

The 3rd Sunday after Epiphany ~ Sunday, January 24, 2016

“Winning The Game of Life ~ Playing by the Rules”

James 1:19-27

Rules outline the _____ of the game; they describe the object of the game, how to set up the board, and get started; they tell you what you can and can't do, what you have to do in order to _____, and give hints about _____. In the case of sports, rules help to keep people _____ and enjoy the game.

Sometimes we can be _____ and go a little overboard with the rules.

However, far more often, we seek to find ways _____ the rules.

Games always test our _____.

integrity = the Latin integer =

Integrity means our lives aren't _____; that we're _____; that we're walking the walk and not just talking the talk.

INTEGRITY IS NOT...

- **Integrity is not the same as _____ the rules.**

“You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said: ‘This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me...’ (Matthew 15:7-9)

hupokrites = hypocrite =

The problem isn't that we don't _____ the rules, it's that we don't _____ what we know.

- **Integrity is not the same as _____.**

“For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (Mark 7:21-23)

The heart of the problem is the _____ heart. Integrity involves so much more than just trying to avoid _____ the rules.

It's not using lots of willpower to override my desires, but becoming the kind of person who _____ to do what is right.

- **Integrity is not the same as _____.**

“If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8 P)

Humans have an almost limitless capacity for _____.

- Self-_____ bias

We make ourselves the _____ of our stories to exaggerate our role in victories and to absolve ourselves of _____ for failure and error.

- Fundamental _____ error

We tend to explain our bad behaviour in terms of mitigating _____; we tend to explain other people's bad behaviour in terms of their character _____.

WHAT THE JOURNEY TO INTEGRITY REQUIRES

- The cultivation of _____: I must want to be _____ more than I want to do _____.

- A _____: I will choose to play with integrity and _____ rather than cheat and _____.

- A _____: I cannot succeed in what I _____ and fail in who _____.

Playing by the rules—playing the game with honesty and integrity is important because they bring us to the deeper issue of _____.

Am I the kind of person other people can trust?

What's more important: winning or being a person of integrity?

In the real game of life, Am I someone who plays by the rules?

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching and rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

theo-pneustos =

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

The the ultimate goal of reading, studying, and meditating on Scripture is _____—following what it says and living it out in our daily lives.

“Be doers of the word, not hearers only who deceive themselves.” (James 1:22)

Playing by the rules means not just hearing God’s Word, but _____
it—it’s walking the walk and not just talking the talk!

PLAYING BY THE RULES: INTEGRATING GOD’S WORD INTO OUR DAILY LIVES

#1. Playing by the rules means _____ our lives on it.

4 FOUNDATIONS OFFERED BY THE WORLD

- _____ - “**If everyone else is doing it, it must be right.**”
“Don’t follow the crowd in doing wrong...” (Exodus 23:2)
- _____ - “**That’s the way I’ve always done it.**”
“You abandon the commandments of God to follow human traditions.” (Mark 7:8)
- _____ - “**If it makes sense logically, it must be right.**”
“Sometimes there is a way that seems to be right, but in the end it is the way to death.” (Proverbs 15:25)
- _____ - “**If it feels right, do it.**”
“At that time there was no king in Israel and people did whatever they felt like doing.” (Judges 21:25)

Building on a solid foundation or shifting sands (Matthew 7:24-27)

“Lord, I might not always understand your word; I might not always agree with it or like it; but I’m going to build my life on it because I know it’s the truth.”

#2. Playing by the rules means _____ on it.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)

FEEDING ON GOD’S WORD

- _____ **with our ears.**
“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)
- _____ **with our eyes.**
“I will study your commandments, and fix my eyes on your ways.” (Psalm 119:15)
- _____ **with our hands.**
“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding even to the simple.” (Psalm 119:130)
- _____ **with our mind.**
“The person who continues to study God’s perfect teachings that make people free

and who remains committed to them will be blessed.” (James 1:25)

- _____ **with our heart.**
“I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” (Ps 119:11)
“Lord, help me to feed on your Word everyday, that it might strengthen and sustain me.”

#3. Playing by the rules means _____ by it.

“Blessed is the one who doesn’t walk in the counsel of the ungodly, but who meditate on the word of God.” (Psalm 1:1)

“Don’t be nitpickers, but use your head and heart to discern what is right, to test what is authentically true.” (John 7:24)

“Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” (Phil 1:27)

“Lord, help me to pattern my life after yours, and to measure myself by your standard and not the world’s.”

#4. Playing by the rules means _____ through it.

THE 4 KINDS OF SOIL (Luke 8:4-15)

- The hardened soil represents a _____ heart.
Action:
- The shallow soil represents a _____ heart.
Action:
- The soil with weeds represents a _____ heart.
Action:
- The good soil represents a _____ heart.
Action:

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down deep in him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught...” (Colossians 2:6)

“Lord, prepare my heart and mind to receive your Word; clear away anything within me that keeps it from taking root and bearing fruit.”

“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31)