

Integrity

Introduction: Tuesday morning, January 28, 1986

A. A crisis of integrity--When it breaks down, the results are devastating (if we don't believe it-- look on)

1. We no longer trust elected officials- they embezzle funds, solicit sexual favors & accept bribes
2. Lack of sexual integrity is sabotaging marriages and destroying lives.
 - a. Divorce is up-- even in the Church
 - b. Abortion claims more than 1.6 million babies a year
 - c. And tens of thousands of people die each year of AIDS
3. Financial integrity is waning-- Enron and other companies with insider trading and hiding monies--People cheat on their taxes w/o remorse
4. And even people in the name of ministry are money hungry and sex offenders

I. Integrity-- there's no substitute (the game warden and the man with two buckets of fish)

- A. We need to know what the word means-
1. Webster defines it as-- An uncompromising adherence to a code of moral, artistic, or other values.
 2. Utter sincerity, honesty, and candor
 3. Avoidance of deception, expediency, artificiality, or shallowness of any kind.
- B. Psa. 78:72 is a description of where integrity is found
- C. Integrity applies not only to what we think and believe, but also to what we do
1. It's one thing to believe what's right... it's another thing to do it

II. Biblical examples of integrity

A. It appears 22x in the OT but is illustrated numerous times without using the word

1. Gen. 39- Joseph had integrity with Potipher's wife who tries to have her way with him.
2. In a time when speaking for God was like committing suicide, Elijah called Ahab a sinner to his face and challenged the prophets of Baal to a dual (**1 Kings 18:7-20**)
3. Nathan had enough integrity to look David in the eyes and say "you are the man" (**2 Sam. 12:1-14**)

B. Integrity is easily found in the NT

1. John the Baptizer had integrity when he proclaimed "He must increase but I must decrease (John 3:26-30)
2. Steven's commitment to the Church cost him his life (Acts 6:8-7:60)
3. The Jewish Council ordered the apostles to stop preaching-- Peter responded boldly (Acts 5:27-29)

C. What about the prophet Daniel (King Darius) **Dan. 6:13-15**

D. I could fill pages with examples of integrity from the Bible, including Jesus.

1. You don't have to be a prophet, apostle or a martyr to have integrity
2. It lives quietly and consistently in the hearts of everyday believers

3. It comes out through a
 - Tender touch
 - An act of obedience
 - An honest answer
 - And a thousand other ways
4. Integrity is for everyone!

III. Two principles we need to remember

A. True integrity implies that we do what is right even when no one is looking or when everyone else is compromising

1. It cannot be faked
2. It ignores excuses... “everyone else is doing it...”

B. Real integrity stays in place whether the test is adversity or prosperity

1. If the business prospers, we praise God!
2. If the company goes belly up, we don't participate in shady deals
3. It stays faithful when the marriage sails effortlessly and when it hits a reef

There's no substitute for integrity!!

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