

Building Block of Character

Honesty is the best policy. No doubt, you've heard that preached to you by parents, teachers and others throughout your life. Why? Because honesty is a building block of character.

What is the origin of this phrase? The proverb is first found in the writings of Sir Edwin Sandys, an English politician and colonial entrepreneur who was prominent in the Virginia Company that founded the first English settlement in America at Jamestown, Virginia.

Benjamin Franklin also used it. Thomas Jefferson said, "Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom." And William Shakespeare famously described honesty as an attribute people leave behind when he wrote (in *All's Well That Ends Well*), "no legacy is so rich as honesty."

In a world in which honesty is too often in short supply, we admire demonstrations of it. Here are a few, gleaned from random readings:

A lowly paid waiter in a major city found a briefcase containing cash and negotiables in a parking lot and no owner in sight. No one saw the waiter find it and put it in his car in the wee hours of the morning. But for the waiter, there was never any question of what to do.

He took the briefcase home, opened it, and searched for the owner's identity. The next day, he made a few phone calls, located the distressed owner, and returned the briefcase, along with the \$25,000 in cash it contained.

The surprising thing about this episode was the ridicule the waiter experienced at the hands of his friends and peers. For the next week or so, he was called a variety of names and laughed at – all because he possessed a quality the Bible holds in high regard: integrity. (From Christian Globe Networks)



A bank employee was due for a good promotion. One day at lunch, the president of the bank, who happened to be standing behind the clerk in the cafeteria, saw him slip two pats of butter under his slice of bread so they wouldn't be seen by the cashier.

That little act of dishonesty cost him his promotion. Just a few pennies' worth of butter made the difference. The bank president reasoned that if an employee cannot be trusted in little things, he cannot be trusted at all. (Michael P. Green, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching)

(more)



A little boy was sent by his mother to buy a 65-cent loaf of bread. While the baker was putting the bread into a bag, the boy noticed that the loaf looked rather small. "Isn't that a small loaf of bread for 65 cents?" he asked.

"You'll have less to carry," replied the baker. The boy put 50 cents on the counter.

"You're 15 cents short," said the baker.

"That's right," replied the boy. "You'll have less to count." (Christian Globe Networks)



The Bible is clear about what God thinks of honesty – or deceit.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are His delight (Proverbs 12:22 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter