

# Being Honest - Spiritually



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Psalm 32:2 *“Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit [guile].”* Jesus said John 1:47 that Nathanael was an Israelite, *“in whom is no guile;”—“Here comes an honest man.”* Those who enter God’s kingdom Revelation 14:5 *“In their mouth was found no guile [deceit; or dishonesty]: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”*

God requires our loyalty concerning faith in Him, so we must make an honest evaluation of our trust on His divine power through the Atonement Blood of His Son. Just *speaking* about faith in God, but *not obeying* what His Word teaches, is deceptive. James 1:22 *“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves;”* because James 2:26, *“faith without works is dead.”*

A righteous standing in the sight of God comes *only* by combining our belief in the resurrection power of Christ, with acting in faith on the divine power of God. James 2:22 Abraham’s *“faith was co-operating with his actions, and that by his actions his faith was perfected.”* Our faith in God must be perfected—*not divided* among other plans, policies, or prescriptions. Matthew 5:48 *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

Making an honest assessment of our faith in God, is being willing to see our spiritual *condition* in light of His Word. We must be truly trusting God in faith, to receive answers to pray-

er. There are only two classes of people in the world—those who are *willing* to be spiritually honest before God, and those who *are not willing* to be shown spiritual requirements. John 12:46 *“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”*

We may *think* that we are making an honest effort to trust God, but may also be justifying ourselves and placing the blame *on* God. The devil tries to convince us that we are doing our best, so something else is the problem. A *dishonest* spiritual assessment will hinder the spiritual *light* and the answer to *prayer* God *wants* to give us.

Being honest spiritually is asking ourselves if *we* are hindering the answer to prayer that God *wants* to give. God is always right, so there *has* to be a spiritual lack in *us*. If we will be honest with ourselves, and take an attitude of humility before God, He promises to give the spiritual wisdom we need to meet a situation right, or to receive an answer to prayer. Psalm 51:4 *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”*

If we are willing to forget any preconceived ideas and be open to divine light, God will surely show us any hindrance. Ephesians 5:13-14 *“Everything can be tested by the light and thus be shown in its true colors; for whatever shines of itself is light. For this reason it is said, ‘Rise, sleeper; rise from among the dead, and Christ will shed light upon you.’”*

The Holy Spirit is ready to enlighten our mind to understand spiritual truth, if we are willing to make an honest assessment of our faith. 1 Corinthians 2:12 *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”* The spiritual benefits of the Atonement of Christ are waiting to be given.

We must always be alert to deception, because Satan can deceive us into seeing things opposite to what God’s Word says. An honest assessment of our attitude *toward* God, will bring spiritual wisdom *from* God. It is a promise James 1:5 *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* Our responsibility is to be spiritually *honest* and place the blame on our *own* spiritual *condition*.

The Bible gives examples of honesty in spiritual matters. The two criminals crucified with Jesus show two opposite attitudes. They were both in the worst situation anyone could be in; but one was honest and the other was not. One was willing to admit that his *own* sins *caused* him to be in that horrible situation—the other wasn’t. The first one blamed himself—*not* God.

These two criminals were at the very gate of Hell, and only one thing stood between them and the fire—a *change* of attitude! One was honest before God and *changed* his attitude—which enabled God to change his direction to Heaven. The other criminal justified himself, blamed Jesus, and went to Hell forever and ever. Only an *attitude change* separated the two men—only an *attitude* separates *Heaven* from *Hell!*

Making an honest judgment of our attitudes, and being open to spiritual *light*, is a salvation issue. The only difference between them and their opposite fate, was their attitude toward God. That is recorded for our spiritual *benefit* and our preparation for the Kingdom. Luke 23:39 *“Now one of the criminals who had been crucified insulted Him, saying, ‘Are not you the Christ? Save yourself and us.’”* The devil caused that man to take that attitude.

40 *“But the other, answering, reproved him. ‘Do you also not fear God,’ he said, ‘when you are actually suffering the same punishment?’”* We are at the jaws of death, he meant, and yet

you show no fear of God! How can you have that rebellious attitude when you are facing eternity! This is valuable spiritual light for everyone today.

The man who reproved the other had the right attitude, and said Luke 23:41 “*We indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving due requital for what we have done. But [Jesus] has done nothing amiss.*” If God can find one soul anywhere in the world who will take *that* attitude, and be open to spiritual light, He would give it. It would enable them to Romans 12:2, “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is.*”

The *honesty* of the man’s prayer showed the *sincerity* of his heart—Luke 23:42, “*Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.*” He would be acquitted and justified by his faith in Christ. It was a humble attitude and an honest prayer—like Luke 18:13 “*God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*” Jesus answered that man’s prayer, and promised Paradise Luke 23:43, “*Verily I say to thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*”

It is the same promise of Luke 18:14 “*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself [by making an honest spiritual judgment] will be exalted.*” Our words are vitally important; Matthew 12:37 “*For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.*”

These examples are for us today, and they show how important it is to be humble, repentant, and ready to change wrong attitudes. The man with humility and a willing heart, was given eternal life—just by reversing his attitude toward God. He went from *no faith* to *complete trust*. One man will suffer the tortures of Hell forever, and the other will praise God through the endless

ages of eternity in Heaven. What a contrast between an honest and a rebellious heart!

John the Baptist recognized spiritual pretense. The scribes and Pharisees looked religious, but their hearts were rebellious. If those Pharisees were here today, most denominational churches would consider them Christians on their way to Heaven, because they do *not* recognize the rebellious attitude in their *own* heart—much less in someone else. Outward piety does *not* justify our sins, but a genuine inward faith in the Atonement of Christ *does*.

The religious leaders in the first century looked pious, and they *tried* to follow their laws and traditions. They were careful not to carry a carpet, nor light a fire on the Sabbath. Jesus said that such people appeared righteous Matthew 23:27 “*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean.*”

They wanted to be baptized, but John the Baptist was enlightened to see their hypocrisy. Luke 3:7 “*Then to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*” He was calling them *children of the devil*, which was what they were, because they wanted John to *think* they were sincere in trusting God, when they were not.

They were *hypocrites* because they were not willing to admit they had no conversion of heart—a heart that would accept God’s Son. A *generation of vipers* would mean they were descendants of that wicked serpent who deceived Adam. Jesus said Luke 20:46 “*Beware of the Scribes*” who look pious on the *outside*, but are wicked on the *inside*.

John knew their real intentions so he had to warn them of God’s wrath. They had *no* inten-

tion of accepting Christ as their Savior, and they had *no* willingness to trust God for anything—but they wanted to be baptized. John said Luke 3:8 “*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*”

They were not willing to change, so he told them—*Do not just profess faith, but actively show that you are trusting God, and living by faith in the Atonement sacrifice of His Son.* It was a strong rebuke—but just what they needed.

If there was ever an issue where spiritual honesty is needed, it is when our eternal life is at stake. John spoke the *truth in love* Ephesians 4:15 and said Luke 3:9 “*The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*” John was just telling them where they *were* spiritually—in the sight of God.

A logger places the ax against the tree when he stops for lunch, with the intention of cutting down that tree next. God has already placed an ax at the feet of those who are not producing spiritual fruit, because they are not trusting Him in believing faith, for—healing without drugs, for protection without guns, for justice without lawyers, for provisions without welfare, and for every other issue that involves faith in God.

If the religious leaders would have been spiritually honest, and had truly repented, God would have done as much for them, as He would for anyone else. From what the Bible records, they did not repent, and they continued to be controlled by the devil, so they would find themselves in the flames and pleading for relief. Being honest—spiritually is a *salvation* issue.



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