

Gap-Free Living

Ready:

"I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity."
-1 Chronicles 29:17 (NIV)

Set

There is a story from the French Revolution that tells of a man who was seen running after a mob. As he moved quickly into danger, somebody screamed, "Stop! Stop! Don't follow that mob!" He continued to sprint toward them, calling back, "I have to follow them! I'm their leader!"

When I read this story (as told by Bible teacher Warren Weirsbe) I laughed. It's funny how often things don't appear to be the way they actually are. This happens a lot with our spiritual lives. We often live a different way than what we try to convey to others. This, however, goes directly against our calling to live lives of integrity. Our being and doing should line up, but we have holes or gaps in our lives—gaps between our belief and our behavior. We want to be the real deal, but we aren't.

As a lacrosse player, I knew some of my teammates to be big partiers. Despite their lifestyle, I learned that they had nothing to hide. Actually, I came to find out that they lived with more integrity than me! As a Christian who had a "testimony" to protect, I tried to hide my gaps. What they said and did, however, were the same things. No gaps. Just the basic "what you see is what you get" lifestyle. They were partiers, but not hypocrites. It all lined up with them. Unfortunately, we as Christians often will say one thing and do another.

Here is the big question for us: What would our lives look like if our inside became our outside? What would it look like for our private to become our public? Proverbs 11:3 (NIV) states, "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity." And duplicity is just a big word for gaps.

One of FCA's four core values is integrity. Personal integrity is essential when it comes to our faith. It is basically saying that you will demonstrate Christ-like wholeness, privately and publically. Integrity is completeness or soundness—being the same throughout. Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden once said, "A leader's most powerful ally is his or her own example. There is hypocrisy to the phrase, 'Do as I say, not as I do.' I refused to make demands on my boys that I wasn't willing to live out in my own life."

The tension in our lives is the gap between the outside and the inside; the public and the private; the physical vs. the spiritual; what they see and what we know. Living with gaps will not bring life-change; it will bring inner torment. Gaps in our integrity develop hypocrisy. The

two key ingredients of integrity are honesty and truth. And when these become options instead of non-negotiable standards, hypocrisy is born.

God doesn't want there to be any gaps in us. He wants every aspect of our lives to be filled with integrity. But there is a constant war in our souls. We don't want others to see us as we really are because they might see that we are imperfect. But God wants us to bring the dark (the things that we have buried in our hearts) into the light so that He can purify us.

In walking with integrity, we must pray that others will see us as authentic, not better; not perfect, but real. Perhaps, then, their love for us will increase because they will see realness. If we get this down, our lives would really change. Can you imagine if we had no gaps and nothing to hide? How would it change us, our families, our teams, our schools, our communities?

Gap-free living requires guts. We must have spiritual grit and courage to be the real thing. It's tough to make a stand for being authentic in all things. In the classroom, on the athletic field, in the locker room, in the private times, with our buddies on the weekend, on the Internet, with your date. At all times!

It takes just plain old guts to live gap-free. So, ask yourself today, are you up for the challenge? If you are, it could take you to a whole new level of life in Christ.

Go

1. What are your gaps? Why are they there?
2. What does it mean for you to have spiritual courage? Give an example.
3. How can gap-free living be turned into gap-free playing in your sport?
4. What gaps must you expose today? Do you need to find a safe environment in which to tell someone about an area you've been hiding?

Workout

Galatians 1:10

Ephesians 3:19

Philippians 3:10

Overtime

"Father, thank You for Your unconditional love for me and for Your desire for me to have a full life. I want to live gap-free from now on. May Your grace and mercy fill my gaps. Your touch is enough. Let me fall into Your love and experience a fresh touch from You. Forgive me, Lord. I ask for spiritual guts today. Thank You, Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen."



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