiah. We cannot deny Him, as Peter would later do after Jesus' arrest.

The deceitful heart described by Jeremiah resists honesty. At times, we are guilty of something, but we say we did not do it. However, God saw the event happen in space and time. By lying, we are not “saying-with” God about what actually took place in space and time. Our intent to deceive repels honest confession.

In some Christian traditions, people associate “confession” with going into a confessional booth and talking to a priest about one's sins. In those traditions, it is common for the priest to prescribe some prayers or actions to remedy the sins. Other church traditions do not practice the “confession—absolution” model. Their pastors may simply ask their congregants to silently confess their sins to God prior to taking holy communion.

While it is true that only God, not priests, can forgive sins, we should not lay aside the concept of confession too quickly. Sometimes we must confess to other people we have sinned against. Accountability may include confessing things to our spiritual leaders to bring those things out of darkness and into the light.

Moreover, *confession opens the door to the process of transformation in which we begin to think the way God thinks and say what He says.* There is no path to becoming more honest without earnest Bible study. By prayerfully reading the Scriptures, our consciences will become aligned with God's Word. Then we will be able to “say-with” and confess more easily and more accurately.

The term *homologeō*, or “to confess,” appears twenty-four times in the New Testament. This Bible study reviews several of those references. MBBs can gain much from a thorough study of each of these references to confession.

The biblical understanding of truth contradicts modern relativism, which states that whatever people believe to be true is true. Some describe this as “my truth.” Relativism makes excuses for dishonesty. It does not seek to “say with” God. Relativism wages war against honest confession.

These same disciples later became truth-tellers and gospel preachers as they testified to the True One. They would say-with Jesus what He had truthfully taught them. As we draw near to Jesus, we must likewise make sure that our confession is truthful.

In most Muslim contexts, it is dishonorable to confess Christ as Lord. Historically, this is the most shameful thing a Muslim could do. To maintain family honor and avoid shame, some new MBBs remain “secret believers.” They have chosen honor above honesty, and honor above confession. Due to fear, they are not saying-with the Bible what it says about the Son of God.

Discussion Questions

1. If an unbeliever asked you what it means to “confess,” how would you respond?
2. Is confession still possible if people perceive the same thing in a different way?

3. What is the relationship between confession and the intent to deceive?

CHAPTER 15

The Deception at the End Times

As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you..." (Matt. 24:3-4)

For 2,000 years, Christians have lived in eager anticipation of Jesus' Second Coming. How glorious it will be to see the King of Kings coming on the clouds!

Jesus' disciples also asked Him about the signs of His return. Jesus' full response takes up all of Matthew chapter 24. Interestingly, the first warning the Lord gives addresses deception: "See to it that no one misleads you." After this, Jesus warns that false christs and false prophets will arise and mislead many people.

As Muslim-background Christians, we are familiar with the impact of a false prophet, the prophet of Islam. He misled many people. We praise God that He has delivered us from that domain of darkness into the Kingdom of His beloved Son. Jesus' Kingdom is an honest kingdom.

In the End Times, much deception will occur. As time moves forward, it seems the potential for deception is only increasing.

Sometime ago, internet hoaxes and conspiracies emerged. Identity theft and scams also increased rapidly. Now with “deep fakes,” people can steal someone’s voice and image to create fraudulent videos. This global problem is not limited to Islamic societies.

Believers in Christ must view internet stories with healthy skepticism. Who is writing? Who is speaking? What are their agendas? Who is setting the algorithms for the search engines? Vigilance requires effort, but that vigilance will prove worthwhile in the long term.

Computing power holds tremendous positive potential. Search tools enable people to become more efficient in research. Nevertheless, the present times require Christians to maintain a healthy baseline skepticism regarding AI and similar programs. Their positive potential should not blind believers to the threats they pose as well.

Since Jesus warned us about deception in the End Times, believers are wise to saturate themselves in the Word of God. Reading the Bible anchors Christ’s disciples in God’s reality, as well as sensitizes them to the difference between truth and error.

Another source of encouragement and truth is fellowship with other believers, in person. This removes the potential for “deep fakes.” In countries where persecution is strong, believers often enter meetings without their cell phones, so they cannot be tracked or heard. There is wisdom in this practice.

In the passage above, Matthew 24 narrates that “the disciples came to Him privately.” Matthew was there, so he knew it from firsthand experience. The time has come again for disciples to draw

near to Jesus, personally and privately. Doing so will provide strength for public witness to the glory of Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you see deception increasing or decreasing at this time?
How so?
2. Do you think believers in Christ will always be protected from believing lies? Why or why not?
3. What can believers do to remain in the truth?

CHAPTER 16

True Worship

The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. (John 4:19-23)

John’s Gospel is the last of the four portraits of the glorious life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise, John’s writings are the latest in the New Testament canon. This may explain why the Gospel of John includes materials not covered in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John did not want these encounters of Jesus to be lost to the Church.

One such “divine encounter” is the fascinating meeting in Samaria between Jesus and the Woman at the Well. This dear

woman—the first believer in Christ in her community—was a broken person who had experienced a long line of broken relationships. The passage provides some helpful guidance on worshipping in truth.

First, true worship does not depend on geography. The Samaritan woman pointed out two different locations of worship: Mount Gerizim in Samaria and Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Muslim-background Christians are familiar with this concept. Muslims must make pilgrimage to Mecca once in this lifetime. Islamic prayers must be offered while facing *qibla* toward Mecca.

