

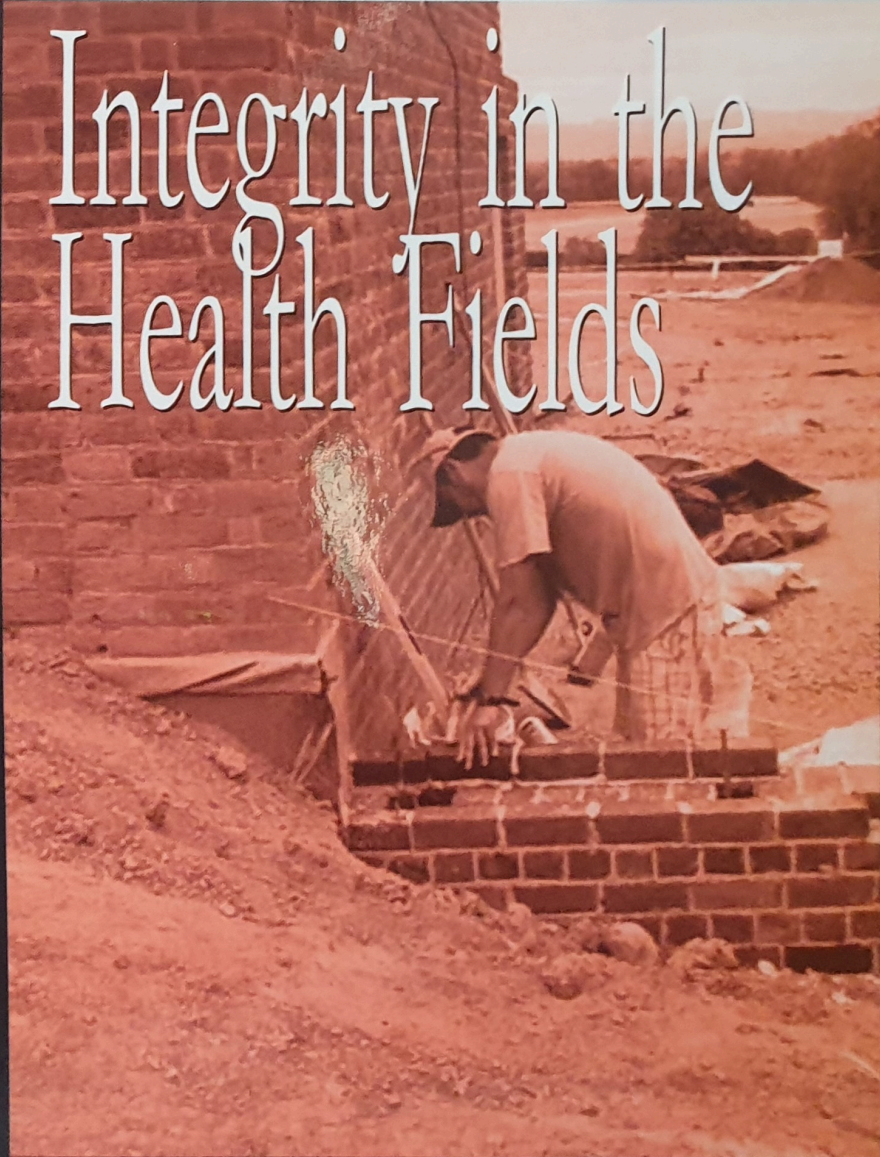


"So did not I because I feared God"
- Nehemiah 5: 15b



5
HEALTHCARE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
INTERNATIONAL (SOUTH ASIA) MONOGRAPHS

Integrity in the Health Fields



Dr. Kumar Fernando

For Healthcare Christian Fellowship International, South Asia

Integrity in the Health fields

Kumar Fernando

Integrity in the Health fields

© 2010 Healthcare Christian Fellowship International—South Asia

First edition 2010

Healthcare Christian Fellowship International—South Asia

7 College Avenue, Mount Lavinia 10370, Sri Lanka



here are Bible heroes whose lives have demonstrated outstanding integrity. Joseph, Daniel and Nehemiah are good examples. Even so, they too, like us, had weaknesses and failings. They lived so long ago but we in the health fields today can learn much from their lives.

At the outset, it is good for us to ponder King David's words in Psalm 86

"Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, that I may honor you. With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever, for your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of death! (Psalm 86:11 – 13 NLT)

Herein lies the meaning of integrity (Integer); the oneness of lip and life.

Charles Swindoll encourages us to perform "self-exploratory surgery of the soul". He says, "While you are fully conscious, fully aware, I invite you to allow the Spirit of God to assist you, handing you the only instrument you need to do soul surgery; the germ free scalpel of Scripture. "

"For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are." (Hebrews 4:12 NLT)

Swindoll continues, "with this reliable instrument in your hand, take a hard, honest look deeper into your inner man and see if you can determine and evaluate the condition of your integrity. For some, it will be your first ever glance, for others not the first,

but long overdue. Whatever, I can assure you that it is a necessary (though rare) procedure”.

John Trent and Rick Hicks write, “For anyone serious about a life of integrity, count on three things:

- It’s going to cost you money
- It often takes a great deal of time and effort.
- It may not make you popular or respected by the world.

In the health fields why do people (ourselves and others) fail repeatedly in the Integrity report card? It boils down to two passions.

- The quest for personal significance** - Promotions, scholarships, enlarging one’s practice, high office, these though not bad by themselves can lead us to failure in the integrity test. Sherman and Hendricks call these “ego-biscuits.” Like a hungry dog jumping and doing tricks to get dog biscuits, people do whatever it takes for their ego-biscuits. So not infrequently integrity is sacrificed.
- Improving one’s lifestyle** – No matter how much we have, we quickly tire of it and want more. Who wouldn’t want a lifestyle of more comfort and convenience? Today, these two passions when fulfilled signify Career Achievement – the idol of our day.

There are Christians who claim to know and worship God but whose real God is their Career. This has a tremendous impact on ethics and integrity. Integrity involves two issues: a study of what is the right thing to do, and consideration of what price you are willing to pay to do the right thing (Sherman and Hen-

dricks). An environment where the god of career achievement reigns provides fertile ground for ethical compromise (Sherman and Hendricks)

“Choose a good reputation over great riches, for being held in high esteem is better than having silver or gold” (Proverbs 22:1 - NLT).

Or again,

“It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and possess much” (Psalm 37:16 - NLT)

It is worth paying any price to preserve our integrity whether it is our job, career, savings, position, status.

WHY IS INTEGRITY SO IMPORTANT?

“But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God — who chose you to be his children — is holy. For he himself has said, “You must be holy because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16 - NLT).

The word we translate as holy comes from a Hebrew term that means – “to set apart”. A related term is sanctified. God is set apart. He is removed from all sin or evil. He is morally flawless. “Now be ye holy” He says. What a calling!

Let us look at the life of Daniel, especially chapter 6. The first sign of integrity in the life of Daniel was his **excellent attitude**. Daniel was one of the three chosen to supervise the 120 princes each of whom ruled one of 120 provinces. He had no jealousy or a competitive spirit but his work was superior to all. It is widely held in the medical world that excelling in work is all that matters. Rudeness, unethical behavior and the like are excused if the medical person is skilful. Outrageous fees are justified because the doctor is highly qualified.

“Praise the name of God forever and ever, for he alone has all wisdom and power.” (Daniel 2:20 - NLT).

That's how Daniel reacted after receiving from God the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Faithful in his work - Daniel's enemies searched for faults in his work and behavior and could not find any. He was faithful, honest and always responsible Dan 6:4. He could be trusted with money and time.

Personal purity – They dug all over for hidden dirt in Daniel's life and came up with zero.

Consistent walk with God - Dan 6:10– He did not turn to God in a panic. He had been consistently praying three times a day. No panic praying when in trouble. Daniel did that which he did everyday and on his knees. When they came to arrest him, he was found praying. Daniel's integrity was built up on:

- I. His excellent attitude
- II. Faithfulness in his work
- III. Personal purity
- IV. A consistent walk with God.

We medical people would do well to apply these principles to our lives. Medicine needs Daniels desperately.

Joseph is another man of integrity. His is a shining example of sexual integrity.

"Now Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man. (Gen 39:6) And about this time, Potiphar's wife began to desire him and invited him to sleep with her. But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do! He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I ever do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God." (Genesis 39:7-9 - NLT).

Joseph got it right. Adultery is a sin against God. This sin is rampant in the health fields. Often it is overlooked or trivialized; specially if the perpetrators are “big shots”. Joseph paid dearly with incarceration because of his integrity. We all know how the story ends but sometimes there may not be a happy end (in this life). Sexual sin has far reaching implications and all of us have seen tragic examples; broken lives in ever widening circles.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRITY?

Sheridan and Hendricks enumerate some:

1. **Self respect** – We don’t have to be looking over our shoulders. In my country we see bribery and corruption taking place shamelessly and in brazen openness. These individuals are rich and powerful but no one respects them except their henchmen and hangers-on. Those who hold firm to their integrity can sleep at night knowing that God smiles upon their character.
2. **A closer walk with God** – A breach in integrity will destroy our intimacy with our Lord and Master (of the believers). That sweet fellowship so treasured by the redeemed is fractured; but standing firm draws us closer to Him. We will experience His presence and approval ever so keenly.
3. **Greater passion for integrity and courage to do right** – When one takes a courageous stand or decision he/she is further strengthened to pursue the same strategy for greater victories and conquests.

4. **Exerting moral leadership in our workplace** – Our society including the health sector is starving for moral leadership. A Christ like character of integrity will work for greater good in our work place. Others will be challenged towards moral excellence. There will be a profound impact on attitudes and behavior of our colleagues.
5. **Effectiveness in Evangelism** - Too many Christians compromise on integrity and sadly others resist the Gospel as a result. It maybe work habits including punctuality and leave taking patterns, anger control, treatment of subordinates, quality of care and fees charged. None of us is perfect, but we can still make the gospel attractive as we show that it makes a practical difference in the way we live and work.
6. **A model for the next generation** – Too many heroes of the young are scandalized by episodes of drug abuse, sexual immorality and financial misdeeds. Yet the most profound and far reaching impact on their values is the behavior they see in those closest to them. Our moral choices make all the difference. The reputation for integrity is one of the most important legacies we can leave for our children.
7. **Encouragement and restoration if we've failed** – All of us have failed and will fail. This is the unfortunate part of being human. But in Christ we find forgiveness and restoration. Furthermore we can develop Christ like compassion and help those who have fallen. We can share what the Lord has done for us and point to our Saviour

People of integrity are godly/holy. It does not depend on how we look. God looks at a person's thoughts and intentions. (1 Samuel 16:7 - NLT). We have to hunger and thirst after God.

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God." (Psalm 42:1-2a)

This comes before our career, reputation and achievements in practice or academics. Then integrity will surely follow as day follows night. Constantly reminding ourselves wherever we are, whatever we are doing that we have been bought with the blood of Jesus, we will follow the path of integrity.

References:

- Charles Swindoll, 'Strengthening your grip'. (Hodder and Stoughton) 1982
- John Trent, Rich Hicks, 'Seeking solid ground' (Focus on the Family Publishing) 1995
- Doug Sherman, William Hendricks, 'Keeping your ethical edge sharp' (Navpress) 1990
- Arul Anketell. Personal communications



Healthcare Christian Fellowship International

South Asia

7 College Avenue

Mount Lavinia

10370

Sri Lanka

Telephone: +94 11 2718503

Email: hcfasia@gmail.com



HCFI
South Asia

5

"We live in an age in which there is a collapse of morality. Moral absolutes have been discarded in favor of relativism. Falsehood, lies and half truths abound. Personal integrity and honesty are no longer being considered as virtues. The health fields in South Asia are no exception. This book is a clarion call for us to come back to God's principles of integrity. It also points out seven good results of integrity. If we respond to this message, we could have a great influence on the Health Fields. The writer, Dr. Kumar Fernando is a well loved Physician in Sri Lanka who lives out these principles daily. He is a Committee member of HCF, Sri Lanka."

**In whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures
of wisdom & knowledge -Colossians 2:3 (NKJV)**

Then the Lord replied:

**Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so
that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an
appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove
false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come
and will not delay. -Habakkuk 2:2,3 (NIV)**