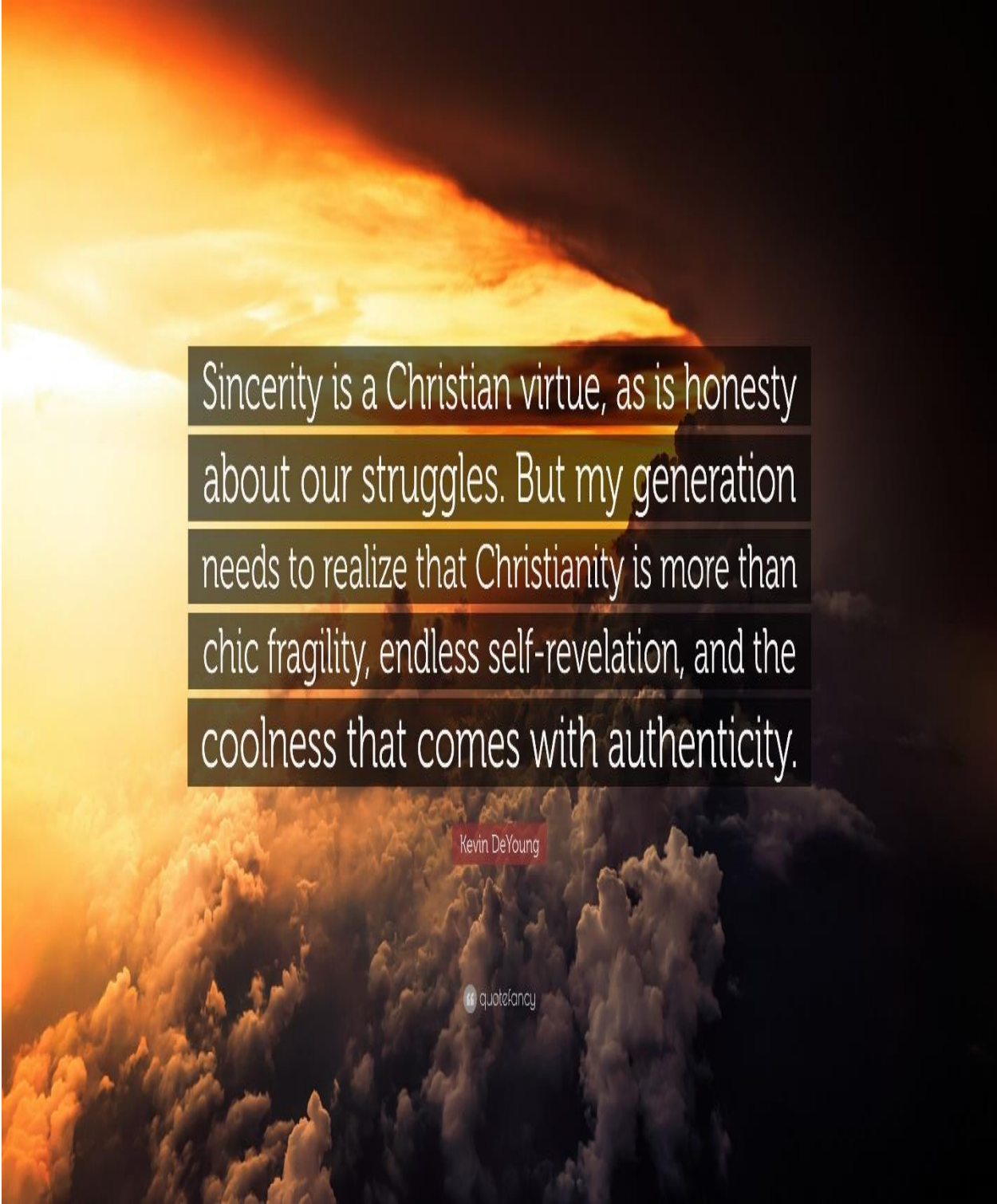


# BEING SINCERE ISN'T ENOUGH

by David Lee Burris



Sincerity is a Christian virtue, as is honesty about our struggles. But my generation needs to realize that Christianity is more than chic fragility, endless self-revelation, and the coolness that comes with authenticity.