Once I was visiting a mosque with a group of Christians. The mosque leaders were sitting with our group for questions and answers. At that time, a young man came in to pray. The rest of the Muslims had finished praying and had since left. However, the young man did not face Mecca; he faced the wrong wall! I smiled to myself and thought, “Will the mosque leaders embarrass this man in front of visitors and correct him?” Sure enough, one of the leaders walked over, grabbed the young man by the shoulders, and swung him around toward Mecca.

This incident underscores a second beautiful aspect of the Christian faith: *one can worship God in any place and through any posture. True worship happens as the believer’s spirit connects with the Spirit of God.*

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes: “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’” (Matt. 15:7-9, quoting Isaiah 29:13)

Though it may seem easy to critique the Samaritans or the Pharisees, think how often our hearts and minds get distracted during worship. Our lips move and say the right words, but our hearts are in a different place. Are we better than them?

Third, we learn from this passage that *true worship does not depend on status but upon sincerity*. God does not favor royal robes or priestly vestments. Worship comes from the heart. Anyone from any background can worship Jesus if they trust in Him as Savior.

The Samaritan woman previously had five husbands. She was living with a man who was not her husband. She was drawing water alone, though that function was often done in groups of family or friends. Yet Jesus approached her to give her these wonderful teachings. He did not send her away. In fact, when she eventually went away, she told her whole community about Jesus!

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe “hypocrisy in worship?”
2. How has the transition been for you from praying toward Mecca after washing (*wudu*) to praying to the Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus?
3. If a Muslim asked you what it means to worship in spirit and truth, how would you respond?

CHAPTER 17

The Chain-Breaking Truth

Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:31-36)

Truth extends beyond education and information. Most people need help at a level deeper than that of mental development. The Christian life does not take place on some type of Mars Hill, where the Apostle Paul found Greek philosophers discussing every new ideology. The Christian life is much more practical.

In this passage, *Jesus teaches His followers that truth does not simply enlighten, but truth sets people free.* They wondered why

they needed to be set free if they were not slaves. Jesus responds with a very serious truth: *sin enslaves people*.

When I first read the Bible as a young man, this passage changed my life. Having been raised Muslim, I expected to read that Jesus would instruct us to be a good person, pray, and be trustworthy. I was somewhat surprised as I got to John 8 to read that Jesus said we needed to be set free. At that same time in my life, I was perplexed about why we, as humans—including myself, only think of ourselves. I did not realize it at the time, but I was under conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit. The same sinful self-centeredness I saw in others was alive in my own heart.

Jesus does not talk about being a better person. He talks about being set free! As we see in this passage, Jesus states, “The truth will make you free” (v. 32). Then, He says, “If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (v. 36). Is it the truth or the Son who sets us free? In John 14:6, Jesus says that He is the Truth. *The Son, who is the Truth, sets us free!* What a wonderful message of good news! I was 19 years of age when I believed this message. I fell in love with Jesus, who forgave my sins.

The Samaritan woman was entangled by sin. Every person, every family, and every community has sinful chains that bind them. It is easier to see the problems besetting other people, while overlooking one’s own faults. All people need to be set free. Jesus is the only One who can set people free. *Information cannot liberate people from bondage, and neither can good deeds.*

“Freedom” is often a political cry. However, deliverance comes when God descends deep within the human soul. A prisoner can be free internally. This describes many Muslim-background

Christians who languish behind bars, yet their spirits are free. Other people live comfortably and enjoy personal liberty, but their spirits are in bondage to sin.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus frequently encounters high-minded people who believe in their own righteousness. Man-made religion has not helped them. They do not realize their need for salvation because sin has enslaved and blinded them.

For every human sin and bondage, Jesus has provided the solution. Jesus, the Truth, provides true freedom. *One should not mistakenly equate freedom in Christ with a life of ease, freedom from persecution, or an absence of problems.* Believers will continue to live in this world, fighting spiritual battles until called home to eternity. At that time, God's children will experience ultimate and final freedom.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Jesus' discussion of bondage change your view of the basic human problem?
2. Are religious people or non-religious people more likely to be slaves of sin? Please explain.
3. How would you reply if a Muslim asked you, "Where does deliverance from demonic bondage come from?"

CHAPTER 18

The Father of Lies

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:42-44)

We caught our first glimpse of Satan in Chapter 1 of this study when he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan laid low in the weeds for much of the Bible. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 give descriptions of Lucifer, but the devil remained largely out of sight, like a lion stalking his prey.

The Incarnation of God in Christ served many purposes. Most importantly, Jesus would win salvation for humans upon the cross. Part of Jesus' mission was also to expose Satan for who he was. In the passage noted above from John 8, Jesus tells the crowd that

Satan is motivating and animating them because he is the “father of lies.”

Satan is a liar by nature. Unfortunately, his lying ways have infected humanity to a great degree. Satan lied to mislead Adam and Eve. Through the Fall, they became dishonest sinners.

A great decision awaits us. Will we continue to live like dishonest sinners, thus running into the arms of Satan? Or will we confess our need for God’s grace, and run into the arms of the Heavenly Father?

The first practical action step includes not lying to cover up our sins. Believers need to walk in an appropriate level of transparency. When a person has sinned against someone, he or she should confess, apologize, and ask their forgiveness. In the end, this is far easier than managing a dishonest coverup.

Jesus exposed Satan as the Father of Lies. One major role of a father is to protect his children. The Heavenly Father protects all His spiritual children. Satan seeks only to protect his kingdom of lies. This same spirit causes liars to always try to cover up their deception. They guard their lies, blame others, and make excuses. Satan has spiritual children: liars.

