

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

The Law of the Harvest

Clip No. 1 ... Study by Michael Catt



THE BIG QUESTION: What seeds are you sowing in order to reap a bountiful harvest that honors the Lord?

SCENE: When Reverend Michaels shows up at Jay Austin Motors to buy a car for his daughter, Jay's co-workers Bernie and Vince make a friendly bet regarding whether or not Jay will "stiff" (cheat) the pastor during his purchase. Ironically, after Reverend Michaels makes the purchase (having been stiffed!), he prays that God will treat Jay just like Jay had treated him in their business dealings.

SCENE LENGTH: 5 minutes

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Integrity. Honesty. Sowing and Reaping. Consequences. Influence.

BACKGROUND INFO: Jay Austin has sown seeds of his sinful nature in his business, financial practices, and family relationships. As the deception piles up, Jay faces the consequences of his poor choices. His wife and son don't trust him, and his employees begin to follow in his crooked footsteps. The Law of the Harvest yields bitter fruit and costly results.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 22:8; Galatians 6:7-10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What had Bernie and Vince witnessed in the past that influenced them to make their bet against him?
- 2) How have you seen the Law of the Harvest played out in your own life? (You reap what you sow; you reap more than you sow; and you reap later than you sow.)
- 3) Why is it important to "sow with a view to righteousness"? (Hosea 10:12)
- 4) What can you do to "sow to the Spirit"? (Galatians 6:8)

"He who sows injustice will reap disaster, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed." (Proverbs 22:8)

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

What seeds are you sowing in order to reap a bountiful harvest that honors the Lord?

Simply stated, the Law of the Harvest says that in life, we will reap *what* we sow; we will reap *more* than we sow; and we will reap *later* than we sow. Good choices, like seeds, ultimately bring forth good fruit as a reward. Bad choices, like bad seeds, ultimately bring bad fruit as a consequence. If you lie to others, then God will allow people to lie to you. Help others and God will send people to help you. This principle demonstrates that God is just. It also implies order and design. God has set certain truths in motion that cannot be violated or ignored. That is why we need to be careful what we sow. Once we've sown, we can't change the harvest.

TAKING IT FURTHER

The Law of the Harvest

These life laws are immutable. The text in Galatians 6:7 is often called the “Law of the Harvest.” You can’t plant an apple tree and expect peaches. You can’t rip people off and expect blessings. You can’t ignore your children and expect them to respect you. You can’t teach those around you to be dishonest and expect them to walk in integrity. You can’t deceive others and expect God’s blessings. You can’t use God as a pawn in your dishonest gain like Jay Austin did. Jay went to church, pretended to put money in the plate, and worked the church system to drum up business. But ultimately it caught up with him.

As the old saying goes, “What goes around comes around.” God will not be mocked or used. God does not practice situational ethics. The positive and negative effects of obeying God-given laws hold true for all of us. Whether you are talking about farming or finances, business or ballgames, the law of the harvest is true. Every action has consequences. You can decide what seeds to plant, but you can’t decide what the end result will be.

John Stott says, “To ‘sow to the flesh’ is to pander to it, to cosset, cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it.” It is interesting to note that this principle is in the context of money. Paul shows us in Galatians chapters five and six the difference between money sown to the flesh and money sown to the Spirit. Like Jay Austin discovered, what you do with your money matters to God.

Even among Christians, we tend to think that our money, houses, and salaries are ours to do with as we please. Yet we want God to bless us, prosper us, and empower us to make more money. Should it come as any surprise that if you plant seeds of stealing from God, you’ll one day reap a financial disaster? If God’s people did the right thing regarding money, we could reach the world with the gospel and impact the social conditions of our day. Warren Wiersbe said, “Sad to say, much seed is wasted on carnal things and can never bring glory to God.”

We need to reevaluate our time, talent, and tithe. Everything we are doing right now is either an investment in spiritual things or in our flesh. In 2 Corinthians 9:6, Paul made it clear: “He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” The *Message* translates it this way: “Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop.”

Jay Austin learned this lesson. He tasted the bitter fruit of dishonest business. He couldn’t avoid the consequences of his deception. Later on, when he turned back to God, he tasted the sweetness of seeing God bless him because of obedience. The minister’s prayer worked in both cases. It brought judgment and blessings. It was answered at first with the fruit of the flesh and then later with the fruit that brings glory to God.

READ GALATIANS 6:7-10

- 1) How are we deceived into believing that the Law of the Harvest isn’t true for our lives?
- 2) What are the short-term results of sowing to your flesh? What about the long-term results?
- 3) What are the short-term results of sowing to the Spirit? What about the long-term results?
- 4) What other promises in Scripture encourage you to persevere and not lose heart?
- 5) Illustrate the Law of the Harvest through one practical example from your life right now.

