

## Spiritual Growth Lessons

### LESSON 27 of 32

#### SINCERITY

##### Definitions:

**sincerity:** comes from the Latin words "sine cera," which means "without wax, separated from the wax, pure honey." Free from adulteration, genuine, unfeigned, real, wholehearted, honest, free of dissimulation.



**dissimulation:** to put on a false appearance, to disguise, to hide under a false appearance; to conceal intentions, facts, feelings under some false pretense.

**unfeigned:** sincere, not hypocritical.

**hypocrite:** One who pretends to be what he really is not. Like an actor, he takes on a role which is not really his true self.

There is no quality more important in the life of the true child of God than sincerity. No amount of fasting, praying, reading the Bible, going to church, etc., can take the place of this!

Perfection might be an impossible goal in this life, but we can and must be sincere, if we are going to experience real spiritual growth. The charge that Joshua gave to the leaders of Israel is applicable to us today: *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth..."* (Joshua 24:14).

1. It is not enough that we are serving the Lord and doing His will. We must do it from our heart: *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you"* (Romans 6:17).

*"Not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"* (Ephesians 6:6).

2. It is not enough for us to worship God, we must worship Him in spirit and in truth (reality, sincerity): *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (reality, sincerity)" (John 4:24).

3. It is not enough for us to love people, our love must be sincere: *"Let love be without dissimulation..."* (Romans 12:9).

*"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart"* (I Timothy 1:5).

*"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently"* (I Peter 1:22).

4. It is not enough to give our offerings unto the cause of Jesus Christ. We must do so from our heart: *"And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought... an offering . . . unto the LORD"* (Exodus 35:22).

*"Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with \*sincere heart they offered willingly to the LORD..."* (I Chronicles 19:9). \*Bible margin

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity (unwillingly): for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7).

5. How can we tell if we are sincere?

a. Do we say that we love the Lord with all of our heart, and yet we do not obey Him? Jesus said, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (John 14:15).

b. Do we say that we love Him, and yet we do not spend much time in prayer communing with Him. If we love Him, we will desire to spend time with Him.

c. When we tell our brother or sister that we love them, do we really? Or are these just mere words. Sincerity is when heart and tongue agree.

d. When we worship the Lord, is it real, or just an act to impress others how sincere or spiritual we are?

e. Is our life "pure honey," or is there a lot of wax mixed in?

### **THE SPIRIT OF PHARISAISM**

A casual glance at a Pharisee might impress you. He was a person who did much praying and fasting. He carried his "Bible" wherever he went. He prayed long prayers. He was careful to pay his tithes. His garments were long in length. He went to a great extent to get one convert. He had only one problem. He was not sincere. He was just acting out a role.

1. The Pharisees prayed, fasted, and gave to be seen of men (Matthew 6:1-18).

2. They preached, but did not practice their own preaching (Matthew 23:3).

3. They looked outwardly religious:

a. The borders of their garment were enlarged. (This was a special fringe that God required Israelite men to wear, to remind them of the commandments (Numbers 15:38-40, Matthew 23:5).

b. They made their phylacteries (cases that held Scriptures) broad, so that they would be more noticeable (Matthew 23:5).

4. They loved recognition (verses 6-7).

5. For a pretense, they made long prayers (verse 14).

6. They were very careful to pay their tithes, but omitted the things that were more important: judgment, mercy, and faith (verse 23).

7. They strained at a gnat (strained out) and swallowed a camel (verse 24).

8. They made clean the outside, while within they were full of extortion and excess (verse 25).

9. Jesus said of them: "*Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto me, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*" (verses 27-28).

10. The Pharisees were very self-righteous in their prayers (Luke 18:10-14).

11. They were quick to pass judgment on others (Matthew 9:10-11; 12:1-2, 9-12).

12. They accepted and rejected whatever was convenient to them (Matthew 15:1-11).

13. It is easy to see the shallowness and insincerity of the Pharisees, even though they were abundant in religious works. It is no wonder that Jesus said: "*...except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:20).

It is possible for a Christian today to have the spirit of Pharisaism, if he or she is not careful. Long dresses, long prayers, much fasting, etc., do not ensure that our hearts are right with God and that we are sincere Christians. We must have a right relationship with God and with men. Then we will be sincere--pure honey, without wax! *ds*



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