

DEMONSTRATING INTEGRITY AND FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

PROVERBS 10:19, 1 CORINTHIANS 4:2

AFEKOLU, CHRIS (Bishop)

Texts

"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out". {Proverbs 10:9 - NIV}

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful". {1 Corinthians 4:2 – NIV}

INTEGRITY

The word integrity refers to the quality of being honest, adhering to or having strong moral principles, and consistently living by them, even when no one is watching. It can also refer to being complete, structural or functional soundness, without defect. It involves aligning actions with ethical values, an embodiment of wholeness of character.

✓ Thus, integrity is essentially the unity between our character and that of the character of God.

✓ Result of this unity produces greater purity of heart, mind and actions that reflects the heart, mind and actions of Jesus Christ.

✓ Becoming a person of integrity is a refining process. Just as gold is purified by Chemical or thermal

processes, we are tested daily to purify our faith.

What Does Faithfulness Mean?

Faithfulness conveys integrity, steadfastness, truth, and dependability, among other qualities. Two important emphases of this quality are highlighted in the Bible.

- God is faithful in all things (see **Psa. 36:5; 100:5; Lam. 3:23**). This means one can have absolute confidence in his promises and thus live in marvellous hope. Also, however, it implies that his warnings will not fail. There will be swift and certain retribution for those who flaunt divine grace and the plan through which it is expressed.

- God demands faithfulness from human beings. The New Testament emphasizes faithfulness as a quality among Christian people. Christ is our example in this regard (**Heb. 2:17; 3:2; Rev. 1:5; 3:14**).

Several outstanding Christians are presented in the New Testament as

models of faithfulness (see **1 Cor. 4:17; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:9; 1 Pet. 5:12**). Paul affirmed his own fidelity (**1 Cor. 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:12**).

While it is true that the child of God will never reach a plateau of perfection in this life (Phil. 3:12ff), he must strive for faithfulness. Faithfulness is the standard for receiving the "crown of life" (**Rev. 2:10**). {Adapted from the book "Bible Words and Theological Terms Made Easy" by Wayne Jackson}

What is integrity to us as children of God. Integrity is character and conduct in harmony with God and His word.

Then the LORD said to Satan, "*Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.*" {**Job 2:3** -NIV}

"No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God". {**Micah 6:8** - NLT}

Integrity means living a life consistent in belief and behaviour, in words and deeds. Our integrity is reflected in how we relate to God and with other people.

"Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbours or speak evil of their friends. Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honour the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts. Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent. Such people will stand firm forever." {**Psalms 15:1-5** _NLT}

Integrity means being honest in our relationships. "*Honesty guides good people: dishonesty destroys treacherous people. Riches won't help on the day of judgment, but right living can save you from death. The godly are directed by honesty, the wicked fall beneath their load of sin.*" {**Proverbs 11:3-5** _ NLT}

Integrity begins with small decisions and choices made when no one else is watching.

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities." {**Luke 16:10** _ NLT}

"We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word

of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this". 2 Corinthians 4:2.

The LORD demands accurate scales and balances; he sets the standards for fairness. {**Proverbs 16:11** _NLT}

How do I demonstrate integrity in my life?

Integrity is evidence in how we conduct ourselves and treat others. Our words and actions should be consistent and above reproach. Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. {**Daniel 6:4** _NLT}

"And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us". {Titus 2:7-8}

We maintain and display integrity by keeping our conscience clear before God and others, admitting when we are wrong and being open and honest.

"...my lips will speak no evil, and my tongue will speak no lies. I will never concede that you are right; I will defend my integrity until I die. I will maintain my innocence without wavering. My conscience is clear for as long as I live." {Job 27:4-6 _NLT}

"Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." {**Acts 23:1** _NIV}. "So, I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man". **Acts 24:16.**

"Cling to your faith in Christ and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked." {1 Timothy 1:19}.

Our integrity may not bring immediate rewards, but one day it will be recognized and commended by God. "Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world." {**1 Peter 2:12** _NLT}

How do I develop faithfulness?

Faithfulness is a way of life. Exercising faithfulness in "little things" strengthen us for being faithful in greater ones.

Doing what we said we would do when we said we would do it.

Intentionally spending time with friends and family and supporting people even during their bad days are everyday way we can be faithful, and they will prepare us for life's greater challenges. (**Luke 16:10**)

We can cultivate faithfulness by being honest and trustworthy. Read **2 Kings 12:4-15**... Verse 15... No accounting of this money was required from the construction supervisors, because they were honest and trustworthy men.

We can cultivate faithfulness in our relationships by keeping our promises and commitments, no matter what.

A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. (**1 Timothy 3:12**). We can cultivate faithfulness by obeying God's word, which teaches us to imitate God's faithfulness.

"If you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways, the LORD will establish you as his holy people as he swore he would do. **{Deuteronomy 28:9 _NLT}**

We can cultivate faithfulness through loyalty and kindness.

Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them

deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. **{Proverbs 3:3-4 _NLT}**

What are the rewards of faithfulness?

Faithful people know God more deeply and more fully experience and appreciate His grace.

The LORD rewarded me for doing right. He has seen my innocence. "To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity you show integrity. To the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. **{2 Samuel 22:25-27 _NLT}**.

Faithfulness in small matters leads to greater opportunities and responsibilities. *"A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. **{Matthew 24:45 -47 _NLT}***

*"Well done!" the king exclaimed. 'You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.' **{Luke 19:17 -NLT}** I will encourage you to read the full story **Luke 19:11-27**, take note of vs 26.*

Faithfulness builds a reputation for being trustworthy. No accounting of this money was required from the construction supervisors, because they were honest and trustworthy men. **2 Kings 12:15** _NLT

While all who believe in Jesus Christ will inherit eternal life, additional rewards and blessings will be given based our obedience in this life. Those who are faithful with what they are given will receive even greater blessings.

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a

Conclusion

- ✓ Integrity keeps us from the traps of dishonesty and the destruction that can come as a result as such character.
- ✓ Our character affects our ability to worship and to enjoy fellowship with God. Worship is more acceptable to God and more meaningful when we honor the Lord in our daily thoughts and conduct.
- ✓ Not only does God bless us when we live with integrity, but future generations also will benefit (**Proverbs 20:7, Proverbs 28:19-20, Psalms 15:1-5**).

wall of flames”. **1 Corinthians 3:11-15** _NLT

God takes special care of those who honour Him with a faithful life.

...He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. (Proverbs 2:8). Staying faithful to Christ even under extreme pressure and difficulties, will bring great reward in our eternal life to come. (**Revelation 2:10**)

Leaders should be faithful to their followers Faithfulness or trustworthiness is very essential for all who are in position of responsibility, where others are depending on them.

Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful. {**1 Corinthians 4:2** _NLT}

I gave the responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for he was a faithful man who feared God more than most. **Nehemiah 7:2.**

*“For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Remember what it says: “Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled.” {**Hebrews 3:14-15**}.*

*“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about world wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? {**Luke 16:10-11** _NLT}*