

## A TIME FOR INTEGRITY

### INTRODUCTION:

1. When men lose their integrity, they cease to be men; when churches sacrifice their integrity on the altar of social accommodation, they cease being the church of Christ although they may still fly the flag; when nations around the world fail to have iron-clad integrity in their dealings with each other, the world will end up in war and chaos.
2. Webster's *New World Dictionary* defines integrity:
  - (1) The quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition; wholeness; entirety;
  - (2) The quality or state of being unimpaired; perfect condition; soundness;
  - (3) The quality or state of being of sound moral principle, uprightness, honesty, and sincerity.
3. Integrity begins with God:

"God himself is eternal, unchangeable and altogether righteous. It is impossible for Him to lie and His relationship with man is predictable. He has always dealt fairly and justly with man in a trustworthy and dependable manner. How miserable would be our existence and how futile would be our search for eternal life if God lacked integrity. Fortunately for us His name is synonymous with eternal, unchangeable love and care for His people!

### I. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF EXCELLENT BIBLE CHARACTERS WHO UNDERSTOOD THE NEED OF INTEGRITY:

- A. Take Job for an example:

Job 2:3: "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

Job 4:6: "Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope?"

Job 27:3-6: “As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. Far be it from me that I should say you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.”

B. Prov. 11:3: “The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.”

C. ISAIAH shows the security of the man with integrity:

Isa. 33:15-16: “He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; he will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.”

D. A man’s honesty must move in three directions:

1. Towards God
2. Towards his fellowman
3. Towards himself
  - a. No man can be honest with God and false with others.
  - b. No man can be untrue to himself and be honest with others.

## II. DISHONESTY IN ANY FORM WILL DESTROY THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS SOCIETY.

A. Dr. James Bales in his book on *Communism and the Reality of Moral Law* writes:

“Thou shall be dishonest is the principle which would be in opposition to honesty. But to universalize dishonesty makes society impossible, for men must have at least some trust in men in order to carry on business or to maintain any one of numerous contacts of man with man.”

B. Dr. Albert Ellis, a psycho-therapist, said that “failures in self-honesty are at the root of almost every emotional and mental disturbance!” Violating one’s conscience can destroy a man’s mind, and his body, in this life and his soul in eternity. Many are

the criminals who have returned to the scene of their crime, the escaped convicts who voluntarily return to prison and guilty consciences who committed suicide rather than face their shame.”

- C. Man must overcome the lure of collective dishonesty.
  - 1. In a mob, one is likely to hide behind anonymity to do that which he would never do alone .... In business, he commits a “corporate” sin that would never be found in his personal life.
  
- D. HONESTY and INTEGRITY must come from a heart of right intent.
  - 1. Prov. 23:7: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. ‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you, but his heart is not with you.”
  - 2. Prov. 4:23: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”
  - 3. Prov. 12:22: “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord but those who deal truthfully are His delight.”
  - 4. Col. 3:8-9: “But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.”
  
- E. CHEATING is a form of DISHONESTY.
  - 1. In the classroom:
    - a. Who wants to fly with a pilot who won his wings by cheating?
    - b. Or a doctor who cheated to operate on your brain or heart.
  - 2. The business world.
    - a. Shoddy products, shady deals, deceitful practices.
    - b. Lying about the amount of crop acreages.
    - c. Falsifying income tax - padding an expense account, etc.
  - 3. In the home.

4. In the Church.

F. A Chinese proverb and a German adage well express honesty as the foundation stone:

Chinese: “If there be righteousness in the heart, then there will be beauty in the character; if there be beauty in the character, then there will be harmony in the home; if there be harmony in the home, then there will be order in the nation; if there be order in the nation, then there will be peace in the world.”

German: “If a man loses wealth, he loses nothing; if he loses health, he loses something; but if he loses character, he loses everything.”

**CONCLUSION:**

Rom. 12:17: “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.”

2 Cor. 8:21: “Providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”