

# BE SPIRITUALLY HONEST WITH GOD

(BY GOD'S MERCY BE PERFECTED)

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For a person to be sincerely honest in daily situations when dealing with other people, is always right and proper, and if we trust God to help us, then the Holy Spirit can enable us to be honest with each other. What we all need to consider of more importance, however, is to be spiritually honest with God, and that means for us to be willing to see things as they really are (and then make decisions in line with God's Word). The world's definition of being honest is much different than a person being spiritually honest with God. However, when we are honest and sincere in our attitudes toward God, it will bring real deliverance out of our troubles (which always includes spiritual blessing from God).

People in this world could be separated into two distinct classes, one class that is not willing to be honest with God, always seeing things in a wrong light and using self-efforts to overcome the circumstances, thus, always taking wrong attitudes toward God and nullifying His rich promises (which are for those who believe and submit to His plan for our life). The reality of not being honest with God is, that it effectively hinders a person from getting any deliverance from God.

The other class of people will admit that they have been influenced by seen things and circumstances, and they will admit to the futility of their own self-efforts. This allows God to give them light and understanding to see things as they really are within His will and plan (then He can enable a person to trust on His power to deliver them). In other words, by being spiritually honest with God, admitting to Him how really wrong and helpless we have been; it allows God to remove our trust on the self-life, and enables us to have real and true faith on His power to deliver. (Most importantly, being honest with God allows Him to perfect our Christian character).

Of course, we could never become perfect of ourselves, ... so consecrating our life to God, which means to humble ourselves, and be willing to allow God's Spirit (the nature of Jesus Christ) to take His place in our heart, ... to replace the sinful nature that each one inherited from Adam. It is to be sanctified by the shed Blood of Christ. That is what enables us to turn from spiritual darkness to spiritual light.

We have met many people of that class who have not been willing to be honest with God (the late Pastor said), and they have been in quite a lot of trouble, ... and the kind of attitude they have had toward God has been the real cause of their difficulties. On the surface it may look as if they were making an honest effort to lay aside self and trust God, but all the while Satan was piling one trouble after another upon them. We did not have to talk with them very long to realize why they were in so much trouble. Hidden deep in their heart (and almost unknown to them, they were justifying themselves and blaming God for their troubles.

Many people have said, I do not understand why I am not delivered; ... I am doing my level best to believe God; I am willing to

meet any condition, and I am still not delivered. I believe that I am all right; ... something must be wrong with the teaching (they may say)... or God is not willing to deliver me. That is a dishonest and rebellious attitude of a worst kind for a person (and it will effectively hinder God from helping us).

We have met some people, however, who took a far different attitude, and they have said, I know I am hindering God somewhere in my life, or I would have been delivered before this. God and His Truth are all right, and I am the one who is in the wrong.

A person who takes an attitude like that is being honest with God,..they could ask Him for needed light, and He would show them just what was hindering their deliverance. God will do His utmost to not only give them needed spiritual light, but also in giving them full deliverance. That is what apostle Paul meant (Ephes. 5:14) For this reason it is said, "Rise, sleeper; rise from among the dead, and Christ will shed light upon you."

When we are willing to lay aside prejudice, preconceived notions, and ideas of our own, and just leave our minds open for God to give us the needed light, we will be given the real light that we need. When we are honest before God, we will not have to suffer for want of needed spiritual light to be able to see things from God's standpoint. We will be shown how to enter in and enjoy the benefits of the Atonement. The Holy Spirit can illuminate our mind to be able to see things as we want and need to see them, within His will and plan for our life. The apostle explained further (1 Cor. 2:12) But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which comes forth from God, that we may know the blessings that have been so freely given to us by God. (Vs.15) But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

A person who is not honest and open to receive light from God, will see things directly opposite to what they really are. A couple examples from the Bible clearly illustrate that when a person is spiritually honest with God, it will bring their full deliverance, while a rebellious and dishonest attitude will allow Satan to get them into more trouble.

There were two thieves hung on crosses (being crucified along with Jesus Christ), the worst place they could be naturally speaking. However, one of them was really honest before God, that is, he was willing to see things as they were, and to acknowledge that his past sins were the cause of him being hung on a cross. He put the blame on himself for his predicament, and he acknowledged that God was altogether in the right. (What true light and guidance that should be for each one!)