Kevin DeYoung

quote fancy

*sincerity makes the very*

**LEAST PERSON**

*to be of more value than the*

**MOST TALENTED**

*hypocrite.*

**C. H. SPURGEON**

*biblicalbeginnings*

"Say what you mean and  
act how you feel,  
because those who matter  
don't mind,  
and those who mind don't  
matter."

Dr. Seuss

#characterstartswithme

 Character Council

If you sincerely drink poison,



it will kill you.

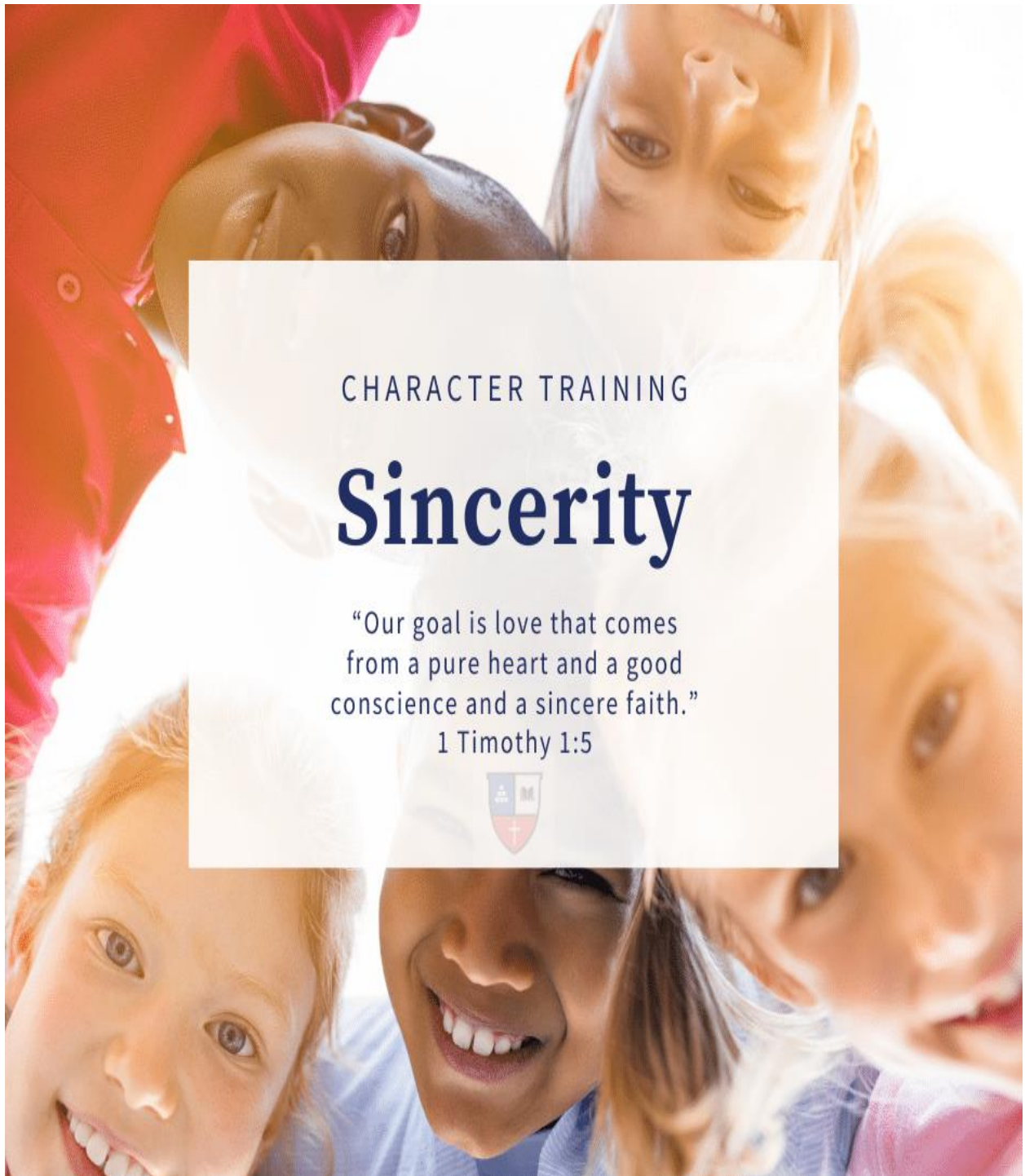
If you sincerely believe a lie,  
you will suffer the consequences.

