

# The Value of Integrity | 5/8/2016

- What is integrity?
  - Definition of Integrity-
    - *Adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral **character**; honesty.*
    - *Incorruptible-incapable of being bribed or morally corrupted.*
  - Someone who is trustworthy – They will not cheat or lie to you
    - Proverbs 19:1
      - “Better a poor man who lives with integrity than someone who has deceitful lips and is a fool”
  - Someone who is blameless – By being obedient and not doing wrong they cannot be blamed for wrong behavior
    - Titus 2:7-8
      - “in everything. Make yourself an example of good works with integrity in your teachings. Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about us.”
  - Someone who is dependable – you can count on them because if they say they will do something then they will
  - They turn from evil and abstain from sin
    - Job 1:1
      - “There was a man in the country of Uz named Job. He was a man of perfect integrity who feared God and turned away from evil.”
  - In the eyes of God, it is one who is obedient.
  - The Christian definition of integrity
    - One who has instilled God’s truths as the foundation for their character. Regardless of trials, persecutions, circumstances or even when no one is watching, you are blameless before God. One who does not give in to the temptations of Satan and upholds God’s ethical standards as He has given us in Scripture.
  - Let your yes be yes and your no be no
    - Matthew 5:37
      - “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”
- God cares deeply about our integrity
  - God does care about whether or not we have integrity as Christians. In fact, He has quite a bit to say about it all throughout Scripture.
    - God speaks of the benefit for Christians for those who maintain their integrity.
    - God speaks of the good for others that happens if we maintain our integrity.
    - **Perhaps the most important reason though for the importance of our integrity, is so that God can use us.**
  - God uses those who are faithful and have integrity (perfect or blameless).
    - When God chooses His followers to do His will, God desires those who have integrity.
      - As Christian we desire to be used by God, we want Him to use us to further His kingdom to be the Gospel to a lost and dying world.

- **But God also chooses those He uses to be that blessing and tool for His good works.** Our integrity has a lot to do with whether or not God will use us.
  - God uses the the faithful because they are dependable and obedient.
    - **Because the obedient are dependable Christians that God can count on.**
    - **He knows their hearts and that they will seek and strive to do His will.**
      - God does not control us like robots, He was a willing and obedient servant.
      - That is whom He chooses.
  - Examples from Scripture
    - Noah’s integrity and heart was right before God and He used Him as the seed for a new beginning.
      - Genesis 6:9
        - “These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, **blameless** among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God.”
      - Even though Noah lived in an evil world his character shone through. He maintained his integrity (blameless) to God and it did not go unnoticed.
      - God chose him and used him because he maintained his integrity by being obedient to God, he was blameless.
    - God’s promise to Solomon was contingent upon his integrity
      - 1 Kings 9:4-5
        - “As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, **with a heart of integrity and in what is right**, doing everything I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and ordinances, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised your father David: you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.
      - God makes it clear that He desires integrity, He desired it from David and told Solomon that His promises were contingent up it. God very much cares if we have integrity.
    - Now this does not mean that one is sinless and perfect because neither of these men of God were perfect. But their hearts were in the right place and they were repentant.
      - **Why do you think that our integrity is so important to God?**
- The benefits of maintaining our integrity
  - If we are obeying God’s commands, turning away from evil and striving to live in God’s there is great benefit to the Christian.
    - A right relationship with God will lead to a right course in life.
      - Proverbs 11:3
        - **“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the perversity of the treacherous destroys them”**

