



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Honesty

YOUR INTEGRITY IS SHOWING!

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

A reporter from a Toronto newspaper was asked to do a story on garages which made unreasonable charges. The reporter pulled a couple wires loose in the electrical system of his car and drove into garages asking for an estimate on repairs which varied from \$25 to over \$400. After he got the estimates, he declined to have the work done, drove around the corner and hooked up the wires, and went on to the next garage. He pulled into the thirteenth garage and explained the problem--a severe miss in the engine so Cecil Baynton poked around for a few minutes and spotted the problem, plugged in the wires, and the car was running like new. "How much do I owe you?" asked the reporter. "Oh, nothing at all!" "Surely I must owe you something," countered the reporter (whose identity wasn't known to Cecil). "Naw," he said, "I'm a Christian and run an honest shop!" He refused payment.

That mechanic took seriously his commitment to Jesus Christ and the ethics of Scripture. Long ago Paul stressed that our lives and our conduct either make the Gospel attractive to men or make them repel our faith. Writing to Titus Paul said, "teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

Telling about the incident, Haddon Robinson said, "I'm sure there were eloquent preachers in the city of Toronto on that Sunday. They may have preached some very powerful sermons, but I submit that the sermon which Cecil Baynton preached at his workbench in the garage was the most beautiful presentation of the Gospel set forth in Toronto that weekend."

The story doesn't end with the article that the reporter wrote. The following week the paper did a follow-up article. In this article the honest mechanic asked that they tell people to stop coming to his garage. He just couldn't handle the steady stream of people who were searching for an honest mechanic. Invitations had come from two service clubs wanting him to speak, and a publisher had approached him about writing a book.

As I thought about the impact of Cecil Baynton's life, I couldn't help thinking that what we believe is either enhanced or downgraded by our lives, the bottom line which the world sees and evaluates. I couldn't help thinking of an acquaintance, telling about the time he was overseas speaking for an evangelistic conference in a certain town. He boarded a bus and gave the conductor a bill, paid his fare and took the change and sat down.

Then counting his change, he realized that he had given the conductor a five and the change was for a ten. He was tempted to just pocket the money and forget it when he quickly realized that would be wrong. When he came to his stop, he went to the forward exit and gave the money back to the conductor saying, "I think you didn't realize that you gave me change for a ten, but I only gave you a five!" The conductor said, "Yes, I know that. I went to hear you speak last night, and when you boarded my bus, I recognized you. I figured that if you were honest, what you say must be right, and that if you kept the money, I wouldn't go back to your meetings!"

The impact of honesty is not the individuals who commend you for what you do, but the vast army of people who are influenced negatively or positively, and subsequently evaluate the Gospel by your life.

It is no wonder that Paul wrote that the Corinthians were his "letters ... known and read by everybody" (2 Corinthians 3:2). Your honesty is showing, friend. Think about it.

Resource reading: 2 Corinthians 3:1-6.