

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth¹ evil? and still **he holdeth fast his integrity**, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. (Job 2:3)*

*Till I die I will not remove mine **integrity** from me. (Job 27:5)*

I. DECISIONS, DECISIONS!

A. Every day of our life will include a multitude of decisions. Some do not matter, such as what we have for lunch or which shoes to wear. But many of our daily decisions have eternal consequences. Those decisions – choices that we make – determine the life that we live here, and our circumstances in eternity.

1. They affect others, and they affect us.
2. They affect the Lord. These decisions are truly important.
3. They determine the course and quality of our life. For example:
 - a. Will we give in to a particular temptation to sin?
 - b. What will we allow into our mind, our eyes, and our ears?
 - c. Will we use our life – our time and energy – to honor God, or to please ourselves?
 - d. Will we do the godly thing, or the ungodly thing?

B. There are also other life changing decisions that we make only once, or only on rare occasion.

- a. For example, we decide only once to be saved.
- b. And, sometimes we must decide upon a change of ministry, job, or major purchase.

C. Salvation is a one time decision to accept Christ *and it has everything to do with sin and what we do (our deeds)*. Salvation is a decision to live a holy life and to forsake sin. It is a decision to have integrity with God.

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be **saved**. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil**. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But **he that doeth truth cometh to the light**, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

1. Notice that believing on Jesus is salvation from condemnation, but it is men who love to do evil deeds who refuse to believe on Him. (20)
2. There is an inescapable connection between Godly deeds and coming to Jesus. (21)
3. A decision to believe (have faith) in Christ is a decision to live a holy life – it is an escape from a sinful life. (1 John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.)
4. Salvation is not a decision to stay out of hell. It is a decision to forsake sin and live a godly and holy life through God’s Holy Spirit.

D. Once saved, there is a certain type of decision that each born again believer will have to make time and time again. It is the decision to “retain, or not to retain our integrity.” (See Job 27:5)

E. There are some sins that tempt us little or not at all. But, each of us are tempted by certain sins that bring pleasure to our flesh, and therefore appeal to us (we lust after them). When we commit those sins, they make us feel pleasure for a moment in our flesh. Then, they bring suffering, anguish, pain, and death.

Too many Christians, and a lot of so-called Christians, have decided to indulge in sin for the sake of its temporary pleasure, and have forfeited their integrity towards God.

We can sometimes avoid making countless little decisions by making one big one. For example, if we have decided not to use ungodly language, we won’t need to make daily decisions not to curse.

¹ The word “eschew” means to flee from, to shun, or to avoid. It is first mentioned about Job in Job 1:8.

1. When we choose to sin, we are choosing to sin against God. We make a conscious decision to disobey Him in order to gain that moment of pleasure.
2. When tempted to commit sins, we must decide:
 - a. Is my love of pleasure – that pleasure – greater than my love for God?
 - b. Is my fear of God less than my willingness to gain pleasure through sin?
 - c. Do I know so much more than God that I can choose what He forbids? (Like Eve)
 - d. Will I obey God or please my flesh?
- F. If we choose sin over our fear for God, and love of God, we will forfeit our integrity.
- G. Until we confess and forsake that sin, we lose many things because of our choice to sin.
 1. Joy, peace, and happiness. (Psalm 51:12)
 2. Hope in God and His blessings. (Prov 10:6)
 3. Confidence in prayer (I John 3:22)
- H. If we stay in this sinful condition for a long period of time, we can become so back slidden that we have almost no relationship with God, and can become blind to our sinful condition.
- I. The amazing thing is, believers can forfeit their integrity and live a life that does not please God.
- J. Another amazing thing is that some people think they are saved, but have never really turned away from sin and believed on Christ for righteousness. They are deceived (see Mark 7:23).

II. QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS?

- A. Is it possible to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and then to live a life that is immersed in the world; engrossed in the world’s music, fashion, fads, and entertainment; and occupied in fulfilment of the world’s goals and dreams?
- B. Is it true that the born again believer’s sins are of absolutely no consequence to him, and that since he is saved he is totally protected from the consequences of sin by God’s grace?
- C. What is integrity? Do we possess it? How can we lose it? What happens when we lose it? How can we get it back?
- D. How can we overcome sin in our life? What must we do? What will God do?

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE CLASS

- A. To fully understand salvation, and the correlation between salvation and holiness.
- B. To understand the role of authority, our accountability, and God’s judgment in our life.
- C. To understand integrity, its value, how to have it, how it is lost, and how it is recovered.
- D. To learn how to measure and build our character.
- E. The understand the flesh, lust, pleasure, temptation, and sin and its consequences.
- F. To learn how to mortify the deeds of the flesh thru the Spirit.
- G. To recognize our ability, our dependance on God, and the connection between these.
- H. To consider specific sins that may tempt us, that they are sin, and how to overcome them.

