

Calvary Chapel O'Hare
Men's
Servant Leadership Study

Week 4

INTEGRITY

Memory Verse for the Week: Hebrews 13:8

Day 1 - Integrity

“God’s honest truth. Actions that back up the words and words that are congruent with the actions. People of integrity and honesty. People we can trust. That’s what we look for in our leaders.”¹ A Leader’s words and actions are always being compared by the people they lead. In our homes, our credibility with our wives and children rest on our integrity. In the church, at work, in the community and yes, even in politics if you haven’t earned people’s by constantly keeping your work and living up to the values you profess, you will be an ineffective leader at best. Most likely, if you are not a man of integrity, people will simply not follow you. *Most importantly, a lack of integrity will destroy your witness!*

Let’s start this week by listing any area in our lives where actions are not integrated with our values and beliefs.

Reading - 1 Samuel 12:1-7. 20-24

Discussion - After surveying thousands of people around the world and performing more than four hundred written case studies, James Kouzes and Barry Posner identified those characteristics most desirable in a leader. In virtually every survey, honesty or integrity was identified more frequently than any other trait.*

That makes sense doesn’t it? If people are going to follow someone, whether into battle or in business or ministry, they want assurance that their leader can be trusted. They want to know that he or she will keep promises and follow through with commitments.

In light of this research, Israel’s high regard for Samuel comes as no surprise. During his farewell speech, after having led Israel for decades, Samuel promised to repay anything he had unjustly taken from anyone. What a promise! Even more impressive was the people’s response: Not one person rose up to make a claim against Samuel.

Samuel’s honesty and personal integrity permeated every area of his life. These two characteristics directed how he regarded his possessions, his business dealings and his treatment of those who were weaker than himself. Samuel held himself accountable to the people he led. He opened himself up to the scrutiny of everyone with whom he had ever had dealings. As a result of this practice, Samuel’s leadership has become legendary as this story has been told and retold throughout the centuries.

¹ “*Leadership Secrets from the Bible*” Copyright © 2002 Lorin Woolfe; Published by MJF Books

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Samuel's example calls each of us to hold to this same standard of integrity. Whatever your leadership responsibilities, whether you're in charge of a multi-million-dollar business or a two-year-old child, manage your affairs with honesty. Let your personal commitment to integrity show in what you do during the day, every day. As you do so, you'll become a leader whom others will eagerly follow.

Now let's take a moment and walk back through our reading for today.

1. How long had Samuel been Israel's leader (vv.1-2)? _____

2. Every leader decides those accomplishments or values for which he or she wants to be remembered. For some this might be their decision-making genius; for others the amount of money they were able to amass; for still others the degree to which their followers loved or respected them. In verse 3 Samuel read his evaluation sheet to the people. What mattered to Samuel? _____

3. Read the people's response to Samuel (vv. 4-5). What does this tell you about Samuel's tenure as Israel's leader? _____

4. What is the key to this kind of integrity? To discover the short answer, read verses 5-7; then jump to verses 20-24. Meditate for a few moments on these readings. Then answer the question: "What was the driving and guiding value that explains Samuel's years of integrity?" _____

5. Consider this question: What is your plan, specifically, to develop the same perspective that kept Samuel on track for all of those years? Spend some time thinking about your own view of God and His role in your life of integrity. _____

*Kouzes, James M., and Posner, Barry Z. *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose it, Why People Demand it*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

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Day 2 - Integrity and Who God Is

How many times have you struggled with your own personal integrity and resolved to do better? Jesus knew that we would struggle with hypocrisy, so in Matthew 6:1-34 he addressed a core issue which we must wrestle to the ground if we hope to increase our level of integrity. Today's reading is Matthew 6:1-34.

Reading - Matthew 6:1-34

Discussion - Integrity requires more than a commitment to itself. Many New Year's resolutions (and scrapes with firings and indictments) have produced deep resolves to live with integrity. Hasn't each of us set our chin, closed our eyes and said, "I will live more consistently by my principles"?

Let's work through Jesus' teaching on integrity in this passage. Some thoughtful understanding and application is a huge first step toward integrity.

1. What did Jesus tell us not to do in vs. 1? _____

2. What reason did he give for not doing it? _____

Jesus warned against doing right things for wrong reasons. Jesus called people who practice this kind of morality "hypocrites." Notice that He used the word three times in this passage (vv. 2, 5, 16). Three times people are cited for violating their integrity by doing something only for the appearance. They did good things – but not for the reasons they wanted observers to think they were doing them.