You must not only be sincere,



but you must be right.

-Charles Spurgeon



CHARACTER TRAINING

# Sincerity

“Our goal is love that comes  
from a pure heart and a good  
conscience and a sincere faith.”

1 Timothy 1:5





# Benson Commentary

[1 Timothy 1:5-7](#), proceeding from a *pure heart* — That is, from a heart purified by the Word and Spirit of God, from the love of sin, the love of the world, and all inordinate self-love, and from all corrupt affections and dispositions; *a good conscience* — A conscience properly informed concerning sin and duty, thoroughly awakened and sprinkled from *evil*, or the guilt of sin, by the blood of Jesus, [Hebrews 9:14](#); [Hebrews 10:22](#); and *faith unfeigned* — Namely, in the truths and promises of the gospel, and in Christ, in whom those truths and promises are *yea and amen*. Observe, reader, this faith unfeigned is the root of the other particulars here named. By it, and by it only, we obtain deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, essential to a good conscience; by it our hearts are purified, [Acts 15:9](#); [1 Peter 1:22](#) : and as it always *worketh by love*, ([Galatians 5:6](#),) by it we obtain the love of God and of all mankind, the source, yea, and essence, of all piety and virtue. Here therefore the apostle asserts that the love which he speaks of, proceeding from the principles here named, is the scope and design of the gospel doctrine, or of the whole Christian institution, as it is indeed also of the moral law, and the writings of the prophets. *From which* — Love, accompanied with these other particulars; *some having swerved* — The verb **αστοχησαντες**, thus rendered, signifies to err from the mark at which a person shoots or aims; and is elegantly used in this place, as **τελος**, the scope aimed at, was introduced in the preceding verse: *have turned aside into vain jangling* — Unprofitable disputes and discourses. *Understanding neither what they say* — The very things they utter; *nor whereof they affirm* — The subject they speak of, or concerning which they express themselves strongly and confidently, as the words **περι τινων διαβεβαιουνται** properly signify.

## Matthew Poole's Commentary

Ver. 5,6 **Now the end of the commandment is charity:** the word translated *commandment* here is paraggelia, which rather signifies a particular charge given by superiors as to some thing, than a general law, [Acts 5:28](#) [16:24](#); and so in this chapter, [1 Timothy 1:18](#); which inclineth me to think, that though the proposition be true of the whole law of God, (for *love is the fulfilling of the law*), and more eminently of the Divine doctrine in the gospel, for the end and perfection it aims at and produces is a pure, ardent love of God, and of men for his sake, and of the gospel, yet it is rather here to be restrained to the commandment relating to preaching, or discoursing the revealed will of God relating to men's salvation, *the end* of which is doubtless *charity*, which ought to be *finis operantis*, the end of the workman, what he ought to intend and aim at; and *is finis operis*, the effect of the work, viz. the begetting in the souls of people love to God and their neighbor, neither of which can rationally be obtained by preachers telling people idle stories, and filling their heads with idle questions and speculations.

**Out of a pure heart:** which love to God and men must proceed from a clean, and holy, and sincere heart.

**And of a good conscience;** and a good and holy life, when conscience doth not sourly reflect upon men for presumptuous miscarriages.

**And of faith unfeigned;** which must all be rooted in and attended with a *faith unfeigned*; rooted in it, as faith signifies a steady assent to Divine revelation; attended with it, as it signifies the soul's repose and rest upon Christ for the fulfilling of the promises annexed to him that believes & liveth up to such propositions. which serve to gender strife and contention amongst people, instead of love either to God or men, and so to defile instead of purifying the heart, and have no influence at all upon a holy life, all which can grow out of no root but an unfeigned faith.

## ***The Role of Sincerity - by Harold Hancock***

Christians must be steadfast, unmovable, and always abound in the work of the Lord to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:58). Sincerity helps Christians to remain faithful and active in the Lord; it safeguards Christians against unwholesome incentives, deliberate sin, willful submission to error and voluntary self-delusion. Being sincere is preventive maintenance for Christians.

Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites and condemned them because they gave alms, fasted, and prayed to be seen of men rather than to please God (Matthew 6:1–8). God judges our hearts and actions (Proverbs 23:7). Sincerity is *genuineness*; it promotes godliness—personal piety with God-ward attitude (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 1:6), and encourages unfeigned faith and love (2 Timothy 1:5; Romans 12:9). If Christians are sincere, their motives are pure.

Truth is the Word of life (John 17:17; 6:68), and is an essential part of the Christian's armor (Ephesians 6:14). Insincere people shun the truth, close their eyes and their ears to the truth and refuse to accept the truth when they hear it (Matthew 13:15). Sincerity, however, is *truth-loving*. If Christians are sincere, they will desire and seek truth, and when they have found it, they will accept and obey it. Sincerity, therefore, helps the Christian to give “earnest heed to the things they have heard” and enables them to keep these things from “slipping away”; sincerity will prevent us neglecting our “great salvation” (Hebrews 2:1–3).

Christians should renounce sin and live righteously, but unfortunately, the devil tempts Christians to be untrue to their confessions that Jesus is Lord of their lives.

Some Christians succumb to Satan's onslaughts and become like the Pharisees of old; they teach one thing, but do another (Matthew 23:3). Sincerity will not permit this kind of conduct; it is *integrity of heart* and demands that we do the things we think are right no matter what the costs. Sincerity, therefore, helps us to overcome temptation & live godly by prohibiting Christians from purposely violating their consciences or willfully disobeying God.

Self-examination is a must for Christians (1 Corinthians 13:5). By carefully comparing our own lives to the Scriptures, we determine if we are in the faith and what our strengths and weaknesses are. We can then go forward in Christ. However, these spiritual evaluations are of no benefit to us and no progress will be made in Christ if we wrest the Scriptures or intentionally close our eyes to our own faults. The Scriptures warn us against deceiving ourselves (James 1:26). Sincerity is *honesty*. When Christians are sincere, they handle the word of God rightly and look at their own lives as fairly and as objectively as they can. Sincerity helps the Christian avoid apathy and indifference and promotes spiritual growth.

Sincerity does not mean that Christians know everything and that they never do anything wrong; however, it does mean, that sincere Christians who make mistakes make them honestly & that they are willing to acknowledge their error and to change when they learn of their error. The case of Apollos is illustrative of this principle. Apollos was sincere when he taught the baptism of John. This was all he knew at the time, and he was doing his best to live and to preach it. He was willing, however, to be taught by Aquila and Priscilla and to conform to the newfound truth (Acts 18). If Christians are sincere, they will be just as open-minded as Apollos was. Sincerity cannot be manufactured or purchased from a store.



Sincerity is an attitude of heart; a part of one's sterling character; it comes only by determination and practice. Christians who possess sincerity have strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and good consciences. They're honest and will not lie to themselves nor to others. They rarely fall victim to pride, and their convictions are not for sale. They normally grow in knowledge and in the favor of God and of man.

Integrity, or sincerity, is the watchword for Christians who want to remain faithful.

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<sup>1</sup> Hancock, H. (1995). [The Role of Sincerity in Keeping Us Well](#). (D. Bowman, Ed.) *Christianity Magazine*, 12(8), 24.

## Destructive, Damnable, Deceit of the Devil

Paul worried about the Corinthians being deceived by the devil, just like Eve was (2nd Corinthians 11:3). Great consequences followed Eve's deception, and so it would be with the Corinthians. The same is true for us. The devil lies to us and if we are deceived, we will suffer greatly.

Satan has those who've been deceived by him working on spreading that deception. Very often it is disguised as the religion of Christ. If you think about it, it makes sense. Which is harder to detect, Monopoly money or counterfeit money? Which is harder to detect in the moral/religious realm, paganism or a religion mostly like Christ's?

