

Becoming like Jesus in transparency (Based on Chapter 11 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

Our ability to be transparent, truthful, and honest is a measurement for how much we trust Jesus.

Biblical Foundation

You have also heard that people were told in the past, “Do not break your promise, but do what you have vowed to the Lord to do.” But now I tell you: do not use any vow when you make a promise. Do not swear by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by earth, for it is the resting place for his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not even swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. Just say “Yes” or “No”—anything else you say comes from the Evil One. Matthew 5:33-37 (TEV)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, “Complete truthfulness is only possible where sin has been uncovered, and forgiven by Jesus. Only those who are in a state of truthfulness through the confession of their sin to Jesus are not ashamed to tell the truth wherever it must be told.” What do you make of this statement?

When you lie, you oppose Jesus

Jesus is the Truth, so when you lie, you declare you’re against Jesus.

You cannot lie to the Truth

Jesus knows about our sins. There is nothing that can be hidden from him. Every dark and dangerous thing about us is uncovered when we enter into fellowship with Jesus because we enter into the light of Truth. Yet, Jesus still loves us and calls us.

Truth creates authenticity within community

Why would our relationship with Jesus, the Truth, effect the truthfulness and transparency of our relationship with all others?

This is our constant challenge: Will we try to define truth separate from God’s standard? Will we ignore the Truth and live a lie?

We cannot answer these questions once and consider the matter settled. We answer them throughout the day, every day, as we make decisions, both large and small, regarding how far we will follow the Truth.

When we hide the truth, it is a faith issue, not a circumstance issue.

Some rules for life together in Christian community:

- **Say only what you mean**— “When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong” (Matthew 5:37 MSG; see also James 5:12).

- **Say only what is true**—When we lie, we speak in the Devil’s “native language,” for he is a liar (John 8:44 NIV). It doesn’t matter if the lie is black or white, a little fib or an outrageous whopper. In the kingdom of heaven, obedience to the King means we no longer lie to others, we no longer lie to ourselves, and we no longer lie to God.
- **Don’t imply that something is true when it isn’t**—Many people would never consider telling an outright lie, yet they habitually tell lies of omission. This happens when they leave critical information out of a conversation in order to deliberately leave a false impression. For instance, your boss compliments you on a job well done and you fail to let him know that a colleague actually did the work.
- **Hypocrisy is just another way to lie**—When we maneuver and manipulate, twist and hide, pretend and posture, we’re engaged in lies without words.