



Part 5: Lying For Love

INTRODUCTION – Made In God’s Image...Still

Genesis 9:6

LOOK TO THE BOOK – Rebels With A Cause

SHIPRAH & PUAH...Exodus 1

TAKE OUTS – I’ll Have That To Go Please

TAKE OUT #1: Submitting To Government / Obeying God

Although Christians are always called to honour, respect, and submit to earthly authority, we are not always called to obey. The difference is crucial. Mindless obedience to authority has led to a great many evils. Christ-followers are never to give their minds and their consciences over to an earthly authority, including the authority of cultural norms. We belong to a kingdom and culture that is not of this world.

John 18:36; 1 Peter 2:9

- Race (a new identity/culture)
- Priesthood (a new religion – without religion)
- Nation (a new loyalty)

Acts 5:29; Hebrews 13:17; Romans 12:14-13:7
[But see Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1]

THE MILGRAM EXPERIMENT...

- Stanley Milgram, 1963. Reported in the 1974 article *The Perils of Obedience*
- 61-66% of participants were willing to inflict potentially fatal damage on other people according to the experiment’s protocol.
- Recent replications found almost identical results.
- “Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority.”
- Generated *the agentic state theory*... The essence of obedience consists in the fact that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person’s wishes, and he therefore no longer sees himself as responsible for his actions. Once this critical shift of viewpoint has occurred in the person, all of the essential features of obedience follow.

- Also generated *the theory of conformism*... A subject who has neither ability nor expertise to make decisions, especially in a crisis, will leave decision making to the group and its hierarchy. The group is the person’s behavioral model.
- May be an example of *the theory of learned helplessness*... When people feel powerless to control an outcome, they cease trying to be an agent of change and abdicate personal responsibility.

TAKE OUT #2: The Courage to Rebel

Who holds the malevolent authority in your life, the power to influence you in ways that violate what you know is best? Rebel against them. Who holds the power of memory over you – forgive them. Who holds the power of coercion over you – refuse to follow and embrace the consequences. Who holds the power of temptation over you – create space between you and them and invite the support of healthy community. Who holds the power of belonging over you – courageously make your own community through compassion toward the excluded. What hobby or recreation or status symbol or luxury or comfort addiction holds the power of financial drain – embrace the freedom of simplicity and the joy of generosity.

TAKE OUT #3: Breaking the Rules in the Name of Love

Why was the midwives’ lie acceptable to God? Because they lied for the love of others, not the preservation of self. There are times when a rule may be broken in order to love others better. But if our focus tends toward how we can get away with rule-breaking, then our hearts are not submitted to Christ. If our mind is set on loving others and we act out of that motivation, we will fulfill the spirit of the law, regardless of the letter. Make it your mission to love others as you love yourself, and you will fulfill all that God wants of you.

Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 7:12

CONCLUSION – Recognizing Love & Living Love

1 John 3:16

FOR FURTHER STUDY...

- *rEVOLution (A teaching series on the love ethic of Jesus)*

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. Review this week’s message. Talk about what challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read through **Romans 12:14-13:10**. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) The role of the CHURCH is highlighted in **12:14-21** and the role of the STATE in **13:1-5**. How are the roles of church and state mutually exclusive? How are they similar? C) According to the text, what ethical challenges should we expect for a member of the Church who tries to act as a representative of the State? D) What confusion would we expect if the Church tried to live by the ideals of the State and the State started living by the ideals of the Church? E) What does the fact that both Jesus and Paul had to specifically counsel Christ-followers to pay taxes tell us about their teaching regarding the separation of Church and State? F) Explain how it is that love is the fulfillment of the law.

SO WHAT?...

3. Review TAKE OUTS #1 & 2: A) What person or group or institution most often pressures you to walk outside of what you know to be God’s will for your life? B) What internal need do they exploit in you to gain power? C) Talk about practical ways to become strong in this area of weakness. Be specific and create plans of action.
4. Review TAKE OUT #3: A) Try to identify some scenarios where you would feel right about lying. What would make lying the right choice in these scenarios? B) What are some possible scenarios where people try to wrongly justify their lying? C) Are there scenarios in which you are tempted to justify lying when really you are looking for an excuse to be more selfish than sacrificially loving?

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, August 9, 2009