One of the great lies of our time is that sincerity is enough. Millions are convinced that as long as you are sincere about your faith, you will go to heaven. You do not need to know the exact truth or hardly any truth at all as long as you are "honest" in it. **Where else does this work in life?**

If a man honestly believed he could jump off the top of a sixty-story building and float gently to the ground (without a parachute or any other contraption), would it be true? **Would his sincerity alter the laws of physics?**

## The Bible gives us a number of examples that illustrate sincerity is not enough . . .

King Saul thought he should offer a sacrifice when Samuel did not show up when he wanted. He was worried about the battle with the Philistines. Samuel rebuked him for his foolishness, but Saul responded, “I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering” (1 Sam. 13:12). This did not fly with Samuel or God (1 Sam. 13:13, 14). His sincerity did not change the fact He did not obey God. His disobedience was to seek God’s favor. Saul did not consider it to be a rebellious act. It was a religious act, an act authorized by God, and for the purpose Saul intended. He went wrong by offering it himself instead of waiting on Samuel. A “minor” detail to most folks, but a “major” one to God!

Another Saul, Saul of Tarsus, serves as another example. He acted in accordance with his conscience (Acts 23:1). Saul did what he thought was right. However, we all know, he did what was wrong persecuting Christians. Remember, Saul acted out of a strong sense of loyalty to Jehovah. Yet, his sincerity did not excuse his sin. It did not cause God to overlook his wickedness.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah challenged to prophets of Baal to a debate. They were to pick a bull, build an altar, and call on Baal to send fire. As they did the latter for some time, Elijah made fun of them (1st Kings 18:27) . . .

*“Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened”*

At this, the Baal false prophets “cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until blood gushed out on them” (1st Kings 18:28). To say they weren’t sincere is to deny the obvious truth. Their sincerity, however, did not alter the fact that there is no god named Baal. It is a figment of man’s imagination, nothing more.

Some will say, “But Baal’s prophets were pagans. Those who sincerely believe in the one, true God will not be condemned as long as they are sincere.” **Just how far will this logic stretch?** Will the sincere Christ-denying Jew or Muslim go to heaven? If you think so, you need to read 1 John 2:18-23, where such are described as “anti-christ.”

What about those who believe in Jesus? If they sincerely believe, but do not do exactly what He says, will they be lost? **Will the Lord overlook their faults because of their sincerity?**

Jesus gives us a picture of the judgment in Matthew 7:21-23. Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day,

“Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” And I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

**The people Jesus describes are sincere believers. They acknowledge Him as Lord and fervently labored in His name. However, their service was done in “lawlessness,” without law. This is the idea of actions that are outside boundaries set down in the Law of Christ, the gospel. It is not their belief that is in question, but their practice. They were sincere, but sincerely wrong. Is this not still applicable?**

We must be sincere in our faith and practice. However, our sincerity alone is not enough to please God. Our convictions must be based on His word. The things we do in service to Him day to day must strictly adhere to the gospel. Worship based on anything other than the gospel is vain, no matter how sincere.

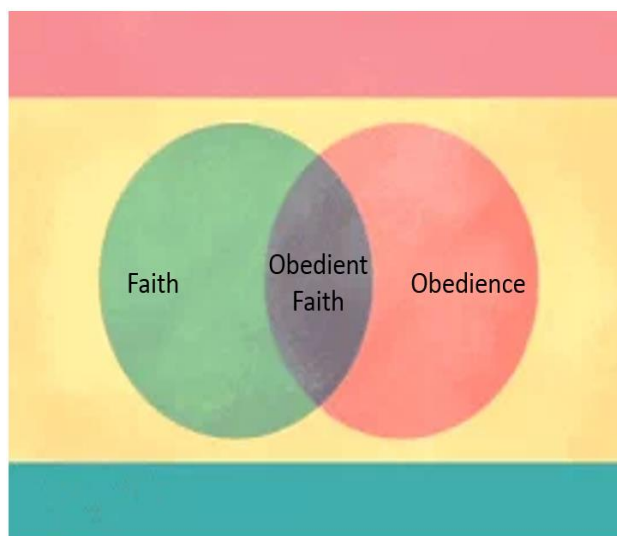
**Sincerity is not enough, but the devil wants you to think it is. Therefore, we need to sincerely search the Scriptures to see what is so (Acts 17:11). Our honest hearts will cause us to change anything that isn’t in agreement with God’s will, no matter how right it seems or how good it makes us feel. Sincerity in truth, not error, must be our goal.** — *Steven F. Deaton*



## AT THE NEXUS OF GRACE & GLORY

# Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



*O That Will Be Glory*

2. *When by His grace,*

*I am Glory for me, glory for me;*

*When by His grace I shall look on His face,*

*That will be glory, be glory for me. me.*

