

## CONDUCTING OURSELVES HONESTLY AT ALL TIMES

### *Note to the speaker:*

Help brothers to examine themselves to see if they are honest in *all* things

### **CHRISTIANS MUST STRIVE HARD TO BE HONEST, ESPECIALLY TODAY** (7 min.)

You know that we live in a time of unprecedented dishonesty (*w86 11/15 10-11; g89 3/22 3*)

Is no longer limited to occasional instances; there is wholesale rejection of standards of honesty

Employee dishonesty is just one example of how widespread dishonesty is (Illustrate with *local* example or see *w88 2/15 3-5; tp 17-18*)

We know dishonesty is in many forms and locations, not just one country

Likely see examples daily—lying, cheating, stealing—in school, government, neighborhood

This is not surprising to Christians, as Bible foretold it (Read 2 Timothy 3:1-4)

Is not lack of honesty related to being lover of money, slanderer, betrayer, disloyal?

In the face of this prevailing spirit of dishonesty, we must fight hard to be honest

Danger exists that Christian might begin to feel that some compromises must be made in honesty so as to survive in this system

Right attitude that all should have is found at Hebrews 13:18, 19 (Read)

No doubt it is our wish to be honest, but careful examination is in order to see if we are

Does being honest in *all* things cover more than not stealing, lying?

Do we see in Hebrews 13:18, 19 blessings associated with honesty?

In discussion today, will deal with aspects that may well affect your life and conduct

Appropriate place to start is with ourselves and in own home and family

### **BE HONEST ABOUT OURSELVES AND WITH OUR FAMILY MEMBERS** (12 min.)

Vital that Christian is first honest about himself, willing to face the truth

First reaction might be, ‘Why, I always strive to be honest, truthful!’

Being honest about self includes recognizing we are imperfect (1Ki 8:46; *tp 109*)

Being imperfect, we will err, make wrong decisions, sin; will we honestly admit it? (*w82 9/1 28-30*)

May know person who readily admits that all humans are imperfect, including himself, but may not acknowledge that when it comes to specific instance involving himself

Do we hesitate to acknowledge to wife, husband, children, or parents that we were wrong?

Admitting from the heart one is wrong makes for peaceful relations with others

Can you see room for improvement in this avenue of ‘conducting self honestly’?

Manifesting honesty in family circle shows love for God and for family (*w88 2/15 7*)

Family members are our closest neighbors, so should be truthful with them (Eph 4:25)

Of course, need to be honest does not justify being crude or blunt; can be kind and tactful, but being honest means we do not distort or avoid the truth

Many problems result when husband or wife does not deal honestly with mate

If husband lies about his whereabouts or wife makes purchase she knows husband would not approve, leaves strained atmosphere in home

When matter comes to light, is harder to forgive and forget; doubts grow about other things

Should one err, honestly admitting mistake will help other to forget it; encourages mutual respect

Children’s confidence undermined by dishonest examples of parents, even in “small” things

May hear parents talking about why they do not want to accept a certain invitation and later hear a different and obviously contrived reason given to person

Parents might expect child to share in deception as to why he missed school, giving teacher untruthful reason

Does this help children respect truth and honesty? Or will it deaden conscience?

Wise to speak the truth even when that will probably bring on difficulties

May result in punishment, but life is linked to proper discipline (Pr 4:13)

In being honest with ourselves and our family, we have definite helps

All we are learning as Christians should help us, for God, his Word, and his organization all exemplify and encourage honesty; can learn from them

Bonds of love and respect assist us to be truthful, honest, with our family

### **CONDUCTING OURSELVES HONESTLY IN OUR SECULAR DEALINGS** (14 min.)

In contrast with world, Christians should be honest in employment matters (Read Titus 2:9, 10)

Paul’s counsel to Christians who were slaves was to be honest; can apply today

If slave was not to steal, would not the same apply to a paid worker?

