

Sunday, February 15, 2026 - Intentional Integrity: The Way of Christ – Pastor John Henry Raskin

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are not only made righteous by position, but we are called to live righteously by intention. Integrity is the intentional alignment of our inner life with our outward actions for the glory of God and good of others.

What Is Integrity?

- Integrity means being whole, undivided, and consistent in character.
- It is the opposite of a “split-screen” life—appearing godly in public while compromising in private.
- Godly integrity is not automatic; it requires daily, intentional pursuit.
- Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Scripture: *“The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.”* Proverbs 20:7

Why Integrity Matters

- Shortcuts may seem harmless, but they weaken the foundation of our lives.
- Like the Hyatt Regency walkway collapse, unseen compromises can have devastating consequences for others.
- Integrity determines whether our lives can withstand pressure, temptation, and trials.

Scripture: *“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.”* Proverbs 10:9

Jesus and Integrity

- Jesus lived with complete integrity—unchanged in every setting and circumstance.
- He taught that integrity goes beyond outward behavior to the condition of the heart.
- Our words must be truthful and dependable, without exaggeration or deception.

Scripture: *“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’”* Matthew 5:37

Integrity in Everyday Life

- Faithfulness is proven in small, ordinary choices.
- Integrity is built through honesty, follow-through, and obedience—even when inconvenient.
- Compromising “just a little” trains us for greater failure later.

Scripture: *“Whoever is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much.”* Luke 16:10

Biblical Examples of Integrity

Joseph (Genesis 39):

- Chose integrity in isolation and temptation., Fled from sin rather than testing his limits.
- Suffered unjustly, yet God ultimately honored his faithfulness

Scripture: *“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness.”*— 2 Timothy 2:22

“Commit your way to the Lord... He will make your righteous reward shine.”— Psalm 37:5–6

Integrity Under Pressure

- Integrity does not always bring immediate reward.
- God uses trials to refine and prepare His people.
- Faithful obedience will be honored in God’s time.

Scripture: *“Let us not become weary in doing good.”*— Galatians 6:9

A Call to Action

- Examine the unseen “structural rods” of your character.
- Identify where you are tempted to take moral shortcuts.
- Choose the “long rod” of honesty and obedience, even when it costs more.
- Remember: others are standing on the strength of your integrity.

Scripture: *“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them... built his house on the sand.”* — Matthew 7:26–27

We have all failed at integrity, Jesus Christ is the true Foundation. In Him, broken structures can be rebuilt, strengthened, and made whole.

INTENTIONAL INTEGRITY - THE WAY OF CHRIST

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we continued our exploration of intentionality.

We saw how the intentional and persistent love of God that caused Him to send His Son to die for us should cause us to be intentional and persistent in the way we love others.

Today we're going to talk about being intentional not only about who we are in Christ, but about what we do to bring honor to His Name. We are going to talk about integrity.

Even though our position in Christ as believers is that we are forgiven and blameless before the Father because of what Jesus did for us, scripture is very clear that we are to follow him in obedience to His Word and to His Spirit.

So... you may ask “what does that mean to me?”

It means that to be followers of Jesus we must strive to be people of integrity.

A new creation in Christ is righteous by position and by intention. We must walk it the way we talk it.

Proverbs 20:6-7

Most men will proclaim each his own goodness,

But who can find a faithful man?

The righteous *man* walks in his integrity;

His children *are* blessed after him.

Let's start by defining what integrity means.

Integrity means having a sound moral character that is complete and undivided.

It is the opposite of living a "split-screen" life, where our private behavior differs from how we present ourselves in public.

Godly Integrity is not automatic; it requires intentional, daily pursuit.

It is using your relationship with God in Christ as a "spiritual compass" that guides your actions, particularly when nobody is watching.

Integrity means doing everything the right way even if it costs you something.

Let me tell you a story by way of illustration.

The Hyatt Regency in Kansas City was meant to be a monument to modern elegance. But in 1981, it became a monumental disaster due to a fatal shortcut.

The Architect's original design for the fourth-floor walkway called for long, continuous steel rods to hang from the ceiling, supporting both the fourth and second-floor decks.

It was a solid plan, but it was difficult to install. During construction, the fabricator, looking to simplify the process, made what he considered a "minor" change: he used two shorter rods instead of one long one.

On paper, it seemed like a harmless tweak. It saved time. It saved labor. It got the job done faster.

But on July 17, 1981, over 1,500 people gathered in the atrium for a tea dance.

As hundreds of people stood on those walkways, the shortcut revealed its hidden cost.

By splitting the rod, the load on the nut supporting the fourth floor was doubled.

The steel couldn't hold. With a sound like a gunshot, the connections failed. The walkways pancaked onto the crowded dance floor below.

In an instant, 114 lives were lost, and 216 people were injured—all because of a structural shortcut.

Now you're probably still thinking, what does this have to do with me?

In our own lives, we often treat Biblical integrity like an engineering blueprint.