Jesus clearly exposes Satan in John’s Gospel and in His Revelation to John at the end of the Bible. The same serpent of old, who tempted and misled Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, is described as he “who deceives the whole world”:

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place

found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, *who deceives the whole world*; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev. 12:7-9, emphasis added)

Since Satan is so committed to deception, as MBBs, we must renounce and reject the intent to deceive. *Chronic deception is not merely a bad habit; it is satanic*. The ways of Satan are antithetical to the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that Satan is not equal in power with God. Sometimes, during periods of intense spiritual warfare, it may seem that God and Satan are in a cosmic wrestling match. However, this passage demonstrates that Satan and his angels are not even as powerful as the archangel Michael and his supporting angels. Satan's power is no match for that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 20 describes events at the very end of the age. That passage describes another angel binding Satan and throwing him into the abyss for a thousand years "so that he would not deceive the nations any longer" (Rev. 20:3). Later, Satan is released for one more spell of deceiving before he is eternally doomed: "And the *devil who deceived them* was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10, emphasis added).

Satan has many descriptions: killer, thief, destroyer, and accuser of the brethren. Perhaps his most common descriptor, and certainly his final one, is the deceiver of the nations.

Discussion Questions

1. Which is easier to do: run to the Heavenly Father or run away from Him? Why?
2. How has Satan's lying nature impacted humanity?
3. What impact does being born again in Christ have on the tendency to lie and cover up?

CHAPTER 19

A God of Truth

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6)

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

During the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus gave some final instructions to His disciples. Memorably, Jesus told Thomas that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In this same message, He describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth.

This Bible study has focused on honesty, which flows from the very character of God. In Islam, Allah is arbitrary. Muslims see any moral limitation on Allah as a restriction of his sovereignty. The usage of *al-Haqq*, or “the Truth,” among the ninety-nine most beautiful names of Allah is simply a statement that Allah is the only true reality in the universe. How could the same deity

simultaneously be “the Truth” and the “Best of Deceivers?” Such is the moral confusion facing Muslims.

Those who have left Islam for the Kingdom of Light must also leave behind this moral confusion. John writes in his first epistle: “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). No darkness. John was there at the Last Supper listening to Jesus’ Upper Room Discourse. John wants to make sure that Christ’s disciples understand that God is light.

Lying casts a shadow of darkness over our lives and relationships. Deception veils one’s true intentions. Dishonesty results in people being hypocrites and two-faced.

When believers meditate upon the one God who exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they can adore Him for His truthfulness. Jesus has many titles, such as The Good Shepherd, the Bread of Life, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and others. The Holy Spirit is given fewer names and titles, but one important one is the “Spirit of Truth.” God wraps himself in honesty.

The Heavenly Father sends the Spirit of Truth to fill the hearts of believers. Jesus said the world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth. Nevertheless, Jesus promised the Spirit of Truth will come to live inside His disciples. As a person filled with the Spirit of Truth, what type of person should you be?

Discussion Questions

1. Why can’t people of this world receive the Spirit of Truth?

2. What is the relationship between light and honesty? Between darkness and dishonesty?
3. How does dishonesty on the part of Christians affect your relationship with God? With others?

CHAPTER 20

God Is Serious about Honesty

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. (Acts 5:1-6)

Though Acts contains many glorious testimonies, it also presents challenging passages. Acts 5 describes a sobering situation. For brevity, the passage above merely includes the section in which Ananias is struck dead by God for dishonesty. Verses 7-11 narrate how his wife Sapphira died in a similar manner.

Ananias and Sapphira come under scrutiny for several reasons. First, they wanted the glory of giving a greater gift than what they actually gave. This may point to a problem with pride. Others in the church were giving 100% of their sale proceeds to the church. Ananias and Sapphira wanted that same credit.

Second, Ananias and Sapphira may have lacked generosity. Though we do not read any rule given by the apostles that believers needed to give everything, this couple held something back.

These first two points require some connecting of dots implied by the story. However, Luke reports the weightier sin in the eyes of God when Peter rebuked Ananias: “You have not lied to men, but to God.” God called out the sin of dishonesty. God does not rebuke them for stinginess or even pride.

We have all thought to ourselves in the same way Ananias and Sapphira thought: “No one will find out.” This couple conspired in whispers, “It will be our secret. Nobody else will know.”

This Bible study reinforces the reality that God sees everything and knows everything. Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph. However, Joseph knew that God was watching so he responded, “How then could I do this great evil and sin against God” (Gen. 39:9)? Joseph was the type of man whom God could trust. He had truth in his innermost being.

When God judged Ananias and Sapphira for dishonesty, great fear came upon the church. God’s punishment had a deterrent effect. Others would think twice about lies and dishonest conspiracies. The Holy Spirit was setting a standard for the Body of Christ.

Today, people do not usually fall over dead for lying to church leaders. Church leaders do not fall over dead for lying to their congregations. Nevertheless, God's standard never changes. He is a holy God, and He expects honesty among believers.

As MBBs enter the body of Christ, we must be vigilant to uphold the standard of honesty. We cannot dishonor the Lord by importing shrewdness and deceit into the Kingdom of Jesus. Anything less is not worthy of the name "the body of Christ."