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

The Law of the Harvest is applicable in every area of life—marriage, parenting, business, family relationships, finances, and more. We can’t choose when to apply its principles; it is in operation all the time. Therefore, we must be constantly mindful of the seeds we sow. Ultimately, it is much easier on our lives to sow unto the Spirit from the beginning than to uproot the awful harvest of the flesh once it has borne fruit in our lives. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul followed his commendation on the fruit of the Spirit with words about sowing and reaping. Will the seeds you are sowing yield a godly harvest?

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Turning to God in Crisis

Clip No. 2 ... Study by Michael Catt



THE BIG QUESTION:

Where do you run when things fall apart? Does crisis bring you to God?

SCENE:

Convinced his business isn't built on honest practices, Jay Austin determines to make a change. With his business, finances, and family relationships crumbling around him, he knows things aren't right. After a conversation with Max about the necessity of a car's flywheel, Jay surrenders his life to Christ and makes God the boss of his life, his family, and his business.

SCENE LENGTH:

4 minutes

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Repentance. Desperation. Surrender. Lordship. Salvation.

BACKGROUND INFO:

Jay Austin has spent his professional life conning people out of money. He comes face-to-face with his own dishonesty when he watches his salesmen follow in his manipulative footsteps. The tension mounts at home and at his business, leaving Jay on the brink of collapse. Jay comes to the end of his rope ... and finds hope in an unexpected place.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES:

Luke 9:23-26; 14:25-34; Romans 6:12-14, 20-23

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) How do you respond when things in your life begin to fall apart? How does God use crises to bring us to Him?
- 2) What proactive steps can you take toward godliness before crises hit?
- 3) How have you responded to crises positively? How have you responded negatively?
- 4) What did Jesus mean by "take up your cross and follow Me"? (Luke 14:27)
- 5) What is the difference between being a slave to sin and a slave to righteousness? (Romans 6:20-23)

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." (Luke 9:23)

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION: Are you allowing crisis to cause you to surrender to Christ?

Are you dying to sin daily, taking up your cross, and following Christ? God's Word calls all people to humble themselves before God, turn from their sins, and surrender completely to Jesus as Lord. Like a horse under the control of a master rider, surrender is the secret to success in the Christian life. When God has all of you, He can save, empower, and use you. Jay Austin's true success did not begin until he surrendered fully to God. Jesus never waters down the demands. He doesn't put lordship in the fine print in the contract. What He said about bearing the cross, forsaking all, and obeying His will was clear. Whether you are far from God or close, He's lovingly calling you to surrender more to Him as your Master.

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TAKING IT FURTHER

Turning to God in Crisis

People love to follow Jesus for what they can get out of Him. People like to use Jesus. They think they can manipulate Jesus to their advantage. But Jesus is no bellhop or ecclesiastical Santa Claus. His demands were and are non-negotiable. He knew He was headed to the cross, and He didn't need people who would only follow him for the bread and miracles.

Look at Luke 14:25-34. Jesus revealed to the crowd what it would cost to follow Him. Large crowds had been following Christ, but after this message, the crowds began to shrink. No one wants to hear about the cost of discipleship. Most folks want Jesus at the discount table for bargain basement prices.

The picture of a man carrying his own cross to the place of execution in Luke 14:27 was a vivid one. The people had seen this happen. They knew that a man carrying a cross had no further plans or agendas. He was going to die. He had forfeited control of his life and his future.

Dying to ourselves—our dreams, plans, and agendas—can be frightening. It is often painful. Yet when we die to self, Christ comes to live and rule in us. He empowers us to live a life we could never hope to live otherwise.

Jay Austin was at the end of his rope. He didn't like what his life had become and was about to lose his business and his family. Jay had overheard his son saying he didn't want to be like his dad. Jay wore the facade of success, but he was a failure. He may have been spinning all the plates, but he was spinning out of control.

Rarely will people surrender to Christ until there has been a crisis or a point of brokenness. God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain and broken bread to give nourishment and strength. In the breaking of the alabaster perfume box, the scent of the fragrance was released. After Jacob was broken to the point of limping, he had power with God and men. After Peter was broken over denying Jesus three times, he returned to preach in power at Pentecost.

For Jay Austin, it could no longer be "Jay Austin Motors;" it had to become "God's business." If your faith is worth anything, it's worth everything. When I surrender, I'm not really giving anything to God. In essence, I'm taking my hands off what already belongs to Him.

READ LUKE 9:23-26

- 1) Why does Jesus call us to deny self? What does this look like on a practical, day-to-day basis?
- 2) Discuss the irony of verse 24. How is this possible?
- 3) How do people forfeit their souls while they are grasping for the things of this world?
- 4) Is the reward of following Christ worth the cost of discipleship? Why?
- 5) What hinders you from taking up your cross daily?

