

Unit II: Honesty

12. The Gift of Honesty

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Review

1. Read Luke 14:7-14.
2. If you were at this feast instead of Jesus, how would you typically react if you saw people jostling for the better seat?
3. Why might you not act the way Jesus does when he publicly chews the guests out?

Day 2—Imagine

1. Read Luke 14:7-14 again.
2. Can you think of a time when you took the higher place? Try to think of an incident where you said something to try to make yourself look better. Briefly describe that incident.
3. Imagine that you are one of the guests at the feast who got one of the better seats. Tell the story of the evening. (Ideas: How were you able to get the better seat? What did it feel like when you got it? What was it like to have Jesus point out to you that you'd "sought the higher place"?)

Day 3—Imagine

1. Read Luke 14:7-14 again.
2. Imagine you are the host. Tell the story of the evening. What did it feel like to be so generous? What did it feel like to have Jesus say what he did? What's it like to have Jesus as a guest in your house?

Day 4—Apply

1. Many of us struggle to be honest in our relationships, especially close ones. Why is that? If it is hard for you, why do you think it is it hard?
2. Think of one particular relationship where it is hard for you to be honest. Why is it hard for you? Be as specific as possible. I.e., what might happen if you were more honest?

Day 5

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us*, pp. 79-85a.
2. What convicts you as you read?
3. What is the difference between Jesus-like honesty and co-dependency?

Day 6—Anticipate

1. Read John 1:43-48, Matt. 20:20-21, 22:15-18.
2. How in these disciples behavior in John 1 and Matthew 20 different from the Pharisees behavior in Matthew 22?

13. Living Without Masks

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Apply

1. Read Love Walked Among Us, pp. 85b-88.
2. In LWAU Paul relates the story (p. 87) of how he subtly manipulated his daughter Courtney by asking Jill to call and say he would be late. Describe an event in your life where you subtly manipulated someone else. Usually this involves a situation where you want something but are afraid to be direct about it. (This is a difficult assignment because we our subtle manipulations can be a quick reflex. We don't even realize we are doing them. If you can't think of an example, then pray and ask God to show you any ways that you might manipulate.)

Day 2—Review

1. Read John 5:41-44
2. According to Jesus, what is the secret behind the way Jesus is so honest?
3. According to Jesus, why might we not speak the truth? What do we lack?
4. What rings true about what Jesus says? How might "having the love of God in your hearts" free you up to be more lovingly honest?

Day 3—Review

1. In the Daily Devotions for lesson 12 (the last lesson), you were asked in Question 4 to reflect on a relationship that might lack honesty. Using the chart from Lesson 12 that compares co-dependency and honesty, continue to reflect on that relationship. (Assuming you have a relationship that lacks honesty) Draw out the chart with your name in it on the left showing your pattern of

Day 4—Apply

1. As you seek to apply this lesson, find an example from your life when you were tempted to manipulate but didn't. Describe the situation, what you were tempted to say, and then what you actually said. How did it effect you and/or the other person to speak honestly like Jesus?

Day 5—Reflect

1. Read Luke 11:37-45, 53-54
2. Define "Niceness" as we use it in the lesson. [The key difference between "Niceness" and "Honesty" is in the motivation. It is good to be nice, but if our goal in conversation is for people to approve of us (we're nice so they'll like us) then we have drifted into self-worship. We've substituted the glib poetry of a Hallmark card for the hard work of love.]

Day 6—Review

1. Read Mark 3:1-6
2. What is good about Jesus' anger in this account?

14. Good Anger

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Apply

1. Read Mark 3:1-6
2. After reflecting on the lesson, list the ways that Jesus' anger is different than your anger?
3. Do you tend to stuff your anger or dump it on others?

Day 2—Apply

1. (From the lesson) What are the three dangers that Jesus avoids in his anger?
2. Think of a time recently where you got angry. If there was any way that you were different from Jesus, reflect on how you could have been Jesus-like in your anger. First describe the incident (minor incidents are always better) and then describe how you could have been different.

Day 3—Apply

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us* pp. 89-92a.
2. What strikes you as you read?
3. Anger is the door to our hearts. We tend to get angry over things that we idolize or worship. Reflecting on the situation in Day 2, what might have been your idol? (For example in the story of Robertson McQuilken, he likely placed a high value on efficiency, orderliness, and neatness. Those are fine qualities, but we begin to subtly idolize them when we get angry because someone doesn't conform to our standard.)

4. Reflect on other times you've been angry. What other idols do you see popping up?

Day 4—Imagine

1. Read Mark 3:1-6 again.
2. What did it feel like to be the crippled man in this story? Take us through the incident in 1st person (I, me, my) as if you were the crippled man and tell us what it felt like.

Day 5—Imagine

1. What is hard about the way Jesus loves the Pharisees in this story?
2. Tell this story from the Pharisee's point of view.

Day 6—Anticipate

1. Read Mark 10:13-16, 11:15-18
2. What strikes you about Jesus' anger here?

14. Good Anger

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Day 6—Anticipate

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15. Good Irritation and Good Rage

Daily Devotional

Day 1—Apply

1. Is irritation wrong in-and-of-itself?
2. Why or why not?
3. What is the difference between good irritation and bad irritation?

