

# Integrity

Is it a matter of the Heart?

## LESSON I

Many may question the true **MEANING OF INTEGRITY**. It is often defined as the quality of being honest and morally upright. I believe, no- I know that integrity is a matter of the heart.

The heart is where the Holy Spirit dwells. When God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him, man became a living soul. The spirit of God dwells in us and makes us not only seek God but we are given a sense of right and wrong.

The bible has a much to say about integrity- it is a spiritual issue:

**1 Chron. 29:17 (NIV) I know, my God, that you test the *heart* and are pleased with *integrity*.**

This passage tells us about David's desire to build God a temple, but was denied the opportunity by God. David's conversation with God was about integrity and how God is pleased with it.

God judges the heart even when you have been denied your heart's desire. If you didn't get that promotion on your job or if some one else got praise, but you did the work; you are to still have the integrity to do what you are called to do in spite of your disappointments.

**Genesis 20:5-6 (KJ) Said he not unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the *integrity* of my *heart* and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the *integrity* of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.**

When Abraham and Sarah lied to King Abimelech out of fear and by stating that Sarah was Abraham's sister, God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and said, "The only reason you are not dead is because I know our heart and your intent was pure!

We see here that the father of faith had a lapse in integrity.

**Proverbs 10:9 (NKJV) He who walks with *integrity* walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known.**

We are called to "walk by faith and not by sight" but our Christian walk must be a walk of integrity.

**Proverbs 11:3 (NKJV) The *integrity* of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.**

Integrity should be your guide. God is pleased when he sees his people doing the right thing for the right reason. He is pleased when we help someone not because we want something, but because it's the right thing to do.

**Proverbs 13:6 (NIV) Righteousness guards the man of *integrity*, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.**

The psalmist spoke to this when he said, "when I saw how the wicked appeared to prosper", we relate this to modern thoughts of the dope dealer who has a big house and a fine car or how people who gave no time to God or service to humankind, have it better than the righteous.

The psalmist said, "I became disheartened. I thought I had made the wrong choice. But when I thought about the goodness of God and all He has done for me. When I looked back over my life and realized that if it had not been for the Lord, I realized that I was thinking like a foolish person for the wicked's reward is with them.

Now, let me share several definitions of the meaning of the word integrity with you.

- ⦿ The word integrity comes from the same Latin root as "integer," or whole number. Like a whole number, a person of integrity is undivided and complete.
- ⦿ Hebrew-Greek the word integrity (TOM) means completeness, fullness, wholeness, simplicity, or innocence.
- ⦿ Integrity is moral and ethical soundness. In the physical realm it is an unreduced or unbroken completeness or totality
- ⦿ Integrity is spiritual oneness in our heart through the Holy Spirit that connects us with God.
- ⦿ This means that the ethical person acts according to His beliefs, not according to expediency. He is also consistent.

God is saying a doubled minded person is unstable in all of their ways.

A person of integrity does not look for short cuts or get rich quick schemes.

For example: You go into the bank to cash a check and the teller gives you \$100.00 too much in change; do you leave saying "Lord, thank you! I just got blessed!", or do you go back and say, "I am sorry you made a mistake" and give the money back? Your integrity will let you know that was a test and God has something better for you.

The person with integrity doesn't compromise his standards.

Joseph was a man of deep integrity; he refused to compromise even when it would have been so easy to do so. What motivated his integrity?

**Genesis 39:8-9 (NKJV) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. "There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"**

Your integrity will always be challenged when your mind can tell you, no one will know. God knows.

Failures in integrity lead to sin and your sin is always against God!

When you are away from home you have the ability to reinvent yourself.

An example of this would be the biggest nerd in high school goes to college and become the coolest person on campus. They have reinvented themselves.

The Prodigal's Son went into the far country and reinvented himself but first he went as low as his integrity would allow him. He came to himself and remembered his values. His integrity would not allow him to go any further. He remembered "in my father's house this is not acceptable. I was not raised like this"

**Job 2:3 (KJV) And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.**

Satan will always challenge our integrity. Job's challenge was not about cursing God. God never mentioned cursing. God's only charge to Job was that he would hold onto his integrity.

