

The Fruit Of Goodness

We have lately been examining the teaching on the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5. By digging around on the fruit of goodness, we discover much about the nature of Christ or, better stated, Christ in us.

The fruit-bearing trait of goodness is a two-dimensional attribute comprised of both character and integrity. I was pleasantly surprised to discover the difference between integrity and character. They are not synonymous at all, as some perhaps previously thought.

Character is the instituting or setting up of a high moral standard or a high ethical code of conduct. However, high character alone is a cake half-baked. Integrity is the lifestyle that is consistently fleshed out by supporting that high code.

The antonym or opposite meaning of the word integrity is hypocrisy. The synonymous phrase for a man of integrity is to say he is a man of principles. A man of integrity will truly live what he claims to be even when nobody is around, or his character is on trial. Whenever it would be easily convenient to change philosophies or even direction, based on a unique or uncomfortable situation, or what can be referred to as “situational ethics,” that person will remain steadfastly consistent in his convictions.

A person of integrity will not compromise the historically set high standards of established character because of convenience or pressure. Integrity is living every day by reflecting the standards of high character.

The highest of character loses its luster or glow and consequently means very little if there is an absence of integrity. Integrity is the enforcer of high character. Bearing the fruit of goodness is to become an honorable person of not only high character but one that can be trusted through a lifestyle of strong integrity.

Integrity will always be guided by principles rather than politics. If there is a barren branch, unable to abound in much fruit of goodness, it is most likely due to a lack of integrity. The standards of high character are firmly set, but the daily and consistent administration of those high codes is lacking.

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