

# *Being Honest In A Dishonest World*

by Tom Wacaster

In a world of "dog eat dog, take care of number one," honesty and integrity are rare. I recently came across the following statistics: "In a recent year, according to the FBI crime report, 13,200,080 crimes were reported in the United States [did you get that number, TW]. Ninety percent of these involved property and included such crimes as burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson. The National Coalition to Prevent Shoplifting says this crime now amounts to \$24 billion annually. Employee thefts amount to another \$22 billion. Tax cheating, according to the IRS, is big business in our nation. Auditing of nearly 2 million returns in a recent year showed derelict tax payers owed \$10.5 billion. For a dozen years we have had 1 million divorces annually. Infidelity, marital dishonesty, has been given as the number one reason for marital breakups in our family troubled land." Those are frightening statistics! On every hand we are faced with those who are dishonest. It has become a way of life. But God's call is to maintain honesty and integrity. "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without" (1 Thess. 4:12). "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor 8:21).

Having survived another political campaign season, it is refreshing not to have to endure the seeming endless array of political campaign ads either accusing or excusing the political candidates of dishonesty, lying, fraud, et al. One interesting quote I came across this last year had to do with a prominent politically active couple. A renowned newspaper columnist observed: "We know that the Clintons are liars. But what scares me is that they do it so well." If the truth were known, it is not just politicians and used car dealers whose "reputation" precedes them; according to the above statistical information dishonesty has infected our populace from the head to the foot. And now that the next President, Vice President, Congress and House of Representatives are in place and soon to be inaugurated or initiated into office, we hold our breath in anticipation of what "scandal" will rock Washington next. It has almost become a way of life, and a sad one at that.

Major William Dean died in 1985. He was a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor and was considered one of American's greatest heroes. He fought in the Korean war and was captured and tortured. Dean resisted all efforts by the communists to extract military information from him. In order to maintain his sanity he would resort to mind games, or reciting passages from the Bible. One day the general was informed by his captors that he was to be taken out and shot. A firing squad was standing in readiness. The condemned was granted a few moments in which to write a letter to his wife. He penned what he thought would be his last words. In addition to the words of love and devotion to his wife, he wrote a sentence for his son. "Tell Bill the word is 'integrity.'" There are two passages that I want to leave with you. "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool" (Proverbs 19:1). "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart" (Psalms 15:1-2).