

## Wrestling with Integrity

by  
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Thanks very much, President Steve. It's wonderful to be among friends, and Steve has been...excuse me, President Woodhouse has been a very good friend for a long while, although this whole affair has started off very ominously. I pulled in the parking lot and parked in a parking stall that says "President Woodhouse" on it. Now, for a seminar, as it were, that's talking about integrity and honesty, I think I'm an impostor of some kind or another.

Now, there are still a couple of seats up here. As I sat and watched these front seats, the last ones to be filled, it reminded me of fifty-five years ago, when I was a young missionary in England. We used to hold street meetings down in Hyde Park. Anyone here from England? You know Hyde Park, Speakers' Corner, at Marble Arch? The bane of my experience, to the last day. Apparently we did all right, but I remember one of the problems was to get people to come in close, and to get them started. But we had professional hecklers there, and I was sitting here, I recalled Mr. Carr, who came professionally to heckle us. I remember one day he pinned my companion. They always loved to get onto polygamy, and he says, "Elder, how many wives did Brigham Young have?" And one way you handle hecklers is just ignore them. But Mr. Carr wouldn't go away. "How many wives did Brigham Young have?"

Finally, my companion looked down at Mr. Carr and said, "Mr. Carr, I don't know how many wives Brigham Young had, but when I get to heaven, I'll ask

him."

"Oh, Brigham Young didn't go to heaven!"

My companion said, "Well then, you ask him."

Now Laura, if you'll come up here, we need one more bit of information before I get started. Would you come up here by me? Here is a magazine recently started by the Fortune magazine group. About three years ago, they began this Fortune For Small Business - FSB. This was the first edition. It happened to be "The Art of Lying." I would like to ask Laura to just read one sentence, if she would, out of this magazine. Would you please read that sentence so they can all hear?

"Quinn McKay is not a liar."

Now, I know that's not the Bible, but it's the next thing to it. And as we go through our experience today that I'd like to share with you, I want you to keep that in mind. When you get your credibility in such print, you'll want to preserve it also.

I would like to stretch your minds for a few minutes. I think, for we in the LDS Church, the true followers of Christ, we have a continual challenge given us by Christ, to live in the world without becoming part of the world. He didn't tell us to hie away to a monastery of some kind and get out of the world when things got tough. We're to stay close into the world. Now, just to set your expectations, I think that what we're talking about here today is one of the challenges. I was teaching at BYU Education Week a couple of months ago, and I'll give you the same setting of expectations that I did that

group. I don't expect you to go out of here and be honest all the time. I'll say more about that later. But if, after being here, you make one decision this week that makes you more honest than you would have been had you not been here, I would regard this as a great success. I told those at BYU that same thing, and then the last day of my class, I noticed sitting on my desk in front was this envelope, and in it was a Disabled sticker, cut in half. And a note on the back, from a dentist in California. Said he, "Quinn, success is yours. I am one person who took one principle home and made one righteous change in my life." He had been carrying around a Disabled sticker because he found difficulty finding parking places. Now, if I can raise your conscience to that level we'll be all right.

I would like to maybe touch four concepts, if you will, about this subject of integrity. I'm just trying to finish this week, if I can get it done, a second book, "How to Create a House of Integrity." But I think the challenges are great.

The number one concept I'd like to get over to you today is, it's like John Worthly, who is a man who has written a great deal about ethics and integrity. He says, "Most discussions in institutions about integrity is just prattle." Anybody know what prattle is? It's the noises little kids make that don't have any sense to them at all. The longer I work on this subject, the more convinced I think it is true. But, we have in our society those who rise above that problem. These are the words of one of the CEOs of Fortune's Top Fifty Companies. Let me read to you and see if this is not the kind of person you would like to work for. Said he, and his name is Jeff Bible (that alone is worth something): "There is going to be a day of judgment. If there isn't a day up there, it's when you're lying on your deathbed. And you're going to say to yourself, 'Well, what did I achieve in my life?' It's not how much money you've made, or how big a house you've got, or how many cars. It's what did you do for

your fellow men. It's what did I do to make the world better. That's what it's going to come down to."

How many of you would like to work for a Jeff Bible? Good. Are you sure? Do you know what company he's the CEO of? Philip Morris Tobacco Company. What do you think he means by those words? Words come easy. Abigail Adams wrote to John Adams about the same problem: "We've got too many people of high-sounding words and high-sounding principles, and too many people with their behavior not corresponding therewith." And that gives the problem in our society. Thank heavens we don't have that problem here.

Now we need to find out who we're talking with for a few minutes here. I need to assess my audience. How many of you regard yourselves as honest people, by show of hands? How many of you engage in dishonest behavior? The same hands went up. Now, if that isn't a great example of prattle, I don't know what it is. And this is one of the challenges we have.

Just quickly, how many of you here know at least one honest person among all your associates in life? Is one of these honest people an adult? Did they raise a family? At Christmastime, did they do any talk about Santa Claus? Where did they say Santa Claus lived? In the North Pole. How did they say Santa Claus got from the North Pole down here? Reindeer, pulling a sled right down the freeway. No? How did the reindeer travel? Oh, reindeer with wings. Oh, reindeer flying without wings.

Now, I'm not trying to slam Santa Claus. But what I want to know is, what is your definition of truth that allows a person to talk that way, and you still claim they're honest. In fact, what makes an honest person?

Do I have one volunteer who will help me just a minute? Will you please stand where you are. What is your name? (Shaliece) Shaliece, and where are you from? You are as American as they come, by saying that. Now we're going to test here for a moment, Quinn

McKay's honesty. So relax. Shaliece, have you ever lied? (Yes) If I should encounter someone someday, and they ask me, "Do you know Shaliece?" and I say, "Yes," and they say, "What can you tell me about her?" Would I be telling the truth if I said, "Yes, I know Shaliece. She's an admitted liar." Well, that would be telling the truth, but I think most everybody will admit that they have lied sometime in their life. You're trying to cover up? Just one more minute. How about if I say, "Yes, I know Shaliece, she's an admitted liar," how many here say I would be telling the truth?

How many say I would be lying? And how many have not the vaguest idea? President Woodhouse, we have a problem. You mean, you don't know right from wrong? (I think she's sincere.) Oh, I don't have any question about Shaliece. I like what she said. I'm concerned about whether I would be honest if I said, "Yes, I know Shaliece. She's an admitted liar."

You can be honest by not saying anything. Can you also be dishonest by not saying anything? Uh-oh. Thanks Shaliece, you were a very good help. Are you willing to acknowledge that standard?

All right, the first thing that you need to do if you want to be a person of integrity, and get off of the prattle bandwagon, is that you've got to have a working definition of the truth, so that you can measure it. By the way, I believe I would be lying about Shaliece if I said that. Anybody know why? All right, I'm going to give you a definition. I ran across it many years ago. I wish I had never encountered it; it's been too heavy a burden for me to bear, but I'm happy to share it with you. Robert Louis Stevenson — anyone heard of Robert Louis Stevenson? What did Robert Louis Stevenson do? He wrote *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*. He wrote a small essay once about the truth, and in it, he said, "To tell the truth is not just to state the facts, but to convey a true impression." I shall repeat it: "To tell the truth is not just to state the facts, but to convey a

true impression."

What this means is that, anytime Quinn McKay, by whatever device, fails to convey a true impression, he's lying. Anybody know what the scriptures say about liars? They go to hell. Do you know where that's found? Some of you sound a little like one of my mission companions. When he'd quote out of the scriptures, and I'd say, "Elder, that's not in the scriptures." He'd say, "Well, if it isn't, it ought to be." Now look up 2nd Nephi, chapter 9, verse 34. You look up in your Topical Guide, and in it, if you'll look up "Lying," you'll find several other words: "fraud," "false," whatever. I counted nearly 400 references in the scriptures to that kind of behavior, including deceit and all else. So, to tell the truth is not just to "state the facts, but to convey a true impression."

Now, how do you do this? How do you convey a false impression? Did someone say here that you really can lie without saying anything? Let's make a test. There are four most frequent ways that we lie. Number one, we say things that are not so. Nearly everyone concurs and understands that that is lying. Many people think that's the only way you lie. Two: We lie by...now, you marketing people and sales people, I want you to pay close attention to this one...we lie by overstating or exaggerating. Why is that lying? Because it does not convey a true impression. That's why a definition is so important. Why would I be lying about Shaliece? That phrase, 'she's an admitted liar,' conveys the impression that Shaliece is worse with the truth than the typical person is. I would suggest she is probably not. But that line conveys that impression, and hence it is lying because it fails to convey a true impression, even though I stayed pretty close to the facts; I almost used her own words. But that still does not make me a truth teller. So again, saying things that are not so, overstating.

The thing that interests me is the third one— understanding. How often when things go wrong do we step up and say, "Oh, yes, that was my responsibility, oh

yes, that was part of my responsibility and I needed to do it,” but when things go wrong what happens? We nearly always say, “I wasn’t at that meeting. Oh, that’s not my responsibility. Oh, I didn’t hear them say that.” And we understate our role.

Do you know what a great state Utah is? I’m delighted to see this international community here. You’ve come to the greatest state in the United States. It’s now again on the court dockets, that great scandal about the Olympics. Do you realize in the state of Utah, there were only two people that knew anything about that scandal of bribing? Remember, I’m not a liar. How many of us stand back and let the other man hang, when we had responsibility? Even in our own families when we’re kids, when something goes wrong, do we always step up and say, “Yeah, I broke that lamp.” I like the story of the little boy. The mother heard her son and his dog playing in the living room and she heard a crash and she went in, and there was the lamp on the floor, broken. And she said, “Why did you do that?” And he said, “I didn’t do it.” “You did. There’s the broken lamp.” And he says, “I didn’t do that. I didn’t break the lamp.” And she says, “Well, who broke it then?” He says, “The floor did.” Is that conveying a true impression?

It’s amazing how nimble our minds are if we engage in unbelievable practices. I have a neighbor. She and her husband run a business together, a small business. And they’re successful. She told me the other day when we got on a discussion of this subject matter, she said, “I lie, but I’m not a liar.” We are so prone to self-deception, and that’s why we engage in the prattle of preachy platitudes. And it won’t get us out of the analysis we need. All right, the third one then was understating.

The fourth one is, and this is where most of us do most of our lying, by withholding information. And this becomes a challenge for us. Another time, when you’ve got a couple of hours, we’ll go through several examples of how this might be done, and this would be

important for us to know. But we distort, we give a false impression, by just withholding selected information. In fact, if you look very close, most illegal fraud is carried out by withholding information, not saying things that are not so. In fact, the catastrophe in our nation today is not the number of scandals you’re reading every day in the newspaper about business. That’s bad enough. But the disaster is, who is it that’s in trouble? Arthur Anderson, the premier name in auditing firms both professionally and in integrity... what happened to them? They literally have disappeared, almost overnight. What other names? Coca-Cola Company, a premier company, Merrill Lynch, another premier company, Boeing Airplane, another company that’s now in the scandal sheets, Health Care South, just a number of them going on. And how come?

All right, let’s plow into another concept for just a minute, because it pertains to business. I wrote this book that’s out, and I’ll give you a little chance to express yourself. The title of the book is: “Is Lying Sometimes the Right Thing for an Honest Person To Do?” How many say yes? Let’s ask the question again: How many say that lying is sometimes the right thing to do? How many say no, lying is not the right thing to do? You may speak for all of those people out there, the others who held their hands up. (I was listening to Conference, and they said it’s not okay at any time. Just at the recent Conference.) Okay, you say that, but if you’ll answer a couple of questions for me. I don’t want to go against Conference. Would you lie if it would keep your country from a dictatorship? Would you lie if it would save a child’s life? Would you lie if it would keep a company from bankruptcy and preserve 1500 good-paying jobs for the community? Would you lie if it would preclude serious embarrassment for you or your family? Would you lie if it would keep you from being unkind to someone? You don’t have to answer out loud. I just want you to answer it yourself.

Thank you very much. The question that we have

to ask ourselves—this is also going to affect my eternal salvation. Is it worth it? This is going to affect my eternal salvation. You're right. So now, I'm going to give you one more thing to think about. And, as President Woodhouse has said, I'm trying to stretch your thinking capacity. I have a friend who spent his whole life marriage counseling. He said to me one day, "Quinn, you show me two people who are completely honest with each other, and I'll show you two people who don't live together anymore."

Should we try one just quickly? Pam and Hal had not been married very long. Pam was so in love with Hal that she wanted to do something extra special for his upcoming birthday. The two were still students and money was tight. Although she'd had very little experience in sewing, she decided that with time and concentration she would make a shirt for him, and the effort would show him how much she really cared. For six weeks she worked on the shirt secretly so that it would be a total surprise. She completed it just in time for his birthday. Pam prepared a special dinner and had the meal all ready and the table set by the time Hal arrived home from his part-time job. After they ate dinner, Pam went to the bedroom and retrieved a handsomely wrapped box. Returning to the dinner table, she smiled, gave Hal a tender kiss and a hug, and wished him a happy birthday. Hal carefully removed the paper and opened the box while Pam watched with heightened anticipation.

The style of collar and the pattern of the cloth left Hal feeling that he would not want to be seen in public wearing that shirt. He had never worn a color like that, nor would he want to. And when he held it up, he could tell right away that the sleeves were not going to fit. At that moment, Pam leaned forward and with excitement in her voice, asked, "How do you like the shirt, dear? I made it myself."

Hal, what is the next thing you say? Anybody volunteer? What is the next thing you say? (It's my

favorite shirt.) My favorite shirt. Let's ask somebody with experience. (Don't give up your day job.) Don't give up your day job. Where did you get it? Is that a good one? Is that telling the truth? (It will keep me really warm...when I throw it in the fire.) Is that what you're going to tell her? What would you say, sir? (I absolutely love it.) You mean, you'd directly lie out loud. (No, you just choose to love it. You can choose to love anything you want. If it's ugly, you can choose to love it in that moment and say that you love it, and you're telling the truth.) To tell the truth is not just to state the facts, it is to convey a truthful impression. Is this a time to convey a true impression, you young marrieds?

Pam, what would you want Hal to say? (Thank you, I appreciate the effort, but...) All right. Here is one problem with being a person of integrity. The difficulty we often have in life, and what gives us grief in trying to be people of integrity and honesty, is that often in life, two principles come in conflict with each other in such a way that you cannot abide both. I believe this is an example of that. If you choose to be honest, you are bound to be unkind. If you choose to be kind, you're not going to be honest. There is no way you can abide both those principles.

Many people will say, "Oh, that's a gray area." A person of integrity never uses that phrase, "It's a gray area" because all [it means] is that you nod your head and go on doing what you did. Recognizing that these are principles in conflict is a first step to integrity. And you do it in four ways. One is you recognize the concept that [conflicts in] principles do happen. I think it's part of the Lord's plan. He did this with Adam and Eve right in the Garden of Eden, and it forces us to wrestle with things. That's how you build muscle, mental and physical and spiritual muscle, is by wrestling with things. So I'm not against the wrestle. Number two, make yourself conscious of what the two principles are that are in conflict. Number three, determine a hierarchy of those

principles. And number four, you should choose the higher principle. And that's important to do. And then you live with the results.

So, acknowledge the concept, identify the two principles that are in conflict, make sure you have a hierarchy in place. If I lived in India and the only way I could feed my family was to steal, would I steal? Because stealing is okay? Not because stealing is okay, but [because] I regard caring for my family as a higher principle. Would I kill someone else to get food for my family? Some people's hierarchy of principle would allow it. My hierarchy does not allow it. I am afraid my children would have to go hungry rather than doing that. You establish your hierarchy. Think through these things. Don't just do what pressure dictates that you want to do. So there's a concept. Principles in conflict. Recognize it. Don't just pass it by. Wrestle with it. Enjoy the wrestle, if you would. I believe this is how you build mental muscle, and it's how you build spiritual muscle, too.

Now, I know it's easy to say, "Well, I'll go to the Lord and ask." And that's all right. I think we ought to pray about things. But sometimes when we go to the Lord and ask, I kind of feel Him up there saying, "Quinn, I gave you a mind. Why don't you use it?" I believe we have some responsibility to make our own choices. Oh yes, the Lord will help, but He expects us to use our own resources first, and then we will do the others.

All right. May I introduce one other concept just quickly that faces us in the business world. One of the problems we have is that we live in a world where all of us have two different sets of ethics. Everybody agree that you have two sets of ethics? What are they? Right and wrong? No, these are two sets of ethics that are both very right. (Well, a good example, you can't steal from a Mormon, but you can steal from a Gentile.) Oh, one set for the Mormons and one set for the Gentiles. No, that's not what I'm thinking of. Let me see if we can just tack one down. The first one we'll call personal ethics. In

personal ethics, let's look at just four elements of personal ethics and see if we can clarify the concept. How many, in your personal ethics, would say that it is wrong to deliberately mislead another person? Oh, we're getting someplace. So, to mislead is wrong. How many say that it is wrong to deliberately deceive another fellow man? President, we're getting someplace. How about scouting out another person's weakness and taking advantage of it for your personal gain. How many say that is wrong? Oh, even better. Taking advantage. Finally, how about stealing? How many say stealing is wrong?

How come you engage in all of these without any compunction at all? Where? Is there anyone here who ever played a game of tennis? Oh, good. Is it all right for me to lead the opposition, my opponent, to believe I'm going to return the ball crosscourt, when all along I'm going to zip it down the alley? Is that okay? I thought you voted against it. I thought you said misleading people was wrong. You didn't vote? Oh, what a relief. Anybody here ever play a game of football? Is it all right for the quarterback to pretend to pass the ball off to the halfback when all along he's going to keep it and throw a pass? Is that okay? I thought you said that deliberately deceiving people was wrong. I wish you'd make up your minds. You're full of schizophrenia.

Where's my tennis star? Is it all right when I discover that my opponent has a weak backhand, is it okay to drill as many... I thought you said taking advantage of people's weaknesses was wrong. (But this is just a game.) Oh, it's just a game. Okay. I told you I would talk you out of feeling comfortable. Stealing? Anybody been to the Delta Center? There's a big banner up on that north balcony. Do you know what it says? John Stockton has stolen more balls than anybody in NBA history, and he is our hero. Is stealing okay or ain't it? Boy, now what do I do?

All right, you're correct. This is what we call gaming ethics. And, in gaming ethics, we know it's

applicable to sports. Where else in life are gaming ethics appropriate? How about war? Is it all right to mislead, deceive, steal, take advantage? How about in politics? Is it all right for me, when I'm campaigning, to point out all my opponent's weaknesses and never mention one strength? (No, that's a dirty campaign, and that just ruins everything.) How do you win without doing it? Is it all right for me, when I'm campaigning, to point out all my strengths and never mention one weakness? Is that telling the truth? That's distorting my image. All right, politics.

How about in courtship? Is gaming ethics okay in courtship? It's not okay? Is it all right for someone to put on their best behavior when they go out and dress up their best, and keep their evil temper hidden away? I did this once and one guy stood up and said, "I just got married three months ago. If I hadn't done that, I'd never be married today."

How about in business. Is business a competitive game? For if it is, I would suggest that gaming ethics are appropriate. What should we teach at the LDS Business College? Gaming ethics or personal ethics? Both? How many believe that in business, gaming ethics is appropriate? How many say no, gaming ethics is not appropriate? And how many have not the vaguest idea?

Just quickly, how often do you go to the store and find anything priced for one dollar, or twenty dollars? Never? Oh, you find ninety-nine cents and nineteen ninety-nine? Why do we do that in business? Is that because nines are easier to deal with than zeroes? Why do we do that? (Because it looks like less than twenty dollars.) This is deliberate deception? I'm going to leave you to go to your marketing classes in this school and discuss this.

Now, I think that if we're going to be people of integrity, I think if everybody will agree that in

business we play by gaming ethics, and we let our customers and others know it, we should have no more guilty conscience than a football quarterback has. The problem is when we don't let our customers know that's the rules we're playing by. So I'm not asking you to change the whole business world, but I'm asking you in your classes to do some deliberation, because this is what hangs us up. If everybody else in the business world is playing by gaming ethics and you're playing by personal ethics, what's going to happen? (You're going to lose) So how do you live in this world without becoming part of the world? Will you take this to your class and do some stretching about it?

My wife has followed me rather closely and she picked up this t-shirt which I thought was rather interesting. "I'm not forty, I'm only thirty-nine ninety-five." We have just a couple of minutes. I'm going to pause right here. By the way, worry about these two standards. Wrestle with them if you would please. Take them home and discuss them. Talk about Pam and Hal and their shirt. They occur every day.

By the way, very often in business and elsewhere, principles that come in conflict are honesty and loyalty. I feel neurotic about what I am about to tell you. Do you know the difference between a psychotic and a neurotic? A psychotic is one who believes two and two are five. A neurotic is one who knows that two and two are four, but hates the idea. What I'm about to tell you is, I'm neurotic. But I believe it is true, in any authoritarian organization, when loyalty and honesty come in conflict with each other, loyalty will nearly always pay you more dividends than honesty will. I am bothered by that, but I am convinced it's true. People in authority do not like to be challenged. They do not

like disloyalty. In fact, it's very hard to run an organization without loyalty.

Well, I appreciate your willingness to take part in this discussion. Thank you, I didn't mean anything personal by it. Shaliece, thank you for helping. But I would like to challenge you. I was always taught that the truth is bright and shining and it sounds beautiful, and lying is dark and dirty and dank, and you'll recognize them both, Quinn, and always choose the bright. I found out that's not so. Truth is a fragile, delicate, subtle thing that can be destroyed by the inflection of a voice, the pause in a sentence. And in our world of competition, with flailing elbows and knees, truth has a devil of a time holding its own, unless someone puts as much effort into preserving integrity as they do into making a profit. And it takes that much. Reciting preachy platitudes does not make a house of integrity.

You have been glorious to visit with. I appreciate your participation. I do know it's easier to talk about it than it is to do it. I've done the talking. Now, if you'll do the doing, we will be a great team. May you get in the spirit of wrestling to make your mind stronger. Use these concepts and enjoy the wrestle. Don't try to hide away from it. I am certain God would have us of more noble integrity than we are sometimes. I bear my witness that though you cannot always be honest, the effort you put forth will bring you closer to the kingdom of God for which we all strive, which witness I bear in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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