

in-teg-ri-ty (in te g' r te) *n.*

1. completeness; wholeness
2. unimpaired condition; soundness
3. honesty, sincerity, etc.

Sounds like something to strive for, doesn't it?

Other words in the same family:

in-te-grate (in' te'grat) *v.*

1. to make or become whole or complete
2. to bring (parts) together into a whole
3. to remove barriers imposing segregation upon.

seg-re-gate (seg' r gat') *v.*

to set apart from others.

dis-in-te-grate (dis in' t grat') *v.*

to separate into parts or fragments; break up.

A teenager asked the following question:

How is it that a person can talk about God, Jesus, their church and their faith and how important it is to them and then turn right around and talk about a wild party they went to over the weekend, or some other wild behavior that goes against what they were just saying about God?

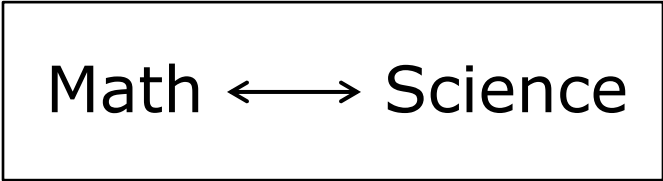
Answer:

We teach that your mind is like a house. (for more information, see article, Who Rules Your House?) This illustration can be used to answer the above question also. A college professor once made the observation that many students have trouble in physics because they keep what they know about calculus in one little "room" of their mind and they keep what they know about physics in another little "room" and they never let the information from one room cross over into the other room. Their house looks like this:



Their math and science information has been **segregated**.

The college professor went on to observe that a student who can allow information to flow freely from one room to another has an advantage over the student that doesn't. This person can take the calculus knowledge from their "math room" over to their "science room" and apply it. Their house looks like this:



This person's math and science information has been **integrated**.

So how does this apply to the teenager's question? Let's apply the same illustration. The average teenager (and adult) has a houseful of relationships. They have a family. They have friends from church; they have friends from work. They have friends that they "party" with and other friends that they share sports or movies with. Maybe they have a boy or girlfriend (or an adult may have a spouse). Often, the person behaves one way with teachers from school, another way when mom and dad are around, and yet another way with their boy or girlfriend. They act a particular way if their youth group leader or pastor is in the room and another way entirely with the friends they party with. We could say that, as far as relationships go, their house looks like this:

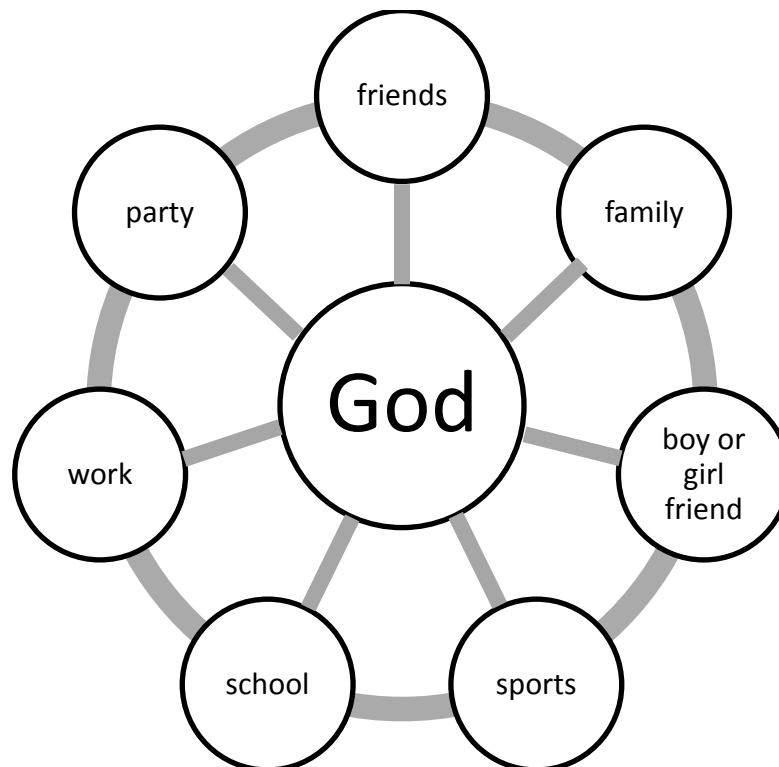
Work	School
Friends	Boy or girl friend
God	Family
Sports	Party

The relationships that make up their life are all **segregated**.

So if this person has behaved differently with different people in their lives, what happens if this person is in a room with their parents, **and** a teacher, **and** their boy or girl -friend, **and** their pastor, **and** their school friends? If they feel the need to be a "different person" for all those people, they will **disintegrate!** They won't know *who* they are supposed to be!

In fact, if a person acts differently according to whoever they are with, they may not know who they really are! They are trying to fit in and please others around them so much that they don't know how they actually feel about an issue, so they behave inconsistently. With one group of people, they say one thing; with another group of people, they do another. The Bible word for this is **hypocrisy**.

The goal for a healthy teenager (or adult) is to have their beliefs **integrated** with their actions. God will have access to all parts of their life. Their house will look like this:



This person will not say one thing and do another. This person will not behave differently to fit in with different people. This person will live as one whole integrated unit because the things they *do* are the same things they *say* they believe in. This person will be known by others as a person of integrity.

Related scriptures:

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right. (Pro.20:11).

But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (Jam.3:8-10).

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. (Mat.23:3).

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. (Pro.11:9).

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Mat.5:20).

In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (Luk.12:1).