VALUE FOR THE WEEK: “INTEGRITY”

ACTIVITY: “IMAGE IS EVERYTHING”

PROVERBS 11:3 “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity”.

Image Is Everything! WisdomWalks Principle #16
Make your reputation match your reality.

I admit it. I fell right in the advertisers’ trap…once (okay, more than once).. When I graduated from college and got a decent job, I bought my first car—a bright red sports car—within thirty days. I originally chose a black one, but when I went in to pick it up, I decided to go with the red one. You see, I wanted to project a certain image. At the time, I had the appearance of success. Interestingly, simultaneously I got involved in the church and other ministries as a volunteer and became known as a person of solid faith and character. But I discovered later that I was full of pride. I was selfish. Just about everything I did centered on creating the appearance that I had it all together. I was even driven to succeed to keep the image intact. But I lacked genuine peace and joy. I was easily angered, frustrated, and defensive, but few people saw that part of me. Yet I certainly was not reflecting the image of God.

WisdomWalking You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside [you] are full of greed and self-indulgence…. First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean…. You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside is full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Matthew 23:25–28

When I read these verses, they hit me between the eyes. When the inside does not match the outside, Jesus calls that hypocrisy. And that’s what I was—a hypocrite. Just like the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day, who had the appearance of righteousness but inside were corrupt. They would make a huge show about cleaning the outside of the cup and dish so they wouldn’t be tainted by anyone else’s germs or unworthiness, but if you got up close and got to know them, you’d never want to drink out of or eat off those dishes! The Pharisees’ hearts were selfish. They were driven by power and position, and they enjoyed feeling like they were better than everybody else. They created a great public image, but they did not reflect the image of God. We’re all concerned with image, to one degree or another, aren’t we? We want to appear better than we really are, and we’re careful to let people only see our best. Yet while we protect our reputation, Jesus sees our reality. What He cares about is the condition of your heart. Do you love Him? Do you love others? Are your motives pure? Are you driven to project and protect your image, or are you passionate about reflecting and revealing that He really is? Everything Jesus did on earth reflected the image of His Father. Everything you do—both outside and inside—should reflect Jesus. To Him, image is everything—because He wants to change you on the inside into the likeness of God.

WORKOUT:

★ What kind of an image do you project to others? Be specific.

What things do you say and do to create that image? Why is projecting that image important to you?

In what way(s) does this image reflect who you are on the inside—or not reflect who you are on the inside?