Discussion Questions

1. Was the root of the problem with Ananias and Sapphira more to do with dishonesty or pride? Why do you feel this way?
2. Can you recall sins you have committed that no one found out about? How do you feel about these "hidden" sins?
3. Can you recall sins you committed that were discovered or made public? Did you react differently when your sin was made known than when your sin was kept secret? In what ways?

Chapter 21

Religious Liars

When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who formed this plot. They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place. (Acts 23:12-15)

Religious liars are among the worst kinds of liars. They believe "the ends justify the means." So, was the case in this passage with those trying to destroy the Apostle Paul. Forty men formed a conspiracy. The religious leaders requested that Paul be transported to a place for further questioning. However, they did not want Paul to undergo further questioning. They wanted to ambush him and kill him.

These religious leaders should have known the Ten Commandments: *You shall not murder. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.* Nevertheless, they conspired with dishonest people to lie to the Roman commander so they could set up an ambush. The fact that Paul's nephew overheard the plot saved Paul from a certain death.

It is easy to critique followers of Islam, or in this case, followers of Judaism. Certainly, dishonesty of this type could not occur in Christian circles—or could it? Brothers and sisters, if you have not been in Christ's Kingdom for long, allow me to warn you that at some point you will witness “church politics.” These types of power struggles and alliances sometimes feature deception as well. As far as you are able, keep yourself far away from this type of behavior and intrigue. It is not the way of Jesus, but the way of this fallen world. If people around you are dishonest, maintain your integrity through honesty and appropriate transparency.

In subsequent chapters, we will review some of Paul's epistles. Thankfully, God made a way for Paul to escape this dishonest conspiracy. Otherwise, we might not have had these inspired letters. Sometimes God helps believers escape persecution. At other times, Christians must walk through the fire of persecution.

Muslim-background Christians often face lies and insults from Islamic religious leaders. Sometimes, they claim MBBs have gone insane. At other times, they claim MBBs are spies, demon-possessed, or disloyal to their countries. Knowing that Paul faced religious liars can bring comfort. We are not alone!

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt surrounded or trapped by dishonest people? How did the situation work out? If you could have done anything different, what would you have done?
2. Have you observed dishonesty among religious leaders? Why do you think they behaved that way?
3. Were you ever invited to become part of a dishonest conspiracy? How did you respond?

CHAPTER 22

The Good Confession

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Rom. 10:9-10)

Sometimes we view confession in a negative light. It means we have sinned, and we need to come clean and expose our own sins. Confessing sin may negatively affect our status and our honor. So, we tend to dishonestly hide our sins, deny we have done wrong, cover up, or shift the blame.

On the other hand, this passage portrays that beautiful side of the positive confession about Christ. As previously described, the meaning of the term “confession” is to “say with” God what He is saying. Here is that positive confession: to confess with one’s mouth that Jesus is Lord. Simultaneously, Paul exhorts us to believe from the heart that God raised Him from the dead. God says to those who make this positive confession, “You will be saved” (v. 9).

Jesus’ dying on the Cross and rising from the dead on one weekend 2,000 years ago constitutes the central event of human

history. Jesus won back what Adam and Eve had lost. People could be restored to God.

For Muslims, the problem is that Islam does not “say-with” God that Jesus Christ is Lord. Neither does Islam affirm Jesus rising from the dead. Muhammad stated that Jesus, the son of Mary, was merely a prophet. Jesus’ role, according to the Qur’an, is to prophecy that Ahmad would come after him. So, Islam is a spirit of antichrist, since it denies that Jesus Christ is Lord. *For this reason, it is important to make a clean break with the spiritual power and dominance of this system. Muslim-background believers accomplish this by confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord and renouncing the Islamic confession.*

As MBBs, we must remember that one does not get saved by becoming a bit more honest. Honesty is not a salvation issue. People are saved solely by grace, which is God’s unmerited favor to those who believe in Jesus as Lord. MBBs need to be clear about this and reinforce it continually.

Romans 10:9 also states that believers must confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord. This becomes central to the *ordo salutis*, which is the order or process of salvation. MBBs agree with and testify with God that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is the truth.

We will contradict our own testimony in Christ, however, if we remain unchanged by continuing to tell lies. Lying is the opposite of confession. Instead of “saying with” God what He sees and knows to be true, lying states the opposite.

This problem creates a slippery slope. At the end of the Bible, God says that chronic liars will not enter heaven. Chapter 29 of this

book reviews those verses. Chronic liars do not have the truth in them. They do not confess what God says and knows to be true.

If you are concerned about your level of honesty, that is a good thing! This indicates the Holy Spirit is convicting you not to deceive others. If the Holy Spirit is moving in your heart, take time to ask Him what He is bringing to the surface. Confess with God. Repent. Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. He died to take away our sins.

I would like to end this intense chapter with a message of joy: Jesus Christ is Savior and, by God's grace, we have become children of God. What a wonderful time to be alive!

Discussion Questions

1. Have you confessed with your mouth that Jesus is Lord? And do you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead? If so, you are saved!
2. Do you know any people who call themselves Christians but are habitually dishonest? What do you think about their testimony that they believe in Christ?
3. If someone asked you whether honesty is "a salvation issue," what would you tell them?

CHAPTER 23

Motives are Important to God

Do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)

The previous chapter exposed the evil nature of Islam because it denies that Jesus Christ is Lord. Nevertheless, Christians may have something positive to learn from Muslims. Both Christianity and Islam have a good emphasis on proper motivations, but Muslims talk about it more than Christians. In Islam, motivation or intention is known as *niyyah*. Muslims should state their intentions before praying, fasting, going on pilgrimage, etc.