IV. WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

If we were to stand before Jesus this very moment, we could either look Him in the eye or we could not. We know where we stand with Him, and we know what stands between us and Him, if anything. We may be deceiving our selves, but in our heart we probably know. We have either decided to be holy, or we have decided to accept sin in our life. We cannot claim that we are right in God’s eyes unless we are COMPLETE – unless we are right with Him in every area. We cannot, for example, say we have integrity if we are not faithful to His word, His local church, His will, His law, and His judgment. Partial obedience is disobedience. If there is sin in our life that we have chosen, for the sake of its pleasure, and which is against God’s will, we have lost our integrity. If we are choosing sin over God, and if we are saved, we will be unhappy, without hope, and unproductive for God. We can have integrity again, but we must forsake our sin, learn how to abstain from fleshly lusts, and be willing to sacrifice whatever stands between us and a healthy happy relationship with our Lord and Saviour.

“In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.” – Genesis 20:5

I. WHAT IS INTEGRITY?

- A. The word “Integrity” only appears in the King James Bible in the Old Testament, and then only in Genesis, I Kings, Job, Psalms, and Proverbs.
 - 1. But, the concept and importance of integrity is found throughout the Bible.
 - 2. The words, “upright,” “perfection,” and “simplicity,” along with “innocence” are used in the Bible to express the meaning of integrity.
- B. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines integrity as, “wholeness; entireness; an unbroken state” and “moral soundness or purity; incorruptness; uprightness; honesty” and “uprightness in mutual dealings.”
- C. David Cloud’s *Way of Life Encyclopedia* defines integrity as, “purity; sincerity; honesty; uprightness” or seeking to walk in uprightness and obedience to God’s commands.

II. THREE SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF INTEGRITY

- A. Abimelech: The first time the word “integrity” is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 20.
 - 1. Abraham was in Gerar (in the far South of Israel), and told King Abimelech that Sarah (Abraham’s wife) was his sister.
 - 2. Abimelech “sent and took Sarah,” (Gen 20:2) but God warned him sternly and revealed the truth that Sarah was married. (3)
 - 3. Abimelech explained that he had been deceived, and pleaded that he had “integrity” (5)
 - 4. What was he saying?
 - a. That he understood right and wrong, and had intended to do what is right
 - b. That his actions were based upon God’s laws, and that he had not knowingly sinned.
 - 5. Integrity, to Abimelech, was being innocent before God.
- B. David and Solomon: The second mention of the word “integrity” is in I Kings 9:4
 - 1. Solomon had just finished building the temple, and the Lord appeared to him
 - 2. God promised Solomon a reward, but there was a condition.
 - 3. In order for God to bless him, Solomon was charged to walk as, “David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness.”
 - 4. David is an example of integrity
 - a. David’s heart was “perfect with the LORD his God.” (I Kings 11:4, I Kings 15:3)
 - b. David followed God with all his heart (I Ki 14:8)
 - c. David was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22)
 - 5. But, Solomon’s wives turned his heart away after other gods (I Ki 11:4). Within only five years of his death, the temple was sacked by the Shishak, king of Egypt. (I Ki 14:25-26)
- C. Job: The third example of integrity (Job 2:3, 2:9, 27:5)
 - 1. Job’s trials and suffering WERE NOT caused by sin; Job was innocent.
 - 2. The LORD told Satan, in Job 2:3, that Job was, “a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil . . .” and that Job, “holdeth fast his integrity.”
 - 3. This complement was a result of Job’s declaration that, “the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21).
 - 4. The Bible explains, “Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” (Job 1:22)
 - 5. Job’s integrity was that he was innocent (sinned not), and did not falsely accuse God.

III. THREE SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS ABOUT INTEGRITY

- A. Integrity is a particular place – “. . . in mine integrity.” (Psalm 26:11)
 - 1. A place (location) is somewhere that we either occupy, or do not occupy. We are either there, or we are not. On Sunday morning, for example, you are either in Sunday School or you are not in Sunday School. Either we are in integrity, or we are not.

2. If we are not in a certain place, we have the choice to go there or to stay away. If we are not in integrity, we could be if we would choose to do so.
3. We know where we are currently located, and we know whether or not we are in a certain place. We know whether or not we are or are not in integrity.
- B. Integrity is a proper path – “I will walk in mine integrity.” (Psalm 26:11)
 1. As we walk along, we can decide to stay on the path or to leave it. If we are walking “in our integrity” we can choose to stay on a path of integrity or to stray off of it.
 2. There are other paths available, and they may appear easier or more pleasant. We will have to avoid some paths in order to stay on the path of integrity.
- C. Integrity is a precious possession – “Dost thou still retain thine integrity?” (Job 2:9)
 1. Like anything valuable, it comes to us with a price. We must pay a price (i.e. forfeit certain pleasures, sins, etc.) in order to possess integrity.
 2. It can be sold – exchanged – for other things. A man could exchange his integrity for sinful pleasures, material possessions, or popular opinion.

IV. MORE ABOUT INTEGRITY IN SCRIPTURE

- A. Integrity must be from and in the heart. (David . . . walked, in integrity of heart - I Ki 9:4)
 1. The heart discerns what we love, and what we love impacts our integrity.
 2. Our heart is our personal final authority over actions in our life. (I John 3:21)
- B. Integrity provides confidence towards God; absence of integrity robs us of confidence and causes fear of judgment. (Psalm 7:8, 26:1, Job 31:6, Heb 10:26-27)
- C. Integrity can be a guide in our life (if we have it). (Prov 11:3)
- D. Integrity cannot be forcibly seized from someone, it must be forfeited. (Job 27:5)
- E. Integrity involves innocence (Ge 20:5), uprightness (I Ki 9:4), obedience (I Ki 9:4), rejecting evil (Job 2:3), and proper speech (Prov 19:1). Without integrity, there cannot be godly wisdom.
- F. There are those who we know from scripture as examples of integrity:
 1. Joseph - the Bible never tells us anything of a sin in his life.
 2. Daniel - tried often, he also is an example of an upright man.
 3. Job – he is the most obvious example of integrity.
- G. There are those in the Bible who did not have, or forfeited integrity:
 1. Cain - murdered his brother out of jealousy and anger.
 2. Balaam the son of Bosor (II Peter 2:15, Num 22) – was willing to curse God’s people in order to earn the “wages of unrighteousness.”
 3. King Saul – was willing to kill innocent David in order to retain the kingdom

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Integrity is a heart felt desire and decision to walk and live in obedience to God’s commands.
- B. To some, integrity is priceless and precious. To others, it is useless and irrelevant.
- C. A self-deceived man will tell himself that he has integrity, but his thoughts and actions will betray his false claim.
- D. Integrity is affected by all parts of our life. We cannot claim integrity until we detest sin in all its forms.
- E. There is no integrity outside of salvation. The unsaved man is at enmity with God. He has no integrity before God at all.
- F. A saved man may forfeit his integrity, and he might or might not be able to acquire it once again.
- G. The Bible contains very few stories of men who forfeited or forsook their integrity and then returned to it once again. The road away from integrity is often a “one way” thoroughfare.

I. REVIEW – WHAT IS INTEGRITY?

- A. Integrity is being right with God: a heart felt desire and decision to walk and live in obedience to God’s commands, which is not being compromised with decisions to live in sin disobedience.
- B. A man who is deceiving himself will tell himself that he has integrity, but his thoughts and actions will betray his false claim. A man with integrity will know it.
- C. Integrity is a chosen place, a path, and a possession:
 - 1. We can remain in the place of integrity, or we can depart from it.
 - 2. We can walk in the path of integrity, or stray off of it.
 - 3. We can retain our integrity or we can forfeit it.

II. WHY DO MEN NEED A SAVIOUR, AND TO BE SAVED?

- A. Because all men are sinners, and are guilty before God.
 - 1. Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one
 - 2. Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God
 - 3. Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned
- B. No man can save himself from sin by good works, future obedience, etc.
 - 1. Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.
 - 2. None of the people healed by Jesus, or raised from the dead, could have delivered themselves. If we could save ourselves, then Christ died in vain. (Gal 2:21)
 - 3. Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

III. FROM WHAT ARE WE SAVED?

- A. We are not just saved from hell! Nobody wants to be caught doing wrong, or punished, and being saved is much more than just avoiding punishment.
 - 1. We *are* saved from wrath. (Rom 5:9), and we are saved from death (James 5:20)
 - 2. We are also saved from living a life of sin – I John is a book dedicated to how someone can know they are saved. Much of that book emphasizes the changes that take place after salvation, and the fact that a saved person is changed. See I John 3:8-10, Matt 1:21
 - 3. Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
- B. A lost man is in a terrible condition and situation, from which he cannot deliver himself.
 - 1. He is blind to the truth. (II Cor 4:4-6)
 - 2. He is guilty before God.
 - a. Ro 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty before God.**
 - 3. He has no fellowship with God. (Eph 4:18, Col 1:21, Rom 8:7-8)
 - 4. He is dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph 2:1, Eph 2:5, Col 2:13)
- C. If we are truly saved, we are saved from:
 - 1. Death (Eph 2:5, James 5:20)
 - 2. Wrath (Rom 5:9)
 - 3. Damnation (Mark 16:16)
 - 4. Inability to work for God (Eph 2:10 - we are saved unto good works)
 - 5. Unrighteousness (I Peter 2:24, I John 2:29, I John 3:10)
 - a. Righteousness is imputed - we are given credit for having it (Rom 4:6, 22)
 - b. Righteousness is performed/lived (I John 2:29, I Pe 2:24)

- D. When we are saved, we get changed with the purpose of being dead to sin. (Rom 6:1-4)