Try to picture two thieves dying in their sins (having broken God's commandment thou shalt not steal), and both were at the gate to the Pit. The only thing that stood between them and spending eternity in the Lake of Fire was a change of attitude in their heart. Could there be a more terrible predicament than that? We could hardly

express in words the terrible nature of the predicament they were in, however, one of those men became spiritually honest before God, so his terrible predicament was turned into a stepping stone to Heaven.

The other thief, however, not only tried to justify himself, but he condemned Jesus Christ and went to the Lake of Fire. The difference between being promised Heaven, or going to a Lake of Fire, was the attitude each one took toward Jesus Christ (the Savior of mankind). (Luke 23:39) Then one of the criminals who were hanged, blasphemed Him (mocked Jesus Christ), saying "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." His attitude and words revealed what a dominating influence Satan had over his life.

However, the other thief had no doubt done some serious thinking after he had been apprehended, and he had regret for his sins, which led him to a repentant attitude (which was what God was looking for and wanted to see in the thief's heart). He answered the unrepentant thief and rebuked him (vs.40), saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?" (but suffering just punishment for your sins).

In reality, what that thief was really saying (or meant) was. you are in the jaws of death and at the very gates of the Pit of eternal torment, and yet you have not the slightest fear of God in your heart. Are you determined to be perverse, rebellious, and stubborn, even in such a terrible predicament as we are in (and justly so because of our sins). (Vs. 41) "And we indeed justly suffering, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; (that was being honest with God, admitting and confessing his sin), but this Man (Jesus) has done nothing wrong." (the thief said).

God can do that for any human being (in any part of the world) if they will allow Him to give them the spiritual light and guidance they need to identify, acknowledge, and confess sins and mistakes in their life. God could bring a revolution in any person's life as He did for that thief hanging on the cross, if one were willing to sincerely confess and forsake sin, and believe they are cleansed and restored by the cleansing Blood of Jesus Christ (who gave His life in place of ours, to save us from rebellion, sin, death, and a Lake of Fire).

The repentant thief then made a prayer to Jesus Christ, saying; (vs. 42) Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." It was a plea for his life. He knew that he had broken God's commandment thou shalt not steal, (and he was headed to the Lake of Fire if he did not repent). Jesus answered his prayer right away, (vs. 43) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

This example should show us how important it is that we always be very humble, respectful, and honest before God. When we are, our first prayer (made in faith and believing that it is answered) will bring God's answer at once. We need to realize how valuable this is, when we learn that a man was re-routed from a through ticket to the Lake of Fire and eternal torment, ... to Eternal Life, ... by just being willing to be spiritually honest with God about sins and mistakes in his life. The comparison is frightening; one man will spend eternity in Heaven, and the other man will spend eternity in the flames of Hell, crying for a drop of water to cool his tongue.

The state of mind and condition of the heart of the rebellious,

unrepentant thief, could be compared to that of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees in the time of John the Baptist (who had real spiritual light and insight from God to teach others). The seemingly pious Pharisees and Sadducees were seen as being good outwardly, and they came to John to be baptized. If those people were living today, we suppose there is not a denominational church minister who would not say they were on their way to Heaven. That is because the nominal church ministers do not know what a real Christian is, they do not know what it means to serve the living God (for they believe that God has changed and will not answer prayer for us today). They think that a little outward morality, a show of piety, putting a few dollars a year in the church box is all that is needed to get to Heaven, while they reject a redemptive and healing power of the atoning eternal sacrifice that Jesus made for everyone on earth who will accept and believe on Him and the power of His Blood.

The scribes and Pharisees were very outwardly pious, lived up to the Law of Moses (would not pick up a stick nor cook food on the Sabbath), but it was all done as human fleshly efforts of their own, (while not trusting on God's promises for anything in their life). They were scrupulous and careful in their outward religious observances and Jesus, Himself said that they appeared to be righteous in the sight of men. But nothing could be more spiritually dangerous or take people to the Lake of Fire than outward religion, because they are deceived by Satan to believe that they are doing right and on their way to Heaven, because of merit in their outward actions). (Matt.21:31) Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. [ He meant, because they already know they are doing wrong by stealing from people and committing fornication. They would be more willing to repent and be spiritually honest in confessing to God, but you are deceived to think that you are right and that there is no need to repent.

When the scribes and Pharisees came to be baptized by John the Baptist, he could see right through their hypocrisy and said to them, (Luke 3:7) Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [ A viper is a serpent, and we know from (Gen.3:14) that God put a curse on the serpent, Satan (and of course any who follow him in unbelief and rebellion against God and His Son Jesus Christ). John called them serpents because they were under a curse of false outward religion, with no trust on God for anything in their life. They were an example of rank unbelief on the Son of God.] (John 3:36) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath (His anger) remains on him."

