

Simple Honesty

By: Dee Bowman

Honesty. A time-honored word. A concept of righteousness. A forgotten requirement among far too many people. It is replaced in our day by convenience, just enough truth to get by. My dad said, about one fellow in town, "He'd lie for a check when he could get cash for telling the truth!" How sad.

Dishonesty is far too widespread in our age. Cheating, they tell me, is an almost common occurrence in many of today's schools, both in the lower grades and at graduate levels. Lying is viewed among political aspirants as acceptable conduct, just as long as you get elected. Many employers suffer substantial losses because of employees who steal from the company; rather than do much about it, they merely build it into the profit factor. How sad.

Dishonesty is used mostly because it is convenient. It is not always easy to tell the truth. In fact sometimes, it is downright hard. But to do less is to incur the disfavor of God, to erode spiritual character, and to make life a little more difficult for whatever is involved in the lie, whether it's telling or its reception.

Out-right lying is done only infrequently. It is usually used as a last resort. But the more subtle forms of untruth are used at random and constitute the large majority of this disrespect for integrity.

These forms include such things as misrepresentation, innuendo, half-truths, plagiarism, misquotation, exaggeration, flattery, and perhaps the most subtle of all untruths, excuses.

Half-truths are one of the most effective of the Devil's devices. He has always used them with great effectiveness. It was a half-truth that got Eve into trouble. It seems to me that almost all sin is involved in some way or the other in half-truths. They offer the best of both worlds -- enough "truth" to salve the conscience, but mixed with an excuse so as to allow you to do what you want. Actually, half-truths are not truths at all--not even half. They are merely error dressed up like truth.

Truth and honesty relate to all areas of life, even the smallest matters. It is just important that you tell the truth about little things as about big things. Honesty must prevail in areas of the insignificant just as it does in areas of the important. To lie about small matters continually is a dangerous business--a very bad habit--one bound to cause pain and heartache eventually. There is no place where integrity does not fit, where it is acceptable to appeal to what is not so. And the notion that situations--no matter their size--alter truth nips at the very heart of righteousness. Situations have nothing at all to do with what is right or wrong.

Truth and honesty are products of the heart (Luke 8:15). From that seat, they must radiate into every area of life--the home, the family, the community, the church (Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21).

The husband-wife relationship is dependent on trust for its survival. I verily believe that dealing treacherously with truth is behind every divorce I ever heard about. Trust and truth are kin; one cannot exist without the other. And trust is what makes happy marriages.



Most of the problems encountered in the family have to do with someone's mishandling of truth. There just cannot be peace and harmony in the family when there is untruth. On the other hand, peace will reign admirably when the scepter of truth is at her right hand.

Politics have gotten a bad name. Not all politicians are bad. But crooked politicians are just that--crooked.

And it would literally shock some of us if we knew how truth is poorly managed when brethren have problems. Preachers have been known to mis-quote, mis-apply, leave false impressions, all in the name of "exposing" some brother with whom they disagree.

Honesty is the badge of the Christian. It is necessary for his own personal peace (Heb. 13:18). It has a profound effect on those who are in his sphere of influence (Col. 3:9). For the follower of Christ, honesty is not just the best policy, it is the only policy.