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthian church, informs them that one day God will “disclose the motives of men’s hearts.” That could be a scary thought! Perhaps I served the Lord so people would notice me and think well of me. God will disclose that motive. If I placed money in the offering so people would think I am generous, God will expose that self-centered motive one day.

Quite often, our motives are mixed. We want to do what is right, but we also want to look good. The Holy Spirit will purify the motives of believers as they submit increasingly to Him. As Christians look to the Lord and to His Word, He will pour truth into their innermost beings.

Building upon selfish motives is like building a house on the sand. Eventually, stresses will develop that will reveal the weak foundation. Cracks will surface. Then the building may collapse completely.

Relationships follow a similar pattern. Those who interact with others solely out of selfish interest will eventually see cracks form in those relationships. If people in the same church, including leaders, demonstrate spiritual immaturity through selfish motives, then a collapse will not lag far behind.

First Corinthians 4:5 rebukes those Corinthians who were busy judging other people. The full text of 1 Corinthians describes the various deeds that were taking place in darkness, such as gossip and incest, all of which would eventually be exposed. Paul adds that the Lord will disclose the motives of people's hearts. An expression exists, "Fake it 'til you make it," but no one can fool God.

For all these reasons, the Holy Spirit reminds believers that motives are important to God. *He is always more concerned about the inner life of believers than the external show.* By walking in humility before God, MBBs will see the Holy Spirit purify their motives over time.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you respond to the news that your motives will one day be disclosed?
2. If your motives were disclosed now, how might that affect your present relationships?
3. If you had to teach children about the importance of good motives, what points would you include in that teaching?

CHAPTER 24

The Bread of Sincerity and Truth

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Cor. 5:6-8)

In the very next chapter, 1 Corinthians 5, Paul encourages the believers to eat the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* defines sincerity as “honesty of mind; freedom from hypocrisy.” Sincerity and truth naturally go together. Internal honesty and truthfulness manifest themselves in sincerity, which is a beautiful character quality. Sincerity is another word for authenticity, something people crave in our times. What you see is what you get.

People commonly close a letter with “Sincerely” or “Sincerely Yours.” A few times, I have sent a letter or email that was artificially polite or expressed something I really did not feel

wholeheartedly. In such a case, I wondered, “Is it right to close the letter with ‘Sincerely yours’?”

Since dishonesty is embedded within most Islamic societies, sincerity is often rare among Muslims. People may view the sincere person as naïve or simple, or as someone who is not smart enough to manage his lies. On the other hand, some Muslims may feel refreshed by a sincere person, much like one is refreshed by a cool breeze on a hot day.

During the initial Passover meal, and for every annual Passover celebration, God commanded the Jewish people to rid their homes of leaven or yeast that causes bread to rise. Most people like to eat fresh baked bread. The leaven in it makes it puffy. Unleavened bread does not rise, so it comes out flat and crunchy like crackers or *matzah*.

Jesus’ disciples often stated their concern about running short of food. Twice Jesus multiplied loaves and fishes. The Lord did this miracle not only to feed the hungry masses, but also to teach His disciples not to worry about food.

On one occasion, the disciples were talking about food. Jesus corrected them:

“O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then

they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matt. 16:8-12)

Jesus used leaven as an example of things that expand. Malice and wickedness grow. Lying multiplies. To cover for one lie, a person may need to tell another one, and then another one.

In contrast to this sinful mess, Paul tells the Corinthians to eat the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. This may be discouraging for believers who have difficulty breaking the habit of deceiving others, but there is hope. Paul even mentions the sense of celebration, which Jews celebrated at Passover, as God gave them deliverance from the Egyptians.

The hope for us as brothers and sisters from a Muslim background is that Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed! Jesus is the eternal sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. If you are depressed about dishonesty still present in your life, look to the Lamb. There was no deceit in His mouth. Draw close to Jesus, and He will certainly bring transformation into your life. Amen!

Discussion Questions

1. Why do lies grow and spread like leaven?
2. Can you think of a situation in which lies spread or “snowballed?” What could you have done to keep the problem from spreading?

3. How would you explain to a new Muslim background Christian what the bread of sincerity and truth is?

CHAPTER 25

Laying Aside Falsehood

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.
(Eph. 4:25)

This chapter explores another one of Paul's teaching letters. On this occasion, he instructs the believers in Ephesus to forsake dishonesty and speak truth to one another. Generally speaking, the Ephesian church was in better spiritual condition than its sister church in Corinth. Nevertheless, dishonesty may arise even in a relatively strong church. All churches need to focus attention on the issue of truthfulness.

These New Testament admonitions occur long before Islam and Muhammad emerged. Due to the sickness of the heart, deceit is a problem that plagues humans of every age. However, Muslim societies are negatively impacted by this human weakness to a greater degree than other societies because Muhammad often rationalized dishonesty. Therefore, MBBs must urgently address honesty as a key component of discipleship.

Ephesians 4:25 provides several key points of application for those entering the body of Christ from a Muslim background. *First,*

true disciples of Christ must lay aside falsehood. This book seeks to curtail the intent to deceive, which includes the motivation to lie to others. If people start attending a church or fellowship group in which they encounter dishonesty, it is likely they will leave, and no one can blame them.

Second, the passage exhorts believers to speak honestly to each other. This does not mean gossiping to destroy others with true information or giving out “too much information.” When Jesus, as the Truth, lives inside believers, their communication with each other must overflow with that same truthfulness. Christians simply cannot lie to each other.

