

Week 4 Nurturing Godliness at GCF: Personal Honesty & The Word of God

A community growing in godliness is a community growing in personal honesty and in applying the Word of God.

Can I trust you? Can you really help me?¹

1. We need to press into being honest with one another.

Ephesians 4:25

"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."

Colossians 3:9

"Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices"

- Falsehood has been and is to be put off.
- Truthfulness is to be put on.
- For we are members one of another.

Honest about what? Problems of daily living (among which are: Sin, Weaknesses, Suffering)

Honest about sin

Proverbs 10:18

"The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool."

Proverbs 26:24

"Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart;"

- It is the heart that hates or loves.
- Speaking in a way that conceals that hatred by flattery, etc. constitutes lying lips.
- To have lying lips (as opposed to honest lips) is for our words not to match our hearts.

Proverbs 28:13

"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."

Why do we struggle with being honest about our sin?

Some possible reasons:

Some possible solutions to these hurdles:

Honest about weaknesses

1 Thessalonians 5:14

"help the weak"

¹ Rob Green, Comment in a Seminar of Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries.

- If we don't know one another's struggle with a weakness how can we possibly help them in that weakness?

Hebrews 5:2

"He [the high priest] can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness."

- ignorance (I should know how to do this but I don't)
- misguided (I thought this is what God wanted me to do but you're telling me something new from God's word)

Why do we struggle with being honest about our weaknesses?

Some possible reasons:

Some possible solutions to these hurdles:

Honest about suffering

Job 7:11; 10:1

"Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul."

Psalm 25:16

"Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted."

Why do we struggle with being honest about our sufferings and sorrows?

Some possible reasons:

Some possible solutions to these hurdles:

2. We need to learn how to respond to one another's honesty

Ephesians 4:29-30

"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

- Cease corrupting talk
- Speak words that are good for building up
- Speak words that fit the occasion
- Speak words that give grace to those who hear

- God wants us to speak only in ways that build up those we are speaking with or around who would overhear us. He wants the words coming out of our mouths to strengthen others in their walk with God. He wants us to speak words that fit the occasion (patient admonition for the idle, patient encouragement for the fainthearted, patient help for the weak 1 Thess. 5:14). If our brother or sister sins against us we are to rebuke him or her (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3). There are words that fit every occasion (Prov. 25:11).
- Our words give grace to those who hear by their being fitted to the occasion and representative of the grace of God in Christ toward the person (be it mild or severe rebuke or a gentle word of encouragement that strengthens our brother or sister).
- The only way to do this effectively is to have the word of Christ and the loving/redemptive agenda of Christ upon our hearts.

Ephesians 4:31-32

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

- Cease holding onto bitter and destructive attitudes and words
- Speak words that give grace - be kind, tenderhearted, forgive one another

Proverbs 12:18

"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

3. We need to be urgent for godly unity and peace in our relationships

Ephesians 4:1-3, 26-27

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."

Matthew 5:23-24

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Urgency vs. Unhurried Time

Summary

Learn and practice godly communication. We need to learn how to be honest about our sins, struggles (weaknesses, ignorance, being misguided), and sufferings on the one hand. On the other hand we need to learn how to speak the true knowledge and wisdom of God to each other when we do honestly open up. Sound doctrine according to the gospel needs to meet me where I currently am in life to empower me to confess sin, rely upon God in my weaknesses, and find refuge in God in my sufferings. Honesty is essential if we wish to avail ourselves of the good news of Jesus Christ. To the degree that we are specific and honest, we are able to be specific in applying the gospel and wisdom of God to our lives so that God becomes more real to us—we taste more of His nearness.