

# Keep Your Promises

Rufus C. Burleson (1823 – 1901) twice served as president of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He was the preacher who baptized Sam Houston – who was governor of both Tennessee and Texas, and best known for his role in bringing Texas into the United States as a constituent state. Burleson once told an audience:

*How often I have heard my father paint in glowing words the honesty of his old friend, Col. Ben Sherrod. When he was threatened with bankruptcy and destitution in old age and was staggering under a debt of \$850,000, a contemptible lawyer told him, "Col. Sherrod, you are hopelessly ruined, but if you will furnish me \$5,000 as a witness fee, I can pick a technical flaw in the whole thing and get you out of it."*

*The grand old Alabamian said, "Your proposition is insulting. I signed the notes in good faith, and the last dollar shall be paid if charity digs my grave and buys my shroud." He carried me and my brother Richard once especially to see that incorruptible old man, and his face and words are imprinted upon my heart and brain.*

What a remarkable illustration of integrity when one's back is against the wall.

People remember when you keep your promises, and they also remember when you tell the truth, especially when you could have profited by being less than honest.

Honesty is your greatest asset and your best virtue. It is the measure by which most people will make their judgments about our character.

*He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure (Isaiah 33:15-16 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter