

Means and Justification

2020-12-11 Devotional

By Major Brian Coles

We live in a world where integrity isn't talked about nearly enough. In fact, ours is a day of weakened integrity.

We live in a world where "the end justifies the means" has become an acceptable school of thought for far too many.

Salespeople overpromise and under deliver, all in the name of making their quota for the month.

Applicants exaggerate their resumes because they desperately need a job.

CEO's overstate their projected earnings because they don't want the board of directors to replace them.

Entrepreneurs overstate the potential of their business proposals because they want the highest valuation possible from an investor.

Investors understate a company's value in order to negotiate a lower valuation in a deal.

Customer service representatives cover up a mistake they made because they are afraid the client will leave them.

Employees call in "sick" because they don't have any more paid time off when they actually just need to get their Christmas shopping done.

The list could go on and on, and in each case the person committing the act of dishonesty told themselves they had a perfectly valid reason why the end result justified their lack of integrity.

If a weakened integrity hounds you, Ps. 15 will speak volumes to you. Hear well the words of David in this psalm.

- ¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?
- ² The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;
- ³ whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbor,
and casts no slur on others;
- ⁴ who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;
- ⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things
will never be shaken.

V.1 is crucial. The rest of the psalm hangs on this 1st verse.

David's prayer opens with two questions which have the same thought in mind. "Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?" And, "Who may live on your holy mountain?"

Tent and mountain are symbols of God's presence describing our having f'ship with him.

In other words, David is asking, "What kind of a person can maintain and enjoy f'ship with you, Lord?"

The rest of the psalm spells out the answer. And it all comes down to integrity. Here are 10 qualities of integrity.

Their walk is blameless, v.2. "The one whose walk is blameless" or walks with integrity.

This person is careful to walk in truth and refuses to live a lie. They do what is righteous. They deal with others rightly – honestly.

They speak truth from their heart, v.2. This has to do with how they think. They have no place for deception or lies. They have no hidden agendas.

They do not slander another person, v.3. They do not gossip or spew out any disparaging remarks about another person.

As Paul writes in Eph. 4.29, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building other up.”

They do not wrong a neighbour, v.3.

They are loyal and consistent.

They cast no slurs on others, v.3.

They say nothing derogatory or scornful about others.

They despise a vile person, v.4.

As Paul states in 1 Cor. 15.33, “Bad company corrupts good character.” It doesn’t mean we never talk to them. We just don’t spend all our time with them.

They honour those who fear the Lord, v.4.

Since we become like those with whom we spend our time, we need to have X’n friendships.

They keep their word even when it hurts to do so and don’t change their minds, v.4.

This means they do what they say they will do, even if keeping their word is difficult to do.

They loan money interest free, v.5.

If you offer financial assistance to someone [and discernment is needed when doing so], do so without charging interest.

They do not accept a bribe, v.5.

The dictionary defines a bribe as “money or favour bestowed on or promised to a person in a position of trust to pervert their judgement of corrupt their character.”

A person with integrity won't stoop to that level.

To the individual who lives this way comes a promise at the end of v.5. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.”

If these things become our practice in life, then through the empowering presence of the HS, we will not easily be shaken.

And we will continue to enjoy unbroken f'ship with our Lord.

This week, review these qualities of integrity from Ps. 15 and ask the Lord to strengthen you in any areas where you may detect a weakness.

Also, if you see one of these qualities of integrity in another person thank that person for demonstrating such fine character.