

When a Handshake Meant Something

Frustration?

That's an understatement.

Times have changed. There was a time when a *man's word* was his bond. A *gentleman's agreement* meant something. A *firm handshake* sealed the deal. It was a time when integrity and honesty were held high as marks of true character. Nowadays everything needs a legal document . . . because so many people are not trustworthy. Frustrating, to say the least.

What changed?

People still make claims. People still desire for their word to be their bond. Yet, words are spoken, promises broken. (American politics is a vivid example of the 'state of the union.' Maybe voters should demand a contract to be drawn up with all those 'promises' before voting.)

**Many a man proclaims his own loyalty,
But who can find a trustworthy man?**

--Proverbs 20:6

The proverb is telling in every age; cer-

tainly in our day. People make claims. Perhaps they believe their claims. Perhaps they are full of good intentions. Yet, as the saying goes, "Talk is cheap." That is Solomon's point. Anyone can make claims. Yet, how rare and refreshing it is to find a man who lives up to his word.

The reality of this proverb is clear. But is that it? Was it written merely to exclaim the difficulty in finding someone who is true to their word? Or is there something more?

Do you ever tell a friend that you will do something,

but then make an excuse when a 'better offer' comes up?

Do you tell everyone 'yes' because you do not want to hurt anyone's feelings?

Do you make promises you cannot keep?

Recognizing the rare and precious value of a person of integrity, one who values honesty and proves himself to be trustworthy by his actions, I think we should ask ourselves:

Am I trustworthy?

