Subject: Integrity  
Date: November 3, 2015  

**TAKING THE PATH LESS TRAVELED**

*What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?  Mark 8:36*

The president and general manager of a manufacturing company learned that their company had been producing a product which was badly flawed. A television reporter wanted an interview which would have focused on the problem. Facing the problem the key man had three choices: 1. He could deny the problem existed (which subordinates encouraged him to do). 2. He could duck out the back door and let a subordinate try to smooth over the problem. Or 3. He could face the music, acknowledging the problem and outlining a solution—which is what he chose to do. *That's integrity.*

A real estate executive was offered a substantial bribe for pushing a certain project, but what the person who offered the bribe did not know was that on the recommendation of the same executive, the board of the company had already made the decision to go with the project. For a fleeting moment, the man realized that he could quite easily take the bribe and no one would know. He refused the money and reported the offer. *That's integrity.*

A visit to a fast foods drive-through restaurant netted far more than tacos for one area resident. Included with the order was the cash receipts for the previous day in a bag just like the one the food came in. When the man opened his sack, he found the receipts, and promptly turned around, drove back to the restaurant and returned the money. *That's integrity.*

A researcher was asked to put her name to a document which contained bogus statistics and doctored results. Though she would not have been directly involved, her conscience was. Though her superiors threatened to fire her for non-cooperation, she refused to sign the document. *That's integrity.*

Our English word *integrity* comes from a word which means uprightness. In simple terms, it’s what you are which makes you do what you do. At times integrity is neither appreciated nor rewarded, especially when other individuals think the way to get ahead is to go along.

As I paid for a book recently, using a credit card, the young man handling the transaction returned the wrong slip, which would have meant he would have had the receipt and I would have had the entire charge slip. As I called this to his attention, I commented, “If you don’t have this, your company doesn’t get its money.” Without a word of thanks, the young man made the switch, and I left feeling like, “Why bother? He didn’t care!”

Then I began thinking about the whole issue of integrity. Doing the right thing because you get thanked for it isn’t a reflection of real integrity; rather, it’s doing the right thing because it is the right thing.

In recent days I’ve spent a good deal of time in either Communist countries or former Communist countries, and as I’ve pondered the obvious lack of morals and integrity when God is left out of life’s equation, I’ve come to the conclusion that integrity is part of the moral fabric which is based on ultimate accountability to God—which, in turn, makes me accountable to you as my neighbor or friend.

When you do right only because it’s rewarded or you are thanked for it, you have a Pavlov-kind of response to a situation; but when you do the right thing because your conscience demands it, you are motivated by integrity. The quick fix, the short-cut, the feeling that you can get away with something which feels good or is profitable is what drives societies to moral bankruptcy.

Whether or not the young man who handled the purchase of my book cared if his company got their money wasn’t important. What was important was that I cared and to my conscience I was true.

Resource reading: Mark 8