Day 2—Imagine

1. Read Mark 10:13-16.
2. Retell this story from the mother's point of view.

Day 3—Imagine

1. Read Mark 11:15-18
 2. Tell this story from the point of view of one of the money changers. Either have the man repentant at the end or make him hardened.
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Day 4—Apply

1. Read Matthew 10:34
2. Why is this passage a particularly hard one for modern American culture?
3. What does it unmask in our lives? That is, where might you have a commitment to peace that shrinks from “speaking the truth in love”?
4. What are the risks of a Jesus-like honesty that speaks the truth in love?
5. What did it cost Jesus to be honest?

Day 5—Reading

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us* pp. 92b-98.
2. What strikes you or convicts you as you read?

Day 6^{3/4} Anticipate

1. Read Mark 14:27-31, 66-72, Luke 12:2, John 13:36-14:1
 2. What patterns of honesty do you see in these accounts?
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16. A Time to Shut Up

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Imagine

1. Read Mark 14:27-31
2. Tell this story from Peter's point of view. Try to capture his self-righteousness, that firm confidence that you've been misunderstood. Remember, self-righteousness never comes with a label.
3. If you were in Jesus shoes, how would you have handled it when Peter was so insistent that he was right? That is, how might you be different than Jesus?

Day 2—Apply

1. Put this lesson into practice this week by practicing a Jesus-like honesty with someone in your life. That is say it once or twice to the person and then be content to let the other person have the last word.
2. What person in your life might you say this to? (Write their initials)
3. What wording might you use?
4. (Answer this question only if God gives you opportunity to be honest with the other person.) What happened? What did you say? How did they respond? Did God give you the grace to be silent or just listen?

Day 3—Reflect

1. Read Mark 14:66-72, Luke 12:2.
2. Why is the principle “hidden things will be revealed” a comforting principle?
3. Give an example of how you’ve seen that principle working in people’s lives?
4. How does that principle take pressure of you when you are being honest?
5. How might remembering that principle make you more gentle in your honesty?
6. How does that principle rest on the sovereignty of God?

Day 4—Apply

1. Read John 13:36-14:1

2. Apply the principle of honesty surrounded by compassion to your life by reflecting on an argument or disagreement you've had with someone and thinking of three different ways you could surround your honesty with compassion. This can be hypothetical.

Day 5—Define

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us*, pp. 99-101a
2. Review the chart at the end of the lesson on the comparison of judging with honesty. In your own words, summarize the difference between the two.

Day 6—Anticipate

1. Read Matthew 18:21-25. How might forgiveness shape our honesty?
2. Read Mark 9:2-8 and John 21:1-8. What do you notice about Jesus' honesty in these accounts?

17. Honesty is Patient and Thoughtful

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Reflecting on Forgiveness

1. Read Matthew 18:21-25
2. How did the servant's forgetting his need forgiveness affect the way he related to the man who owed him money?
3. How might our forgetting our need forgiveness affect the way we relate to people?
4. What is the implication of this story for honesty? How might knowing that we need forgiveness transform our honesty?

Day 2—Reflecting on Accepting and Forbearance

1. Read Mark 9:2-8 and John 21:1-8.
2. Describe Peter's personality. What's he like? What makes him so endearing?
3. Sometimes people like Peter are initially endearing, but then when the day-to-day grind sets in they begin to wear on us. If you were married and Peter were your husband (or your wife was like Peter), what would begin to bug you?
4. If you were married to Peter, how might you try to "fix" him?

5. Read Romans 15:7. What principle does Paul mention here? How does this principle apply to our desire to “fix” people?

6. How do you see this principle working in Jesus’ relationship with Peter?

7. Define forbearance.

8. What kind of communication does forbearance lead to in relationships?

Day 3—Reading

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us* pp. 101-104.
2. What convicts you or strikes you in the reading?
3. Evaluate your honesty in close relationships. What are some of the bad tendencies you have in honesty?
4. What are some of the good tendencies you have with honesty in close relationships?

Day 4—Reflecting on Specifics

1. Read Matthew 23:1-12.

2. Think of someone who irritates you and write out an example of bad honesty. Don't overdue it, but don't forget how 'helpful' adverbs are (never, always, etc), and make sure you have feelings without specifics!

3. Think of that same person and write out an example of good honesty.

Day 5—Reflecting on Good and Bad Honesty

1. Re-read your examples of good and bad honesty from Day Four.

2. Which was faster to write? Why?

3. Which took more thought? Why?

4. How does incarnating relate to good honesty?

Day 6—Anticipate

1. Read John 8:2-11 and Matthew 7:1-5.

2. What lessons do you anticipate from next week's lesson?

18. Reconciliation

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Imagine

1. Read John 8:2-11.
2. Re-tell this story from the point of view of the woman caught in adultery. Try to capture the swirling emotions that she must have felt...the guilt, the shame, the fear, the relief, and finally the joy.

Day 2—Read

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us*, pp. 105-110
2. What personally convicts you as you read?
3. How is Beam Research connected with the Golden Rule?

