

Who Is the Rightful Owner?—An Honesty Story

Introduction

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Honesty is important in the smallest details of life. In fact, it is integral, or should be integral, to the life of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Honesty is essential to what we do, and sometimes in what we do not do. It is essential to what we say, how we say it, and what we do not say. Honesty should govern all our actions. God requires it.

The Scripture

Read the Scripture to the group.

“Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother’s, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself.” —Deuteronomy 22:1-3

A Real Life Example

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Who Is the Rightful Owner?

Edward was walking down his street on the way home from his paper route early one Saturday morning. He was just passing a neighbor’s house where there had been a big party the night before. He was thinking about the bike that he had been wanting and for which he had been praying. As he looked down, he saw something shiny in the grass beside the sidewalk. He bent down and, to his surprise, picked up a money clip. It was holding a considerable number of twenty-dollar bills. Edward almost shouted at the idea that he should have such good fortune. Had God answered his prayer about the bike already?

As Edward started happily for home, he had a thought. The family had been studying God’s law in the book of Deuteronomy. He remembered a passage that they had just talked about. He thought it went something like: *“Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother’s, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not*

hide thyself.”

Then Edward wondered whether he was being honest. It was time to pray again. “Father in Heaven,” he said, “this money truly does belong to someone. How can I know who?” He turned around and went back. He went up to the neighbor’s door and knocked. He told the neighbor what he had found. His neighbor told him that the man who lost the money had phoned and asked if the money had been found in the house, and that he thought there might be some reward given for having it returned. As Edward walked home, his heart was light and his soul felt clean, and he had a bright hope that his honesty might be rewarded in some small way.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Edward first thought that God had answered his prayer?
2. Why is finding something not necessarily a gift from God, but more likely a test from God?
3. What did Edward decide to do? Why?
4. How did a knowledge of biblical honesty help Edward to avoid sinning against his own soul?
5. Why do you think Edward went home happy?
6. Explain why, here again, it would be dishonest for Edward to do nothing.

Conclusion and Resolution

Read the Scripture again. Read or explain the conclusion in your own words. Ask the group to suggest what specific changes that they can resolve to make in their daily lives that will help them to implement needed changes in this area. Ask them to especially consider things they have learned in the Bible to use as scriptural guideposts to a more competent and productive life.

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Honesty is one of the most important character traits that anyone, and especially a believer can possess. In fact, if a person is not honest, he most likely cannot become a believer. Why? Because a person must be honest with himself and with God. A person must be honest enough to admit he is a sinner and he needs a Saviour. A dishonest person is a liar and God’s Word says that there are no liars in Heaven. Revelation 21:8 says, *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* Something to

think about!

Teacher's Notes
