

Is Integrity Overrated?

As I ponder this question, everything within me wants to shout, “No, integrity is not overrated.” It is a key concept as we represent the body of Christ. However, at the same time, I recognize that society has given us increased latitude in its definition of integrity.

One source describes integrity as a “personal quality of fairness that we all aspire to—unless you’re a dishonest, immoral scoundrel, of course. Having integrity means reliably doing the right thing. It’s a personality trait that we admire since it means a person has a moral compass that doesn’t waver.”

A question we all need to ask ourselves is, “Who or what is determining my moral compass?” Another searching question would be, “Am I reflecting the world or the God of the Bible?” Or is my moral compass prone to waiver?

Take a moment and think about the last time you told a seemingly harmless little white lie. Those little lies can slip out before we realize they have escaped. And, to make matters more complicated, situations that surround us can make this detour from the truth even easier. Although I believe culture has been giving increasing latitude and encouraging the compass to waiver, it is nothing new.

Abraham found himself confronted with this very situation. Here he is, a man who journeyed with God. Abraham left everything that he knew simply because God said to leave it all (Gen. 12:1). We know that through that act of obedience, he received God’s provision and lived a life of blessing. Yet, in Genesis 20, we find him living as a foreigner and introducing Sarah as his sister rather than his wife.

In the foreign land, the king could, of course, have anyone he wanted. And he set his eyes on Sarah. He had every intention

of sleeping with her. To the best of his knowledge, she was likely a virgin; after all, he understood that she was Abraham's sister. This was the story Abraham had asked Sarah to adhere to, thinking it would protect them.

We must come to understand that we are a living picture to the world around us of who God is. Neither Abraham nor Sarah was reflecting the image of God well with the little white lie, which Abraham tries to justify (see verses 11-13).

Not walking in integrity will create a time or season in which we find ourselves having to justify our lack of it.

As I looked at this passage of Scripture, I realized that Abraham and Sarah's lie was driven by fear. Their focus went to the pagan culture rather than Almighty God. Just that moment was enough to set things in motion that would impact not only them, but also the king and his family.

In a "but God" moment, King Abimelech was warned by God that Sarah was married. We have the man of God (Abraham) living in fear and the king of the "godless place" hearing from God and having to confront Abraham. I imagine Abraham stumbled around for an answer as the king confronted him.

Remember, lack of integrity will eventually put us in a position where we have to try to justify the decision we made.

Stop for a minute and imagine how this story may have been different if Abraham and Sarah had told the truth from the beginning. Would they have seen God move in power? Would God have protected them? What image would have been portrayed to the king and the people of this pagan land?

I would suggest that integrity is worth fighting for, which also means that our moment-by-moment decisions cannot be fed by fear. Instead, they must be firmly established on the word of God and who our God is.

Proverbs 11:3 (TPT) states, "Integrity will lead you to success and happiness, but treachery will destroy your dreams."

There is a movie series out that my family loves, *Pirates of the Caribbean*. In the movie, Captain Jack Sparrow has a compass that doesn't seem to work. In the world, a compass must be able to find true north to establish our direction. Captain Jack's compass doesn't point to true north; rather, it points the way to the thing that he desires most.

The only way we can be a people of integrity is for our hearts to be set on the one true God. He must be the thing we desire more; when that relationship is stable, then He and nothing else will drive our moral compass.

For more teaching on this topic, listen to the episode titled "Integrity" on *The Real Truth With Ruth* podcast [here](#).