

# Integrity

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Integrity makes you whole and complete.

It is exciting to meet with you tonight as we step across the threshold into this new millennium. It is a sacred time for you to be alive. Whether you are 12 or 15 or 17 years old, what you are doing now really matters as you prepare for your future roles as women, mothers, and builders of the kingdom.

One summer when I was 16, I remember sitting down and writing in my journal all the qualities I wanted in a future husband—testimony, good looks, sense of humor, money, education. I thought these were all good qualities. But when my oldest daughter, Becky, was 16, she came to me and asked, “What is the most important quality to look for in a husband?” By then I had been married for many years. I knew the answer to that question. I believe the most important quality we can possess is integrity. How I love the value of integrity!

What is this most important principle? Integrity means to *do* what you say you will do; you keep promises to yourself. The Young Women program defines integrity as: “I will have the moral courage to make my actions consistent with my knowledge of right and wrong.”

“We can easily spot ... someone with integrity. They’re honest. They do the right thing when nobody is watching. They keep their word and they keep our confidences. They repay their debts, and they clean up their own messes. They accept responsibility for their actions” (“The Wholeness of Integrity,” *Church News*, 26 June 1999, 16).

Everyone comes into this world with different levels of integrity. Have you ever wondered what qualified Jesus to be given the role as Savior of the world? He was the Firstborn of the Father, chosen from the beginning. But what really made Him perfect? It was His total dedication and desire to please our Father in Heaven. The Savior was capable of sinning, but His desire for “honesty [was] an armor against temptation” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 134). The Savior said, “I do always those things that please [the Father]” (John 8:29). We know that throughout His life, He consistently made right choices. He had the moral courage to make His actions consistent with His knowledge of right and wrong.

President Hinckley has said: “In all this world there is no substitute for personal integrity. It includes honor. It includes performance. It includes keeping one’s word. It includes doing what is right regardless of the circumstances” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 270).

Let’s look at a few examples of young women who are learning to love integrity. They have chosen to do what is right regardless of the circumstances.

A young woman named Brooke writes: “This past summer I had the opportunity of attending a leadership conference. It only took a couple of hours to find out that the LDS kids were in the minority there. I ended up [rooming] with two girls who were very nice but definitely didn’t have the same standards. At night when I read my scriptures they stared at me like I was some kind of weirdo. While they were talking about their drinking parties, I was talking about [parties] with punch and cookies. They laughed but were always curious.

“Although I was scared sometimes, I never failed to stand up for what I believe in. At the end of the conference, one of my roommates [said], ‘I guess Mormons can be cool,’ and that she would think about our religion and maybe even learn about it. I [learned] that I could make a difference by simply standing up for what I believe.”

Cari shares this experience:

“I have always known what was right, but I thought I could choose my own path. After being on that path, I started to feel lost and confused. Finally I prayed with a humble heart and asked Heavenly Father what I should do. The first step was to change friends. That wasn’t easy, being in the “popular” group. But I took the challenge and did just that.

“We liked to hang out on the weekend and watch R-rated movies. I had made up my mind never to watch R movies again. It was the beginning of a new school year, and a guy asked me to watch a movie. I told him that I didn’t watch rated R movies. He said, “That’s cool, we can watch a different one.” This has happened more than once. I have left parties, sat home on weekends, and turned down [dates] because I don’t watch R-rated movies. This has been the greatest blessing in my life. Now it’s easier for me to stand up for what I believe in many other ways.”

Kristen, a Laurel, writes:

“I try to stand as a witness of God every day. It’s the little things—being nice to everyone I talk with, not laughing at a crude joke, not gossiping about someone, being patient. Sometimes it’s these small things that are the hardest to do, ... but I constantly strive to do better. Scripture study and prayer have given me power—the courage to stand and share with the Savior my testimony of Him. The scriptures give me the power to change for the better.”

Now listen to Salina’s letter:

“Last year in seminary we were taught about Joseph Smith. Towards the end of the year, we had a spiritual lesson that has impacted the rest of my life. Through all of his experiences, he never once failed to stand as a witness.

“As I sat listening, I asked myself over and over if I could be that strong. My testimony was strengthened that day as the Spirit manifested to me that the Church was true and Joseph Smith was a true prophet. If I was faced with trials as he was, with the Lord’s help I could be just as strong. So I made a commitment that day that I would always stand as a witness. If Joseph Smith could do it, so can I!”

These young women are learning the value of integrity. There is a common thread which runs through all of these stories. Do you recognize it? You’ve heard it a thousand times before. Reading your scriptures and saying your prayers invites the Spirit to be with you.

When President Spencer W. Kimball was 15 years old, he attended stake conference and heard a speaker ask everyone who had read the entire Bible to raise their hands. I heard President Kimball say, “I cared not what others were thinking. I knew that I had not read it and I was filled with shame.” After the meeting was over, he ran home as fast as he could, grabbed the Bible off the shelf, and climbed the stairs to the attic. His brothers teased him, saying, “Why try? You’ll never finish it.” But he did. Almost a year later he finished reading the Bible. The integrity he had as a 15-year-old boy was one of the things that made him a great prophet of God.

Dear young women, you too can develop a love for integrity as you discipline yourselves through daily prayer and scripture study. The Holy Ghost can inspire you with a greater desire for honesty and integrity. Make a decision tonight that you will read your scriptures and say your prayers every day for the rest of your life. You see, scriptures and prayer go together like peanut butter and jelly. They will help you stay close to the Church and close to the Lord.

And remember this: as you develop your integrity you can be more beautiful. Integrity makes you whole and complete. Integrity will bring a twinkle to your eye and a look of confidence that will magnetically draw people to you.

President Hinckley has said, “There is nothing more beautiful in this world than a ... young woman who is clean in thought and word and deed” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 384).

Just like my daughter Becky, someday you will be looking for a young man with integrity. And a young man who holds the priesthood of God will also want to marry a young woman of integrity.

President Hinckley was right. “There is no substitute for personal integrity. It includes honor, ... performance, ... keeping one’s word, ... doing what is right regardless of the circumstances” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 270).

As servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can do it! Our honest effort to improve our integrity allows God to increase our power to do it. Let me repeat that: Our honest effort to improve our integrity allows God to increase our power to do it. I promise you, as you read your scriptures and say your prayers—that’s the magic formula—the Holy Ghost will help you in your noble quest to strengthen and develop your integrity. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.