

Honesty with Others and Myself

Objective

To learn how to be honest with others, and myself and to understand its importance in my relationship with Christ

References

Holy Scripture

“Self Examination” article by HH Pope Shenouda III in “Akhbar El-Yowm” newspaper
“Self examination on honesty.”by St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Washington DC.
www.stmarkdc.org

Scriptural Verse

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves” 1 John 1:8

Lesson Guidelines

Honesty with Myself

- Necessary for my relationship with the Lord because God is Truth and in Him there is no deceit, therefore in order to have a relationship with Him we must present ourselves as we really are.
- “Behold you desire truth in the inward parts”(Psalm 51:6).
- I must examine how I behave, think, speak, act, and feel at all times.
- We must bring to light the diseases that ail our souls, so that we can seek the appropriate therapy. The diseases of the soul hinder our relationship with God, but bringing those ailments at His feet, asking for His help and cure will deepen our relationship with God.
- This should be a continual exercise not limited to certain occasions.

Barriers to honesty

1. Overly concerned with the cares of the world – our minds are too busy thinking about worldly matters with little thought about our spiritual life.
2. Overly busy with life’s demands and therefore not leaving time to meditate on our life.
3. Infrequent confession – confession allows us to examine ourselves and leads to developing honesty with ourselves.
4. Placing too much value on external practices so that it masks our internal mistakes. “But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

Questions to ask myself

- Do I ignore, resist, and deny the conviction of the Holy Spirit on my sin? Do I make excuses for myself regarding my sins? Do I blame others for my wrongdoing?
- Honesty with myself leads to a stronger Christian character so that I am not easily swayed by the influences of others.

- Do I think more highly of myself than God’s view of me? “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing he deceives himself” (Galatians 6:3).
- Do I have an inflated view of my gifts and their value?
- Do I pay attention to what I consider small, inconsequential aspects of my life? My fleeting thoughts and feelings – do I feel jealous, bitter of others.

Honesty with Others

- St. Paul says in Ephesians 4:25 “Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”
- The devil, who is a “liar and the father of lies” tricks us unto thinking that lying will make us more respected, more appreciated, live more comfortably, or get us out of a tough situation. We lie also because we do not want people to know who we truly are, we want to fit in a certain group and because we are competing with one another.
- Honesty with one another is essential and not optional because we are part of one body. We cannot share each other’s joys and sorrows if we are not honest with one another.

Questions to ask myself

- Do I seek to create a better impression of myself – that I am more spiritual and holy than others? That I am more sophisticated, or intelligent.
- Do I speak well to others while harboring hate and bitterness?
- Do I put barriers around me so that people do not see the real me? Am I willing to allow others in my life to ask for prayer, and to reveal my needs to my father of confession?

Conclusion

Honesty with myself and others is an essential part of a Christian’s life, through it we come closer to God and we build His body. We must carefully examine our lives daily in order to make sure that we are worshipping God in honesty and truth.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. What are some exercises that we can do to help us examine our lives?
2. What should I do in situations where lying would be the easiest way out?
3. How should I address situation where I am tempted to create a better impression of myself than I am?