Satan said Job would give up his integrity for his life.

**Job 2:9 (KJV) Then said his wife unto him dost thou still retain thine integrity?**

**Curse God and die**

Job's wife asked, "Do you still hold your integrity?"

**Job 27:5 (KJV) God forbid that I should justify you; till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.**

**Job 31:6 (KJV) let me be weighed in a even balance, that God may know my integrity. (good, bad, and ugly...(let it be considered equally)**

If you consider my faults against my integrity, my integrity will come to the top.

Now, let us discuss why the person of integrity is not negligent in his duties.

**Daniel 6:1-5 (NKJV) It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."**

These men searched and searched and the bible says they found no corruption in Daniel. Let's say that we found about 100 people that didn't like you very much, and they were going to investigate your life. They're looking for some area that you have been corrupt in, either intentionally or negligently. What would they find?

David was given the same job as others, but because of his work ethics, his work was superior to the others. When they sought to find something against Daniel, the only thing they could charge him with was that he prayed three times a day.

## **LESSON II.**

Now, I'd like to share with you, the **BLESSINGS OF INTEGRITY**

A heart of integrity inherits the promises of God. I King 9:4-5 (KJV) **And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thou father walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgements: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever, as I promised to David thou father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.**

God made Solomon a promise that if he walked in integrity of heart, he would be blessed, but as you see in 1 Kings 9:6-7 (KJV) **But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people.**

Why do we call King David's sin a failure compared to the privileges of foreign kings?

- David was God's choice
- David was God's promise (lineage of Christ)
- ☉ **II Samuel 11:2-4 (KJV) David rose from his bed...from the roof saw a woman washing herself...David sent and inquired after the woman...And one said. Is not that the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent and took her, and lay with her.**

When we are challenged, we will face failures as did David  
David's failure was one of integrity because other Kings had the right to anything in his kingdom.

The scriptures tell us that you should always know that you can be restored.

- ☉ **Psalm 51:3-4 (KJV) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, and thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thou sight: that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.**
- ☉ **Psalm 26:1 (KJV) Judge me O Lord for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide.**
- ☉ **Psalm 26:11 (KJV) I will walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me.**

### **LESSON III.**

Your blessings or integrity can bring so many **REWARDS**

- ☉ Integrity brings peace. There is nothing like laying your head on the pillow at night with no nagging pangs of guilt.
- ☉ **Proverbs 11:3 (KJV) The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.**
- ☉ There is value in integrity. **Proverbs 19:1 (KJV) Better is the poor that walketh in integrity than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. – guides your tongue.**
- ☉ **Proverbs 20:7 (KJV) A just man walketh in integrity: his children are blessed after him.**

**Malachi 3:10 (KJV) Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.**

Would you rather bring it to God willing or risk the liability of misfortune?

- **Mishaps**
- **Emergencies**
- **You can give it off the top or God will take it off the bottom**

Let me share this example for the scripture just used: I know a pastor who got upset at a board meeting. The board would not approve a project he felt should be implemented. Out of anger, he refused to pay his tithes. Before the week was out, he heard a pop in the front of his new car. He took the car to the shop; the cost of the repair was \$1,300 for an item that was not under warranty. Two days later, the service engine light came on. That was another \$400. That Sunday he was the first person at the tithers' box.

**Haggai 1:6-7 (KJV) Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.**

During the first Great Depression of the 1930s, Mr. Roebuck said to Mr. Sears, "I can't afford to tithe. I have lost money. My stocks are gone. The bank failed and sales are down. I just can't afford to tithe. Mr. Sears looked back at him and said for all the reason you just stated, I can't afford not to tithe."

**Acts 5:2-3 (KJV) And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine HEART to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land.**

Ananias did not have to give anything, but it was a failure of integrity that he lied about the sale of the property.

President Harry Truman used to say, "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings. Those who cheer today may curse tomorrow. Only one thing endures - character." Charles Spurgeon wrote, "A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered. Carve your name on hearts, and not on marble."

Yes, integrity is a matter of the heart!

All Christians should strive for integrity!

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