

Integrity - Living an Uncompromising Life **Isaiah 6:1-8; James 5:10-12**

When is the last time you heard someone described as being 'honorable'?

The chief synonym for honor is *integrity*.

Webster's dictionary defines integrity as "uncompromising adherence to moral and ethical principles", "soundness of character", "honesty", "whole or entire", and "unimpaired in one's character".

Integrity is a virtue that all Christians are called to display in their lives.

Living by Principle

Integrity can best be described as *a person who lives life by principle -a person of principle*. This person is uncompromising. This does not mean they are uncompromising in every discussion or negotiation; there are times when it is appropriate to be political. To be uncompromising in every situation is nothing more than being stubborn and closed-minded.

But integrity does mean that the person does not compromise any moral or ethical principle. This person puts principle ahead of personal gain (money, social status, security, and the like.)

This means for the Christian, that all of life is to be lived by Biblical principles that reflect the nature and character of God.

A Sound Character

Integrity also refers to soundness of character and honesty.

James 5:12 tells you and me that integrity requires an honesty whereby our actions reflect our words, and our words become our bond. The simple statement of 'yes' or 'no' and living by that answer is "above all" for it is best indicator of who you are.

You and I need not take an oath or recite vows because if we are of sound character, our words will reflect the integrity and honesty of our character. The result of this is that you will be seen as trustworthy.

Example: difference between a statesman and a politician.

This lack of integrity is also found in the church.

In the Old Testament, the same lack of integrity destroyed Israel.

Where the false prophets preached what they knew the people wanted to hear rather than what God had commanded them to say. This was and still is the greatest lack of integrity within the church.

The supreme example of a lack of integrity is found in the New Testament in the judgement the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate rendered on Jesus.

The Standard of Integrity

To be people who are honorable and full of integrity, you and I must look to the One who is honor and integrity, or in other words to the one Who is holy; that is God Himself.

In Isaiah 6, Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up as well as the seraphim singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy." In response to this epiphany, Isaiah pronounced a curse upon himself, "Woe is me" He did this because he was "undone" or "ruined".

Isaiah experienced at that moment what theologians call "human disintegration".

Before this vision, Isaiah was considered a righteous man in Israel. He stood secure and confident in his own integrity. Everything was being held together in his life by this virtue. He considered himself a whole integrated person--but when he met the ultimate model and standard of integrity, he disintegrated. He fell a part because he realized that his sense of integrity seemed to be nothing more than pretending.

John Calvin - If you and I look on the horizontal level, comparing ourselves to others, we can congratulate ourselves with all flattery, raising, ourselves to being Godlike. But when you and I look vertically and consider, even if for a moment, who God is, we stand humbled, undone. It is then that any grand illusions that you and I possess about our own integrity, is gone.

Our standard of integrity comes not from what others say about you or me or what you and I think about ourselves; it comes only from whom God is.

The Reward for Living in Integrity

There is one thing more that you need to understand about God and integrity or honor.

God rewards those who honor Him with an honorable life.

Psalms 84:11 says: *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestow favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.* In other words, those who honor God with an honorable life, with a life of integrity, God will honor.

Conclusion

You and I are to reflect the character of God. You and I are to be uncompromising concerning ethical principles. You and I are called to be a person of honor whose word can be trusted.