Let's Talk About: Integrity

How would you define integrity?

The dictionary defines integrity as a "steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code." Is there a moral code that Christians should follow?

If so, what is that moral code?

The Bible should be the code that you live by. This is the Word of God. Read 2 Timothy 3:16 again. What does this teach you about the role of the Bible?

The role of the Bible is to teach, correct, guide, and instruct you. To do so, it provides a "moral code" that you are to follow. Can you give some examples of the moral code that the Bible teaches?

Integrity in Your Heart

When many of us think of a moral code, we often consider rules and laws. The Bible does provide many of these. However, Jesus wanted us to see that integrity goes beyond following a bunch of rules. Read Matthew 22:36-40. What did Jesus teach us are the two greatest things a person can do?

Jesus calls us to love God and our neighborhood. How do you think this will affect your integrity?

Integrity is ultimately about showing love for others. It is about the condition of your heart. It may not be hard for you to steal or lie. However, you may covet things from others or withhold information that others may need to know. You don't break the law, but your heart is not in the right place. You do not love your brother or sister.

This is what Jesus wanted to address in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus started six teachings by stating "You have heard it said…, but I say …" Many thought they were righteous, people of integrity because they followed the Law to the letter, but their hearts were full of evil.

Read Matthew 5:21-48 and pick two teachings from this passage. According to Jesus, where does a person's heart need to change for him or her to be a person of integrity?

How do you think changing one's heart promotes one's integrity?

How do you think your heart condition is affecting your integrity?

Do the Right Thing

Your heart must be in the right place. This should spur you to want to do the right thing. James 1:22 tells us to doers of the Word and not hearers only. How do you think that relates to your integrity?

Read Proverbs 10:9 and Proverbs 20:7. What do these passages teach about integrity?

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A person walking in integrity is living securely. It can be difficult to walk in integrity, however. There are many "gray areas" that arise where are integrity is challenged. What are some areas where you feel your integrity has been challenged?

It is most often in emergency or unexpected circumstances where one is willing to give up his or her integrity. It is the parents against abortion who face a moral dilemma when their daughter gets pregnant or the person who thinks stealing is wrong until he or she is unable to make the house payment.

It is important to know the areas where you are likely to stumble. What kinds of things will cause you to turn from your moral code?

Why do you think you give up your moral code in these instances?

Integrity is about standing firm to your moral code no matter what. In Luke 16:10, Jesus explained, "**One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much**."

Big, emergency situations require you to demonstrate your greatest amount of integrity. Therefore, you must be willing to do what is right according to the moral code of the Bible regardless of the situation and who is affected.

Can you think of a situation where your integrity was challenged? How did you respond?

Others Will Ask You to Quit

How do you think it would affect you if you always followed the same standard in every situation? How do you think it would affect others if you did so?

The second question may be the toughest to answer. The truth is that not everyone wants to see you walking integrity. In Job 2, Satan attacked Job, taking everything he had. In verse 9, it explains that his wife said to him, "**Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die**."

Those who are closest to you may not be happy about you living in your integrity. Can you think of a time when someone has challenged you as Job's wife challenged him?

Keep Your Word

It is easy to say you will do something. Many of us commit to doing things or to following our moral code. The question to ask yourself is if you are actually going to do what you say you will do.

Read Matthew 5:37. What does Jesus tell us to do?

Do you do the things you commit yourself to doing? Why is that so hard to do?

What does it mean to you when you commit yourself to doing something?

Your Memory Verse: Matthew 5:37 – 37 **Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.**

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