Day 3—Beam Research

1. Read Matthew 7:1-5
2. Do some Beam Research and “take the beam out of your own eye” by doing what Paul did when he went to his wife Jill and asked her what he did wrong. The simplest way to do that is to ask a spouse (or boss, co-worker, friend, child, or parent), “If there was one thing about me you’d like to change, what would it be?” Make sure you go to someone who knows you well.
(Be aware that people are afraid to be honest about their real feelings. The fear of honesty comes from how poorly most of us receive criticism. I say that because you might need to draw the person out with a follow-up question or tell them that you are serious. You

might want to say something like, “I’m asking this question as part of a Bible study that I’m doing. I’m really serious about this question. I honestly want negative feedback. I know that is not easy to give, but I think it will be helpful for me.” Feel free to go to someone who is not a Christian. It would be a great way for them to see Jesus in you.)

3. Write the initials of the person you plan to go to _____.
4. In *Love Walked Among Us*, Paul Miller reflects on how nervous he was about going to Jill. Why was he nervous? As you contemplate this assignment, what makes it difficult (possibly) for you? This is a good opportunity to get to know your heart better.

Day 4—Beam Research Follow-Up

1. What was it like to do Beam Research? What did it feel like?
2. What did the other person say about you?
3. What is your reaction to what the person said? Is it accurate? Was it helpful? Was there anything surprising?

Day 5—More Research

1. Go to a second person, again someone who is close to you or knows you well and ask them the same question, “If there was one thing about me you’d like to change, what would it be?”
2. Write the initials of the person you plan to go to _____.
2. What did they say? Was it helpful? Did you notice any pattern between what the two people said?

19. Love Your Enemies

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Reading

1. Read *Love Walked Among Us*, pp. 111-114.
2. What strikes or convicts you as you read?

Day 2—Identifying An Enemy

1. Read Matthew 5:38-48.
2. Do you have anyone in your life who might qualify as an enemy? “Temporary” enemies count! Possibly, you might not have an “enemy” but just a difficult person in your life. If that is the case, then substitute that person for “enemy” in these exercises. Write the person’s initials: _____.
3. What is our instinctive reaction when dealing with your enemy?
4. Why does Jesus tell us we should love our enemies?
5. How has God loved you, personally, when you were his enemy?

4. Now write out a simple strategy for “destroying” your enemy with love. That is list, what should you do when.

5. Should you do this strategy or part of it? It is up to you and the Holy Spirit. You can’t do what Jesus says without the very presence of Jesus living in you.

Day 5—Reflect

1. Have you ever seen enemies ever changed because of love, either in your own experience or in the experience of others?
2. If you’ve seen enemies changed because of love, take time to write out the story of how it happened. If you’ve not seen enemies changed because of love, then write a reaction to the four stories in Point 3 on enemies who were changed because of love.

Day 6—Anticipate

1. Read Matthew 7:6. What do you think Jesus means here?
2. Read Matthew 10:16-17. How does Jesus teaching in this Scripture apply to honesty?

20. Prudence: Silence in the Face of Evil

Daily Devotions

Day 1—Reflect

1. Read Matthew 10:16-17
2. What is hard for you about *being as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves*? What are the two kinds of behaviors that we have to maintain?

Day 2—Reflect

1. Thinking of the road with two cliffs, do you tend to “write them off” or think “everyone is my friend”. Which cliff do you tend to fall off? (Or possibly you’ll do either depending on the situation.)
2. Why?

Day 3—Apply “Go to your brother”

1. Read Matthew 5:23-24
2. Note: when you go to someone who appears to have something against you, people tend to react in two ways: they deny or ‘dump’. If they deny it could be they are embarrassed that you’ve called them on it. What to do with the deniers? Nothing. It usually helps them to resolve it inwardly when you call them on it. (And it is often true that there wasn’t a problem there in the first place.) The problem dumping comes because they’ve been stewing on the problem, fearful to go to you so it builds up in their own mind and then burst like a broken dam. What to do with the dumpers? Listen and repeat back to them what they’ve said. When someone is dumping, it is unwise to tell him or her your point of view. It is better to wait until the emotions are drained and then ask their permission to give your point of view.
3. Can you think of someone that is distant from you and possibly offended by you?

3. How might have following Jesus' advice saved you unnecessary hassle?

Day 5—Review Jesus' Prudence

1. Read your notes on Point 3 and the passages listed there (Matthew 10:16, 26, 13:24-30, Mark 10:10, John 2:23-25).
2. In these examples of Jesus' prudence which do you find helpful?

3. How might prudence in your life help your honesty? How might it change your honesty?

Day 6—Little Victories

1. Describe a little victory that you've had this week in the area of love. It is ideal if it fits in with this lesson, but it is fine if it is something from a previous lesson. Sometimes a little victory is nothing more than being convicted that we've failed to love someone the way Jesus does. 90% of the battle is just seeing our selves in a new light. Possibly, we were harsh, or we pulled back from someone when we should have moved towards them.

Day 7—Anticipate

1. Read John 7:1-9. What new aspects of Jesus' love do you see here? (This begins a new unit, so we'll be looking at a whole new way that Jesus loves people.)