

A LESSON IN INTEGRITY

“But they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are acting faithfully.” (2 Kings 22:7, NIV)

ISPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH JUNIOR GOLFERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. For all the joy there is to share in the game, occasionally a particular form of sad story jumps up in a conversation. It is the story of the cheater.

One of the worst things a competitive golfer can do—no matter their age—is to willingly cheat: casually drop a ball when one is lost, insist on a score known to be false, nudge a ball from a bad lie. It leaves the golfer with a stained reputation, often for good. And this is what makes cheating especially sad for a junior player who wants to be taken seriously. Without a confession, they’ve disqualified themselves from our trust and respect, a truly horrible loss so early in life.

Trust and respect. These are the well-earned responses to a life of integrity. When we do things cleanly, fairly, honestly, mercifully, we are building a house fortified with integrity. Others find safety there.

In our time we may stand amazed reading the words of King Josiah from 2 Kings 22. He ordered the restoration of the temple, a project endeavored at significant cost. There was to be a good amount of cash moving from hand to hand—plenty of opportunity for theft of money, theft of time, theft of workmanship. But Josiah was unconcerned. “I have no worries about the flow of money,” he told his supervisor. “These men on the job are men of integrity. We can count on them to do right by us.” Now that’s the favor of a king!

Recently, I interviewed a dear friend in front of a Links Fellowship. It was meant to be an introduction to the topic, an easy conversation for which I had in no way prepared him. The discussion—about philosophies in general—turned to his philosophy of business, in which he is highly regarded and quite successful. “What is your philosophy of business?” I asked him, to which he briefly responded, “I am always looking for the best deal.” Certain that I knew what he was talking about, I asked something like this: “So you want a good price to turn the best profit?” He corrected me, “No, I want the best deal for both sides. I want every transaction to benefit us both.” Simple, beautiful, remarkable.

I learned something big that day: The King’s men are not all gone. Integrity lives. We find it in those who are unwaveringly faithful to God.

Opening questions Have you ever been a witness to cheating in a competitive environment? What was your internal reaction? How do you think cheaters suffer even if they are not caught?

READING 2 Kings 22:1-13, Proverbs 20:28, 2 Timothy 2:1-7

Righteousness and the Word

In 2 Kings 22, we read that Josiah honored workers known for their integrity even before the Word of God was discovered in the temple. How much righteousness can we enact without God’s Word? How does the Word help us serve God fully?

Love and faithfulness

Proverbs 20:28 is surprising. How do you think both love and faithfulness contribute to integrity? What about fairness, honesty, and mercy, which are mentioned in today’s devotion?

Soldiers, athletes, farmers

What pictures of integrity did Paul paint in 2 Timothy 2? What other examples would you give of those who are reliable and trustworthy? Why are these traits especially necessary in those who would teach the Word (v. 2)? How can you honor God with integrity in your own work and life?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2014 Links Players International.