

# Finding Integrity

717 words

Imagine finding it at the bus stop. It was a cold winter day as I waited at the bus stop. Something was sticking out of a snow bank. Upon closer inspection I realized what it was. I couldn't decide what to do when I saw it. I felt sorry for the person who lost it. *What should I do?* I thought. Then I made up my mind. I picked up the \$100 bill and stuffed it in my pocket. As more people showed up for the school bus, I made sure the money was tucked safely out of sight.

During recess later that day, I found my friend, Hudson. He told me that he had lost a \$100 bill at the bus stop the day before. He said he was going to buy the gecko that was in the window of the pet shop. *I* really wanted that gecko. I had already bought the aquarium and everything else it needed. The \$100 bill would let me buy the gecko 4 months sooner than my paper route wages.

I felt guilty for the rest of school as I planned out my gecko purchase with the money I had found. When I got off the bus that afternoon, I started walking toward the pet shop. Then I changed my mind and walked home instead. I still couldn't figure out what to do with that money.

The next day, as I met Hudson at the bus stop, I still felt bad that I hadn't given him his money. I reached into my pocket to hand Hudson the bill, but was interrupted by the arrival of the bus. He got on the bus, but as I tried to find him, the bus driver told me to sit down. I looked for him at the first and second recess but I couldn't find him anywhere. That afternoon, I looked

at all the people getting off the bus at the bus stop. None of them was Hudson. *He must have walked home.* I thought.

All of a sudden, a strong gust of wind ripped the bill out of my hand. I hadn't realized I had been fiddling with it while I was thinking. I sprinted after it. It blew across the road and I frantically chased it, hoping the wind would stop so I could get it back. I saw it fluttering in a tree a few meters away from me. As I jumped to grab it, I only knocked it loose. It blew towards the pond, and all I could picture was a ruined, useless piece of paper. But, it suddenly turned and flew towards a residential street.

Just when it was going to soar over a house and be gone forever, it stopped and landed on a driveway. I grabbed the money and stuffed it in my backpack. I looked at the house I was in front of and realized it was Hudson's house. I was immediately determined to give him his money. I walked up the steps and rang the doorbell. Hudson opened it.

"Here's the money that you lost at the bus stop," I said. He was speechless for a moment but then he grinned. He gratefully accepted the money and asked me how I got it. I explained how I had found it in a pile of snow the day after Hudson had lost it. I told him that I had kept the money for a couple of days because I wanted to buy something with it. I apologized for stealing it from him. We agreed to meet at the pet store after school the next day.

The day after that, we went in the pet store and I noticed him looking at a white puppy in a cage. He said that he wished he could get a puppy, but he only had enough money to buy a cheaper pet. Then I pulled some money out of my pocket. I said that I would help him with the

money I had been saving. He said I didn't have to, but I did anyway. I expected to feel bad that I gave all that money away, but I didn't. I was just grateful for the wind that reminded me how valuable integrity and friendship are.