



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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JUMP START #520

Ephesians 4:25- *“ Therefore laying aside all falsehood, speak the truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”*

Honesty---it is the foundation stone of all relationships. God hates lying. He said that in **Proverbs 6:16,17**. One of the 10 commandments condemned false witnesses. The lack of trust has made society sign papers for nearly every transaction and back those papers up with a battery of attorneys. Honesty is the key. It is one of the core values of being a Christian.

Lying began in the garden when the serpent told Eve that she would not die if she ate the forbidden fruit. Lying is one of the easiest and earliest sins we learn. People lie to avoid trouble—first to their parents, then to teachers, then to the police, then to their bosses, then to their mates. And generally, all along, they have been lying to God and to themselves.

Telling the truth can hurt. It gets folks mad at you, and so, it is just easier to lie. It's easier to tell a lie than to commit to something that we don't want to do. For instance, telling someone, “I'm busy,” gets you out of something you really don't want to do. The truth may be that you are not busy, you just don't want to do it. A lot of folks have found that it is easy to say that they are sick, when they are not, just to get a day off of work or to skip school. Later that morning they are at the mall shopping and eating with the best of them, having a great time, thinking nothing of what they have done. Horror strikes when they happen to run into someone who has been told that they were sick. Now the person has to think of a fast one, which often is another lie, to cover their tracks. Living on deceit and dishonesty becomes a way of life for them.

Relationships that are built upon lies will someday crumble and crash. The truth has a way of coming to the surface. Often more lies have to be told to hide the earlier lies and after that more lies to hide those recent lies. There can be so many lies that a person doesn't know what the truth is. Some folks are professionals at lying. They can look you right in the eye and tell you a lie. Others can shed tears, and you think this is for real, but you find out it is not.

The apostles words from our verse today, “ Lay aside falsehood, speak the truth....” Jesus said, “Let your yes be yes and your no be no.” **Matt. 5:37** Don't say yes when you mean no. Be honest. Be truthful.

One thing about lying that is almost universal and that is most people hate being lied to. They don't have a problem lying to others, they have their reasons, but when someone lies to them, they get upset and vocal. Amazing to me that they don't see the inconsistency in all of that.

How does one be honest? The simplest way is to just do it. Tell the truth. Be honest. Honest about your feelings. Honest about what the job is about. Honest about the item being sold. Honest with God.

Being honest may cause you to lose a few bucks. It may cost you a job. Being honest may take a while to fill a position. Honesty may open some doors that you don't like. It may show you that you are not the hotshot that everyone thinks you are. It may reveal that you, yes you, need a lot of spiritual help. Being honest especially with God, may reveal that you've played church far too long and that you have a shallow relationship with him.

Being honest often is the pathway to better relationships and the improvements necessary for positive change. Remember Jesus' story about the two men who went to pray in the temple? **Luke 18:9-14** The publican beat his chest, wouldn't look Heavenward, and begged God to have mercy on him. The Pharisee, bragged and bragged about all the great things he had done and how he was so different from everyone else, especially the publican who was praying near him. He was lying to God and to himself. Had he been honest, like the other man, he would have asked for mercy as well. Being honest will take us to the Bible. It will cause us to drop to our knees in prayer. It will make us go across the street and apologize. It will lead us to have true connections and real relationships. We sometimes, maybe most times, do not like to hear negative things about ourselves. We like praise, compliments, and honors. Proverbs tells us that the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy. **Prov. 27:6**

I believe this is one of the reasons, not the only reason, that God established the church. We need each other. We need honest fellowship, connections, and accountability. I need the wounds of a friend, even though it is painful to hear. I need people to be honest. That is the means for us to improve. We often don't see it in ourselves. It is like bad breath. Usually the guy who has it doesn't realize it, but everyone else does! We need others to help us, be honest with us, and to be patient with us.

Speak the truth each one of you....it may be hard, but give it a try today. All day long. On the phone....in meetings....with co-workers....in e-mails....on facebook.....with the kids....with your mate...with brethren....and with God. One day—tell the truth all day long. Piece of cake for many of our readers because you already do it. For others, this will be a challenge. You may stop yourself in mid sentence and change what you were going to say. I need to be honest. It has to start some time, it might as well be today.

If you missed it a time or two, tell God about it. He already knows. Ask him to help you and be patient with you. Then go back in and engage in life and do it with honest lips, honest hearts, and honest motives.

Roger Shouse