

## **BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!**

### **Part 9: The PROBLEM of LACKING INTEGRITY**

**INTRO:** Our last two lessons have addressed two of life's most prominent problems: prejudice and hypocrisy. Both actually sins with significant negative impact. What is the remedy? Consistently practicing integrity, which is a dying quality in our society.

**TWO FUNNIES:** Actual words on job applications . . . Epitaph . . . Lacking integrity. Jesus lived with integrity.

**CHINA WALL (2 pics):** Failed to build integrity in the gatekeepers.

**LIFE/LEADERSHIP VERSE:** Psa. 78:72 NIV "...integrity of heart..."

#### **I. WHAT IS INTEGRITY?**

- A. Webster's defines as "consistency and sincerity, with no deception or pretense; worthy of confidence, dependable"
- B. Mathematical term "integer" is root. Integer is a whole number. People with integrity are whole—no gap in who they are on the inside and how they appear on the outside.
- C. Working definition—People who practice integrity have consistency in their thoughts, words, and actions. No gaps between private and public person. Integrity is key character quality.

GRAHAM QUOTE . . .

STANLEY QUOTE . . .

#### **II. WHY IS INTEGRITY IMPORTANT? BENEFITS**

- A. Strengthens relationships by building trust
- B. Clear, guilt-free conscience (Pro. 10:9) – security vs. found out
- C. Pleases God (1 Chron. 29:17) – God searches for integrity in our heart
- D. Guides us (Pro. 11:3)
- E. Protects us (Pro. 2:7; 19:1; 28:18) – World may despise you (29:10). Practicing integrity can get you in trouble!
- F. Gets rewarded (1 Kings 9:4-5; Neh. 7:2; Psa. 112:4-5)

G. More valuable than riches (Pro. 22:21; 28:6)

H. Leaves legacy (Pro. 20:7)

#### **III. HOW IS INTEGRITY DEVELOPED?**

People who consistently practice integrity make wise choices. No, not perfect. They make mistakes and sin. But they admit them; do not cover them up. They change their lives for the better. Integrity chooses to:

- A. Listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. Attuned to His promptings.
- B. Always tell the truth (in love), even when it hurts you (Pro. 12:17).
- C. Treat others fairly and honestly (Pro. 16:11-13).
- D. Always keep a promise when you'd rather not (Psa. 15:1, 4).  
Suggestion: Don't make many promises!
- E. Confront problems when it is easier to walk away (Pro. 27:5-6)
- F. Forgive others when rather hold a grudge (Eph. 4:32)
- G. Give God permission to examine their lives (Psa. 139:23-24; Psa. 7:8)

**EXAMPLE?** David in Psalm 15 . . .

Consistently practicing integrity matters—a lot! Eliminates or minimizes lots of sins: lying, prejudice, hypocrisy, . . .

**RING STORY (Ring Pic):** The security of the jewel is decided by the strength and quality of the setting. The setting is our integrity of character.