

How to Increase in Your Integrity

James 5:12

Have you ever lied? For those of you who might not be quite so sure, let me remind you of Miriam-Webster's definition of a lie. To lie is either "to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive"; or "to create a false or misleading impression." I don't know about you, but I would have been a lot more comfortable with this definition if the second part of it wasn't there. It's bad enough to consider those times when we have said something that wasn't true, but to then have to think about those times when we created a misleading impression by perhaps not saying anything, or by being intentionally vague. That adds to the percentages doesn't it? For many people lying is a way of life. It is a necessary skill. But the question is why do people feel the need to lie?

1. Self-protection : People lie because they're afraid.
2. Self-centeredness : People lie because they benefit from their lies.
3. Self-importance : People lie because of their pride. Somehow the lies of this kind feed our self-importance.

Either we lie to save face, to cover our mistakes, to be liked, to appear more important, or more successful than we really are. The making and breaking of promises is the issue here. OK, here is the big question then: how can we increase in our integrity?

1. Consider : Don't make promises you can't keep.
2. Commit : Keep the promises you make—even when it costs you! (Psalm 15:4)
"Integrity is keeping my commitments even if the circumstances when I made the commitments have changed."
3. Confess : Admit when you've failed. (James 5:16) We all have broken a promise at one time or another.
4. Concede : Surrender to Christ. (John 15:4)

A promise is a holy thing, whether it is big or small—whether made to the chairman of the board or a child. We need to not only refrain from telling lies--we also have to be men and women who keep our word. Our own integrity and the integrity of the church demand nothing less. Today more than ever, we have to let our "Yea" be yea and our "Nay" be nay.

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