



I wonder how many of you here wanted to break bad habits whether it's known by people around you or even bad habits that no one knew but you. Wouldn't it be great to end this year and you'll just see those bad habits on the rear view mirror?

We all want to change for the better. We all do. It's innate in your heart. Why? God made you that way. God created us in His image so we're naturally good. Believe it or not. Here's the deal: If it's true, why is it so hard to change for the better? Why do we want to change so badly and achieve it so hardly?

When it comes to changing for the better, we always experience guilt at the end of the year. There's a voice that says, "I have to do this. I should do this." I believe some of you here are tired of writing down your New Year's Resolution because it's tiresome to write them down and not do it.

God reminded me: He who walks in integrity walks securely.

Proverbs 10:9 - "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out." (NIV)

If we want to really change, we have to go below the waterline. We have to dig deeper. The problem is your heart. The problem is our attitude and our thoughts that shape up our behavior. Below our behavior and thoughts is our belief system.

Integrity is a prerequisite for a lasting change. Choices made after assessing yourself below waterline are done with conviction. Do you know the difference between conviction and intention? Conviction is something that God gave to you so you have to do. It's from the inside.

The journey of having integrity is painful but the alternative is lethal.

THREE REASONS WHY INTEGRITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR LASTING CHANGE:

1. Relationships are Impossible without Integrity

It's impossible to have relationship with yourself without integrity. If you are having relationship without integrity, it's just PSEUDO relationship. But ...God made us for genuine relationship. Jeremiah 29:13 - "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart (NIV)." God wants people who are honest. Psalm 15:1 - "Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain (NIV)?" This means who can have authentic relationship with you. Then the answer is: Psalm 15:2 - "The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart (NIV)." God is looking for someone. It doesn't have anything to do with intellect, background, status, or finances. God's requirement is someone who will be honest with Him. Psalm 145:18 - "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth (NIV)."

2. Peace is Impossible without Integrity

Colossians 3:15 - "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful (NIV)." Peace here does not mean that you don't have problem or sickness. Peace here is beyond our understanding. Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Regardless of your circumstances, you can have this overwhelming peace. The big emptiness in your heart is filled by God. Love and understanding reign in your heart even in times of difficulty.

But when we step out of the fellowship with God, He removes the peace. Have you ever lied to others? And as you lie, suddenly the peace of God is gone. Yes, maybe you're able to get away with it but God's peace is gone and you know it. Then, when you're alone, you are depressed. Anyone here who can relate? But once you confess your sin to people that you lie to and you decided to stop sinning, suddenly the peace of God comes back.

Peace doesn't only vanish because of lying. It also vanishes when we're angry, or we're envious or jealous. When we have these negative feelings, suddenly we quench the Spirit of God in us. Then, we become uneasy. You need to get quiet with God and be honest with Him.

3. Impact is Impossible without Integrity

Proverbs 25:26 - "Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the wicked." (NIV)

When you read Proverbs, you just have to read it again and again and meditate it to understand it. Water is life. Maybe, we're taking it for granted because Philippines doesn't have much problem with water. But if you live in the Middle East, you know that water is life. For your information, God created men with spiritual thirst. And since you already have Christ in your life, you have this spiritual water that people long for. Have you noticed that you're a Christ-like magnet that people want to be with you even if you don't know them that well? You know why? You are the vessel of this LIFE that they need. It's just like you're the water.

But what if the water is polluted? Do you think people want to drink it? I don't think so. The same with us. When people see how you treat your family, when people see how you do business or treat your staff, when people see how you talk about people when they're not around, they'll just think, "This guy is no different from me. I don't like to be with him/her. I heard about Jesus but I don't think He's real because this so-called Christian is no different from me." Sometimes instead of being springs of water, instead of giving life, we just give poison and death.

This is the truth: When we don't live with integrity, there's no impact. If you're not sharing Jesus through your life, if people don't come to Christ even if you're around, maybe you're a polluted water. Check below the waterline maybe there's duplicity in your life.

LIFEGROUPS
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the things in your life you desire to change?
2. What are the hindrances you see in your life that makes this changes hard for you to achieve?
3. What takes away your peace of mind and heart ?
- 4.) Have you been doing everything you said you want to do, if yes , how , if no why?