IV. WHAT IS SALVATION?

- A. Confession - dealing with sin. Salvation must include confession that we have sinned against God, that sin is wrong, and that we are guilty. (Rom 10:9-10)
- B. Calling – Whosoever shall “call” upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Rom 10:13) In order to call, one must know they are unsaved and in need of salvation.
- C. Cleansing – removal of sin and guilt. Salvation is the making whole of the sin sick soul.
 - 1. When Jesus healed at the pool of Bethesda, He said, “Wilt thou be made whole?”
 - 2. The cleansing of lepers and raising of the dead are examples of salvation.
- D. Changing – old things are passed away, behold all things become new. (II Cor 5:17) It involves a new direction in life, a new purpose, a new master, a new hope, and a new eternity. Note: there are things that “accompany” salvation. (Heb 6:9)
- E. Captivating – the Spirit of God dwells within those who are saved. (Rom 8:9)
 - 1. Rom 8:5 – They that are after the Spirit [do mind] the things of the Spirit.
 - 2. Rom 8:14 – For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
- F. Challenging – once saved, we live a life which is a struggle against sin and temptation.
 - 1. Mt 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
 - 2. Ro 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

V. FACTS ABOUT SALVATION AND INTEGRITY

- A. Without salvation, integrity is impossible.
- B. Salvation is a choice not to live in sin, but to be holy.
- C. Salvation cleanses us from all sin, and provides the foundation for integrity.
- D. Salvation brings the spirit of God which allows us to have integrity.
- E. Salvation does not eliminate the possibility of sin, or of forfeiting integrity. David, Demas, and Lot all were saved but lost their integrity, as did Saul and Peter.
- F. Salvation places us into fellowship with God, but that fellowship can be interrupted.
- G. If we truly love the Lord, we will desire to have integrity before Him.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. To be born again - truly saved - is necessary if a man would desire integrity before God.
- B. Salvation is a consequence of repentance (II Cor 7:10).
 - 1. Repentance toward God. (Acts 20:21)
 - 2. Repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. (II Tim 2:25)
- C. We can make salvation seem too difficult by insisting that one cannot be saved unless they eliminate sin from their life.
- D. We can make salvation seem too easy by ignoring the need to deal with and turn from sin.
- E. In either case the lost sinner will miss out on salvation unless they realize the truth
 - 1. Salvation is not self reformation.
 - 2. Salvation is not living a life of sin but escaping the consequences.
- F. Integrity requires salvation, and salvation brings integrity. Subsequently, that integrity must be guarded or it can be lost.

It is impossible to have integrity without being born again - saved. It would be like trying to swim without getting in the water. And, once saved, it is impossible to have integrity without choosing to obey God in your life. Finally, a saved person can lose their integrity through disobedience, but can then regain integrity through confession and repentance.

Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. Prov 23:23

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The enemy of integrity is that thing that would cause us to lose/exchange (i.e. sell) our integrity — to decide that integrity was not as valuable as that something else.
- B. Integrity: being right with God, in His will, and in close proper daily fellowship with Him.
- C. The enemy of integrity — the allure of sin and man’s lack of faith in God’s word about sin.
 - 1. Sin is wilful disobedience: it is not sin if it is coerced or forced. We choose to sin.
 - 2. It is the man who voluntarily chooses sin, forfeits his integrity.
- D. The fundamental problem is that, *“We do not understand the exchange rate.”*
 - 1. We do not realize the high value of Integrity.
 - 2. We do not realize that the return on investment from sin is trivial and temporary.
 - 3. Most of all, we do not realize the difference in value between the two - the exchange rate.
 - a. We do not realize the suffering that sin will bring.
 - b. We do not appreciate the reward that integrity brings.
- E. The enemy of Integrity is our misunderstanding of the exchange rate - what these two things are worth, and the vast difference in that worth.
- F. The world, flesh, and devil will offer us attractive alternatives to our integrity.
- G. The lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life are the weak spots in us. (I John 2:16)

II. THE LOW VALUE, AND HIGH COST OF SIN

- A. It is true that sin provides limited pleasure for a season, but if a life of sin was so wonderful, why did we repent of it and ask Christ to be our Saviour?
 - 1. We did not get saved if we only wanted to be saved so we could live a life of sin and not go to hell at the end of it.
 - 2. When we got saved, we dealt with our sin by asking God to save us from living in its bond.
- B. The ultimate end result of sin is death – James 1:15 . . . when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.
- C. The harvest you get when you sow to the flesh is corruption - decay and loss. (Gal 6:8)
- D. The flesh is never satisfied - sin does not bring satisfaction, and will require more and more in a never ending downward spiral. (John 4:13-14)
 - 1. Note a man who lives in sin, and look to see if he has found satisfaction. He has not.
 - 2. Many who have all that this world has to offer have decided life is not worth living.
- E. The cost of our sin to our Saviour was His death on the cross. (I Cor 15:3)
- F. You cannot have sin and maintain your integrity at the same time. Sin costs integrity.
- G. Psalm 51 provides a list of some of the inner consequences of sin.
 - 1. It continually bothers us to know we are living in sin. (3)
 - 2. It causes us to doubt the availability of God’s presence. (11)
 - 3. It robs us of our joy. (12)
 - 4. It causes us to feel guilty. (14)
- H. Fleshly lusts war (fight with a purpose to defeat) against our soul. (I Peter 2:11)

III. THE GREAT VALUE OF INTEGRITY

- A. The value of fellowship with God is immeasurable. (Psalm 84:2, 10, Ps 27:4, Ps 43:4)
- B. Sadly, many have never known or understood the joy of walking with God, and do not know what they are missing when they lose it.
- C. Some may have known the joy of walking with God, but mistakenly think that there is something even better to be had through sin. (Adam and Eve did this.)
- D. Answered prayer is contingent upon pleasing behavior. (I John 3:22)
- E. Blessings are in store for those who abstain from sin. (Psalm 1:1-2)

- F. A victorious and rewarding experience at the judgment seat of Christ awaits those who live their life for Him. (Matt 25:23, I Peter 1:7, Rev 2:10)
- G. In the economy of eternity, sin is a liability but integrity is a precious asset.

IV. THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND

- A. Eve - exchanged holiness for a piece of fruit
- B. Cain - refused to bring the required sacrifice and chose sin instead
- C. Esau - exchanged his birthright for a bowl of beans (lentils)
- D. David - exchanged his family for a night of infidelity (and murdered in an attempt to have what he wanted)
- E. Peter – forfeited his loyalty to the Lord for fear of what man might do to him
- F. Do we understand that our integrity is more valuable than sin?

V. THERE ARE ALSO EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO DID UNDERSTAND

- A. Moses – Rejected the pleasure of sin (which lasts only for a season - Heb 11:25)
- B. Joseph – For him it was not worth it to “sin against God?” (Gen 39:9)
- C. Daniel – The flavor of the king’s meat was not enough to cause him to disobey. (Da 1:8)
- D. Jesus – For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2)
- E. Are we willing to retain our integrity and forfeit the devil’s suggestions?

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. What would deceive us into believing that the value of sin is greater than the value of integrity?
 - 1. Over valuation of the pleasures of sin
 - 2. Under valuation of integrity with God
 - 3. Not understanding the exchange rate
- B. Eve - believed the devil instead of believing God.
 - 1. The devil told Eve that the cost was low (“ye shall not surely die”) and the reward was great (“ye shall be as gods”).
 - 2. He lied! And she had to endure the pain of having one of her sons kill the other.
- C. Cain - was so proud he refused to do as the LORD required, and chose sin instead.
 - 1. Gen 4:13 And Cain said unto the LORD, *My punishment is greater than I can bear.*
- D. Esau - could not see how a future blessing would meet his current appetite.
 - 1. Esau could not see that the birthright would do him any good (Gen 25:32)
 - 2. He believed that pottage was better (34)
 - 3. In God’s eyes, Esau despised his birthright (34)
 - 4. In the end he cried with a “*great and bitter cry*” (Gen 27:34) - the cost was higher than he ever expected.
- E. If we believed what God said in His word, we would not misunderstand the exchange rate.
 - 1. As with everything else in the Christian walk, it all boils down to faith.
 - 2. He has cautioned us against the deceitfulness of sin.
 - 3. He has informed us of a coming judgment.
- F. There is a cost for everything of value.
 - 1. Integrity will require that we abstain from sin and the pleasure it can bring.
 - 2. Sin, if chosen, will cost us our integrity and the blessings that go with it.
- G. Our decision – integrity or sin – has eternal consequences.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:
for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Rom 7:18

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh:
and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Gal 5:16-17

I. THE PROBLEM OF RETAINING INTEGRITY?

- A. Different people have weakness in different aspects of their lives.
 - 1. Peter’s weakness was a fear of what men might say or do to him. (Lu 22:58, Ga 2:12)
 - 2. David’s, Solomon’s, and Rehoboam’s weakness were in the area of lust for women.
 - a. Apparently this ran in the family.
 - b. It cost all three of these men greatly.
 - 3. Thomas’s weakness was in believing what Jesus said. (John 20:25)
- B. Were it not for the flesh, we would not have the weakness which threatens our integrity before God. (Gal 5:17)
- C. When we allow the desires of the flesh to govern our actions, we distance ourselves from God and forfeit our integrity. This is called walking after the flesh or in the flesh.
 - 1. Ro 8:5 They that are after the flesh do mind (attend to) the things of the flesh
 - 2. Ro 8:8 They that are in the flesh cannot please God.
 - 3. Ro 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
- D. Romans chapter 8 continues to explain that we “groan” (Rom 8:23) waiting for the redemption of our body because we are saved by hope (not by a sinless body).

II. THE PROBLEM WITH THE FLESH

- A. The flesh is weak (Mark 14:38)
- B. The flesh profitless – can do no good (John 6:63)
- C. Our flesh (in a saved believer) serves the law of sin (Ro 7:25)
- D. The flesh will always be a source of trouble in the moral realm (I Cor 7:28)
- E. The flesh is inherently filthy (II Cor 7:1, I Pe 3:21)
- F. The works of the flesh are all wicked and sinful (Gal 5:19-21)
- G. The desires of the flesh are sinful and wicked (Eph 2:3)
- H. The flesh is the home of lust (II Pe 2:18, I Jn 2:16)

III. MORTIFICATION OF THE DEEDS OF THE BODY

- A. The word “mortify” means, “to make dead; to put to death; to deprive of life force.”
- B. Mortification of the deeds of the body is a Christian’s obligation and responsibility.
 - 1. Ro 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
 - 2. Col 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry
- C. The body - our body – is already spiritually dead (spiritual death, not physical death).
 - 1. Ro 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
 - 2. Ro 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
- D. But, the deeds of the body are still present with us, and must be mortified by us.
- E. The only possible way to mortify the deeds of the body is “through the Spirit.” (Rom 8:13)
- F. Romans 10:13 says, “IF” – There are two possibilities in the Believer’s Life.
 - 1. If ye live after the flesh . . .
 - 2. If you . . . mortify the deeds of the body . . .

IV. JOHN OWEN’S WORK – THROUGH THE SPIRIT²

- A. To fulfil the obligation of “mortifying the deeds of the body,” the believer MUST do so THROUGH THE SPIRIT.
- B. John Owen, in *“The Mortification of Sin”* lists three ways the Holy Spirit can mortify “sin.”
 - 1. By producing the fruit of the Spirit in our life (Gal 5:22-23)
 - 2. By weakening and destroying the habit of sin in our lives
 - 3. By providing fellowship with Christ.
 - 4. But, these actions are outside the realm of our control and thus they do not answer the obligation that WE have to mortify through the Spirit.
- C. Owen acknowledges that we must take part in mortification, and explains:
 - 1. Our effort to mortify **must include all sin**, not just some sins, or we will fail.
 - a. Acceptance of a few particular sins in our life is acceptance of sin.
 - b. It would be like building a dam meant to hold back water only in some places.
 - 2. So, to mortify sin we must firmly grasp the knowledge that ALL sin is loathsome, perilous, and unacceptable in our life. Indeed, we must seek holiness rather than partial obedience.
 - 3. And, we must fully accept the guilt, danger, and evil of any sin whatsoever.
 - a. The conscience should be in proper condition: good (I Tim 1:19), pure (I Tim 3:9), and healthy (no seared - I Tim 4:2: not defiled – Titus 1:15).
 - b. We must affirm to ourselves and in our heart that sin WILL bring chastening to a child of God. (De 8:5, Heb 12:6-7) Know that sin will rob us of peace with God.
 - 4. Then, we must fervently and sincerely desire deliverance from all sin.
 - a. Through God’s word, we can obtain longing and a fervent desire for holiness. Time in God’s word will cleanse us. (Eph 5:26, John 15:3, Psalm 119:9)
 - b. Do not make excuses to yourself for your sin, its cause, its root, your tendency towards it, or your weakness. Do not soothe your conscience while still in your sin.
 - 5. Further, act out with all your power against any and every sin in your life.
 - a. Consider what circumstances bring sin forth in your life, and avoid them.
 - b. Rise with great might against sin as soon as it begins to rise against you.
 - c. Think on the holiness of God, the loathsome nature of yourself and your sin, and the high price paid for your sin on the cross.
 - 6. Finally, Owens instructs – “Set faith on Christ to work for the killing of thy sin.”
 - a. By trusting Him wholly to be sufficient to deprive sin of its power
 - b. By expecting, in faith, relief from sin by Christ
 - c. And, by acting on faith in Christ by expecting His power to conquer sin
- D. The Spirit alone:
 - 1. Clearly and fully convicts the heart of sin
 - 2. Reveals to us the fullness of Christ for our relief (through His word)
 - 3. Establishes expectation of relief in our heart by faith
 - 4. Brings the cross of Christ into our heart with its sin-killing power
 - 5. Is the author and finisher of our sanctification
 - 6. Is the power, life, and vigour of our prayers.
- E. Two simple but powerful truths from God’s word
 - 1. We can overcome temptation: I Cor 10:13 God “will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able”
 - 2. We overcome by asking: II Cor 12:8-9 “I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart”
- F. Three things to say – say “Yes” to God’s Spirit, say “No” to the flesh when tempted, and say “Help” to the Lord when you are weak.