Easy for trusted employee to ‘commit theft’ by taking home tools or supplies or by unauthorized personal use of phone, car, or company funds (Eph 4:28; *w88 2/15 4-5*)

Can ask self: 'Am I honest in reporting amount of time worked or expenses for reimbursement, in taking sick time?' (Speaker: Could bring up other questions, but do not condemn; just try to stimulate conscience)

No real reason for fear when honest, for God cares for those who are (Ps 37:25; *tp* 114-16)

Righteous person (which includes being honest) is assured of necessities (Mt 6:33)

Honesty is important, too, in dealings with secular authorities (Read Romans 13:1, 2, 5-7)

Many persons justify shady dealings in taxes, customs, social payments, or welfare

Is a serious matter to Christians who want to avoid adverse judgment and have good conscience

Shun common practices of dishonesty involving welfare or relief payments

Not wrong to accept State aid if one actually qualifies and needs it (*w83* 4/1 8-11)

Bible urges us to work to support selves if able, discourages laziness (2Th 3:10)

Christian honesty would rule out giving false information to get aid

Would not distort facts to qualify or fail to report circumstances that would end welfare

Can apply to getting unemployment insurance or government-subsidized housing

Christian may face test of honesty regarding taxation (*w79* 1/15 30-1; *g86* 11/8 26-7)

Paul said to render what is due; government dictates what is due

Would rule out claiming exemptions or deductions one is not entitled to

Rendering what is due also involves reporting all earnings law says should be reported

If one's wage included tips that should be reported, do you report them?

Related to paying tax is honesty in paying customs duty, avoiding smuggling

Easy to rationalize that duty is excessive or limits are unreasonable, but what is due?

In addition to keeping good conscience, honesty in these matters protects from punishment

Honesty applies even when enforcement is difficult

Often, people who claim to be honest steal when little likelihood of punishment

Take "souvenirs" from hotels or public buildings (*g73* 3/22 6-7)

Many cheat in using telephone, conveying messages without paying

In times of disaster, supposedly honest people loot (*g79* 12/22 19)

Christians avoid this because they are honest from heart, not merely afraid of punishment

#### **LET US IN ALL WAYS BE HONEST FROM THE HEART** (6 min.)

Impossible here to consider all possible situations in which your honesty may be tested

What basically is needed by Christians is love of honesty and desire to be honest at all times (*yp* 214-15)

Hebrews 13:18 indicates this, saying: "We *wish* to conduct ourselves honestly"

The heart motivation is there, helping conscience and mind to choose honest course

If Christian lacks heart desire to be honest, could fail under test

Ananias and Sapphira acted dishonestly; lacked good heart (Read Acts 5:1-5)

Danger exists for us too, as warning about heart's treachery applies now (Jer 17:9)

Highlights the need to cultivate love and appreciation for honesty, molding one's heart

Meditate appreciatively on honesty displayed by fellow Christians, especially if someone's honesty is not way we would "naturally" have acted; this helps to train heart and conscience

Cultivating honesty from heart is important, as test probably will be private or unusual

Because of having stimulated honesty in heart, will likely take honest course

#### **BE DETERMINED TO FOLLOW GOD OF TRUTH AND HONESTY** (6 min.)

Are helped to develop honesty from heart by knowing that in this way we imitate God, not Satan

Untruth and dishonesty originate with Satan (Joh 8:44)

Acting dishonestly—on job, at school, within family—means imitating Satan

Our God Jehovah is unquestionably a God of truth and honesty (Read Psalm 31:5)

He hates lying, perjury, and false scales (Pr 6:16-19; 20:23; *it-2* 874 ¶6, 7)

Following God's pattern of truth and honesty will make for happiness now and forever

Will thus avoid distrust, troubled conscience, and strained relations

Rather, will have clear conscience before God and men, feeling free to pray (*w88* 2/15 7)

Prayers will be heard and will be acted on by God (Heb 13:18, 19)

Truth and honesty will be vital aspects of getting along in life

Earth will be filled with people who are honest with Jehovah

Will be able to live in peace with such ones because they will be honest and truthful with us and we with them

Can be sure that honesty and truth will prevail and endure; will we?

Answer will be yes if we think and act in harmony with honest and truthful God, Jehovah

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need to be read)