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Jesus' challenge in Luke 9:23 is coupled with a promise in verse 24. While the cost of discipleship is great, the rewards are even greater. Jesus acknowledged that this life would not be easy and that following Him would divide friends and family. His call to discipleship is not all-inclusive. Only those who are willing to pay the price to follow Him are afforded the benefits of the Christ-like life. The rewards may not always be material or tangible here on this earth, but we can anticipate inconceivable treasure that can never be taken away from us. Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). Are you living for yourself or for God? Is He using crises in your life to awaken you to your need for Him? What is holding you back from completely surrendering to His Lordship?

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Choosing to Lead

Clip No. 3 ... Study by Stephen Kendrick



- THE BIG QUESTION:** What is the value of a man who leads his family well?
- SCENE:** Used-car salesman Jay Austin apologizes to his wife and tells her he has surrendered his life to Christ and will now love and lead his family.
- SCENE LENGTH:** 2 minutes, 28 seconds
- TOPICS DISCUSSED:** Leadership. Apologizing. Marriage. Submission. Spiritual Direction.
- BACKGROUND INFO:** For years, Jay Austin has neglected his family and passed his spiritual responsibilities on to his wife Judy. The previous night, Jay yelled at Judy when she pointed out his dishonesty. Today, Jay realizes his hypocrisy and humbly surrenders his life to God. When his wife comes home, he has a chance to make things right and tell her of his change of heart.
- KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES:** Joshua 24:15, Ephesians 5:22-30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is it important for a man to seek forgiveness from his family when he has failed them?
- 2) How do a man's sins and failures make it difficult for him to lead his wife and kids well?
- 3) How does the culture make it difficult for men to want to lead their families or even know how?
- 4) What are some differences between a man who is spiritually leading well and one who is not?
- 5) Can you share an example of a man who is successfully modeling the way for his family?
- 6) In Joshua 24:15, what does Joshua's declaration teach us about his spiritual leadership?

“Joshua said, ‘If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.’” (Joshua 24:15, NASU)

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

What is the value of a man who leads his family well?

A large percentage of homes have no strong male leadership present. The husband or father is either absent or neglecting his responsibilities. By default, the weight of this role is often shouldered by the wife or mother. In the Bible, God calls for men to take responsibility for the spiritual health and direction of their families. They are to commit themselves to this role, take initiative, and step up and lead by example. Does your home follow this Biblical model? Pray for this to happen in your family and church.

TAKING IT FURTHER

Choosing to Lead

The success of any organization, team, or family rises and falls on its leadership. When marriages and families fall apart, it is often a direct result of men not leading and loving well. Both the Old and New Testaments give a strong argument for the importance of men stepping up and leading their marriages and homes. Consider ...

- God gave Adam responsibility over the earth and his family. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-24)
- God identified Himself by referencing male headship: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."
- The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are lists of men's names as heads of households.
- Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem by engaging the fathers to lead their households. (Nehemiah, chapters 2-4)
- True religion is defined as helping those whose families have no male leadership. (James 1:27)
- Wives are encouraged to support male leadership in their homes. (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18)
- Leadership qualifications in the church presuppose good male leadership at home. (1 Timothy 3:1-5,12)

Though our culture accuses the Bible of being archaic in its portrayal of patriarchal leadership, the Word of God is timeless and clear in God's command for it. Yet, the Scriptures are not alone in arguing its importance. Research indicates that one of the strongest predictors of a child's education being of higher academic performance is the involvement of his or her father. This also extends to church attendance. Citing research from Switzerland on the influence of fathers, David Murrow explains that when moms have gone to church but the dad refused to go, only 2 percent of the kids became regular attendees. However, when dads attended church faithfully but mom never went, 44 percent of the kids became regular attendees. If men step up and get involved, kids are more likely to do so as well.

Though strong male leadership is vitally important, it is greatly lacking. One of the strongest positive examples of male leadership is in the Old Testament when Joshua boldly said, "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15, NASU). Joshua had been challenged and taught how to be a leader years before. His call to leadership explains how he had become equipped to lead so well.

READ JOSHUA 1:1-18

- 1) Who established Joshua as the leader of the people after Moses died?
- 2) Who has established men as the spiritual leaders of their homes?
- 3) What was stated multiple times as the key to Joshua's leadership? (Joshua 1:6,7,9)
- 4) What resources and promises did God give Joshua as he commanded him to lead?

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Just as Jay Austin apologized to his wife for his lack of support, men ought to wake up to their leadership responsibilities and get right with their families. As Jay stepped up and committed to love and lead his family well, so should wives see their husbands boldly accepting their responsibilities before God. A key to this is for men to realize that even as God called Joshua to lead, He is also calling them. Not only does He call, but He also supplies. The four key resources and promises given to Joshua are also given to men of God as they seek to lead their homes. Men are given ...

1. **The Authority from God to lead** (Joshua 1:1-3)
2. **The Presence of God's Spirit to empower, comfort, and guide** (Joshua 1:5, 9)
3. **The Word of God to be a lamp and light to their paths** (Joshua 1:8)
4. **The People of God—the church—to support them** (Joshua 1:10,16-18)

Choose this day whom you will serve and the legacy you will leave to your family!

