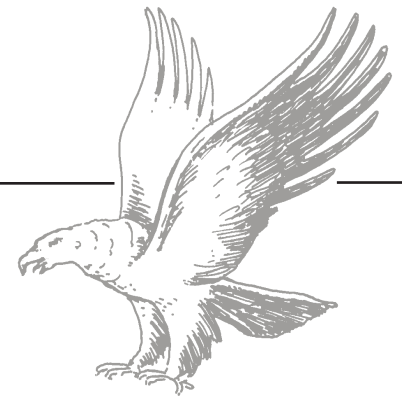


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



January 31, 2016

Truth and Trust

Everyone knows that trust is essential in human relationships. But trust cannot flourish in an culture where truth is denigrated as obsolete. Truth and trust stand or fall together.

“They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me,” says the Lord. ‘Everyone take heed to his neighbor, and do not trust any brother; . . . Everyone will deceive his neighbor, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies’” (Jer. 9:3-4).



Jeremiah’s commentary on social conditions in his day highlights an important connection that is often overlooked: When people “are not valiant for the truth,” they quickly arrive at a point where they “do not trust any brother.”

Trust is the foundation of a civil society. We enlist the cooperation of others with the simple plea, “trust me.” Businesses promote themselves as “the name you can trust”—then must treat their customers in a way that will earn that trust. Implied in all this “trust” talk are the concepts of fairness, honesty, integrity, and transparency in our words and deeds.

Trust is indispensable in personal relationships. A spouse trusts that his/her

partner will be faithful in all circumstances, particularly involving members of the opposite sex. Children trust their parents to protect and provide for them. Friends trust each other with private information that could be damaging if revealed to a wider audience. Trust is the willingness to expose ourselves to others, with the expectation that we will not be taken advantage of.

Trust is important, definitely. But what we often miss is the role of *truth* in establishing trust. Truth is that which is real or factual. Trust, in other words, requires that both parties operate on the basis of a common understanding of what is real or factual; the claims, statements, and promises exchanged between the two parties are all true, valid, correct. As long as everyone is speaking the truth to each other, trust can flourish.

Trust is broken when someone deals falsely with the facts. “I will never lie to you” is a promise based on a truth claim: I will speak the truth. But if we catch the promiser in a bald-faced lie, we learn that his words are *not* true, and trust has been shattered. It’s not just that one

transaction has been derailed; the entire basis of the relationship has been damaged. If I can’t trust what this individual says in this matter, what else can I not trust him on? What else might he lie about? *Trust* has been destroyed because *truth* has been trampled.

Historians will argue that societies collapse because of the loss of trust among their citizens. But it goes deeper than that. Societies collapse when truth is abandoned as the foundation of character. How can trust be maintained when people operate on the presumption that all truth is relative? We might agree that “you have your truth and I have my truth,” but at some point one or both versions of this phony reality will collide with the *real* reality. This foolish post-modern concept of truth renders trust impossible.

If we are to salvage our culture, we must do our part to rebuild trust among our fellow citizens. We do that by being “valiant for the truth” in our own lives. In everything we say and do, truth must be the foundation of our character, even when it is not easy or comfortable.

– David King