² Much of this material comes from *The Mortification of Sin*, by Puritan John Owen (1616-1683). To read this book, you may go to https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/spiritualformation/texts/owen_mortificationofsin.pdf

*Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper:
but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

I. REVIEW

A. What is Integrity?

1. Integrity is an unbroken state of fellowship with God; loving Him and seeking to walk in obedience to God’s commands.
2. It is a place, path, and possession. It involves justification, uprightness, and rejecting (eschewing) evil.
3. There is no integrity without salvation, but there can be salvation with subsequently lost integrity.

Israel is a picture of God's commitment to holiness. He chose to place His name in Jerusalem, but then when Jerusalem became a place of idolatry and ungodliness, God sent enemies against the very place that stood for Him. This shows that God will not ignore sin just because we are Christians, and God will judge sin even when it brings reproach to His reputation.

B. What interrupts Integrity?

1. Sin
2. The lack of faith which leads to sin
3. Lose of integrity occurs when we value sin more than we value our relationship with God.
4. The weak spots: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life. The flesh.

II. CAN INTEGRITY BE RESTORED?

A. There are examples of people who walked closely with God and then somehow failed or fell with no mention of restored integrity. We might presume that it was restored, but are not told.

1. Noah - Gen 9:20-21 (drunkenness long after the flood)
2. Aaron - Ex 32 (the golden calf incident)
3. Gideon - Judges 8:27 (the golden ephod that became a snare)

B. There are examples of Saints in the Bible who lost their integrity and then later found restoration.

1. David - killed Uriah in order to have his wife
2. Samson - compromised with Delilah and lost his strength
3. Peter - denied Christ in order to avoid persecution

C. It is also true that there are Saints in the Bible who turned away from God in some way, and never seemed to regain a right relationship with Him.

1. Lot
2. King Saul
3. King Solomon

D. Some who lost fellowship with God were restored and some were not. What was the difference?

III. HOW WAS/IS INTEGRITY RESTORED?

A. Three examples:

1. King David

a. God sent Nathan the prophet to name the sin and accuse the guilty (II Sam 12)

- (1) God initiated the correction – The LORD sent Nathan unto David (1)
- (2) David was taught the seriousness of what he had done (1-4)
 - (a) One reason we accept sin is that we consider it not to be as serious and injurious as it really is
 - (b) When David saw how evil the sin was, he said it deserved death (5)
- (3) David was named as the guilty party - “Thou art the man” (7)
 - (a) David “despised” God’s commandment (9)
 - (b) Judgment was pronounced (10-11)
- (4) David confessed his sin (13) and was forgiven by the LORD.
- (5) But, there were still consequences of that sin (14).

- b. David longed for forgiveness and restoration (**Psalm 51**)
 - (1) Psalm 51 is an account of David’s thoughts “when Nathan the prophet came unto him.”
 - (2) He asks god for mercy, cleansing, and forgiveness.
 - (3) He confesses his sin and the seriousness of it. (3-4)
 - (4) He asks for restoration and promises to use it wisely (12-13)
 - (5) He explains the Lord’s requirement – a broken spirit and contrite heart (17)
 2. Samson
 - a. Samson had chosen to consort with the enemy of God, and was betrayed by that enemy. Note: we will not find a loyal friend in the devil or his children. (Jud 16:17)
 - b. It took time for the effects of his sin to be removed. (Jud 16:22)
 - c. Then, when he had the opportunity to exemplify Christ (by dying to defeat God’s enemies) he willingly did so. (Jud 16:28-30)
 - d. Samson’s life was filled with mistakes, but ended with a great victory.
 3. Peter (**John 21:15-19**)
 - a. After his sin, Peter went out and wept bitterly. This was the beginning of restoration. (Luke 22:62)
 - b. Then, Peter went back to the same place he had been before the Lord had called him - to the fish.
 - (1) Peter became a fisher of fish, rather than a fisher of men.
 - (2) Fish provide a living wage, but they have no eternal value.
 - (3) Had Jesus left Peter alone, the remainder of his life would have been empty.
 - c. The Lord Himself came to Peter with the specific purpose of restoring him (Jn 21)
 - d. Just as Peter had denied Christ three times, he was asked three times if he loved the Lord. (15, 16, 17). Each time Peter answered, Jesus told him to “feed my sheep.”
 - e. Then, the Lord told Peter that he would indeed die to glorify God, and the sin was forgiven and forgotten. (18)
 - f. Peter went on to do incredible things for God in the first few chapters of Acts. Thousands were saved.
- B. In each case, there was a change of heart by the offending Saint, and a desire of forgiveness. God is willing to forgive, but will not force us to repent or forsake sin. He will lead us towards repentance, but we must make the decision for ourself.

IV. WHAT COULD PREVENT RESTORATION OF INTEGRITY?

- A. Stubbornness – Failure or refusal to repent, as in the case of Saul and Lot
- B. Blindness – Not seeing, facing and accepting the seriousness of our sin
- C. Apathy – Not having any desire to be restored
- D. Faithlessness – Continuing to value the benefits (so-called) of our sin more than fellowship and a restored walk with God.

V. WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

- A. If Peter had not repented, what would have happened?
- B. If David had not repented, what would have happened?
- C. When Lot and King Saul did not repent, what happened?
- D. Eternity Should Matter! – I Cor 3:13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. 14 If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

“Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity:
I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.” – Psalm 26:1

I. BEWARE THE DANGER OF SELF DECEPTION!

- A. More lives are wasted or lost because of self-deception than for almost any other reason.
- B. There will be “many” who step into eternity who were deceived about their spiritual condition
 - 1. About salvation – (i.e. I Cor 6:9,
 - a. Matt 7:22 – Even those who think they’ve done “many wonderful works” can be lost.
 - b. 2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith
 - c. 1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. (The habitually wicked man is not saved.)
 - 2. About their walk with God - whether or not they possessed integrity
 - a. Gal 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.
 - b. 1 Cor 3:18 Let no man deceive himself
 - c. James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
- C. It is easy to have a problem and deny it or justify it
 - 1. We tell ourselves that things are fine when they are not.
 - 2. We make believe that there is nothing we can do about it, or that it doesn’t really matter.
- D. Be honest and not deceived. There is a problem . . .
 - 1. If you are not faithful to your local church (attendance, participation, financially)
 - 2. If you have sin in your life that would be an embarrassment to the Lord if known publicly
 - 3. If you have given your children to the world and its so-called opportunities
 - 4. If you have no prayer life and/or no devotional life
 - 5. If you have no obvious regular concern or effort for the salvation of lost souls
 - 6. If the focus in your life is the possessions and pleasures of the world
- E. If you were tried by a jury of your peers, could it be proven that you are a born again believer?

II. QUESTIONS TO HONESTLY ASK YOURSELF

- A. Am I truly saved? How do I know?
- B. If so, am I walking in integrity?
 - 1. Am I right with God?
 - 2. Am I living in sin, or am I living apart from sin?
- C. Am I more interested in things of this world than things in eternity?
- D. If things are wrong, am I willing to make things right with God and have integrity restored?

III. ENVY THE MAN WHO LIVES IN HIS INTEGRITY: OR BE THAT MAN (Psalm 26)

- A. David, the writer of this Psalm, exhibits the traits and benefits of walking in Integrity. Notice that the psalm begins and ends with the phrase, “I have walked in mine integrity.” (Ps 26:1, 11)
- B. David describes what HE HAS DONE. (If you have integrity, this will be you.)
 - 1. He has walked (1, 3). He has not been static, motionless, or at ease.
 - 2. He has trusted (1). Faith in the LORD is the source and strength of our integrity.
 - 3. He has hated (5). Those who do evil were not his companions, helpers, or friends.
 - 4. He has loved (8). The Lord’s house (“church”, to us) was what he loved.
- C. David reports the impact (and nature) of integrity in his life.
 - 1. The things he prohibits in his life
 - a. I shall not slide (1). There is stability when we live in integrity.
 - b. Neither will I go in with dissemblers (people who are phony) (4).
 - c. I will not sit with the wicked. (5)

2. The things he approves in his life
 - a. I will wash my hands in innocency. (6)
 - b. I will compass thine altar (6)
 - c. I [will] tell of thy wondrous works (7)
 - d. I will bless the LORD (12)
- D. The threefold character of integrity
 1. Integrity is seen in our confidence (1, 2, 3, 6, 11)
 2. Integrity is seen in our consecration (6, 7, 8)
 3. Integrity is seen in our companions (4, 5, 9, 10, 12)
- E. Perhaps greatest of all, David was READY FOR GOD TO JUDGE HIM NOW! (Verse 1)

IV. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- A. Every man is accountable to God. If he chooses not to retain and walk in his integrity, it will be a great concern to him on judgment day, even if he is unconcerned today.
 1. “. . . we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . . every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:10-12)
 2. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (I Cor 6:19-20)
- B. It will be impossible to retain integrity if there is a refusal to honor godly authority in our life.
 1. Disobedience towards God given authority is disobedience towards God.
 2. God has established authority in the following:
 - a. Parents
 - b. Pastors
 - c. Government
 - d. Scripture
- C. Faith is the key to all that matters in our Christian life.
 1. Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, **that thy faith fail not**: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.
 2. If we sin, it is because we do not really believe the Bible when it says that sin brings death.
 3. If we live for God, we do so with hope for the coming reward, not because of what we see or get in this present world. (Heb 6:19, 11:39)
- D. It is not every little sin that costs us our integrity, it is that sin of deciding to walk away from God, to step out in disobedience and forsake our fellowship with Him or His people, and our decision that we will live for this world and its pleasures, and not the next.
 1. Probably the greatest simple example of a man who lost his integrity would be Demas – 2Tim 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.
 2. When we choose our sin over our God, we lose our integrity.
- E. If you have lost your integrity, and have yet to have it restored, it is not God who is at fault.