

A Hard-Won Achievement

Integrity is not a given factor in everyone's life. It is a result of self-discipline, inner trust and a decision to be relentlessly honest in all situations in our lives.

Integrity is defined by *Oxford Dictionaries* as “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness ... the state of being whole and undivided.”

Unfortunately, in today's world, strength of character is a rare commodity. As a result, we have few contemporary models of integrity. Our culture has produced few enduring heroes, few models of virtue. We have become a nation of imitators, but there are few leaders worth imitating.

The meaning of integrity has been eroded. Drop the word into conversations in Hollywood, on Wall Street, even on Main Street, and you'll get blank stares in return. In the primaries being held by the Republican and Democrat parties for the nation's highest office, the debates show how little integrity is valued in the personal and public lives of the contenders.

For most Americans, the word conjures up ideas of prudishness or narrow-mindedness. In an age when the meanings of words are manipulated to accommodate one's own personal agenda, foundational values such as integrity can be pulverized overnight.

Integrity is antithetical to the spirit of our age. The overarching philosophy of life that guides our culture revolves around a materialistic, consumer mentality. The craving need of the moment supersedes consideration of values that have eternal significance.

Evangelist Billy Graham, whose life and work have modeled integrity, said, “Integrity is the glue that holds our way of life together. We must constantly strive to keep our integrity intact.”



He is right. His pronouncement should be heeded by our nation, following a petition to God for His forgiveness for the way we have wandered off the path of moral principles.

His call for integrity applies to every profession and to every person – certainly to those of us in health care who have been equipped by our Lord to serve others in a noble endeavor.

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out (Proverbs 10:9 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter