

## If You Could See...

Integrity is one of those words that get bounced around in Christian and secular circles alike. We long for it in our own lives; we search for it in the lives of others; and very often, we come up short in both the former and the latter.

I want to be a man of integrity. When I die, I don't really care if I am remembered for anything. But if there had to be something to remember me for, it would be that I lived my life in such a way that I could be called a man of integrity. I want people to remember me as one who exhibited a strong character and a Godly nature.

The fact of the matter is that I often feel I have a long road ahead of me if I am ever going to reach that point. I am torn between the spiritual me (which is the one I try to show the most) and the not so spiritual me, the one who battles and fails, lies and cheats, weasels and worms. There seems to be a constant disconnect between the guy I want to be and the guy I usually end up being.

I don't often feel like I have a whole lot of character. In fact, I feel more like Satan's worm than God's child at times. I find myself wondering if my life is ever going to be fixed. I wonder if I am ever going to be able to stand up for my own values, to be the man that I want to be.

By the way, I am not saying any of this for your sympathy. Rather, I am telling you this because of a sneaky suspicion that you feel the same. Why we as Christians need to mask ourselves and pretend with each other that we have it all together I will never understand. It's like going to a wart clinic and trying to pretend with everyone in the waiting room that you don't have a wart.

Living our lives as a process of purity involves becoming men and women of integrity. Take a look in that mirror - do you see a person of integrity? Or do you feel your reflection to be more like the worm I have already described?

Webster's defines integrity as the firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values; the quality or state of being complete or undivided. James encourages us to be undivided in our minds, lest we be "as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord." (James 1:6, 7)

A life that is undivided.  
Is that what I am living?  
Is that the character that I am portraying?

What does that look like? Therein lies the problem, I think. We often cannot see what that looks like because we are too caught up in our own dividedness to picture what an undivided life might be. We run away from him instead of towards him. We cannot see beyond the cloud of brokenness. We cannot see beyond our shrouds of shame. We cannot see beyond ourselves.

If only we could see.

If we could see what Christ sees when he looks at us, maybe we could begin to move away from our dividedness. Maybe we could begin to calm our restless heart and begin living the life of integrity that each of us longs to live. If we could see what Christ sees, maybe we would have the strength to not pick up that bottle for the thousandth "last time", to not raise our hand against our wife or our children, to not lie or manipulate to get ourselves out of a transparent situation. If we could see that Christ has not given up on us, perhaps we could gather up just that last bit of strength needed to not give up on ourselves.

If only we could see.

Strip it all away... the clothes, the career, the ministry, the family, the accomplishments. What are you left with? What do you see in that mirror? A broken, messed up life.

See beyond your sin.

That temper that flared up again? That addiction you gave into instead of running away from? That altar you stepped down from instead of sacrificing yourself upon? Maybe if we began to see what God sees, the impurities in our lives would no longer be an issue. Maybe the reason we have not gained victory in those aspects of our lives is that our vision does not go beyond it. Until we begin to see beyond our sin, there is no way God can help us conquer it.

See beyond your accomplishments.

Do you remember that mountaintop experience you had long ago? Do you remember that time when God just seemed to be working so clearly through you? Remember how you felt so in tune with his spirit? Wondering why you can't return to that place? Perhaps it is because you are living in the light of your past accomplishments instead of future glory. Perhaps God is trying to do a new thing in you, but you are so focused on what he has done in the past that you cannot see what he is trying to do in your future. It's good to remember what God has accomplished through us, but we cannot stay there lest our pride give way to self indulgence and bitterness. We need to look beyond what God has done and toward what he still wants to do.

See beyond yourself.

Then you would know you have my heart  
If you could see what I see  
That a treasure is what you are  
If you could see what I see...

If beauty is all in the eyes of the beholder  
Than I am beholding true beauty

Geoff Moore penned those words for his wife a few years ago. When I was a teenager I always said that would be the song I sang to my wife on our wedding day. But lately, it's being sung to me instead. God has been gently singing it to me when I have been too embarrassed to come near him.

He has been softly singing when I have been too proud to be honest. This is God's heart; this is God's desire - that you and I see what he sees.

Am I am man of integrity? I guess if you look in the natural realm it all depends on the day. But this one thing I know - integrity comes from within a person who is willing to see past their barriers and hang ups. Integrity comes through a person who is able to look in the mirror through a lens of perfect justice combined with divine mercy. Integrity begins when we begin to see what he sees.

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