



The Building Block of Authenticity

Week of June 27, 2021

Intro Discussion Question(s):

- *What did God reveal to you this past week through your personal Bible Study?*

Read Bible Study Summary:

According to an article in Florida Today, during a ceremony at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery last March honoring Vietnam veterans, a Vietnam veteran with an impressive military record delivered the invocation. He was introduced as a retired Green Beret medic and Army master sergeant who served in Vietnam and later in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. The audience was told he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, 10 Bronze Stars and nine Purple Hearts, among other military commendations. The truth is while the veteran did serve in Vietnam as a medic, the rest of the story is completely false and is one of many cases in what is called “stolen valor.”

This is a tragic example of what inauthenticity does. It erodes personal character, defrauds others of the truth, and often steals the credit where credit was due originally. In stark contrast, Christ calls his followers to authenticity in our attitudes, our speech and our actions by putting off falsehood and speaking truthfully with one another. In this way, we give credit to him as our King and properly represent him in the church and to this world as his ambassadors. Through his letter to the church at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul teaches the church two steps to help us grow in authenticity which builds our relationship with God and others.

Main Scripture

- *Read Ephesians 4:25*

What does the Bible say about how believers grow in authenticity?

1. Put Off Falsehood (Eph. 4:25a)

- The first step in authenticity is putting off the things in our hearts that contradict genuineness, sincerity, and transparency. The word “falsehood” (or lying) includes every kind of deception and is a characteristic of the old sinful nature. Have you ever noticed when you’re living in sin, you seem far away from God? Guess who moved? It wasn’t God, it was you! Praise God that doesn’t kick us out of the

family when we mess up, and we don't lose our salvation when we make a mistake! But, the hard truth is that our sin affects our fellowship with God. So, if we don't put off falsehood or lying, it keeps us from enjoying the blessings and the beauty of a daily walk with God and maintaining healthy relationships with others.

- **Read Selected Proverbs**

- *10:18 Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spreads slander is a fool.*
- *12:22 The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.*
- *19:1 Better the poor whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.*
- *19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free.*
- *26:28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

- **Ask Questions**

- *Through salvation in Christ, we are no longer in the old nature, but live in the new nature. How has God helped you put off falsehood in your new nature?*
- *What are some situations in which you realize that you are still easily tempted to not be truthful?*

2. Speak Truthfully to Your Neighbor (Eph. 4:25b)

- Falsehood, as part of the old nature, must be put aside, and "truth" must be cultivated. In our culture today, we often see dishonesty in personal relations, deceptive practices in business, and corruption in government. Therefore, Christians must admonish one another to live honest and authentic lives which are characteristics of the new nature in Christ.¹
- The main focus of speaking truth to your neighbor begins with being realistic about your own weaknesses. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul shows his authenticity by sharing his weaknesses.
 - **Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10** *Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
- Paul pleaded with God to remove his hindrance, but God did not. It seems that God's refusal to remove the thorn taught Paul a valuable lesson about his own suffering and weakness. What it teaches is that, when we understand how weak and powerless we truly are against our own sin, we become reliant on God, instead of ourselves. This is true authenticity - being "real" and "authentic" by recognizing that we need God's mercy every day.²
 - **Ask Questions**
 - *Why are pride and authenticity incompatible?*
 - *Sometimes we are quick to speak truth about the weaknesses in others which does little to challenge authenticity in yourself. What are some fears that you have in regard to speaking truth about your own vulnerabilities?*
 - *Can you think of a "thorn in your flesh" that God hasn't removed? What lessons have you learned about God's mercy through this weakness?*

¹W. Curtis Vaughan, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1963), 102.

²Content adapted from <https://ministrytoyouth.com/youth-group-lesson-on-authenticity/>

Closing

- **Ask Question** - *What is the greatest challenge you are facing? Is there some way our group can help?*
- Pray together over those requests.