

# PLAIN HONESTY

Prov. 11:1; Eph. 4: 25, 28; Rom. 13: 8; II Cor. 8:21; Rom. 12: 17; Lev. 19:11

Sermon by Donald Townsley

## INTRODUCTION

1. Prov. 6: 16 - 19; I Thess. 4: 11 -12
2. God's nature excludes His lying -- Num. 15:19; I Sam. 15: 29; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18
3. My subject is PLAIN HONESTY
4. I can think of no subject that needs dealing with more than this one because honesty is the CORNERSTONE OF CHARACTER.
5. Many people today in the church, and in society, are dishonest.
6. EXAMPLES OF DISHONESTY:
  - (1) A man in Athens, Alabama, who was the treasurer, stole \$100,000 from the church he was a part of.
  - (2) High officials in government lie.
  - (3) Men and women cheat on each other in marriage.
  - (4) Men won't keep their word.
  - (5) People won't pay their debts.
  - (6) Shop-lifting in stores.
  - (7) Christians rob God.
  - (8) Students cheat on tests.
7. A reputation for honesty is one of the greatest things you can leave your children.
  - (1) *"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children:"* Prov. 13:22
  - (2) Example: My father went into the First National Bank in Florence, Alabama in the early 40's to borrow some money; the banker remembered *his* grandfather, and his honesty, and my father got the money.
8. Let us look at this subject in some detail:

## I. THREE WAYS DISHONEST INJURES A PERSON

1. A dishonest person loses SELF-RESPECT.
  - (1) When you fail to be honest you must live with self.
  - (2) If you have lied, failed to pay debts, or cheated in marriage you must face that every day -- Psa. 51:3; Psa. 32: 3 - 4
  - (3) That will cause you to lose SELF-ESTEEM.
  - (4) This dishonesty will warp your personality; can't look people in the eye.
2. Dishonesty will sear the CONSCIENCE.
  - (1) I Tim. 4:2
  - (2) Dishonesty will, in time, produce a POKER-FACED LIAR.
  - (3) How pitiful to see a person with a NUMBED CONSCIENCE.
3. How pitiful to see a person who is a dodger of RESPONSIBILITY.
  1. A man or woman who uses dishonest short-cuts to meet responsibility will come to depend upon this crutch.

## II. IT IS DISHONEST NOT TO BE DEPENDABLE

1. We are to men of our word.
2. To fail to keep our word is to be condemned by God -- Matt. 12:37.

3. Many Christians are NOT dependable.
4. Some promise to perform some work in the Lord's Church, and then can't be depended upon to do the work.
  - (1) Song leading
  - (2) Teaching
  - (3) Giving
  - (4) Personal Work
5. Some are not dependable in the Home.
  - (1) Husbands don't keep their word to their wife and children.
6. Some are not dependable in Business.
  - (1) Some won't do what they promise to do.
  - (2) Some won't pay their bills.

### **III. WE ARE DISHONEST WHEN OUR WORD IS NOT OUR BOND**

1. Christ in the New Testament teaches that we must not lie to each other.
  - (1) Col. 3:9 *"Lie not one to another"*
  - (2) Eph. 4:25 *"wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor"*
  - (3) Rev. 21:8
2. There are many ways to lie:
  - (1) Many lie through others -- many instruct others to lie for them.
  - (2) Many lie by coloring the story.
  - (3) Many lie by telling a flying rumor without investigation.
  - (4) Many lie by making promises and then disregarding those promises.
3. The lie is the companion of every kind of sin:
  - (1) Greed
  - (2) Lust
  - (3) Covetousness

### **IV. MANY ARE DISHONEST ON THE JOB**

1. Many will not give a day's work for a day's pay -- I Thess. 4: 11 - 12
2. Many pilfer (taking things of small value) from the job -- Tit. 2:10
3. Many only work when the boss is looking -- Eph. 6:6
4. *"Do you see a man diligent and skillful in his business? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men" (The Amplified Bible)--Prov. 22:29*
5. Rom. 12:11 -- *"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"*

### **V. FAILING TO PAY A JUST WAGE IS DISHONEST**

1. James 5:4
2. In the Old Testament:
  - (1) Lev. 19:13
  - (2) Jer. 22:13
3. Col. 4:1
4. No man can steal another man's labor without sinning.

### **VI. ONE MAY BE LEGAL, BUT NOT HONEST**

1. A Christian may legally hide behind the bankrupt law and escape the burden of a financial obligation.
2. But, morally he cannot.

## **VII. MANY HUSBANDS AND WIVES ARE DISHONEST IN MARRIAGE**

1. They carry on a careless flirtation with the people they are around.
2. These actions lead, many times, to extra-marital relations.
3. Moses said in the Law that a man was not to covet or desire his neighbor's wife -- Ex. 20:17.
4. Job said for a man to commit adultery with his neighbor's wife is "*an heinous crime*" -- Job. 31:11

## **VIII. IT IS DISHONEST NOT TO PAY ONE'S DEBT'S**

1. David said, "*The wicked borroweth and payeth not again*"; "*but the righteous sheweth mercy and giveth*" --Psa. 37:21
2. We have to learn to live within our income.
3. Rom. 13:8
4. Christians who incur debts that go unpaid NULLIFIES their influence.
5. The member of the church that won't pay his or her debts hurts the reputation of the entire church in a community.
6. People who are unfriendly to the Master's cause take delight in passing on the spicy word that "so-and-so" who takes a big part in the church will not pay his debts.
7. THREE KINDS OF MEMBERS WHO HAVE BAD DEBTS:
  - (1) FIRST is the DEADBEAT -- this kind has no intention of paying whenever it can be avoided.
  - (2) SECOND is the member who is unwilling to live within his income -- he will not exercise self-restraint when the budget will not allow the purchase.
    1. Better to have an old car, old clothes, and half-soled shoes than to have a name for NOT paying one's debts.
  - (3) THIRD is the kind of member who through sickness or loss of a job has debts, but has every intention of paying when he can, and tells his creditors.

## **IX. MANY ARE DISHONEST WITH GOD -- Malachi 3:8**

1. Many people are dishonest with God and themselves about their relationship with God -- I John 1:6; Rom. 1: 25; II Thess. 2: 9 - 10
2. Man so often convinces himself that his COURSE is accepted with God -- when it is not -- and he knows he has not followed clear instructions -- Matt. 7: 21
3. I must not rationalize my sins and refuse to accept responsibility for them:
  - (1) Rom. 3: 9 - 10, 23
  - (2) I John 1:8
4. I must follow God's clear instructions for the forgiveness of sins.
5. We cannot deceive God -- Psa. 139: 1, 23 - 24; Heb. 4: 12; Gal. 6: 7 - 8

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The seeds of cheating will produce a harvest of tragedy.