Third, Paul tells the believers that they are members of the same body. Parts of the body cannot lie to each other. If a person’s knee feels pain, it will send an honest message to his or her nervous system. If someone’s stomach is empty, it will send a message to the brain. The members of the body cannot trick each other, so it is with the body of Christ.

Since believers are members connected to one another, falsehood injures the whole body. Some may think, “Well, it’s only one little lie, no one will find out.” Perhaps Ananias and Sapphira thought this as well. They did not understand they threatened to lower the standard of honesty for the whole church. God later disclosed their motive to protect Jesus’ standard of truthfulness.

All believers in Christ stand as stewards to safeguard the good health of the body of Christ. Lying does to the body of Christ what smoking and drinking do to the physical body. These bad habits introduce poisons into the body, impacting all the cells, not just those in the mouth. When deceit creeps into the church, the entire

body of Christ feels the effects. Deception simply is not the way of Jesus, who is building a truthful kingdom. Whatever you need to lay aside, lay it aside for the sake of Christ and His body, the Church.

Discussion Questions

1. Give a concrete example of something a person takes off, lays aside, or throws in the garbage. How is the process of laying aside falsehood similar?
2. Who gets injured when people lie to one another?
3. What can you do to improve the state of honesty in your church or congregation?

CHAPTER 26

The Belt of Truth

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth. (Eph. 6:11-14)

In this marvelous passage, Paul's tone is not one of correction, but one of instruction. Ephesians 6:12 speaks of the believers' spiritual warfare. This book has not focused much on spiritual warfare, other than the devil being the father of lies. Anyone ministering among Muslims or coming to Christ out of Islam should expect a significant amount of spiritual conflict. It may seem like battles never end. In this passage, Paul describes the armor of God, which will help believers stand against Satan's schemes.

The first component of the Armor of God is the belt of truth. The additional armor items are the breastplate of righteousness, shoes prepared for sharing the Gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of Salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

Paul does not explain why he lists the belt of truth first, but every piece of armor is important for a soldier. Lethal blows can land anywhere on the body, but for some reason, Paul starts with honesty. At least two major points flow from the description of the belt of truth.

First, honesty plays a key role in spiritual warfare. Satan seeks to do his insidious work in many ways. He may fire flaming arrows of gossip and slander, or he may motivate people to deceive one another. Many churches have suffered shipwrecks due to dishonesty. Christians counter deception with vigilance for the truth.

Second, the belt is fastened around the middle section of the body, which is also responsible for human reproduction. This entire passage forms a type, likeness, or spiritual picture. Dishonest Christians will not be able reproduce spiritually and lead others to Christ. If they lack credibility, unbelievers will believe neither their personal testimony nor their message about Christ. Those who win souls to Christ must be honest souls themselves.

Many people like to hear testimonies of those who have turned from Islam to Christ. Many MBBs have bravely shared their stories in person and online. All should remember the rule of “confession” in sharing these testimonies. “Say with” God what He has seen happen in space and time. While it is true that two people may recall an incident differently, MBBs should not embellish or

exaggerate their testimonies. Such exaggerations do not help the cause of the gospel since they are not truthful.

In conclusion, God will give believers in Jesus victories in spiritual warfare. MBBs should expect that these battles will come. Honesty plays an important part in the armor of God. Paul lists it as the first item. God receives the glory as MBBs are transformed into more honest people. This reality itself is a type of victory in spiritual warfare. May God be glorified in the lives, words, and deeds of all His children.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the relationship of dishonesty to spiritual warfare?
2. Can you think of a situation where truthfulness could have led to a spiritual victory?
3. What advice would you give to MBBs who want to keep their testimonies completely truthful and credible?

CHAPTER 27

The Perils of Self-Deception

But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Tim. 3:13)

This chapter considers another complicated topic. Earlier, we looked at the story of Rahab and situational ethics. At this time, we will examine the complicated interaction of deception and self-deception.

Some deceivers sincerely believe what they are saying. For example, promoters of Islam sincerely believe in its message. They are deceived and their message deceives other people. Some people drink in and internalize deception for so long that they believe it; then they deceive others. Their lies sound like music to their own ears.

However, most of these “sincere but deceived” *do not intend to deceive*. Since this book has focused mostly on identifying and remedying the intent to deceive, the case of self-deception becomes a challenge to understand as well as a condition to avoid.

People process experiences differently. Imagine a scenario in which ten people work in an office. Nine of them think the manager is pleasant, supportive, and an overall good person to work for. The

other person thinks the manager is bossy and a dictatorial tyrant. How could people who have experienced the same work environment process it so differently?

While it is possible that the manager treated the disgruntled employee completely differently than the others, it is more likely that something within the disgruntled employee caused him or her to process the work experience negatively. If this same employee began saying the manager was a tyrant and difficult to work for, various problems would ensue. First, the manager's reputation would be damaged. Second, prospective employees might not apply to work for this company. Third, a disconnect would occur in confession. The upset employee, perhaps due to a history of personal pain, insecurity, or hypersensitivity, did not "say-with" God what God saw happening in the workplace. This disgruntled employee has created an unhealthy and untrue picture of what really happened. Self-deception has occurred, even if this employee did not consciously intend to deceive.

For this reason, as MBBs we must take care of how we process our experiences and share our testimonies. This requires healthy stewardship of our life experiences, which includes the need for accountability. Do we invite others to help us process our experiences? Wise counselors are often able to do this. Or do we insist on "my truth" only, even if it may be a false narrative?

