



HOW INTEGRAL IS INTEGRITY?

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Integrity is equated with honor, or the ability to do as you say. An individual with unquestionable integrity is able to match actions with words, and does everything he can to fulfill obligations and promises made. Someone who fails to do as they say falls flat on integrity. People do not particularly like others that fail to deliver as they promise.

In the world that we live in today, vows are made instantly to gain trust, to grow business, to manage reputations. Unfortunately, what is said and written is not quite the same as actually doing a deed. I can say, for instance, that I can finish 5 essays in a day. But the failure to deliver those essays according to my declaration merely resounds with nothing but lies, braggadocio, conceit, and incredible self-confidence. It is important that what we do can speak a lot louder than what we say, and this is specially so with what the younger generation see in us.

We may preach honesty and trustworthiness to our kids, but if we willfully neglect our obligations to society and our fellowmen, our words come out hollow. We may attend prayer meetings and participate actively in fellowships and worship gatherings, but if we fail to keep a healthy and loving family atmosphere, what good is all that then? We may wish each and everyone all the blessings in this world, but if we fail to be sources of comfort, guidance and needed wisdom at their most vulnerable, where is the integrity in that? We need to say what we mean and mean what we say, and of course, a suitable plan of action is but a given in all cases.

Acknowledging humbly that we are but humans with human limitations (read: financial burdens) that hinder us from giving material blessings is fine, but too much of that can be seen as just being miserly or worse, selfishness. Remember the widow's mite? "She gave all she had". Whatsoever we do to the least of our brethren, that we do unto Him. We may preach selflessness and talk about how we value human interactions and relationships, but if we fail so miserably to ease the burden of others in our own little ways, we also fail miserably in building our bridges towards the Lord.

It is important that we always strive to live according to the Lord's teachings. But what is equally significant is how we strive to live according to what we believe in. A pillar's strength is in its foundation just as our own strengths lie within our integrity. With integrity, our lives are not subject to the termites of doubt and uncertainty in our actions. Let's put back integrity in our lives once and for all.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define integrity in your own words. How do you practice integrity in your personal life?
2. Who is your model of integrity? Be able to talk about this person in class.
3. Why is it difficult for most people to do as they say? How do you personally deal with this difficulty?
4. How can knowing oneself be a safeguard against making empty promises?
5. Why is integrity an important lesson to be taught to the young? What are the effects of a society without integrity?