

integrity

What the New Testament Teaches About Integrity
(Scriptures from the NIV)

Luke 3:13-14

13 "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.
14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"
He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely-be content with your pay."

Luke 6:31

31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 11:42

42 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

Luke 16:10

10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

Acts 23:1

1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."

Acts 24:16

16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

Romans 9:1

1 I speak the truth in Christ-I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-

Romans 13:5

5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

Romans 14:5

5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

Romans 14:14

14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

Romans 14:22

22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.

2 Corinthians 4:2

2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 5:11

11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

2 Corinthians 7:2

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one.

2 Corinthians 8:21

21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

Colossians 3:22-23

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

Ephesians 6:6

6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

4 On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.

1 Timothy 1:5

5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 Timothy 3:9

9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

Titus 1:7-8

7 Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

Hebrews 13:18

18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

1 Peter 2:12

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

1 Peter 3:16

16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

"A person is not given integrity. It results from the relentless pursuit of honesty at all times."

**Remarks at Joint Services Conference
on Professional Ethics
(JSCOPE 2000)
January 27, 2000
by General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (RET.)**

We study and we discuss ethical principles because it serves to strengthen and validate our own inner value system...it gives direction to what I call our moral compass. It is the understanding of ethics that becomes the foundation upon which we can deliberately commit to inviolate principles. It becomes the basis of what we are...of what we include in our character. Based on it, we commit to doing what is right. We expect such commitment from our leaders. But most importantly, we must demand it of ourselves.

Sound morals and ethical behavior cannot be established or created in a day...a semester...or a year. They must be institutionalized within our character over time...they must become a way of life. They go beyond our individual services and beyond our ranks or positions; they cut to the heart and to the soul of who we are and what we are and what we must be...men and women of character. They arm us for the challenges to come and they impart to us a sense of wholeness. They unite us in the calling we know as the profession of arms.

Of all the moral and ethical guideposts that we have been brought up to recognize, the one that, for me, stands above the rest...the one that I have kept in the forefront of my mind...is integrity. It is my ethical and personal touchstone.

Integrity as we know it today, stands for soundness of moral principle and character—uprightness—honesty. Yet there is more. Integrity is also an ideal...a goal to strive for...and for a man or woman to "walk in their integrity" is to require constant discipline and usage.

The word integrity itself is a martial word that comes to us from an ancient Roman army tradition. During the time of the 12 Caesars, the Roman army would conduct morning inspections. As the inspecting centurion would come in front of each legionnaire, the soldier would strike with his right fist the armor breastplate that covered his heart. The armor had to be strongest there in order to protect the heart from the sword thrusts and from arrow strikes. As the soldier struck his armor, he would shout "integritas" (in-teg-ri-tas), which in Latin means *material, wholeness, completeness, and entirety*. The inspecting centurion would listen closely for this affirmation and also for the ring that well-kept armor would give off. Satisfied that the armor was sound and that the soldier beneath it was protected, he would then move on to the next man.

At about the same time, the praetorians or Imperial bodyguard were ascending into power and influence. Drawn from the best "politically correct" soldiers of the Legions, they received the finest equipment and armor. They no longer had to shout "integritas" (in-teg-ri-tas) to signify that their armor was sound. Instead, as they struck their breastplate, they would shout "Hail Caesar," to signify that their heart belonged to the Imperial personage—not to their unit—not to an institution—not to a code of ideals. They armored themselves to serve the cause of a single man. A century passed and the rift between the Legion and the imperial bodyguard and its excesses grew larger. To signify the difference between the two organizations, the legionnaire, upon striking his armor would no longer shout "integritas," but instead would shout "Integer" (in-te-ger). Integer (in-te-ger) means undiminished—complete—perfect.

It not only indicated that the armor was sound, it also indicated that the soldier wearing the armor was of sound character. He was complete in his integrity...his heart was in the right place...his standards and morals were high. He was not associated with the immoral conduct that was rapidly becoming the signature of the praetorian guards.

The armor of integrity continued to serve the Legion well. For over four centuries they held the line against the marauding Goths and Vandals. But by 383 AD the social decline that infected the Republic and the praetorian guard had its effects upon the Legion. As a 4th century Roman

general wrote, "When, because of negligence and laziness, parade ground drills were abandoned, the customary armor began to feel heavy since the soldiers rarely, if ever, wore it. Therefore, they first asked the emperor to set aside the breastplates and mail and then the helmets. So our soldiers fought the Goths without any protection for the heart and head and were often beaten by archers. Although there were many disasters, which lead to the loss of great cities, no one tried to restore the armor to the infantry. They took their armor off, and when the armor came off, so too came their integrity."

It was only a matter of a few years until the Legion rotted from within and was unable to hold the frontiers...the barbarians were at the gates.

Integrity...it is a combination of the words, "integritas" (in-teg-ri-tas) and "integer" (in-te-ger). It refers to the putting on of armor, of building a completeness...a wholeness...a wholeness in character.

How appropriate that the word integrity is a derivative of two words describing the character of a member of the profession of arms. The military has a tradition of producing great leaders that possess the highest ethical standards and integrity. It produces men and women of character...character that allows them to deal ethically with the challenges of today and to make conscious decisions about how they will approach tomorrow. However, as I mentioned earlier, this is not done instantly. It requires that integrity becomes a way of life...it must be woven into the very fabric of our soul. Just as was true in the days of imperial Rome, you either walk in your integrity daily, or you take off the armor of the "integer" (in-te-ger) and leave your heart and soul exposed...open to attack.

My challenge to you is simple but often very difficult...wear your armor of integrity...take full measure of its weight...find comfort in its protection...do not become lax. And always, always, remember that no one can take your integrity from you...you and only you can give it away! The biblical book of practical ethics, better known as the book of Proverbs, sums it up very nicely: "The integrity of the upright guides them: but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity" (Pr 11:3).