When John called the pious, outwardly religious scribes and priests of the Pharisee sect, a brood of vipers, he meant, you are "children of the devil", and who has warned you to flee from the 'wrath to come. That is the kind of greeting they needed to hear from him, because they were trying to make John the Baptist think they were honest and sincere at heart, when all the while they were hypocrites and not willing to give up their carnal ways of living (which they tried to overshadow by acting pious outwardly, while not trusting on

God and the power of an atonement Blood sacrifice but were trusting on many other things). (Could that not be likened to the "once saved, always saved" mind-set of many professed Christians in this day). In saying, brood of vipers, John meant, you are direct descendants of that old serpent (the devil) who deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

John the Baptist had real spiritual light from God, but they did not, and he was saying to them, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ... you certainly did not get that light from God. He knew that they did not come to accept the real Gospel from God (but just to see what it was all about). He could see through their hypocrisy, and that they did not desire to live the true Christian life of faith on God. They needed to repent in the worst way and John knew that.

John further said (Luke 3:8) "Live lives which shall prove your change of heart; (bear fruits worthy of repentance), and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our forefather,' for I tell you that God can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones."

John did not mince words with them, for he knew that their only chance to be saved from an "eternity in Hell", was for them to realize their truly wrong spiritual condition, and that many notorious sinners would enter the Kingdom of God before they would enter, because those people would be willing to sincerely repent, trust Him to control themselves, and begin trusting on God for things in their life. The scribes and Pharisees were unwilling to admit to the sad spiritual condition of their heart. Do not let your repentance be in word only (John meant), but let us see by your lives that you mean to accept the Truth right. Stern words, but just what they needed to hear. If there is ever anything needed in our life, it is to be spiritually honest with God, and to live the Truth right, because our eternal interests are at stake.

John warned them further (vs.9) "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

He was telling them just where they stood in God's sight. When a man is cutting down trees and stops for lunch, he lays his ax against the next tree he intends to cut down. John meant God has laid his ax up against you, and every tree that does not bring forth fruit, is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Of course, if the scribes and Pharisees would have been honest with God and repented of their unscriptural ways of living, God (in His great mercy) would have done as much for them as He did for the repentant thief on the cross, or anyone else willing to sincerely repent. But they were so much under the control of Satan (and did not know it), that they refused to accept the mercy and advice that God offered them. So, they would (because of being unrepentant), eventually end up in the Lake of Fire just as John the Baptist told them that they would.

When we will be spiritually honest with God ourselves, see things in our life as it really is, and are willing to sincerely repent and begin to trust in God for things in our life, then God (by His grace and mercy for sinners), can remove "outward actions" that come from the self-life from within our heart, and, perfect us by a changed

attitude in our heart, to save us from "eternal torment" and prepare us for Eternal Life with Him (as He promised to do for every true believer). (John 3:16) For so greatly did God love the world that He gave His only Son, that every one who trusts in Him may not perish but may have the Life of Ages. (Vs.18) He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgement. "He who does not trust has already received sentence, because he has not his trust resting on the name of God's only Son." (Then Vs. 36) He who believes in the Son" (trusts in the power of Jesus' shed Blood), "has the Life of the Ages."

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## The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

Some Main Points:

- 1... When we are spiritually honest with God about our true spiritual condition (and in regard to circumstances in our life), it allows Him work toward perfecting a truly Christlike attitude in our heart. (Jesus said (of the tax-gather who stood far back) but kept beating his breast and saying, "O God, be reconciled to me, sinner that I am....I tell you that this man went home more thoroughly absolved from guilt than the other." (Luke 18:13-14)
- 2... When we are not honest about ourselves with God, and open to receive needed light from Him, we will see things directly opposite from the way God sees them.
- 3... A thief on a cross was honest about himself with God,...(and he received a promise to be with Jesus Christ in Paradise). The thief simply had true change of attitude in his heart.
- 4... The chastisement for our peace was laid upon Jesus Christ, so when our peace is disturbed by circumstances or some person, we need to look at ourselves for the cause, not look at the other person (while we try to justify ourselves). There is some reason on our part why our peace is being disturbed. (The other thief who hung on a cross did not acknowledge his true spiritual attitude, and he condemned himself).