

**Series:**  
***Success the Bible Way***  
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**Message #3**  
***“Integrity”***

So far in our series on Success the Bible Way we have discussed:

- The Fear of God
- Gaining the wisdom we need to live life with skill through the Word of God
- Last week we discussed values

This week we will discuss something very significant: Integrity

True Story: Pastor on the train

Given back too much \$ for ticket

Praise the Lord, He has met my needs!

Asked himself, “Could my gain be his job.”

Went to man and said you gave me too much

Man said, “I know I did.”

I was in your church last week and you were teaching on Honesty

**Let’s talk about Integrity**

***Proverbs 22:1 says...“A good name is to be more desired than great wealth...”***

Integrity in Hebrew is used 30 times and means **completeness**, no **duality** between what you say and what you do.

Greek word: haftharīa = singleness = a unity between what you say and what you do.

English word means the same thing: Thus the word Integrity means there is no duality between what you believe and how you live.

The opposite of Integrity would be Hypocrisy

“Integrity is not only the way one thinks but the way one acts”

Integrity is not wearing a cross around your neck, then coming to church, acting like a Christian, and then going home and being a mean or abusive husband, a disrespectful wife or an uninterested parent.

That's duality...hypocrisy, but not Integrity.

Integrity means that you don't hold or profess you're a Christian, but in your job you do a bad product, you're rebellious against your boss, you gossip, you act unethically, and you lie...that's hypocrisy.

I have a certification as a personal trainer and I learned that you don't just work the front of the joint, but you also work the back of the joint, for the integrity of the joint, to keep it unified.

***Proverbs 10:7 says that : “The memory of the righteous is blessed...”***

- Integrity is what you are
- Reputation is what people think you are

You cannot be truly successful in life when you are disrespected by the living because you have no integrity.

We're talking about true Success the Bible Way

The one thing that will carry on beyond your life here on earth will be the memory of your Integrity.

Let's look at Jesus and Paul taught about it:

**Jesus first:**

***Turn to Matthew 17:24 and we will look at the smallest miracle in the NT.***

**In verse 17** Peter is asked if Jesus pays the temple tax.

The smallest act of obedience in the OT was paying a shekeled tax, which at this point had dropped down to a 2 drachma tax.

Every Jew according to the book of Exodus had to divvy up for the upkeep of the temple.

So they came to Peter and tried to poke a hole in Jesus' life with His integrity.

And what they did, or should I say what the world did was look at the smallest jot and tittle of His life and the world will still do that today.

So they came to Peter and asked, "Does your Master do this smallest act of moral compliance?"

They were looking for a tear in His garment.

#### **Verse 24 Read**

**Verse 25: Read** ...In other words does Prince Charles have to pay the tax on Buckingham Palace?

No, because he is not a citizen, he is a son.

#### ***Does Jesus have to pay the tax on the temple?***

No, because it's His house!

**Verse 26:** Read...Jesus, Peter and all the saints of that time did not have to pay the temple tax.

**Verse 27:** Read..."lest we offend them" or "lest we cause a division, a scandal, or lest we harm our Integrity, lest we appear preaching one thing and do another.

**In this case it does matter what people think.**

**Verse 27** continued...Read... "Piece of money" NASB says a "shekel"

In the Greek it is the word "stater" which is the **Exact** temple tax for 2 (Jesus and Peter)

We see that Jesus was not only concerned about His Integrity, but the Integrity of His people and He wanted to show that God Almighty is concerned about the Integrity of His people, in the smallest things!

It matters that people don't see duality in our lives.

### **Let's see what Paul thinks:**

Turn to 2 Cor. 8... Here we see the Apostle Paul on his journeys to the Gentile Christians collecting money to take back to the poor among the Christians in Jerusalem.

Many Christians in Jerusalem had lost jobs because they had been excommunicated, and had no money.

So Paul to the Romans, Philippians, and Thessalonians would take up a collection for the Jewish Christians.

**Look at 2 Cor. 8:16:** We read that Titus was with Paul as he collected the money

**Verse 17** tells us that Titus was sent with Paul

**Verse 18** tells us that there was another man with them who is unnamed.

So we have 3 people dealing with, carrying and handling the money for the Jerusalem church as they travel.

### **Why is this important? And what does it say to us about Integrity?**

**Verse 20:** Read...NASB "Taking precaution" so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift.

"Taking precaution" that no one should discredit us.

We take 3 guys so no one should discredit us in the administration of this gracious gift.

He is concerned with their Integrity.

Our church will be like this...churches should be like this with money.

Integrity means everything!

Paul said we'll go out of our way, we'll be careful, that nobody should discredit us.

There are several other occasions Paul goes out of his way to hold to Integrity and to guard it so that nobody should discredit him or see him or those with him as having no Integrity.

Let's look at the example of Samuel:

He was a man who exuded Integrity.

We see this personified in 1 Samuel 12:1-4

Samuel said to Israel: ***"I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you. Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right."***

***"You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied. "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand."***

During his farewell speech, after having led Israel for decades, He promised to repay anything he had unjustly taken from anyone.

Not one person rose up to make a claim against Samuel!

- His honesty and Integrity permeated every area of his life.
- He 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, his leadership has become legendary.

Biblical Integrity is not just doing the right thing; it's a matter of having the right heart and allowing the person you are on the inside to match the person you are on the outside.

Taking Precaution...

Lest we cause them offense...

We need to cross every T and dot every I

You know there are non-Christian cultures that understand that everything a man or woman is their Integrity.

- 1. If you don't have Integrity it will affect you and your ability to lead and to minister.***

**Proverbs 28:1 says *"The righteous are as bold as a lion, but the wicked flee when no one pursues."***

- 2. If you don't have Integrity it will affect those closest to you.***

It is awfully difficult for a woman to respect a man who will profess Christ on Sunday but live in an abusive way for 6 days.

For that wife to have as her chief occupation making sure that the word doesn't get out on her husband.

It is awfully tough for a child to live in a home where there is duplicity. Where he or she is told to honor the God they hear about but what they see is the opposite.

If parents have a life of flesh at home they will make it so difficult on their kids.

### ***3. If you don't have Integrity you're also going to affect God.***

God cannot truly use a man or woman who lacks Integrity...see also Samson.

God is slow in judgments but He will eventually take him out.

Well what can we do you ask?

You are saying, "I struggle with this duplicity" "I struggle with believing one thing but doing the other" "I struggle with saying one thing but doing another"

\*I've seen kids ask for prayer for their parents...

\*Wives weep because of their husband's duality...

\*Men who can't serve because of a lack of Integrity in their wife...

\*I've known of people walking into a church and because of seeing a certain person that they have done business with who they see serving communion, leave the church immediately and never come back, because of the way that person did business.

So what do we do?

You do what Jesus said:

- You get your life straight.
- You reconcile if you need to with those you hurt do to your duplicity.
- You look at yourself in the mirror, and know a change is needed and repent for your duplicity.
- You start crossing your T's and dotting your I's
- You start taking precaution so that no one can discredit you
- You guard your integrity because it's what you are
- No, you'll never be perfect but you work on never letting your life have holes poked in it

It's been said that the reputation of a thousand years may be determined by the conduct of one hour.

Next week: Message #4...Self-Control