

Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets

Session 2

The Integrity Question – Am I being honest with myself?

Overview

5 questions will be at the heart of this study.

1. The Integrity Question – Am I being honest with myself?
2. The Legacy Question – What story do I want to tell?
3. The Conscience Question – Is there a tension that deserves my attention?
4. The Maturity Question – What is the wise thing to do?
5. The Relationship Question – What does love require of me?

Key Summary in Session 1

In this first session, we discuss how your decisions determine the direction and quality of your life. If that's not motivation enough to focus more on the choice you make, consider this. Your decisions also determine the direction and quality of other people's lives – not just today but for generations to come.

In the second session, let's begin with a true but uncomfortable thought: *The easiest person for you to deceive is the person in the mirror.*

It shouldn't be his way, but it is. You have talked, deceived, and sold yourself into every bad decision you have ever made. You were there for all of 'em! You've done more to undermine your own success and progress than anyone on the planet. Granted, there were outside pressures, other voices, and people promising you stuff. But in the end, you decided. And the reason I know so much about you is....I know so much about me. I'm equally guilty. So what's wrong with us?

As you know, dishonesty erodes credibility. In a similar way, when we are dishonest with ourselves, it erodes credibility within ourselves. Author and professor Erin Brown defines a false narrative as a Plastic Truth. She describes it this way: "What we've said so many times in our heads becomes our Plastic

Truth. Over time, these fake parts of the story – the pieces that we’ve made up – actually cement into the gaps between Truth.”

When we’re dishonest with ourselves, we have a hard time owning the outcomes of our decisions. So, this week we’ll discover how to root out our false, plastic, mostly true, self-created narratives and kiss em’ good bye!

To decide your way into a better future, you’ve got to develop the uncomfortable habit of telling yourself the uncomfortable truth about why you’re choosing to do what you’re choosing to do, which leads us at last to our first question:

The Integrity Question: Am I being honest with myself?

I’ve found that it helps to ask this question twice. But on the second round, add a word: Am I being honest with myself...really?

Why am I doing this?....really?

Why am I postponing this?...really?

Why did I say yes?...really?

Why did I choose to wear this?....really?

Why did I choose to purchase, lease that?....really?

Just tell yourself the unfiltered – perhaps embarrassing -TRUTH! You may hurt your own feelings. But in the end, it’ll help. Owning the real *why* behind your *what* will bring your narratives, justifications, and excuses into the light.

So, are you ready to be honest with yourself even if it makes you feel bad about yourself? You’ll never get to where you need to be until you acknowledge where you actually are. So be honest!!

Questions

1. What’s an example of a “Plastic Truth” you’ve embraced over time? How has that false premise recently resulted in a faulty decision?

2. Why is self-control so difficult if we generally want what's best for ourselves?
3. Are you aware when your brain shifts a "want" to a "need" in order to justify doing or having whatever it is you desire? Can you share how that experience played out?
4. In Jeremiah 17:9, the prophet describes how the heart is deceitful. Based on your own heart experiences, do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. Jesus says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). How might being honest with yourself free you to make better decisions?

Closing

Once you start being absolutely honest with yourself, it's gonna be a bit harder to be dishonest with everybody else. And while being honest with ourselves can be a bit terrifying, being honest with ourselves, telling ourselves the truth, can be....liberating. In fact, it's almost always liberating.

Jesus made a powerful statement in this regard. You may not know Jesus said it because politicians say it all the time...without giving Jesus credit. Apparently, it's okay to mention what Jesus says as long as you don't mention Jesus.

Jesus said, *You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" The truth really will set you free. But the opposite is true as well: dishonesty will imprison you. And if we're not careful, we'll imprison ourselves when we're less than honest with ourselves.

Telling yourself the truth, owning up to the real reason you're considering what you're considering, will bring immediate clarity. You will see better. It will be harder to deceive yourself. That is what the Integrity Question empowers you to make the right decision for now...and the future!

Between Sessions - Consider the following questions and challenges over the next week.

3 categories of decisions that create the majority of regrets are purchases, relationships, and habits. Sometimes they are related. List a regret from each category.

- Dumb purchases
- Doomed relationships
- Destructive Habits

We rarely have to sell ourselves on a good idea. But what's an example of when you've been guilty of selling yourself on a bad idea?

Integrity is more than just a good idea. God says integrity guides us – but those without it are destroyed by their duplicity (Proverbs 11:3). How might seeing the importance of integrity through God's eyes strengthen your decision to pursue it.?

It's pretty much impossible to lead a liar. When people lie at work, they are fired. Now it's your turn. Will you fire the dishonest version of you and hire a new you – an honest you – that will tell the truth even when it's hard or when it makes you feel bad? How might this decision change your life going forward?