- If we live our life with integrity, it will be a guide for our life. A guide that leads us down the path that God desires that we live.
- It is difficult to fall when you are walking with integrity
  - Proverbs 28:18
    - **“The one who lives with integrity will be helped,** but the one who distorts right and wrong will suddenly fall.”
  - Proverbs 10:9
    - **“The one who lives with integrity lives securely,** but whoever perverts his ways will be found out.”
- But the benefit of our integrity isn’t limited to just us, but also our children.
  - Proverbs 20:7
    - “The one who lives with integrity is righteous; his children who come after him will be happy.”
  - Not only does our integrity benefit ourselves, but it will benefit our children and others.
  - If we as parents live our lives with the biblical version of integrity, we will be a blessing for our children.
  - They will have a greater chance of following in our footsteps and living the same live.
  - We must live as we desire our children to live.
- We must have integrity in ALL aspects of our lives
  - The Bible gives us an excellent example of what integrity in the eyes of God looks like through Job.
    - Job 1:1
      - “There was a man in the country of Uz named Job. He was a man of **perfect integrity**, who feared God and turned away from evil.”
      - Not only did he have integrity but he had perfect integrity.
  - The description of Job’s character tells us he was a man of moral integrity in all relations of his life as a father, a husband and a worshipper of God. All aspects of his life.
    - **For him to be considered perfect then he held his integrity with everything not just portions of his life.**
      - Christians knowing the importance of integrity to God, strive to have that integrity. But it is possible that we show integrity in **some** portions of our life but there are areas that we neglect.
        - Even though by definition if we have integrity it SHOULD apply to all aspects of our live but don’t always treat it that way.
      - It’s possible to have integrity in our church facing life where we “look” like we have great integrity, but perhaps in other places that’s not the case.
    - Maybe your integrity holds up really well until say you go to a ball game that your kid is playing in and the refs aren’t making the calls you want.
      - All of a sudden your integrity goes out the door and you’re no different than anyone else, yelling and screaming.
      - But you get away from the ball game and you’re good again.
    - Then we justify this with well I was good during the rest of the week I just need to vent at the ball games. **And so we have now falsely justified this in our minds.**

- This wasn't Job, he had perfect integrity in EVERYTHING.
  - Christians must not compartmentalize our character. We must strive to live that Christian life with integrity in all aspects no matter the cost.
  - **Where do you see in your life that you might lose your integrity?**
- We must maintain our integrity regardless of our adversities or circumstances.
  - While it may seem easy at times to maintain our integrity when times are good, but what about when times are bad and they are not going our way?
  - Job again is an excellent example for us.
    - Job lost everything that was important to him, his children, his possessions and his health. Yet through all of this he never gave in to the temptation to curse God or to give up.
    - Look at what Job said after he had learned of his calamity.
      - Job 1:20-22
        - "Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of Yahweh. Throughout all of this Job did not sin or blame God for anything."
      - Job 2:3
        - "Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and turns away from evil. He still retains his integrity, even though you incited Me against him, to destroy him without just cause."
    - Even though this was a terrible time for Job he still maintained his integrity, he stayed true to God.
  - Noah maintained his integrity even though he lived in an evil world.
    - Think about it Noah and his family were the only ones that God saved. Noah was the ONLY one who maintained his integrity.
    - But think of how hard this would have been for him to do, he was the ONLY one. But yet he didn't give in to the sin of the world.
  - We must maintain our integrity even if we are pressured
    - Sometimes even our family and friends can pressure us to into losing our integrity. Or worldly wisdom may tell us that our integrity does not matter because of circumstances.
    - Let's take Job's wife as an example. She was equally devastated about what had happened to them and she apparently had lost her integrity some time ago.
    - She tells Job to throw aside his trust in God because of the circumstances.
      - Job 2:9
        - "His wife said to him, "Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die!"
    - But Job knowing that his devotion, obedience and trust in God was by far more important.
      - Job 2:10

- “You speak as a foolish woman speaks,” he told her. Should we accept only good from God and not adversity? Throughout all of this Job did not sin in what he said.”
  - Job was not going to intentionally lose his integrity just because life was hard.
- **Have there been circumstances in your life that have caused to you either lose your integrity or perhaps pressured you into it?**
- How can we maintain our integrity?
  - While there are several ways we can maintain our integrity I like to look again at Job to see what it is that he did that caused God to say he had “perfect” integrity.
  - We maintain our integrity by treating God’s Word with respect and making it a priority in our lives.
    - Job 23:12
      - “I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food.”
    - We must treat God’s Word as a sort of lifeblood that is more important than even nourishment to our bodies.
    - Job was able to maintain his integrity because he took the truth of God (voiced in his time) and made it the most important thing in his life.
    - By treating God’s Word in the same way Job did, then we too will have a greater chance of maintaining our integrity.
  - We can make a spiritual commitment with God
    - Psalms 101:1-4
    - David made a spiritual commitment to God, in that he would maintain his integrity.
    - He would sing of love and justice which are the character traits that God desires for His Christians to express.
      - This is how David ruled his kingdom.
    - David would seek to have a blameless heart and to live a blameless life in the eyes of God and others.
      - He would begin I his own house because what better place than to get your home in order first.
  - We can take it seriously and make it a priority.
    - Job 27:1-6
    - Job made it clear that he would maintain his integrity until his deathbed. This shows how important it was to him and also how important it was to God.
  - **What have you done to help you remember that your integrity is important to God?**