

# **INTEGRITY**



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

Integrity is one of the most valued character qualities a person can have. A person of integrity has strong moral and ethical principles. They are known to be honest regardless of the circumstances they are in, the company they are keeping, or when alone with no one watching. What you see on the outside is the same person they are on the inside. People of integrity keep their word, even when it is not convenient. They are honest in all their dealings, personal and business. They practice morality in their sexual life, both in mind and with body. They are not perfect. They make mistakes and occasionally sin, but they do not cover up offences. They confess them, and deal with any consequences.

Integrity is not a character quality most of us could claim when we lived in addiction. It's not something that automatically appears when we come into recovery either. However, integrity can and will be developed in a person who lives according to the Word of God, and who stands with confidence before God.

***I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. Because of my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. (Psalm 41:11-12 NIV)***

The story of Daniel in the Bible gives us an example of a man of integrity. Daniel was a man who experienced all sorts of injustice and unfair treatment that could have resulted in bitter resentment and a desire for revenge. In his teens, through no fault of his own, Daniel was made a Jewish captive. In spite of many challenges he became a high government official in Babylon but the injustices continued. His enemies were jealous of him and tried hard to find a way to get him charged and punished for misconduct in his handling of government affairs. Try as they might, his enemies could find no grounds for charges against Daniel. Daniel did not live in reaction to unfair circumstances. Daniel lived with integrity before God.

***"...They couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds***

***for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.”*** (Daniel 6:4-5 NLT)

The only way these schemers could undermine Daniel’s influence with the king was to prey upon Daniel’s devotion to God. They convinced King Darius to issue a law which could not be revoked. This law banned prayer for 30 days to anyone, divine or human, except to the king himself. The penalty for not complying with this law was that the person would be cast into the den of lions.

Because of his faithfulness to the living God, Daniel would not obey this unjust law. Daniel went home and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom. When this was brought to the king’s attention, even though he regretted having to do it, King Darius ordered Daniel to be thrown into the lions’ den. The next morning when the king discovered that God had delivered Daniel from the lions, he worshiped God as the living God--and ordered all in his kingdom to do the same!

Daniel’s integrity, in spite of unjust accusations and unfair actions, brought him the blessing of the king’s high regard, lifted him to a position of honor and influence, and brought honour to the living God in a foreign culture.

***Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: “Peace and prosperity to you! I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the***

***God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end. He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”*** (Daniel 6:25-27 NLT)

What does integrity look like in our lives, in our time, and in our city? People of integrity set a good example for the children and youth of our society. We may think our children don't know when we cheat, take advantage of a customer or employer, lie to the boss or abuse paid benefits. They see more than we realize. Our misdeeds, whenever they are exposed, will cause our children to lose respect for us, or worse, to pattern their own actions and lives after ours. People of integrity live honestly in all situations, noticed or unnoticed.

People of integrity have the peace of a clear conscience. When we live according to the Word of God we experience a deep inner peace knowing that we have not violated our conscience or hurt someone else. We can be confident that when someone examines us, we will be proven innocent of wrongdoing. In contrast, when our lives lack moral wholeness, we live in constant fear of being “found out” as frauds. If our thoughts and desires were exposed today, would we be seen as persons of integrity?

***Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.***  
(Proverbs 10:9 NIV)

A person of integrity experiences the favor of God and His blessings. These flow down, even to the person's children.

***Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. A righteous man who walks in his integrity--how blessed are his sons after him.***" (Psalm 112:4-5 NIV & Proverbs 20:7 NASB)

People of integrity gain the respect of others. Men and women of integrity can be depended upon. People look to them with trust and respect. Neighbours speak highly of them and they are helpful in their community or place of work. Few things are more valued than a good reputation.

***A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*** (Proverbs 22:1 NIV)

Integrity is built over time as we diligently apply God's teachings to the choices we make. Regardless of any unfair words or the behaviour of others, we remain faithful to God's principles, and leave all the consequences of others' actions with Him. The result of living with an

undivided heart and being a vibrant witness for Jesus to the world around us, is worth the effort.

***May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you.*** (Psalm 25:21 NLT)

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What situations can cause me to lack sound judgment?
2. What are my personal challenges in living for convenience or being a person of integrity at all times?
3. People of integrity have a clear conscience – is there any clearing I need to do?
4. How does loving God with all my heart, soul and mind and loving my neighbour as myself help me to acquire the quality of integrity?

Heavenly Father, You are an awesome God who loves me unconditionally. Forgive me for the times I have reacted negatively to circumstances and the behaviour of others, and have personally neglected to behave in ways that I know to be right and just. Please help me to consider the impact of my actions and behaviour on those around me. My desire is to love and care for others as You have faithfully loved and cared for me. As I walk in Your ways, help me to become a person of integrity. I am forever grateful that You are a God who is faithful in all Your ways. AMEN