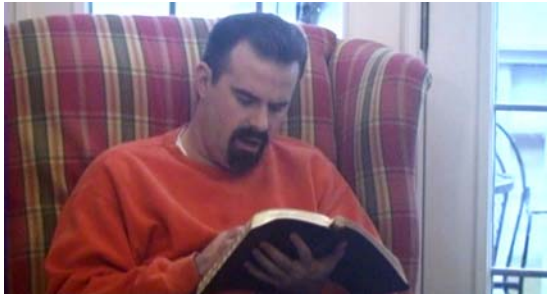
FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Starting Today Right

Clip No. 4

Study by Stephen Kendrick



THE BIG QUESTION:

Do you honor God with each day that He gives you?

SCENE:

As a brand new Christian, Jay Austin begins a new day by spending time with God in His Word and dedicating his used-car lot to God.

SCENE LENGTH:

1 minute, 23 seconds

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Daily Devotions. God's Word. Habits. Dedication. Offerings. Surrender.

BACKGROUND INFO:

In the past, used-car salesman Jay Austin cheated his customers and used his time and possessions selfishly. Having humbled himself, Jay surrendered his life to Jesus Christ the day before. Now he has an opportunity to use his days for God's glory.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES:

Mark 1:35-36; Psalm 1; Proverbs 16:3; Psalm 118:24

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What are some things that can help us begin our days right in God's eyes?
- 2) What factors in our lives make it difficult for us to spend time alone with God on a daily basis?
- 3) What are the elements that should be a part of a good devotional time?
- 4) Why is it important to give God the first part of a day? What does it mean if we're too busy for Him?
- 5) How did Jesus begin His days? What can we learn from Him regarding this?

“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.” (Mark 1:35-36, NASU)

“This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24, NASU)

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

Do you honor God with each day that He gives you?

Every day is a sacred trust given to us by God. Time is the passing of life; so when we waste time, we are wasting our lives. God's Word challenges us to use our days wisely for His glory. Each day we are given is a fresh opportunity to glorify God with our lives. This happens when we prioritize our walk with Him and spend time with God in His Word and in prayer. If Jesus found it necessary to start His days off with the Father in prayer and in the Word, how much more so should we? Ask the Lord to help you prioritize your walk with Him and dedicate each day you are given to Him.

TAKING IT FURTHER

Starting Today Right

One of the most important things any person can do in life is to get alone with God and spend time with Him on a daily basis. God delights in this, and each of us desperately needs it. No one can conceivably obey God consistently or stay close to Him without spending time with Him in His Word and in prayer. This is a fundamental part of the Christian life, but it is too often overlooked or neglected. Jesus Himself modeled this habit daily. We should too. Because of the salvation and mediation of Jesus, we have the privilege and opportunity to directly relate to the holy God of the Universe on an intimate level (Hebrews 4:14-16). Like eating and breathing, prayer and time with God should become a vital part of our daily routine. Jay Austin begins his first day as a Christian by getting alone with God and reading the scriptures (from Psalm 1). With childlike faith, he then dedicates himself and his car lot to the Lord. This prepares him to better respond to the unique pressures and decisions of the day. It also reveals that Jay wants to make God a priority in His life. The Scriptures communicate that God wants to be First Place in your heart (1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 22:36-40). He calls the first day of the week "The Lord's Day," and wants us to set it aside for Him. He desires the first part of our income, the Lord's portion or tithe (Proverbs 3:9-10). To begin your days right, consider giving God the first part of your days. It will revolutionize your life ... one day at a time.

READ JOHN 15:1-12 (Realize that the words "**abide**" or "**remain**" are interpreted to mean, "staying intimately close to and connected to.")

- 1) What things does Jesus associate with abiding in Him?
- 2) Do you spend time with God on a daily basis? Do you begin your days by prioritizing Him?
- 3) Has anyone ever shared with you how to have a simple quiet time with God?
- 4) If so, what is holding you back from making them a priority in your life?
- 5) Would you be willing to commit now that you will start today spending time alone with God?