3. Why did these hypocrites give (v. 2) pray (v. 5) and fast (v. 16)? _____

4. Because they were, in fact, hypocrites, what would be your guess about what would happen to those right behaviors if no one were watching? _____

5. How excited would you be about doing business with them? _____

So the essence of hypocrisy (lack of integrity) is public-dependent behavior. It is acting one way if people are watching but another when alone. Typically this isn't the kind of person most parents would want their daughter to marry; nor is this the kind of leader who inspires dedicated followers.

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What, then, did Jesus suggest we do? Read verses 4, 6, 17 and 18. Note the statement repeated in all three verses. Jesus' key to integrity is that His followers will live by the standard of their unchanging, ever-present heavenly Father. Resist the temptation to dance to every vendor's tune. Instead, march to the steady beat set by our Almighty God. In fact, keeping the reward terminology in mind, read verses 19 through 21, where Jesus drove the point of the message home.

Integrity involves living by one standard and for the approval of one Judge. People and their fickle standards come and go. Trying to please all of them will at best drive you nuts and at worst turn you into a hypocrite. But God is unchanging and always present. Living for Him is foundational to integrity – and it reaps an eternal reward.

God's character never changes; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Because it is impossible for God to lie, He is the ultimately reliable source of hope. His changeless character is the foundation of all of His promises. Whatever He says He will do is as good as done, and when we hope in His promises, this hope becomes an anchor for the soul, both firm and secure (Hebrews 6:19). God's yes is always yes, and His no is always no (James 5:12); His actions flow perfectly out of His character. God never changes His mind (1 Samuel 15:29). There is no possibility of manipulating or bribing or bargaining with God, because He will never compromise His perfect integrity.

Read Hebrews 13:8 to reflect on God's immutable character and perfect integrity. Contrast His character and integrity with the changing character of people.

6. What implications does God's perfect and constant character have for your relationship with Him?

7. Is there anything that keeps you from trusting Him more?

Day 3 - Integrity and Who I Am

People sometimes tell us one thing but live another. The biblical virtue of integrity points to a consistency between what is inside and what is outside, between belief and behavior, our words and our ways, our attitudes and our actions, our values and our practice. Go to Isaiah 6:1-7 to learn more about the meaning of integrity.

Reading - Isaiah 6:1-7

Discussion - When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the glorious and awesome Creator of the universe, he was overwhelmed by the holiness of God. R.C. Sproul comments on Isaiah's encounter with the holiness of God: "To be undone means to come apart at the seams, to be unraveled. What Isaiah was expressing is what modern psychologists describe as the experience of personal disintegration. To disintegrate means exactly what the word suggests, 'disintegrate.' To integrate something is to put pieces together in a unified whole...The word integrity suggests a person whose life is whole or wholesome. In modern slang we say, 'He's got it all together.'"*

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In the face of God’s perfect integration, Isaiah saw his deep need for personal reconstruction. Isaiah realized the depth of his own sin in the process of catching a glimpse of God’s perfect holiness, and he acknowledged those areas in which he had turned from his commitment as a priest and a prophet. But his commitment in verse 8 and his life as a faithful prophet demonstrate for all leaders the possibility of framing a life of integrity with God’s help.

Even the most spiritually committed among us will blow it at one time or another. No matter how devoted or mature we are, we will find ourselves asking, “What do I do when I have violated my commitment to God and to my own integrity?” David demonstrates what a godly person does in the face of his own failure. Read Psalm 32:1-11 and meditate your way through David’s prayer of repentance.

Does God excuse David’s sin? No! Does David’s story give today’s leader permission to sin? Absolutely not. But integrity doesn’t demand perfection, either. Even the most morally committed people blow it. Integrity doesn’t guarantee a perfect life, but it does require an integrated life. People with integrity have a moral center that integrates their behavior. When they violate that moral center, they recognize that violation as sin and treat it as an aberration. They confess it, make restitution, seek forgiveness and reconfirm the standard.

David would be scandalized if he were to learn that people were using his failure to justify their own sin. His prayers of repentance show leaders what to do when they violate their commitment to God’s standards and want to reestablish their integrity.

1. What have you done when you have violated your commitment to God and to you own integrity?

2. In light of today’s study, what should you do when we realize that you have said or done something that has violated your beliefs and values? _____

3. Is confessing our mistakes to God and others a sign of weakness or strength? _____. Write down the reasons for your answer. _____

*Sproul, R.C. *One Holy Passion*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987

Day 4 - Integrity and How I Think

Integrity – character – ethics – morality. We tend to use these words interchangeably and consequently blur some essential distinctives. Just what is integrity? How is it different from ethics or morality? Jesus provided clarity with regard to these critical concepts in Matthew 23:1-39. See Matthew 23:1-39 for today’s reading.