Self-deception can also plague us when we believe false narratives about our lives. Sometimes this can plague us as self-pity: "No one has had it as bad as me." We can also view our relationships through a filter that becomes distorted. Our self-talk becomes overly negative or inaccurate. For these reasons,

trustworthy Christian counselors or positive role models can provide perspective in the difficult situations of life. Sometimes they can recommend a positive way forward when, to us, every door seems blocked.

Paul provides a few clues to the identity of those who are “deceiving and being deceived.” He calls them “evil men and imposters.” Evil people cultivate darkness rather than truth in their innermost being. They are also imposters because they pose as something they are not. These evil men were originally deceived by Satan and his demons, but now they deceive others and fall into a spiral of evil in which deception and self-deception feed off each other. They “proceed from bad to worse.”

Believers in Christ experience the opposite cycle. The Holy Spirit transforms Christians from glory to glory:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

James also warns believers in Christ against self-deception: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, *deceiving yourselves*” (James 1:22, emphasis added). The Bible safeguards against self-deception. We must read the Word and apply it. James continues:

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he

looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. (James 1:23-24)

The Bible serves as a mirror for the souls of believers. Most people look in a mirror after waking up or before leaving the house. They want their actual appearance to match their desired appearance, so they wash their face, brush their hair, and so forth—undergoing a small transformation or makeover. In a similar way, this outward transformation illustrates the spiritual transformation that takes place as believers live in and dig into the Word of God. By reading the Bible and applying its teachings, believers behold the glory of Jesus and are transformed into His image.

Discussion Questions

1. How much blame do people bear if they have first been deceived?
2. Have you ever observed someone in the cycle of deception and self-deception? How did it happen?
3. How is the Bible like a spiritual mirror?
4. Are you carrying false narratives into your “self-talk” or into any of your relationships?

CHAPTER 28

Confession and the Light

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:6-9)

John adds Holy Spirit-inspired wisdom in this epistle to what Paul has written in his epistles. The cornerstone of this passage is again to “confess,” *homologeō*, or “to say-with” God. Confession is a foundational building block of truth and reality. Confession involves believing what the Bible says is true. This shapes the thought life of believers, and their thoughts and beliefs then overflow through their speech.

This passage serves as a great review of the study thus far. Lying is associated with darkness. Truth is associated with light. Believers walk with Jesus in the truth just as they walk with others

in the truth. Christ's disciples confess (say-with God) that the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, cleanses from all sin. Lastly, believers are reminded of the faithfulness of God: if we confess our sins, we can trust Him to forgive us and to cleanse us.

Though dishonesty is used to try to cover up any and every type of sin, confession opens the door of forgiveness for any sin humans may commit. With the godly sorrow of repentance, we agree with God that we have fallen short of His glory. We turn to embrace Jesus, who is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

As MBBs, we must frequently reflect on the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father. Allah in Islam is arbitrary, not trustworthy. The God of the Bible is faithful; when God makes a promise, He makes it truly and sincerely. What a great promise we see here! If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us. Jesus did the hard work on the Cross. That is why forgiveness seems somewhat easy for Christians. One need not pray, fast, give, and sacrifice and then hope one is forgiven, as Muslims do. Instead, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. We receive forgiveness by grace through faith.

Some MBBs may wonder when public confession is required, and when private confession to God is sufficient. In all cases, we should confess our sins to God in prayer. If we have injured others through our sins, we should also ask their forgiveness and make things right as much as possible.

Many scandals and downfalls among church leaders could have been avoided if they had confessed their sins when they first

occurred. However, when Christians choose the path of dishonesty and coverup, the fall becomes even harder later.

The passage above says, “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” Walking in the darkness of dishonesty is a sure way to break fellowship. Walking in the light of confession activates the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Walking in the light does not mean embarrassing other people, but it does require a proper view of God, ourselves, and others. We walk in the light as He is in the light. The light is from God. Through Him, we can see each other clearly and experience godly fellowship. This is a welcome change from the dishonest, insincere scheming so common in this fallen world.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe “walking in the light” in your own words?
2. How does “confession” repair and restore our relationship with God and others?
3. Imagine a church of MBBs walking in the light of true confession. What potential does such a group have to impact the world for Jesus?

CHAPTER 29

Honesty is a Salvation Issue After All

He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Rev. 21:7-8)

In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:25-27)

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. (Rev. 22:14-15)

Sin is a serious matter because it separates people from a holy God. Islam has not provided an answer or a remedy to human sinfulness. Glory to God, Jesus *has* provided the remedy!

The final two chapters of the Bible contain three pictures of warning. Each includes a picture of the saved and the lost. These passages describe those who will be excluded from paradise:

- “All liars” (Rev. 21:8)
- The one “who practices abomination and lying” (Rev. 21:27)
- “Everyone who loves and practices lying” (Rev. 22:15)

In a previous chapter of this book, 1 John 1:8 stated: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.” We confess that, at times, we all sin—including dishonestly presenting ourselves and promoting ourselves. Will this keep us from eternity with Jesus?

The Good News of the gospel is that sinners are saved by grace, not by improving their level of honesty by increments. The believers’ part is to repent and believe the gospel. The key phrase from Revelation 22:15 is “loves and practices lying.” We seek to remove every crumb of dishonest leaven from our hearts. We regret when we have not done so, yet we are not like those who love and practice lying. These lost souls are not repentant. Neither do they have truth deep within. They have not experienced contrition or the godly sorrow that leads to repentance (see 2 Cor. 7:10). They love to lie. They simply do not like being caught lying. If they are around other liars, they brag about lying and laugh it off.