We see the "long rods" of honesty, patience, and ethical discipline as cumbersome.

We look for the shorter rod—the white lie that avoids conflict, the cut corner at work that gets us home earlier, or the hidden compromise that we think no one will ever see.

But the laws of spiritual and moral gravity are just as unforgiving as the laws of physics.

Proverbs 10:9 NIV

**Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.**

Integrity isn't about how the structure looks when it's empty; it's about whether it can hold the weight when the pressure of life is applied.

When we compromise our internal "blueprints," we aren't just saving time—we are weakening the very foundation we expect others to stand on.

In our modern world, "integrity" is often treated as a PR strategy—something we manage rather than something we are.

We live in a "filter" culture where people curate the best versions of themselves while the structural integrity of their character remains unaddressed.

We are the first generation in history that can literally "edit" our faces and lives in real-time.

Fathers and mothers post the "family photo" on social media where everyone is smiling, three minutes after a screaming match in the car.

Intentional integrity is the process of closing the gap between what we want people to see and who we are.

In Christ, that is what we are called to do and able to do through the power of His Spirit.

Jesus was the same person at the Transfiguration as He was when He was washing the disciple's filthy feet.

He was the same whether He was healing a leper or turning over the tables of those who sold sacrifices in the Temple.

Everything He did was for the Glory of God.

The word Integrity comes from the root word integer, meaning "whole" or "undivided."

For the follower of Jesus, integrity isn't just about "not lying"; not stealing, not cheating on your spouse.

For us, it is the intentional alignment of our inner person with our public life, modeled after the wholeness of Christ.

Jesus made clear in the beatitudes that if you look at a person in lust you have already committed adultery with them and if you hate your brother in your heart then it's the same as murder.

But let's dig a little deeper into the concept of intentional integrity.

Take lying for example...

Matthew 5:33, 34a, 37

33“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ 34 But I say to you, do not swear at all: 37 But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

In Jesus' time, people used elaborate oaths to convince gullible people that they weren't lying when in fact, they were.

Jesus is pointing out that if you have to swear an oath to be believed, you've already admitted that your word isn't enough.

Intentional integrity calls for saying what you will do and doing what you say you will do.

For example, do you ever say "I'll pray for you" with no intention of doing it?

Do you tell your friend "I'm almost there" when you haven't left the house yet?

In modern corporate and social life, we've developed what might be called the "Soft No."

Someone asks for a favor, and instead of saying "I'm sorry but I can't make that a priority right now," we say, "I'll try to be there!" or "Let me check my calendar and I'll get back to you."

We know we aren't going. We think we're being "nice," but Jesus calls this a lack of integrity.

Intentional integrity means we stop "hedging" our bets.

Intentional integrity means valuing the other person enough to tell them the truth, to give them a real answer even if it is a bit uncomfortable for you in the moment.

This is what Jesus means when he says "let your yes be yes and your no be no".

When we over-promise to manage our reputation, we are actually serving our ego, not the person in front of us.

You can't count on somebody who won't tell you the truth. As Christians, we are making Jesus look bad especially to unbelievers.

Let's move on to other aspects of intentional integrity and some biblical examples that may help us to achieve it.

Jesus tells us

Luke 16:10

10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

We often wait for a "big moment" to prove our integrity, but Jesus suggests that integrity is a muscle built in the trivial.

It's the way you handle a checkout error, how you speak about a colleague who isn't in the room, or staying true to a commitment when you no longer feel like it or a better opportunity arises.

It is choosing God's standard over our convenience, comfort or preferences.

Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego walked through fire and Daniel braved the lion's den because of their integrity and faithfulness to the God of Israel.

They not only survived because of God's faithfulness, but because of their integrity, they were rewarded by the very King Nebuchadnezzar who put them through the trials.

Psalm 84:11

**11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
The Lord will give grace and glory;
No good thing will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly.**

Joseph is another good example of the importance of walking in integrity towards God.

We know that he ended up as #2 man in Egypt and was able to save his family because of his faithfulness.

But if we go back in Joseph's story 20 years we will see that he proved his integrity long before he met Pharaoh.

In Genesis Chapter 39 we see that Joseph, having been sold into slavery by his brothers, ended up in the house of an Egyptian General named Potiphar.

There, he was entrusted with great responsibility.

Scripture says, "The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered and his master saw that the Lord gave him success in everything he did."

Because of Joseph's integrity and faithfulness, not only was he blessed, but Potiphar's entire household prospered.

Yet the real test of Joseph's character was not in the presence of favor but in the presence of temptation.

Verse 7 tells us that Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him. Her pursuit was persistent. But Joseph refused.

He says in verse 9, "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

This statement reveals a powerful truth. Joseph's loyalty was not just to his earthly master, but first and foremost to God.

He could have justified the sin. He was far from home. He had been betrayed, enslaved, and forgotten by his family.

But instead of using hardship as a license for sin, Joseph chose integrity in isolation.

