

It seems like such a simple thing. It seems like it would be very little trouble at all. It seems like everyone says they would like to do it. Then, my question is why does it seem like few people are actually doing it today? Let me explain.

In the past 6 weeks, my wife and I have had three projects that needed to be done around the house. Two of them were major projects because of a water leak in our bathroom and the other was a project involving the installation of a satellite dish and setting it up properly.

First, I dropped by a local electronics store, talked with the manager personally, made the arrangements for installation of a satellite dish, paid for the work in advance and went home to tell my wife, "I have it all under control. The installers are coming in two days, they will have the project completed in just one day, and we will be enjoying the programming in just three days." Well, to make a long story short, they did come to our house in five days and did about three fourths of the work. They said they would be back the next day to finish the job. That was three weeks ago, and we haven't seen them since. Even after several phone calls to them, they still haven't made it back.

Next, I contacted a man who was "the best in town" when it came to installing ceramic tile. He actually did come to our house to give us an estimate, which we liked and hired him to do the job. "The one thing that set him apart from others in town," he said, "was when he said he was going to be somewhere, he was there. We could depend on him." He told us he was going to begin the job in three days. Sound familiar? (Perhaps he and the electronics man went to the same trade school.) About three weeks later, after leaving several phone messages for him, the last of which said we were going to have to hire someone else to do the job, he contacted us again. He would begin the job the next afternoon, and it would take about a week to complete.

The short story is, he did come the next day to begin the job. But the job, which was to take a week to complete, has now taken three weeks and, of course, we haven't seen him in the last week. (It's a good thing we have two bathrooms in our house or the neighbors would be tired of us knocking on their doors at 3:00 in the morning to use their rest room.) My wife's latest phone conversation with him rewarded her with the promise; "We'll be back as soon as we can make it." Well, at least we have no expectations at this point.

Finally, I made a third call to a man who makes his living as a handyman. He seemed a little pricey but I almost felt honored just to get someone to agree to come over and do some work for us. He said he was a bit busy at

the moment but he would get back to me in a couple of days and to be assured I was on his list and he would be there at the very latest, within a week.

Well, 10 days later after he hadn't shown up or called, I phoned him again, this time leaving a message with his wife and was assured again that he would be over very soon. Another week went by, still no handyman. I placed several more calls over the next two weeks just trying to find out if he was even thinking about doing the job. He never returned my calls, came by or even stopped to say "boo." It was finally apparent to me that he had no intention of doing the job when I saw him driving in the parking lot of a local builders supply store. (I was there because I had finally decided to do this last job myself. I did want to have the job completed before I died of old age.) As he drove up I waved to him, he returned my greeting, and then - get ready - he turned around and drove right out of the parking lot. Hello! I guess that was a clear message!

So, I did the job myself. Of course it took me three days to do what would have taken him one day to do, but at least the job is finished, at least almost. When I do carpentry work, it seems there is always just one more piece of trim to buy, or one more board to stain. At least my wife is pleased that some progress has been made.

It does seem like such a simple thing. It does seem like it would be very little trouble at all. It does seem like everyone says they would like to do it. What is it? Honesty, integrity, and keeping one's word.

No doubt everyone gets behind schedule. No doubt there are circumstances that keep all of us from doing exactly what we said we would do at the exact time we said we would do it. But, it also seems to me that there is an integrity issue involved in all of this. What has happened to common courtesy? What about making a phone call saying, "I'm sorry, I'm having trouble keeping on schedule and I'll need to reschedule our appointment?" We might cause someone a little disappointment, but at least they would know we are people of integrity. At least they could get about their other business without tying up hours and hours sitting around hoping someone was going to show up when they promised they would.

Two thousand years ago a man lived who set standards for His followers. His standards were honesty, integrity, and keeping ones word; just to name a few. And the problem with these standards was and is, He actually expects people to live up to these standards. Even the Apostle Paul referred to these standards when he wrote, "Provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." (II Cor. 8:21)

If we as Christians are going to make a difference in the world, it seems to this writer that one of the basic requirements is keeping our word; at home, at church, at school, and yes - even on the job.

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