To the contrary, believers in Jesus Christ walk in the light. When we sin, we confess it. We say with God that this is evil. Therefore, we give the Holy Spirit full permission to transform us.

So, do not worry about losing your salvation if you are not perfect. This includes imperfection in the area of truthfulness. Only Jesus is perfect; that is why He is the Savior.

These exclusionary passages in the Bible do not contradict the total and unconditional love of God. He is the same God who forgives us of all sins, including telling lies. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. However, we should not sin casually or carelessly, so that our lifestyle contradicts the grace of God.

The concluding chapters of the Bible leave readers with a sense of seriousness and sobriety. Jesus gives a clear warning to those who love and practice lying.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you known anyone who called himself or herself a Christian but was a chronic liar? Without naming names to embarrass anyone in a public discussion, what was this person's problem as you saw it?
2. Someone may say, "We are not saved by good works, including telling the truth." How would you respond?
3. What is the difference between telling a lie once or twice, and loving and practicing lying?

CHAPTER 30

Healing for the Nations

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:1-5)

This Bible study can be summarized in four points. First, the Bible portrays God's character as holy, faithful, and true. Second, dishonesty constitutes a major human problem, especially in Islamic societies, resulting in relationships fraught with suspicion and distrust. Third, Muslim-background believers being grafted into the wider body of Christ must address honesty as a key discipleship issue. Fourth, the grace of God in

Christ provides forgiveness of sins and divine empowerment for real change.

The final chapter in the Bible, as well as in this study, features a happy ending. When we get to heaven, we will enjoy the presence of God. The curse of sin will be broken forever. We will drink from a refreshing river flowing from the Throne of the Lamb.

The tree of life will be there, bearing twelve kinds of fruits. Can you imagine a tree that bears a different kind of delicious, ripe fruit each month? Better than this, the leaves of the tree bring healing to the nations. Iranians, Pakistanis, Moroccan, and Turkish MBBs will probably boil those leaves to make tea!

In heaven, we will experience final and full healing from sin, dishonesty, and deceit. We will live forever with Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Hallelujah!

The kingdom of God is within us. The kingdom of Jesus has appeared. In heaven, we will enjoy the full meal. On this side of eternity, we can enjoy an appetizer. Let us walk on the way of Jesus, walk in the truth, and walk in His life. Together, we will make it to our glorious destination, since the Holy Spirit is guiding us!

Healing of the nations will include healing from honor-seeking, shame avoidance, and dishonesty. Since the Kingdom of God is often described as “now and not yet,” let us at least dip our toes into Jesus’ healing river now. Can’t you wait to dive in?

Discussion Questions

1. How does “healing for the nations” help people impacted by dishonesty?
2. At the end of this study, how would you compare the strength of God to Satan?
3. What are you most thankful for in this passage?

Afterword

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this study has surveyed thirty Bible passages that address the topic of honesty. We have observed that truthfulness is central to God's character and holiness. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. As we draw closer to the One who is the Truth, we will inevitably become more honest. If we insist on remaining dishonest, we will quickly drift away from Jesus unless and until we repent.

The Lord Jesus is building up the body of Christ as an honest family. He is the head of the body, which is forever attached to Him. As MBBs enter the body of Christ, we must abide by the holy standard of honesty Jesus himself established 2,000 years ago.

These passages constitute a small subset of Bible passages dealing with honesty and truthfulness. Even after finishing the first draft of this book, I kept discovering additional references to honesty. However, I did not want to expand it to 40 or 50 chapters or more.

For example, the Greek term for "truth" (*alethia*) appears 110 times in the New Testament. This word study would undoubtedly bring much edification. The short letter of 3 John mentions "truth" seven times in its 14 verses. I recommend that for a topical study also. By contrast, the Greek term for "deceit" (*dolos*, from the root "to catch with a bait") appears eleven times in the New Testament.

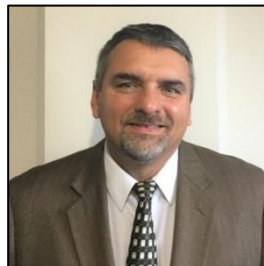
Another helpful study is Jesus' rebuke of "hypocrites." This study did not unpack any of those references. You might choose to study those individually or in a group.

I encourage you to look for more Bible references and study them. They make good group discussion prompts. You can formulate discussion questions, as you have seen above.

Farewell, brothers and sisters in Christ. We are on the journey to Jesus, who is the Truth!

About the Author

Dr. Fred Farrokh and his wife, Annette, are International Trainers with Global Initiative: Reaching Muslim Peoples. Fred is an ordained missionary with Elim Fellowship. Before joining Global Initiative, Fred served as Executive Director of Jesus for Muslims Network in Metro New York, and Special Projects Officer with SAT-7 in Cyprus. A Christian of Muslim-background, he completed his PhD in Intercultural Studies through the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in 2014, with a dissertation on Muslim Identity. He has ministered in over thirty countries.



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the Truth about Jesus!**



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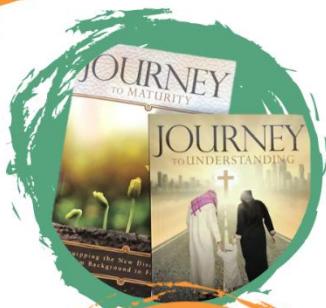
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