

The Integrity Test

Lesson 8

Psalm 15 :1 THE MESSAGE

"God, who gets invited to dinner at your place? How do we get on your guest list? Walk straight, act right, and tell the truth. Don't hurt your friend, don't blame your neighbor; despise the despicable. Keep your word even when it costs you, make an honest living, and never take a bribe. You'll never get blacklisted if you live like this."

In 2002, U.S. companies Arthur Andersen, Enron, and Salomon Brothers were all brought down by the rogue actions of a few who failed the integrity test. Their corporate integrity code failed to equip front-line employees to make the right decisions without supervision.

Lack of integrity is nothing new. The Bible is full of examples. One of these involves Gehazi, the assistant to the most famous prophet of his day, Elisha. It's hard to imagine that anyone working with such an anointed man who saw firsthand the power of God would fail the integrity test. But he did.

When Elisha healed Naaman (a general in the army) from leprosy, he didn't expect to be compensated and he didn't ask for money. When Naaman insisted that Elisha take some form of payment, the prophet answered, *"As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing"* (2 Kings 5:16).

Gehazi, however, did not agree with his employer. He saw this as a great opportunity for gain and took matters into his own hands. *"Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, 'My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him'"* (2 Kings 5:20).

As a result of his sin, God judged Gehazi. Elisha fired him and God struck him with leprosy, and his life was never the same. He was removed from serving one of God's most extraordinary prophets.

Each of us has the potential of being a Gehazi if we do not have a foundation built into our lives that makes us willing to receive only what God gives us through the fruit of our obedience.

Ask God to keep your motives pure in all you do.

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Roundtable Discussion

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"God, who gets invited to dinner at your place? How do we get on your guest list? 'Walk straight, act right, and tell the truth. Don't hurt your friend, don't blame your neighbor; despise the despicable. Keep your word even when it costs you, make an honest living, and never take a bribe. You'll never get blacklisted if you live like this.'"

2 Kings 5:16

"As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing".

2 Kings 5:20

'My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him'.

1. What does it mean to be a man of integrity?
2. What is the best example you have of a person of integrity?
3. Is it easy to do the right thing even if it cost you?