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Read Matthew 23:1-39

Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites seven times in this sermon (vv. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). His language reveals His anger. Notice that each verse that includes the word hypocrite begins with the words: Woe to you. In this passage Jesus chided the Pharisees for saying one thing and doing another.

We discovered in our Day 1 study that integrity – the direct opposite quality of hypocrisy – is the quality that people want most to see in a leader. The Pharisees didn't live up to that standard. When we talk about integrity today, we generally use other, closely related terms such as ethics and morality. But a clear understanding of the concept of integrity requires clear thinking about all three words. Each as a distinct meaning. When properly used, they bring clarity to a crucial but often misunderstood leadership essential:

- *Ethics* refers to a defined standard of right and wrong; good and evil. It's what the Pharisees said they believed was right.
- *Morality* is a lived standard of right and wrong, good and evil. It's what the Pharisees actually did.
- *Integrity* means "sound, complete, integrated."

To the extent that a person's ethics and morality or integrated, that person has integrity. To the extent that a person's ethics and morality are not integrated, that person lacks integrity. Let's look at this another way. If John tells you he will lie to you, he has a low ethic. If he does business that way, he also was a low morality. John is unethical and immoral, but he has integrity because the morality is consistent with the ethic. If John claims to lie but doesn't lie, he is moral, but lacks integrity. Think about that. You can have a high or low ethic. You can be moral or immoral. But if you want to have integrity, you must choose your ethic and live to match it. Leaders should let prospective followers know what they are getting into.

A person who claims to be a Christian makes an ethical statement and has committed to a certain morality. For that person to have integrity, then, he or she must live by the biblical ethic. Jesus makes it unequivocally clear that the worst choice is the hypocritical one.

1. It is often a good practice to write down those ethics and morals you believe are most important in your life and then critically compare your actions to see if you have an integrated life. Take the time now to list the top five ethics/morals you believe are most important. _____

2. Now in light of the list above, examine your words and actions over the past month or two. Are you living an integrated life in all areas listed? _____. If you gave your list to your wife, children, co workers, brothers in the church, and yes, the Lord, would they agree or disagree with your answer? _____.

Day 5 - Integrity and What I Do

How does a leader actually demonstrate integrity? Paul gave Timothy some instruction about leadership that will be helpful to all of us, and Howard and Bill Hendricks offer a telling illustration of integrity in action. Today's reading is 1 Timothy 4:15-16.

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Reading - 1 Timothy 4:15-16

Discussion - It's self-evident that a hypocrite is unqualified to guide others toward attaining higher character. No one respects someone who talks a good game but fails to play by the rules. What a leader does will have a greater impact on those he or she wishes to lead than what the leader says. A person may forget ninety percent of what a leader says, but he or she will never forget how a leader lives.

Bill Hendricks encountered an illustration of this principle during the go-go days of the real estate market of the 1980s. He met a land developer who claimed to have woven what he called "biblical principles of business" into his deals. But when the market went south, he skipped town and left his investors to pick up the pieces – and the debts.

Another of Bill's friends stands in sharp contrast to the first. He too was a land developer. He too talked of integrating biblical principles into his business. And when the market crashed, so did his empire. But unlike the man who ran away, this land developer, as a matter of conscience, worked out a plan to pay back his investors (pp.67-69).*

Which of these two would you rather follow in terms of integrity? There is simply no substitute for a man or woman of consistent Christlike character.

That doesn't simply imply that any of us will be perfect. In fact, the New Testament doesn't call for perfect leaders; it calls for those who are models of progress in their faith. Paul instructed Timothy to be diligent in following godly teachings. He encouraged Timothy to give himself wholly to them (1 Timothy 4:15). That's sound advice for us today, as well.

*Taken from *As Iron Sharpens Iron* by Howard Hendricks and William Hendricks. Copyright © 1995, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Moody Press. Used by permission.

1. In your own words, re-write 1 Timothy 4:15-16. _____

2. In verse 15, what is the phrase "...in these matters..." referring to. _____

Paul tells us in verse 16 to "Watch your life and doctrine

Pray as the Psalmist in Psalm 139:23-24 that the Lord would search out any area of your life where your ethics and morals were not integrated with His Word. Then ask Him to make His ethics yours and for you to live an integrated life.

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