

THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF

For a disciple of Christ, honesty is at the very heart of spirituality.



By Elder Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I hope to elevate your mind and spirit with a principle that you all believe in. I promise you, however, that if you will think about it more intently, pray about it more specifically, and embrace it more fully, it will bring an abundance of blessings to you now and throughout your life. My subject is honesty.

Why would I speak to *you* about honesty? Were we to compare you to others, you would undoubtedly rank very high. However, the standard for honesty is not determined through comparison with others. Ours is a divine standard. I speak to you as fellow disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, committed to His restored gospel and striving to keep His commandments.

AN ETERNAL PRINCIPLE

God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are beings of absolute, perfect, and complete honesty and truth. We are sons and daughters of God. Our destiny is to become like Him. We seek to be perfectly honest and true like our Father and His Son. Honesty describes the character of God, and therefore honesty is at the very heart of our spiritual growth and spiritual gifts.



HONESTY



Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

The Lord asked the brother of Jared, “Believest thou the words which I shall speak?”

The brother of Jared answered, “Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie” (Ether 3:11–12).

And here are the Savior’s own words: “I am the Spirit of truth” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:26). “I tell you the truth” (John 16:7).

The Savior constantly rebuked those who professed one thing publicly but lived differently in their hearts. He praised those who lived without deception. Can you see the contrasting difference? On the one hand there is truth and light and honesty and integrity. On the other hand there is lying, deceiving, hypocrisy, and darkness. The Lord draws a sharp distinction.

Light, spiritual answers, and heavenly direction are unalterably linked to your

own honesty and truth. Many of your lasting satisfactions at school and work will come as you continually elevate your commitment to personal honesty.

For example, Roy D. Atkin noticed a number of his classmates drop out after the first year of dental school as the classes became more competitive.

He said, “Some students decided that the way to succeed was by cheating. . . .

“ . . . But I knew I couldn’t cheat. I wanted to be right with God even more than I wanted to become a dentist.”

During his third year, Roy was offered a copy of an upcoming test. He had the chance to have the test questions ahead of time, but he declined. When the corrected tests were returned, his score was low compared to the high class average.

“Roy,” his professor said, “you usually do well on tests. What happened?”

“Sir,” he said, “on the next exam, if you give a test that you have never given before, I believe you will find that I do very well.”

When the next test was handed out, there were audible groans. It was a test the teacher had never given before. When the graded tests were handed back, Roy had received one of the highest grades in the class. From then on, all the tests were new.¹

Honesty, integrity, and truth are eternal principles that significantly shape our experience in mortality and help determine our eternal destiny. For a disciple of Christ, honesty is at the very heart of spirituality.

KEEP YOUR WORD

There are times we honor commitments simply because we have agreed to honor them. You will have situations in your life when you will be tempted to disregard an agreement you have made. You will initially make the agreement because of something you wish to receive in return. Later, because of a change in circumstances, you will no longer want to honor the terms of the agreement. Learn now that when you give your word, when you make a promise, when you sign your name, your personal honesty and integrity bind you to your word, your commitment, your agreement.

How grateful we are that you “believe in being honest” (Articles of Faith 1:13), that you tell the truth, that you would not cheat on an exam, plagiarize a paper, or deceive one another. Listen to this scripture:

“And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come;

“And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:24–25).

THERE IS ENORMOUS SPIRITUAL POWER IN REMAINING TRUE AND HONEST WHEN THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR HONESTY COULD APPEAR TO BE A DISADVANTAGE.



A SPIRITUAL POWER

How do you think the Lord feels when we make difficult decisions of honesty? My young brothers and sisters, there is enormous spiritual power in remaining true and honest when the consequences of your honesty could appear to be a disadvantage. Each of you will face such decisions. These defining moments will test your integrity. As you choose honesty and truth—whether or not the situation works out the way you hope—you will realize that these important crossroads become fundamental pillars of strength in your spiritual growth.

Be honest when the consequences appear to move against you. Pray for greater honesty, think about the areas in which the Lord would want you to be

more honest, and have the courage to take the needed steps to lift your spirit to a higher level of resolve in being completely honest.

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) admonished, “May we be examples of honesty and integrity wherever we go and in whatever we do.”² You might consider putting this counsel by a prophet of God where you can see it often.

CHOOSE TO LIVE HONESTLY

I end where I began. Our Heavenly Father and His Son are beings of absolute, perfect, and complete honesty. I testify that our Father in Heaven and His beloved Son live. They know you personally. They love you. Your destiny as a son or a daughter of God is to become like Them. We are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us have the courage to follow Him.

As you humbly ponder and pray about your own desire to be honest and quietly make decisions that lift your personal integrity, I promise that you will have greater clarity come into your life. You will feel the grace of the Savior as He leads you along to ever greater honesty, assuring you of His love and approval. As you are honest, you will know that He is aware of you. He will bless you as you seek to be like Him. **NE**

From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on September 13, 2011, speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Roy D. Atkin, “I Wouldn’t Cheat,” *New Era*, Oct. 2006, 22–23.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “At Parting,” Apr. 2011 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 114).