Joseph not only rejected the first advance, but he maintained a consistent pattern of resistance.

Genesis 39:10 says, "And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her."

He did not just say no. He intentionally removed himself from tempting circumstances.

Joseph understood that proximity is dangerous.

The closer you are to fire, the greater the chance of being burned.

That is why Scripture repeatedly commands us to flee temptation as an intentional means of maintaining our integrity.

2 Timothy 2:22 NIV - Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

And lest we think that it's only sexual immorality that we ought to free from, Paul also tells us this...

1 Corinthians 10:14 NIV

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

In the way of Christ, fleeing is not cowardice. It is wisdom.

Listen closely, because this is crucial.

Avoiding temptation by choice is far wiser than testing your limits in its presence.

Joseph set a powerful example of intentionally choosing Godly integrity by refusing to compromise.

Even when Potiphar's wife grabbed his cloak and demanded he lie with her, he left the cloak in her hand and ran.

He valued his integrity more than his personal desires and earthly comfort.

After Joseph fled, he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and thrown into prison. Imagine that. He did everything right. He honored God. He resisted sin. Yet he was punished for his integrity.

This is a truth every believer must understand. Integrity does not always lead to immediate reward. Sometimes it leads to deeper trials. But God sees. And God rewards in His time.

Psalm 37:5-6 NIV - Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.

Even in prison, God was with Joseph. The Lord showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

His integrity, though tested, was not in vain. It was refining him. It was preparing him for his destiny.

If you are being tested for your integrity, whether in your job, in your relationships, or in your walk with Christ, don't lose hope.

Galatians 6:9 NIV - Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Let's go back to our story about the Hyatt hotel and how a small lapse of integrity caused a great collapse and calamity.

Jesus concluded His sermon on the Mount with a warning about engineering.

Two men, He tells us, built houses; one did the hard labor and built his on the solid rock, while the other one looked for the shortcut and built his house on sand.

Jesus likens their efforts to hearing His Word and doing it.

Matthew 7:26-27 - 26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Intentional integrity then, is not saying one thing and doing another or even believing one thing and doing another.

Intentional integrity is about doing the "subsurface" work.

No one sees the foundation once the house is built, just as no one saw the rods inside the Hyatt walkway.

But the foundation determines the survival of the structure during the storm.

We live in a "social media" culture that prioritizes the facade.

We polish the fourth-floor walkway where everyone dances, but we neglect the bolts and rods that hold it up.

We must determine that as followers of Jesus, this cannot be the way we choose to live.

Ask yourself: What parts of my character am I neglecting because "no one is looking"?

Integrity is doing the right thing when the only witness is the Architect.

The Hyatt fabricator saved a few days of work, but those saved days cost 114 lives.

When we take moral shortcuts—lying to a spouse to avoid an argument or cutting corners at work to meet a deadline—we are

saving time or temporary discomfort at the expense of harming our relationship with God and others.

Identify one area where you are tempted to take the "short rod" approach.

Commit to the "long rod" of honesty, even if it's harder to "install."

The most sobering part of the Kansas City tragedy is that the people who were harmed weren't the ones who changed the blueprints.

They were innocent bystanders trusting the work of others.

Your integrity isn't just about you.

Your spouse, your children, your employees, and your church "stand" on the walkway of your character.

If you fail in private, they will feel the impact in public.

Who is relying on the strength of your "structural rods" today?

We've seen the wreckage that follows a "minor" shortcut.

We have seen that a life built on "close enough" cannot sustain its own weight.

But the beauty of the Gospel is that while we have all cut corners, we serve a God who is the Master Builder.

Today, I am calling you to move past the "aesthetic" of faith and get down into the structural steel of your soul.

Tonight, or in the quiet of your drive home, I want you to perform a structural inspection. Don't look at the parts of your life that people applaud.

Look at the rods. Look at the "segmented" places where you've tried to bridge the gap with a lie, a compromise, or a hidden habit.

Name that shortcut. Confess it to the Architect who already sees it and is ready to help you fix it.

Tomorrow morning, you may face a "short rod" opportunity.

It might be a conversation where a half-truth is easier than the whole truth. It might be a task at work where "good enough" replaces "right."

Choose the long rod. Do the work that takes more time but creates more safety.

Remember: you aren't just saving your reputation; you are protecting the people who stand on the walkway of your influence.

You are lifting up the name of Jesus.

If you feel like your structure is already swaying—if the weight of your past compromises is becoming too heavy to bear—don't wait for the collapse.

Come back to the Foundation. Jesus Christ doesn't just offer a patch for our cracks; He offers us a new foundation.

Whether you are a "first-time builder" or a "renovator" needing to tear down a wall of secrets, the time to strengthen the connection is now.

"Beloved, may we be a people known not for the height of our steeples, but for the integrity of our beams.

Let's go from this place and build something that can hold the weight of the world, because it is anchored in the truth of God."

Let's pray.