



Integrity
Derek Beauchamp
February 26, 2023

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

We've been studying a series in the New Testament book of 1 Peter where the Apostle is writing to believers scattered throughout the Mediterranean area because of persecution. In the past three weeks we have looked at **Hope**, **Identity** and **Submission** and now we learn about the fourth of five character traits we need to develop in order to live in our current culture of persecution – **Integrity**. It is the state of being whole and undivided – this means we are basically the same in whatever situation we find ourselves. To lack integrity is in some way to be divided - as a hypocrite or someone who is two-faced.

SCRIPTURE¹

Luke 22:57-62 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him. "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

1 Peter 3:15-16 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

OBSERVATION

There's a moment in Peter's journey with Jesus when he lacked integrity. It took place at Jesus' final meal when Peter said, "I am ready to go with you to prison and death." **Luke 22:33**. That same night He denied three times even knowing Jesus. He was wholly divided in his loyalty and revealed who he really was when his actions didn't line up with his beliefs. Here is the good news

¹ The NIV translation unless otherwise noted .

for Peter and us – Jesus still has a plan for us. He is gracious and kind and no matter what we’ve done, there is grace and forgiveness available for all who believe in Him.

QUESTION: When have you regretted a lack of integrity in your behavior?

APPLICATION

If we are honest, we are a lot more like Peter than we’d like to admit, aren’t we? It is so easy for us to say and believe one thing, but then act another way. For example, as believers we value forgiveness, but then refuse to take the action needed to forgive; we believe in being faithful to our spouses, but allow our eyes to wander; we believe we should flee from gossip, coarse language, negativity and cynicism, but our words don’t bring life; we believe in honoring our parents and encouraging our children, but have they become a bother? Whatever guides our lives determines our beliefs. If they are all about money we think it makes us happy. We may be willing to fudge the line a bit, pay our employees less, be less generous to others. On social media we may put our image first over our integrity and lie about our accomplishments. But Peter says to put Jesus first over everyone and everything because He teaches us what we need to believe in order to have integrity.

QUESTION: Which people in your life do you need to forgive? Who needs to forgive you?

QUESTION: When has your family described you as gentle and kind with them? When have people described you as hopeful and an encourager like Barnabas?

If we want to grow in integrity we all must **1) Recognize that there are areas in our lives that lack integrity** – where our actions don’t line up with our beliefs. This honest moment with ourselves and God can help us stop running and numbing the areas we know aren’t God’s best for us; **2) Realize that it is wrong if there are some areas that are a bit off.** We are robbing ourselves from experiencing the full goodness of God. When things lack integrity, we often find ourselves anxious, plagued by headaches, lack of sleep, unhealthy coping, disassociation and challenging relationships. We were created in God’s image – whole and undivided – but when sin enters in, integrity is shattered. When we operate in integrity there is peace, reliance on God, placing Him in control, and trusting that He will work out all situations.

QUESTION: What areas of integrity are lacking in you today? Who is the one person you would turn to if you lack integrity in an area of your life?

QUESTION: How much time do you spend on social media every week? What kinds of comments are you posting? How much time do you spend each week in devotions?

If Jesus is really Lord of our lives, how should we filter our actions through our belief in Him?

1) We commit to a plan to read our Bibles. Today, if we are lining up our lives with the ways of Jesus, people will have questions. We each have our own unique story to tell about life before Jesus, our redemption, and life with Him. This is our unique experience that no one can dispute. Then as we read His Word, we will have Biblical answers to share as well. **2) We fellowship with other Christians on a regular basis; 3) We register for Rooted, Alpha and ReadIt classes; 4) We stop trying to be perfect and open up to the awareness of God working in our lives; 5) We share our shortcomings with others.**

QUESTION: Which of these five actions are you already practicing?

QUESTION: How comfortable are you with answering questions people have about Jesus?

Imagine living a life of integrity. We don’t need to impress other people in our culture. We need to be people who care for others, parents who say “sorry” to their kids, spouses who honor each

other, people who are generous with their resources, who choose to forgive, who work hard and treat others as more than themselves. What we really need are people who want to be like Jesus.

QUESTION: If you are tired of a life that lacks wholeness, of feeling two- faced, of carrying secrets, when will you be ready to submit to Jesus? It's time to take a step of faith.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we want to be people of integrity so we don't have to live with guilt and shame because of our sinful behavior. Lift us up Father, and send a Barnabas to encourage us as we follow Jesus. Show us the way to live righteous lives. In Jesus' name. Amen

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: When have you regretted a lack of integrity in your behavior?

QUESTION: Which people in your life do you need to forgive? Who needs to forgive you?

QUESTION: When has your family described you as gentle and kind with them? When have people described you as hopeful and an encourager like Barnabas?

QUESTION: What areas of integrity are lacking in you today? Who is the one person you would turn to if you lacked integrity in an area of your life?

QUESTION: How much time do you spend on social media every week? What kinds of comments are you posting? How much time do you spend each week in devotions?

QUESTION: Which of these five actions are you already practicing?

QUESTION: How comfortable are you with answering questions people have about Jesus?

QUESTION: If you are tired of a life that lacks wholeness, of feeling two-faced, of carrying secrets, when will you be ready to submit to Jesus? It's time to take a step of faith.