

Completeness

"And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power;"(Colossians 2:10).

Integrity is about completeness, or being a whole person because of our union with Christ. Being joined to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17) means that we can receive the necessary cure for our character defects and flawed behavior. In Christ we can be men and women of integrity walking uprightly before God. Without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5) to be pleasing to God. But with the presence of His Spirit in our lives we can be courageous, empowered, compassionate, and have a soundness of mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Just as Jesus' disciples were transformed in their communities because of their relationship to Jesus (Acts 4:13), so we can reveal a new life of integrity in our neighborhoods.

Integrity for our Families

"The just man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him" (Proverbs 20:7)

Sometimes the hardest place to walk in integrity is in your own home. We might try to display our best Christian behavior at work or at church but at home we might let down our guard. It is at home that we may find out whether we really have integrity within us (Psalm 7:8) or are we just pretending to be upright. Our families know us in better and in worse, in riches and in poverty, in sickness and in healthy times. It is there that we should model true integrity to those we love.

But how do we show integrity in our homes? We have to show the same self-sacrificial love (John 15:13) to every member of our family that we would show to any member of our church or to someone we are trying to reach for Christ. A person of integrity lives by the same godly character in their homes as they do on the street. Husbands of integrity love and cherish their wives (Ephesians 5:25).



Wives of integrity honor their husbands by living a life of unity and love (Ephesians 5:31-33). Children who are raised in a home where there is integrity will honor and obey their parents knowing it is the right thing to do (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Integrity on the Job

"Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10a)

A person of integrity gives their employer eight hours of work for eight hours of pay, they don't steal office supplies, they keep their commitments, and they treat their co-workers with dignity and respect. Christians should stand out on their jobs because they are ultimately working for the Lord's honor and glory (Colossians 3:23). Our actions on the job will speak much louder than words.

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"Integrity"

How Christianity Works Series

By Pastor Curt Carter

Integrity

"Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee"
Psalm 25:21

integrity (noun) 1: honesty or sincerity; uprightness. 2: wholeness, completeness. 3: perfect condition; soundness.

From Dictionary Thorndike & Barnhart

In the American culture of today, there is a lack of people living lives of integrity. Millionaire athletes enhance their sports abilities with steroids and human growth hormones. Bankers and Wall Street financiers use Ponzi schemes to defraud their clients. Politicians steal from their constituents and even a president carried out adulterous acts in the Oval Office where he was supposed to be serving the American people. It is growing more difficult to find men and women whom we would describe as "honest, sincere, and upright". Even people serving in positions of religious authority are stealing donations and committing acts of sexual immorality in their congregations. How this must grieve the Lord.



And consider that even those that reject living in integrity want others around them to treat them with honesty. No one wants to be treated unfairly, cheated on, lied to or ripped off by someone acting unscrupulously. The person stealing from the company also care-fully counts their change at the store!

"Phony as a Three Dollar Bill"

So we are surrounded by a culture lacking in basic integrity. Flashy commercials try to sell us products that can never live up to the hype. Politicians make pledges crafted by media spin artists to manipulate the masses. Everyday there is another story in our local news about a respected community leader being arrested for some dishonest act. It makes some Christians want to go home, lock their doors and pray for the Lord to "come quickly" (Revelation 22:7) to rescue them from this world. But maybe we should also consider that in a phony world being the "genuine article" stands out! Anyone would know immediately that a three dollar bill isn't legitimate money. Likewise when someone lives an honest, sincere, upright, godly life in this counterfeit culture people take notice. That is why Christians are given greater scrutiny to see if they actually live out the life that they tell others about.

Integrity During Distress

When people are in distressing situations often their true natures emerge. So when Christians are dealing with difficult circumstances they may find themselves under the microscope of community attention. I think that one reason God put the Book of Job in the Bible was to give us a role model for how to act when times go bad. And for Job, times got real bad real fast! He didn't understand that his experience was being used to teach Satan a lesson about living an honorable life. Satan had been given a place of authority among heavenly created beings (Ezekiel 28:14-19). But he violated integrity and became unsound in mind and evil in behavior.

Job as Role Model

"And the Lord said unto Satan, have you considered my servant, Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause" (Job 2:3).



God is exhibiting the life of a man of integrity to Satan and his minions, showing them that even under duress Job is maintaining an upright attitude toward God. It must have made Satan extremely angry to see Job's consistent dedication to faithfulness and truth. The integrity of service and love towards God that Satan had failed to live in atmosphere of heaven, Job was now revealing under duress.

Even Job's wife questioned him, "Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die" (Job 2:9). When the pressure of situations increase, especially situations that we do not understand, we may want to simply give up, turn against God and check out of life. It takes real courage to continue holding on to what we believe about God. Later, Job's friends came by to counsel him by trying to get him to admit the hidden sins that he knew were untrue. But he knew his God deeply and said, "God forbid that I should justify you; till I die I will not remove my integrity from me" (Job 27:5). As David said in our opening verse, integrity actually has a preserving effect upon the believer who is waiting for God to act. Living an upright life will prepare us for the really difficult circumstances that we will occasionally face.