

Integrity

In the summer of 1805, a number of Indian chiefs and warriors met in council at Buffalo Creek, New York to hear a presentation of the Christian message by a Mr. Cram from the Boston Missionary Society. After the sermon, a response was given by Red Jacket, one of the leading chiefs. Among other things, the chief said:

"Brother, you say that there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree, as you can all read the Book?"

"Brother, we are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place. These people are our neighbors. We are acquainted with them. We will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching has upon them. If we find it does them good, makes them honest and less disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said."

What if everyone waited to see what effect our beliefs had on us before they decided to accept it? How many people would accept our beliefs based on them observing the difference they have made in our lives?

The apostle Peter in his first letter said that people, like Chief Red Jacket, are watching our every move to see what kind of difference our faith makes in our lives. People who are not believers are living all around us,

Peter says, " (1 Peter 2:12). "Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that in a case where they speak against you as those who do evil, they may, by observing your good works, glorify God in a day of visitation".

People are making mental notes on us. People are watching us whether we like it or not, especially if we claim to be a believer.

What do they watch? Like Chief Red Jacket, they watch to see if our behavior matches our belief, if our walk matches our talk, if our character matches our confession, if what we claim to believe on Saturday is put into practice on other days. In a word, they watch to see if we have integrity.

The hallmark of a Believer's life is integrity. Isn't that what Chief Red Jacket wanted to see in the white people: if they were good, honest, and not given to cheating?

What is the meaning of integrity?

Integrity is a high standard of living based on a personal code of morality that doesn't succumb to the whim of the moment or the dictates of the majority.

Integrity is to personal character what health is to the body or 20/20 vision is to the eyes. Integrity comes from the word integer. A person of integrity is whole, their lives are put together. People with integrity have nothing to hide and nothing to fear. As Solomon wrote,

(Prov. 10:9). "The one who lives with integrity lives securely".

Their lives are open books. They say to a watching world, "Go ahead and look. My behavior will match my beliefs. My walk will match my talk. My character will match my confession. Who I am on Saturday will be the same on Monday and every other day of the week."

Without a doubt, Jesus is the supreme model of integrity. His life evidenced his purity and excellent character. Even his enemies acknowledge this.

(Mark 12:14)"When they came, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know You are truthful and defer to no one, for You don't show partiality but teach truthfully the way of God".

. The NIV says this, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity."

Even at the conclusion of his life here on earth as he stood before Pilate in the mockery of a trial, the ruler said,

Luke 23:4

4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man. "There was no basis for guilt, no evidence of fault, found in Jesus. In other words, his behavior matched his belief, his walk matched his talk, and his character matched his confession.

It is for these reasons that Peter instructed all believers: (1 Peter 2:21) "For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps".

Peter gives us the example, the model of integrity that we should follow. If the world is watching us, then we should be watching Christ. Imitating Christ! We should follow his example. We should do as He does.