



INTEGRITY NOT EQUAL TO PRIDE

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I was listening to a radio program featuring a young politician. It's the young politician's regular program after all, aired once a week and that is co-anchored with a radio station personality. Anyone listening to the program would easily know the politician is bent on running in the upcoming elections this year for a local post. The politician talked about the many efforts directed toward helping countless others get their hospital bills reduced, thanks to this politician's influence. Yes, the politician dared say "...because of MY influence". I had to turn the radio off because I was easily growing tired of this young politician's posturing. I was surprised by all the conceit and self-importance the young official had shown at such a young age. Are there simply no modesty, truthfulness and integrity anymore in these parts?

I live in a city that is modest in growth. While it is true that we have been able to experience significant growth here, they are by no means gigantic and astoundingly huge. Of course, this is not to make light of all the efforts that many of our local officials have capably exerted. Fortunately, most of them have determinedly worked hard toward giving services and realizing potentials for our city. But the way in which so many of them crow about this and that achievement while forgetting about the contributions of their constituents that have made their projects possible, is reprehensible at best. People are not blind; we see what they are capable of doing and what they have done. There's no dire need to highlight them and put all sorts of glitter all over them just because it's almost election period.

The true measure of integrity is the ability to be able to do as one has promised and as one professes. Government officials have a genuine obligation to their constituents. They have been granted a mandate to serve the people and offer them a better way of living in society. It's also the same in our personal lives. We must strive to maintain truthfulness in all our dealings and stay honest in all we do. Crowing about our achievements, especially when those form part of our duties and responsibilities, is nothing but bragging. We can find pride in what we do, find honor in our accomplishments. But others will see the honorable way with which we conduct our lives as a more palpable testament to our untarnished and unshakable reputation.

How we live our lives is infinitely more important than how often and how much we talk about our good deeds. Hopefully, behind all the bragging and grandstanding that the young politician has been doing, the will to serve burns brighter than ever.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do you choose the officials you vote for? What criteria do you personally use?
2. Would you vote for someone who is very aggressive about development but lacks standards in personal conduct (i.e., a womanizer or an oppressor of the poor)? Why or why not?
3. Why is it important to vote for people with integrity?
4. Can having a well-established name be a guarantee of integrity from a person? Why or why not?
5. How important is integrity to you? How does it pervade or influence your personal and career life?