

•5.0 For Further Study

In the Old Testament, God identified many men as people of integrity:

- Noah (Genesis 6:9),
- Abraham (Genesis 17:1),
- David (1 Kings 9:4),
- Job (Job 1:1,8; 2:3,9)

Certain positions of authority called for men of integrity:

- Leaders (Exodus 18:21)
- Judges (Deuteronomy 16:18)
- Kings (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

Although Jesus did not use the word integrity, He called for:

- purity of heart (Matt 5:8),
- singleness of purpose (Matt 6:22),
- purity of motive (Matt 6:1-6).

Psalm 15 describes the person who may dwell with the Lord, a person of integrity.



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 11 (NIV)

Developing the Character of a Christian – Integrity

Student's Name _____ **Unit** ____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction To Integrity

As we grow in the Christian life, God is at work in us to change our character so that we become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. One of the character qualities that He is developing in us is *integrity*. Integrity is the quality of living a life that is consistent with our core beliefs. One of the root meanings of the word is “cut from one piece of cloth,” indicating that we live the same way in different circumstances and in front of different people.

Nelson’s Bible Dictionary describes integrity as honesty, sincerity, singleness of purpose. Integrity is the opposite of being a hypocrite. Integrity can be further described as:

- being the same on Saturday as you are on Sunday
- being the same in the dark as you are in the light
- acting according to who you are, not according to the circumstances
- keeping our promises, even when it is difficult

1.2 Introduction To The Book of Daniel

After the death of King Solomon (1 Kings 11), Israel was divided into two warring factions: the northern kingdom, known as Israel, and the southern kingdom, known as Judah. The people and the leaders of both kingdoms turned away from the LORD and worshiped idols. Although warned to repent many times over by the prophets, Israel consistently refused. After about 200 years, Israel was overpowered by Assyria, who then dispersed the people throughout the kingdom (thus the 10 lost tribes of Israel) and brought other captured peoples into Israel (2 Kings 17). The kingdom of Judah experienced revivals at times, but finally turned completely from the LORD. About 125 years after the fall of Israel, God used the Babylonians to conquer Judah and carry the people into captivity in Babylon (2 Kings 24-25). Jeremiah had prophesied that this captivity would happen, and that it would last for 70 years. After that time they returned to rebuild the land, as described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Daniel was a young man who was faithful to the LORD and was taken into Babylon. During the captivity, he rose to a position of great power in the government while always remaining faithful to the LORD. This book shows how the LORD protects and uses a person who remains faithful to Him in an ungodly society.

This book also clearly shows God’s sovereign control over heathen nations and gives many detailed prophecies of future events.

3.0 The Wisdom of Integrity

The book of Proverbs teaches us wisdom for living; it gives us Solomon’s observations (as inspired by God) on what works best in life. It should be no surprise that Proverbs has many things to say about a life of integrity.

Proverbs 10:9 *The man of _____ walks securely,*

but he who takes _____ will be found out.

Proverbs 13:6 *Righteousness guards the man of _____,*

but wickedness overthrows the _____.

Proverbs 15:26 *The LORD detests the thoughts of the _____,*

but those of the _____ are pleasing to him.

Proverbs 28:18 *He whose walk is _____ is kept safe,*

but he whose ways are _____ will suddenly fall.

4.0 Later Quotes

Martin Luther (1483–1546), German leader of the Protestant Reformation, in a speech on the 18th of April 1521, when he was on trial for his faith and under penalty of death, said, “I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God.”

Another interesting quote, from a source other than the Bible, says: “One must live the way one thinks or end up thinking the way one has lived.” Paul Bourget, a French novelist.

2.0 Examples of Integrity (cont'd)

2.3 Daniel's Worship (cont'd)

8. What did the king think Daniel's God could do (verse 16 and 19)?

9. Where do you think he got this idea?

10. What did God do to protect Daniel (verse 22)?

11. How did Daniel display integrity ?

2.0 Examples of Integrity

2.1 Daniel and the King's Food

When they conquered Jerusalem, the Babylonians chose some of the best of the young men to be trained in their courts and schools to be leaders, to help convert the Jews to the ways of the Babylonians. Read Daniel 1:3 - 20.

1. What did Daniel refuse to do (verse 8)?

2. Why do you think he did this?

3. How could he have eaten the meat and rationalized his decision?

4. What was Daniel's attitude in his refusal?

5. What did Daniel propose as a test (verse 12-13)?

6. What was the result of the test (verse 15)?

7. How did the guard react (Verse 16)?

8. How does this story demonstrate Daniel's integrity?

9. How did God reward their integrity (verse 17)?

2.0 Examples of Integrity (cont'd)

2.2 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the Statue of Gold.

Because of the great wisdom God gave to Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they were appointed to important positions in the Babylonian government. But Nebuchanezzar got carried away with his own ego, and put their faith to a severe test. Now read Daniel 3:1-30.

1. What did the king require everyone to do (verse 5)?

2. What would happen to anyone who disobeyed (verse 6)?

3. How did most people respond (verse 7)?

4. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond (verse 12)?

5. How could they have rationalized bowing down to the statue?

6. How did they answer the king (verses 17-18)?

7. After the king threw them into the furnace and God protected them, the king issued a new decree. What did the king say about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (verse 28)?

The last half of verse 28 is a powerful statement of what constitutes integrity *They trusted in him (their God) and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.*

8. What other characteristics are required to carry out a life of integrity?

2.0 Examples of Integrity (cont'd)

2.3 Daniel's Worship

Daniel remained a top government official for many years in Babylon. About 60 years after he and his friends were brought to Babylon, the Medo-Persians captured Babylon and set Darius in place as the ruler. Daniel became his most trusted official, but that made the other officials jealous. They came up with a plot to have Daniel killed. Read Daniel 6:1-23.

- 1., What was the first thing Daniel's enemies tried to do to destroy him (v. 4)?

2. What was the only "weak link" in Daniel's life (verse 5)?

3. The other officials conned the king into issuing a decree that everyone must worship the king, and only the king (verses 6 - 9). What did Daniel do in response to this news (verse 10)?

4. What might Daniel have done differently to get around the new law, or at least avoid being caught?

5. How did the king respond when he heard of Daniel's defiance of his law (verse 13-14)?

6. What does the king's response tell us about Daniel?

7. What did the king finally have to do with Daniel (verse 16)?
