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Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners

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Lesson Title: “Honesty” (pp. 179-192)

Session 13

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The main point of this lesson is: Real change comes only when we are honest about our sins and struggles.

Focus on this goal: To help adults grow deeper in Christ by finding at least one accountability partner with whom they can be honest about their sins and struggles

Key Bible Passages: 1 John 1:5-10

Before the Session

1. Write the following on a board: When I’m tired or hungry, I get \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. and My family knows I’m at my worst when I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Step 1)

2. Bring a small lighted vanity mirror to class and set it up, lit, where learners can look into it as they enter. (Step 2)

3. Invite three volunteers to carefully read one of the following passages and prepare to summarize it: Romans 6:1-14, Ephesians 4:20-24, and Colossians 3:1-4,9-10. (Step 6)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

As learners arrive, **invite** them to consider how they might fill in the blanks on the board. As class begins, be the first to **answer** the prompts for yourself and **lead** a few volunteers to do the same. (**Keep** this lighthearted!)

**Help** learners recall the important points from the *Deeper* study by briefly summarizing the main points from each previous session (pp. 134, 149, 162, and 176). **Say:** *Today, our focus is on being honest about our sins and struggles. We’ve already considered some of our less-than-perfect tendencies; let’s get into the text.*

Step 2. Walking in the Light

Draw attention to the lighted mirror Ask if anyone looked at his or her face as they arrived. If so, did they like seeing themselves in that light?

Describe the horizontal and vertical relationships we’re called to in Christ, using the first Day One paragraph (p. 179). Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 1:5-10. Explain that most believers think “walking in the light” means living with moral purity, and we are certainly called to that. Stress that, however, this passage deals directly with honesty with other Christians.

Draw out the phrases in verses 7-10 that reveals the interpersonal nature of this passage. Explain that accountability with others is like a lighted mirror: only then do we see our spiritual wrinkles, freckles, and clogged pores.

Step 3. Two Kinds of Dishonesty

Read James 5:16. Use the Day Two section “Objections” (pp. 182-183) to clarify the significance of confessing our sins to one another. Help learners understand that this verse does not command us to confess every sin to every believer, but to live openly and honestly.

Ask the author’s question at the end of page 182, “What if each of us had one person . . . who knew who we really are, inside and out?”

Point to the grace given horizontally, the joy at triumph over sin, and the lack of shame that would accompany group gatherings if we knew one another confidently and openly enough to be honest with our most personal needs.

Step 4. Fellowship with One Another

**Invite** learners back to their Bibles, and **ask for** a volunteer to read 1 John 1:1-4. **Point to** the togetherness of the Father and the Son, as well as the fellowship believers have with the Trinity, resulting in joy.

**Use** the information in the opening Day Three paragraph (pp. 183-184) to point out that all people, of all social levels, are made for enjoy life with others.

**Read** the second paragraph (pp. 184-185), then **ask:** *Have you ever spent time in one of those “little dark rooms”? What did that do to your walk of faith?*

**Help** learners see that openness before others is not to be avoided but cherished because it brings freedom.

Step 5. Cleansing from Sin

Read 1 John 1:7 again. As a group, discuss the seemingly silly notion of being cleansed by blood. If you have time, point learners back to Exodus 12:1-14 and help them understand how the idea of cleansing by blood meant the world to those ancient Hebrews.

Summarize the paragraph (p. 187) that begins, “Many of us feel irredeemably dirty,” and the paragraph that follows it. Help learners find comfort in the fact that, if they have surrendered their lives to Jesus, they have been declared clean by God Himself. This is true regardless of how they feel.

Ask: What can we do to really, daily, honestly believe that we are clean like 1 John 1:7 teaches?

Step 6. Honesty Fuels Feeling Forgiven

Invite the volunteers you enlisted before class to summarize Romans 6:1-14, Ephesians 4:20-24, and Colossians 3:1-4,9-10. As a group, discuss what these verses all teach: our old self is gone once and for all.

Say: Gone with our old self is pride and individual righteousness. The teachings about fellowship and walking in the light of others is not just a good idea; it’s an integral part of growing deeper and walking as God directs us to go.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Read** 1 John 1:5-10 again, emphasizing “we” each time it appears. If you’re part of an accountability group or have an accountability partner, **share** how he or she has brought you to important understanding in your spiritual life. **Challenge** learners to take these verses carefully: either strengthen their accountability groups or start one!

**Close in prayer,** thanking God that He made us to live in community and asking Him to help each person experience real, deep, honest Christian fellowship.

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