



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Integrity

Release date: September 30, 2016

INTEGRITY

Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction. Job 36:21

A couple wanting to spend a quiet lunch together, away from the spying eyes of the office help, picked up a pizza and headed for a nearby park. When the box was opened, however, they found not only the pizza but the funds from the restaurant's previous day's business which had been hidden in the box for safekeeping. Fearing that they might be accused of theft, they immediately returned the money; whereupon, the owner of the shop, so impressed at their honesty, said, "Let me call the newspaper and have them do a story. Just think how impressive it is--you find the money and return it. I can't believe it." Immediately the couple was horror-stricken. "Oh, please don't do that," they pleaded, "we're not married to each other and we wouldn't want our picture in the papers!"

"Nobody almost has integrity," says Chuck Swindoll; "You either have it or you don't!" Webster defines it as, "The state or quality of being complete, undivided, or unbroken... moral soundness; honesty; uprightness." If Swindoll is right--that you either have it or you don't--then far too many people today must find themselves in the "don't-have-it" category. There have always been moral lapses; there have always been individuals who have been corrupted with power and pleasure, but today integrity seems to have been corrupted by the importance of ourselves and the all pervading pressure to get the job done, no matter what the cost.

Integrity implies a knowledge of right and wrong. It deals with black and white issues of truthfulness and dishonesty, of full disclosure and shoddy half-truths, of commitment and infidelity. If integrity is in short supply today, and few would deny that it is, then our measurement of what constitutes right and wrong is also fuzzy. When every man does that which is right in his own eyes, moral chaos follows.

You'll find 27 references to the word *integrity* in the Bible, and as surprising as this may seem to you, all of them are found in the Old Testament. The Hebrew root means, "whole, sound, unimpaired..." It speaks of the absence of duplicity, and means "straight-forward and honest." Five of those references weave a story of testing around a man whose name was Job, who systematically lost almost everything most people hold dear to their hearts. Even his wife chided him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9). But Job neither cursed God nor abandoned his integrity.

Don Richardson tells of working with an Indian tribe in New Guinea who made Judas to be the real hero in the Gospel account. I wonder at times if we have not done the same thing in our thinking. Thinking that you can't make it in business without bending the truth, we lose sight of our commitment to honesty. Thinking that our wives will never know, we forget that when we breach our integrity we are the real losers, because something within dies.

An interesting study can be done of those 27 references in which you find Scripture speaking of integrity. If you have time to trace them, you'll quickly agree that integrity is at the very heart of the Judeo-Christian foundation. Integrity means that the God who gave the Ten Commandments and the moral principles of the Bible still expects people to keep their word and be true to their vows. Bending the truth to fit a situation may be good business for the moment, but it destroys the very fabric which holds our lives together.

The Psalms speak of the integrity of the heart, and it is right there that you either win or lose the battle. You can't go back and undo yesterday's mistakes any more than you can recover water poured into the sand, but with God's help you can determine to be a man or woman of integrity starting today, and be that person.

Resource reading: Job 36