

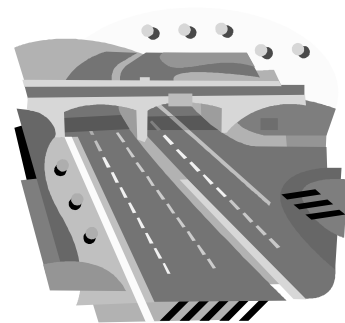
## INTEGRITY

During a marriage seminar that I attended several years ago, a question raised to an audience of men was: what is the root word of integrity? After a moment, someone replied “grit” - possibly because having grit, or unyielding courage, has some association to integrity.

To have integrity is to imply honesty or to have a strong allegiance or adherence to moral or ethical standards. Politicians will often claim to espouse such attributes in order to give the impression or perception that they are honest and can be trusted as representatives of the region or citizens. Inanimate things such as metal can be described having integrity relative to the fabrication, content, and overall quality to specification. In both applications, integrity pertains to compliance and adherence to certain expressed or implicit standards and a consequential level of trust.



The root word of integrity is actually integer; which, in math, means a whole number or a complete number. Similarly, integrity means to be complete, whole, or altogether. When something has integrity, the indication is that it is *everything you think or understand that it should be*. If a bridge collapses because a girder fractured, the cause of the failure might be described as a loss of metal integrity. Twice in as many years, Birmingham has had two overpasses or bridges collapse because of an accident leading to fire and heat under the bridge. In both accidents, fire and heat broke-down the integrity of the metal.



Sometime in the early 90's, a great ministry emerged in America called “Promise Keepers”. This ministry became a great opportunity for men and young men of different churches, races, and regions to come together and worship and praise God. In addition, the ministry provided programs, study material, and other resources to encourage *men of integrity* or men who can be trusted by their wives, children, churches, and employers

A most meaningful and memorable opportunity was to participate and worship with these men of integrity; once at the Alltel stadium in Jacksonville and the other in Atlanta. “Stand in the Gap”, “As Iron Sharpens Iron” and other scripture-based slogans set the theme for these national events. I want to be like iron that spans the gap with Integrity though surrounded by heat and fire.

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