

Fast Fact

A GLANCE AT TRENDS IN OUR SOCIETY

Integrity: Checking Our Moral Compass

When social observers check America's moral compass, the issue of personal integrity often emerges. Several years ago, researchers James Patterson and Peter Kim reported astounding discoveries in *The Day America Told the Truth* (Prentice Hall, 1991).

Their assessment that "everyone makes up their own moral codes" may be even more true as the nineties conclude. They list "real commandments, the rules that many people actually live by" (noting the percentage of people who live by each commandment):

- I don't see the point in observing the Sabbath** 77%
- I will steal from those who won't really miss it** 74%
- I will lie when it suits me, so long as it doesn't cause any real damage** 64%
- I will drink and drive if I feel that I can handle it. I know my limit** 56%
- I will cheat on my spouse—after all, given the chance, he or she will do the same** 53%
- I will procrastinate at work and do absolutely nothing about one full day in every five. It's standard operating procedure** 50%
- I will use recreational drugs** 41%
- I will cheat on my taxes—to a point** 30%

The following page gives an idea to help you live by God's commandments.



NavTools

HELPING YOU RESPOND BIBLICALLY TO TRENDS IN SOCIETY

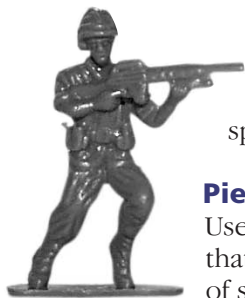
One Choice at a Time

“When we dig an ethical grave, it is not with a ditch digger but with a teaspoon, one small choice at a time—a few words plagiarized, minor cheating on taxes, taking home supplies from the company, flirtations with a coworker, white lies, or even creating a false impression to impress a neighbor.”

—Jerry White, international president of *The Navigators*,
quoted in *Discipleship Journal* #104, p. 34

Godly men and women choose honesty in their words and dealings, morality in their thoughts and actions, consistency in their beliefs and behaviors. But to live with integrity we need God’s strength...and perhaps a few reminders.

The book of Proverbs suggests visual images that can reinforce righteous choices. Pick one or two of these “images” and carry them with you or put them in a conspicuous place in your home or office as reminders of your commitment to integrity:



Toy soldier

Let a plastic figure from your child’s toy box remind you to “guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Piece of coal

Use a charcoal briquette from your grill to remind you that you can be burned by playing with the “hot coals” of sexual immorality (Proverbs 6:27-28).

Can of Orange Crush® soda

When you look at the can of Orange Crush®, remember that “a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit” (Proverbs 15:4).

Hershey Kiss®

Let a foil-wrapped candy kiss remind you that “an honest answer is like a kiss on the lips” (Proverbs 24:26).