

INTEGRITY



in-'te-gr&-tE — INCORRUPTIBILITY : an unimpaired condition : SOUNDNESS : the quality or state of being complete or undivided.

When walking with God we want to walk in uprightness of heart and integrity before God and man. By the grace of God we desire to be the real deal — a follower of Jesus Christ whose life is transformed to the glory of God.

It is we who are in danger: in danger of missing the fullness of life offered to us. Can we seriously believe that God would establish a plan for us that essentially bypasses the awesome needs of present human life and leaves human character untouched? Would he leave us even temporarily marooned with no help in our kind of world, with our kind of problems: psychological, emotional, social, and global? Can we believe the essence of Christian Faith and salvation covers nothing but death and after? Can we believe that being saved really has nothing whatever to do with the kind of persons we are?

Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy - Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1998) 38.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read **Psalm 78:1–9** and **78:56-72** as a group.

David, the king of Israel, led in two ways; he had skillful hands and integrity of heart.

What is skillful leadership? Give some examples of someone who leads this way.

What does it mean to lead with integrity? What happens when people lead without it?

THE SECURITY OF WALKING IN THE WAYS OF GOD

¹A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother. ²Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death. ³The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry but he thwarts the craving of the wicked. ⁴Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. ⁵He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son. ⁶Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. ⁷The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. ⁸The wise in heart accept **commands**, but a chattering fool comes to ruin. ⁹**The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.**

Proverbs 10:1-9

How could integrity bring security and strength to life?

GOD KNOWS THE WAY WE SHOULD LIVE — OUR WAYS FAIL

²⁵There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. — Proverbs 16:25

CONTRAST IN PLANS

¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11

Jesus says...follow me with your whole heart — with integrity!

¹³Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and **only a few find it.** **Matthew 7:13,14**

⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.** ¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **John 10:9-11**



PRAY ABOUT IT — ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION

- A** Praise God he will show us the way to live and give us the strength to walk in it.
- C** Confess to God your sin and failings. Confess to him that you have not even sought out his ways for your life and have been doing it on your own.
- T** Thank God that he has not shipwrecked us to live alone on the island of the earth. Thank God he has a plan for your life — one to transform you into a man or woman of integrity.
- S** Ask God to help you to keep his commandments by his power working in you.

WORK IT OUT — SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

We need to know there are ways that God detests and ways in which he delights — look at these and ask yourself — How am I doing? Where do I need to change?

D ¹⁶There are six things the LORD hates,
E seven that are detestable to him:
T ¹⁷haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands
E that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that
S devises wicked schemes, feet that are
T quick to rush into evil, ¹⁹a false witness
S who pours out lies and a man who stirs
up dissension among brothers.

Proverbs 6:16-19

D ²³"Let not the wise man boast of his
E wisdom or the strong man boast of his
L strength or the rich man boast of his
I riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast
G about this: that he understands and
H knows me, that I am the LORD , **who**
T **exercises kindness, justice and**
S **righteousness on earth,** for in these I
delight," declares the LORD .

Jeremiah 9:23,24

Questions to ask yourself and your group:

- Do you think you are better than everyone else — do you “look down” on others?
- Are you a man/woman of your word with your teachers, coaches, advisors, etc.? Are you honest?
- Do you plan and plot schemes against others—family, teammates, etc?
- Do you talk about others in a way that reflects poorly on them? Do you stab people in the back? Are you gossiping about others?
- Do you try and stir up stuff with others? Are you an instigator of trouble?

Help keep your brothers and sisters strong in the Lord — be honest with your group about your struggles and where you want to change. Desire to be men/women of integrity. If you see one another acting up, go to each other in private and address it — follow the method laid out in **Matthew 18:15-17**.

If we do not know what God requires of us, how will we know how he desires us to live. We need to find our way by the light of God’s Word.

“THE GOSPEL FOR US”

Booker T. Washington describes meeting an ex-slave from Virginia in his book Up From Slavery: I found that this man had made a contract with his master, two or three years previous to the Emancipation Proclamation, to the effect that the slave was to be permitted to buy himself, by paying so much per year for his body; and while he was paying for himself, he was to be permitted to labor where and for whom he pleased. Finding that he could secure better wages in Ohio, he went there. When freedom came, he was still in debt to his master some three hundred dollars. Notwithstanding that the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligation to his master, this black man walked the greater portion of the distance back to where his old master lived in Virginia, and placed the last dollar, with interest, in his hands. In talking to me about this, the man told me that he knew that he did not have to pay his debt, **but that he had given his word to his master, and his word he had never broken.** He felt that he could not enjoy his freedom till he had fulfilled his promise.

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Proverbs 10:9

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