



Integrity

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P_{review}

Integrity: It's often named in academic and sports slogans, and you may hear it mentioned at church. But what does integrity really mean?

Everyone name one person who comes to mind when you think of integrity. (Note: One dictionary's definition of integrity is "firm adherence to a code of moral values; incorruptible.")

P_{raise}

Listen to or print a copy of the lyrics to Casting Crowns' song "Slow Fade." Discuss the meaning of the lyrics.

P_{arable}

Scientists have discovered that it wasn't a gaping hole in the hull that sank the *Titanic*, but a series of small slits. Maybe you've never been arrested for shoplifting. But have you ever copied answers off someone's homework? Have you ever let someone copy yours? Maybe you've never told your parents a whopper of a lie, but have you ever told a friend or relative you'd help them with something you knew deep inside you didn't intend to actually do?

Having integrity means more than saying you've never stolen a car or been to jail. It's actually about the daily choices you make in the little things—from handling your personal interactions with respect and honesty, to keeping your mind pure and staying true to God. Just like the slits that sank the *Titanic*, several "small" bad choices will end up sinking your character.

P_{resent}

1. **Proverbs 22:1.** Warren Buffett, a successful, well-known businessman, once said that it takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. **Proverbs 2:6-8.** (*The KJV states that the Lord is a "buckler," which is an old word for a small shield.*) A summary of this passage could be that the Lord stores up sound



wisdom, acts as a shield of protection, guards the paths of justice, and watches over the way of those who have integrity. In a world as corrupt, unstable, and dangerous as ours has become, is this promise important to you?

3. **Titus 2:6-8.** Though this passage is addressed to “young men,” it by no means excludes the ladies! As Christ-followers, we’re supposed to show a *pattern* of good works—a day-in and day-out dedication to having upstanding character. You can’t experience the full benefits of living with integrity if you behave uprightly at church then go to school and lie, cheat, and gossip.
4. Some say, “It’s nobody’s place to judge me.” This may or may not be so, but the Bible says to live in such a way that there’s nothing evil anyone can say about you. Can you think of ways having a reputation of integrity can benefit you at school, at home, and when you apply for a job?
5. There are many biblical examples of people who had integrity and reaped rewards for it: Mary and Joseph, Samuel, Joseph the son of Jacob, Esther, and Ruth, among others. Choose integrity, and you’ll be amazed at the ways God begins to work in your life.

P practice

1. As time goes on, it seems there are fewer people with genuine integrity. Why do you think this is so?
2. Does the average kid think about integrity? Why or why not?
3. Make a list of things a person with integrity does and a list of things he or she doesn’t do.
4. Can anyone share an example about how you made a right choice—even if it was a hard one—and were later glad you did?

P pray

*Start by reading **Romans 12:2.*** God, thank you for pouring out blessings on those who dedicate their lives to You. I ask You to help me become transformed in my mind and heart so that I can walk in integrity and shine Your light in my home and school. Forgive me for the times I’ve failed to represent Your holiness and love. From this day forward, I want to commit my life into Your hands.

P plus



Joseph was faced with temptations and trials again and again, but he consistently made good choices. His brothers, on the other hand, did not practice integrity. As homework, read the story of Joseph in **Genesis 37-45**.