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Though abiding in Christ includes more than a devotional time, it is an important part. A daily quiet time or devotion is a simple thing to learn. Though there is no set formula, here is a suggested way to begin:

- **Get Alone** (with your Bible and something to write on) and away from distractions
- **Pray** and ask God to speak to you (James 1:5, Jeremiah 33:3)
- **Read** at least five minutes in the Bible (the books of Matthew or John are good places to start)
- **Write** out a simple prayer applying what you learned
- **Pray** your prayer and then talk to God humbly and honestly
- **Go** and live out what you have learned

When you are praying, consider the acronym **A.C.T.S.S.** for how you can pray and relate to God:

A doration	Loving on and worshiping God for Who He is
C onfession	Admitting and repenting of any sin in your life
T hanksgiving	Expressing true gratitude for what God has done
S haring	Share your heart, dreams, concerns, stresses, etc.
S upplication	Praying for yourself, for what you need, and for others

These are secrets to having successful and consistent quiet times:

- Choose a set time and place that you guard.
- Have devotions so that you can **meet** with and **delight** in God—not check a to-do box, perform some religious duty, or impress others. Make it personal. Don't view time with God as an intruding chore to be accomplished, but as a refreshing walk with your most loving and trusted friend.
- When you miss a daily quiet time, don't give up. Get back on track and start again the next day enjoying time with Him! Make your commitment now ... you'll be glad you did!

My Daily Quiet PLACE will be: _____ My Daily Quiet TIME will be: ____:____ am/pm

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Integrity at All Costs

Clip - No. 5 ... Study by Michael Catt



THE BIG QUESTION: Do you honor God in every area of your life?

SCENE: When Jay Austin shares a new business philosophy with his employees, not all of them share his convictions. After apologizing for his past dishonest practices, Jay tells the guys that he's changing the way he operates his business. Angered by the smaller commissions and stricter work ethic, Bernie walks out and convinces Vince to do the same. Jay, Sam, and Max are left behind, with a commitment to selling good cars at honest prices.

SCENE LENGTH: 4 minutes

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Honesty. Integrity. Accountability. Sacrifice. Work Ethic.

BACKGROUND INFO: Following a major turning point in his life, Jay Austin commits every area of his life to God. He shows up at his car lot as a different man and says to God, "This is Your lot." His choice to walk in integrity before the Lord comes with great costs ... but even greater rewards.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 1:10; Colossians 1:17; 1 Peter 4:11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Describe a time in your life when you've been tempted to compromise your integrity to please people.
- 2) What does it mean to live for the glory of God? (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- 3) Why is it costly to walk in integrity?
- 4) What are the rewards of walking in integrity?

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." (Colossians 3:17)

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

Do you honor God in every area of your life?

Here's another way to ask this question: Are you willing to walk with honesty and integrity before the Lord, regardless of the cost? Every day, men and women compromise their integrity in the face of success, promotion, financial gain, approval, and fame. Uprightness is quickly fading in our society. However, Scripture tells us that God honors those who walk blamelessly before Him: "For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face" (Psalm 11:7). While the cost for maintaining our integrity is great, the rewards are even greater. Have the same conviction that Paul had in Acts 24:16: "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men."

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TAKING IT FURTHER

Integrity at All Costs

People tend to believe everyone is a hypocrite—except themselves. They believe everyone is out to get the other guy. Just mention the term “used-car salesman,” and most people will roll their eyes. Say the words “integrity” and “car salesman” in the same sentence, and someone just may walk up and tell you a story of being ripped off by a crooked car dealer.

But we shouldn't point the finger only at car dealers—it happens in every business. I can remember growing up in my dad's drugstore. Sometimes people would bring in a prescription to be filled from another store. After they would leave my dad would say, “That store is taking advantage of those people. They are charging them twice as much as they should for those medicines.”

Robert Kennedy said, “Each time you stand up for an ideal, you send forth a tiny ripple of hope.” There's always a moment or a situation in life where you have to make that ultimate decision about being a person of integrity and character. At that moment, the door swings open to reveal a God-sized future.

Everything in life is a test of character. The mark of your life is how you treat a person who can't be of any possible help to you. Our integrity is often tested in the area of finances. Will I cut corners or will I be honest in my expense reports, fair in my pricing, and excellent in all my dealings?

John Maxwell writes, “Even if you've had a negative effect on others in the past, you can turn that around and make your impact a positive one.” Integrity was a costly decision for Jay Austin. His key salesman didn't understand. Bernie lacked uprightness; after all, he had been well taught by Jay. But Bernie never changed. Some folks refuse to change. Jay shows us that a person of integrity counts, and can be counted on.

Jackie Robinson noted, “A life isn't significant except for its impact on other lives.” Jay lost a salesman, but he honored God and gained the respect of his customers. He later earned national attention for doing the right thing. Sometimes doing the right thing goes unnoticed, but it's still the right thing to do.

Integrity is an essential trait for the believer in all he says and does. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. Stand up while the rest of the world is caving in. Integrity is the foundation on which other positive qualities are built. It is a characteristic of Jesus. Pilate said, “I find no fault in Him”—no character flaw or inconsistency between His life and His teachings.

The reality is this: If I can't trust you in one area, I'll probably have trouble trusting you in other areas. If we are to have a positive witness in this world, we need to see integrity as the foundation of a house built on the rock. When the storms of life come against us, we'll still be standing. When the world is caving into materialism and greed, we'll be above board. Webster defines integrity as “adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.” These are not flexible principles. In the postmodern world in which we live, integrity is needed now more than ever.

READ GALATIANS 1:10

- 1) Explain the connection between this verse and the issue of integrity.
- 2) Do you tend to seek the favor of men or of God? Why?
- 3) What is the difference between pleasing men and being a bondservant of Christ?
- 4) Read Proverbs 29:25. What is the warning? What is the exhortation?

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Paul recognized the direct relationship between maintaining integrity and trying to please men. He chastised the church in Galatia in chapter one because they were deserting Christ in exchange for a false gospel. These followers of God were more concerned about pleasing men and were compromising their integrity in the process. Don't sacrifice your uprightness on the altar of instant gratification or approval in the eyes of men.

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Become a Blessing

Clip No. 6 ... Study by Stephen Kendrick



THE BIG QUESTION:

Have you discovered the impact of blessing others?

SCENE:

Jay Austin's father discovers that Jay has made Jesus the Lord of his life. His father is so thrilled that he drives more than three hours to encourage him and pray a father's blessing of love and support over Jay.

SCENE LENGTH:

3 minutes

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Blessing. Encouragement. Support. Love. Parental Support.

BACKGROUND INFO:

Jay Austin's pride and stubbornness over the years brought a strain between him and his father. Now, a day after Jay has given his life to Christ, he begins to seek God with his relationships. Jay's wife Judy quietly calls Jay's dad to share with him the good news.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES:

Hebrews 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:10,11; Ephesians 1:1-6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is it important that people stay encouraged in their spiritual lives?
- 2) Share about those who have encouraged you the most in your relationship with God.
- 3) Do your words encourage others in their walk with Christ or discourage them from following Him?
- 4) What is a blessing and where did it originate? How does a blessing encourage others?

“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13-14, NASU)

**“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:10-11, NASU)**

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

Have you discovered the impact of blessing others?

People continually need encouragement in life as much as a sail needs wind to move forward. God calls us to be a blessing and an encouragement to others. But too often, our words may tear others down and make it harder for them to stay away from sin or enthusiastically be all God wants them to be. Just as Jay Austin's dad went the extra mile to bless and encourage his son, we too should reach out to others with encouragement and prayer so that they will stay blessed and focused on doing what God has called them to do. Who in your life may be struggling with sin or weary in doing well and needs your prayer support and encouragement?

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TAKING IT FURTHER

Become a Blessing

A blessing is when you speak and pray success over someone's life. It is saying, "I love you, I'm proud of you, I support you, and I am genuinely hoping and believing for God's best and God's good success for your life." God has put a special place in our hearts that longs for this type of love and blessing from others. Ideally, this should first come from a person's father to them. Proverbs 17:6 says, "... the glory of children is their father" (NKJV). Children naturally tend to go to their fathers for their approval and for answers to the deeper questions in life. They consciously or subconsciously ask, "Dad, am I a success or a failure? Am I accepted or rejected? Loved or hated?" Depending on his answer, a father will either help his child bloom or stop his child from developing a healthy sense of his emotional security and identity in life. In his book, *You've Got What it Takes*, John Eldridge writes, "Identity, especially gender identity, is bestowed by the Father. A boy learns if he is a man, if he has what it takes from his dad. A girl learns if she is worth pursuing, if she is lovely from her dad. That's just the way God set this whole thing up." Because of this unique influence, God commanded the strong spiritual leaders in the Old Testament to bless their children. God blessed Abraham and then commanded him to bless his son Isaac, who in turn later blessed his son Jacob, and so on. Did you get that from your father? Check this out.

On two occasions, Jesus received a blessing from His heavenly Father: first, when He was baptized (Matthew 3:17); and second, when He was on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). Both times, He heard His Heavenly Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." These encouraging words were given at strategic points in Jesus' life: when He was about to be tempted by the devil before He launched His ministry, and then when He was about to go to the cross and die. Jesus Himself also blessed others. In Mark 10:16, He took children in His arms and began blessing them. Before He ascended into Heaven, He lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples (Luke 24:50-51). Whether you received a blessing from your earthly father or not, you can more importantly receive one from your Heavenly Father. If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, then God's Word says that God your Father has blessed you like He blessed Jesus. Do you believe that?

READ EPHESIANS 1:3-6

"Blessed be the God and **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him **in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons** by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, **by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.**" (NKJV, **emphasis added.**)

READ 1 PETER 3:8-10

- 1) Over the years, did you long for your earthly father to show love and a blessing to you?
- 2) If you did not receive that, will you choose now to forgive him and receive your Heavenly Father's blessing instead?
- 3) Is it difficult to believe that God really loves you and wants to bless you in Christ Jesus?
- 4) What happens when someone accepts and receives God's blessing over their lives?
- 5) What is holding you back from doing that right now?

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE

Because we are "in Christ," we have received the blessing that Jesus received. As Ephesians 1 shows us, we are beloved and accepted children of God in Him. If you truly know Christ, then God looks at you and sees Jesus. Therefore, He can say to you, "You are my beloved child in whom I am well pleased." If your earthly father never blessed you, you need to forgive him and move on. You can now enjoy something far better: your Heavenly Father's blessing. It is God's will that we receive His blessing over us in Christ, know that He loves us, and then pour out that blessing onto our children and to others.

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Making Wrongs Right

Clip No. 7 ...Study by Michael Catt



THE BIG QUESTION:

Do you admit your faults and take responsibility for your actions?

SCENE:

As a modern-day Zaccheus, Jay Austin begins to repay over-charged customers from his past. He seeks to continue walking in obedience in every area of his life. Though forced to eat his share of humble pie, Jay personally delivers the checks to his clientele and receives funny, and mixed, reactions.

SCENE LENGTH:

8 minutes

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Restitution. Responsibility. Repentance. Relationships. Finances.

BACKGROUND INFO:

After the Lord blesses Jay Austin with increased sales as a result of his commitment to honesty, Jay senses the Holy Spirit's conviction in another area. He knows he must make restitution to all his previous customers who had been over-charged in the past. Once again, the Lord honors his obedience and grants him favor.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES:

Luke 19:2-9; Romans 12:16-21; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why are we commanded to strive to be at peace with all men? (Romans 12:18)
- 2) What should our attitude be toward other people? (Philippians 2:3-4)
- 3) How does the Holy Spirit enable us to humble ourselves before our friends and our enemies?
- 4) How has Jesus set an example of humility for us? (Philippians 2:3-4)

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:18, 21)

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

Do you admit your faults and take responsibility for your actions?

It's one thing to get right with God. It's another to make things right with other people. Are you willing to do whatever it takes to be at peace with those around you? Most of us want to leave the situation with Jesus and hope He can ignore the wrong we've done to others. But true repentance involves being right with God *and* right with others. There is more to repentance than just apologizing to God. We must strive to be right and keep peace with the people around us. Broken areas of fellowship with friends and family can lead to broken fellowship with the Lord (Matthew 5:22-24). The love of Christ causes us to want to be right with those around us. Is there someone you have wronged in the past? What would the love of Christ compel you to do about it?

TAKING IT FURTHER

Making Wrongs Right

Read Luke 19:2-9. Jesus encounters Zaccheus, a first-century tax collector who was anything but honest in his dealings with the people. The Greek form of his Hebrew name means “innocent.” However, he was guilty in his dealings and doings. Zaccheus was known as a “middle man”—one with ordinary tax collectors under him. He had influence concerning the way they collected taxes and calculated percentages. These men didn’t have a regular salary, so they lived off the money they could fleece from taxpayers who had little recourse.

Does it surprise you that the Lord calls people to Himself that we would otherwise write off? Zaccheus is a reminder to all of us to never regard someone as being beyond God’s reach. They may be the next great witness for the gospel! Jay Austin was a cold, hard-hearted money grubber. Most folks would have dismissed him, but Jesus had other plans in mind.

Notice the radical change in Jay’s business ethics that Christ brought. Jay was prompt to make amends. Just like Zaccheus, he “made haste.” He joyfully went from house to house, admitting his wrongs and making things right. In order to make restitution, you have to put it all on the table. In the end, it was profitable for Jay to repay those he had cheated. His wife and son respected his repayment; a positive news story about his new business practices aired; and knowing he had done the right thing, the joy of being at peace with God came.

Whatever the cost might be for making things right, it can never be more than the cost of leaving things wrong. If we put it off, make excuses or continue to justify our past actions, we have not repented. You can’t repent too soon—you don’t know when it will be too late.

Jay learned that you cannot compartmentalize your life. You can’t be doing “okay” in one area, while justifying ungodly behavior in another. In reality, all the compartments of your life will stink from it and will need to be cleaned up. In the case of Jay Austin, note the joy (and even the humor) in doing something as difficult as repentance and restitution.

Repentance is a change of direction. Vance Havner said, “Real repentance produces confession and forsaking of sin, reconciliation and restitution, separation from the world, submission to the lordship of Christ and filling of the Holy Spirit.” There is evidence and fruit that comes with making things right: restored relationships; a different way of doing business; a restoration of Judeo-Christian ethics and values; and, obviously, a chance to give glory to God.

READ ROMANS 12:16-21

- 1) Why is it essential to have humility when making peace with others? What does a prideful apology produce?
- 2) What else does the Bible say about making peace? What are the rewards of being a peacemaker? (see Matthew 5:9)
- 3) What does Paul mean in Romans 12:19?
- 4) Identify a practical way that you can overcome evil with good this week.
- 5) What is the connection between Matthew 5:23-24 and Paul’s admonition in Romans? Is there a relationship in your life that needs reconciliation?

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Regardless of the issue, problem, or disagreement, restitution and reconciliation are always the right choices. Often our pride and desire for respect keeps us from admitting our wrongs. But confession actually brings great respect from others. The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation. We are a community—a body of believers—and must strive to maintain unity and peace. God has given us “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), and we are calling the world to Christ. In the meantime, we must be at peace with others so the world may not bring a charge against us. Repentance and reconciliation are worth the cost! Is there someone you need to reconcile with? How can you, like Jay Austin, become a modern-day Zaccheus to others?

FLYWHEEL

STUDY SERIES

Modeling the Way

Clip No. 8

Study by Stephen Kendrick



THE BIG QUESTION:

Does your life show an example worth following?

SCENE:

Todd Austin watches his dad demonstrate Christ-like kindness to a lady by giving her a car that she desperately needs. Jay's actions and example greatly impact his son, causing Todd to want to be like his dad.

SCENE LENGTH:

3 minutes, 29 seconds

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Kindness. Influence. Being an Example. Giving. Compassion.

BACKGROUND INFO:

Before he surrendered his life to Christ, Jay Austin was negatively influencing others. His co-workers were learning his crooked ways and his son didn't want to be like him. Now, as a new Christian, Jay is seeking to operate his business honorably. After he dedicates his car lot to God, he begins treating his customers with kindness. Now his son is seeing the change in his dad.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES:

1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Corinthians 11:1, John 13:14-16

“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.” (1 Timothy 4:12, NASU)

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1, NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What would happen if people who claim to know Christ really began to live out 1 Timothy 4:12?
- 2) What areas in that verse do you think you're a good example in? Where do you need growth?
- 3) Do most people really grasp how much influence they have on others? Why is that?
- 4) Why are Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:1 really the secret to being a good example for others?
- 5) Share how someone you know has modeled the right way to live and positively influenced you.

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION:

Does your life show an example worth following?

One of the most powerful influences we have is the example of our lives. People hear what you say, but ultimately they tend to follow what you do more than what you say. Regardless of what we are saying with our lips, our actions are speaking louder and pointing people to righteousness or to wickedness. The greatest example in life is the one Jesus lived and modeled for us. When we begin to follow Him, our lives begin to provide the best example possible for those around us. Can you honestly say that you are following the example of Jesus with your life? Have you fallen away or are you modeling the way?

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TAKING IT FURTHER

Modeling the Way

When Jesus began His ministry, His words were powerful because they were backed up by the perfect example of His life. His selfless love, sacrificial service, complete humility, perfect sincerity, powerful prayer, endless purity, and total obedience to God is the universal model for anyone, anywhere, at any time. Jesus practiced what He preached. He also rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and pointed out that while their words may have been good, their examples were terrible. In Matthew 23:2-3, Jesus said, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them" (NASU). In other words, the Pharisees said, "Follow our teachings." But Jesus said, "Follow ME!"

Paul the Apostle started off as a Pharisee. He was religious and had memorized the rules of the law. Yet he had an empty righteousness and no real relationship with God (Philippians 3:1-9). But when Paul surrendered his life to Christ, everything changed (2 Corinthians 5:17). He received a new righteousness that came from God rather than himself (Philippians 4:9). The Holy Spirit of God filled Paul's heart and began to change him from the inside out. Whereas before, Paul had rejected Jesus and persecuted His followers, now Paul was himself following Christ. He had tried empty religion and had lived as a walking hypocrite. Now he was following the words, actions, and leading of Jesus from within the context of a love relationship that was real and sincere. Before, Paul could challenge people to merely follow His words; now he, like Jesus, was telling people that they could follow His example.

Consider these words of Paul to others...

"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:9, NASU)

"Brethren, join in following my example and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." (Philippians 3:17, NASU)

"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you... in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example." (2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, NASU)

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1, NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What will happen to those around you if they follow the example of your life?
- 2) Do you encourage people to merely follow your counsel and words—or your example?
- 3) Are you seeking on a daily basis to follow the teachings and life of Jesus?
- 4) Could you say, like Paul, "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ?"

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Whether you know it or not, your life is either leading people to heaven or to hell. It is helping them climb higher towards Christ or knocking them away from Him. The Greek word for "stumble" in Scripture also is the identical word for a "stumbling block." When we fall, we then can cause others to fall too. Just as Jay Austin was awakened to his own hypocrisy, so too should we become aware of any areas of our lives where we are not living what we teach or modeling the way for others. After Jay repented and began to follow Jesus and the Word of God, he naturally became a great model for his son Todd. Every person who claims to follow Jesus Christ should be providing a living example of Jesus to the world. God's Word commands us to be an example in our speech, life, love, faith, and purity. Are you willing to?

**I'd rather see a sermon
Than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely tell the way.**

**The eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear.
Fine counsel is confusing,
But example's always clear.**

*(an excerpt from "I'd Rather See a
Sermon" by Edgar Guest)*