



ABIDE

LESSON FIVE: INTEGRITY

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Paul records in Titus 3:1-2, *“Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate and always to be gentle toward everyone.”*

The NIV Life Application Study Bible defines the word integrity as, honesty, without compromise or corruption. Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines it as, honesty, sincerity, singleness of purpose. Although Jesus did not use the word “integrity,” He called for purity of heart, singleness of purpose, and purity of motive. Proverbs 20:7 records, *“The righteous lead blameless lives; blessed are their children after them.”* I have also heard another definition that says integrity is what you do when no one is watching.

Think about the word integrity for a moment. Who comes to mind? Is the first person you thought of a friend or family member? Was it a hero? Is it someone you greatly admire? Now think about your own integrity. When you thought about this, what came to mind first? Did you compare yourself to someone else? Did you conclude that you have more integrity than the person who came to mind? Friend, that is referred to as self-justification and that will not stand in the eyes of God. Perhaps your mind did not compare your acts against another person’s and instead you decided you are a good person and gave yourself a mental check in the box next to integrity because after all you do not cheat, lie (at least not big whopper lies), or steal (anything big anyway.) Again, you need to remember who your standard is when it comes to behavior and that is Jesus. Jesus was a man with the greatest integrity of all people who walked on this earth and who will again in the future.

Paul wrote the above verses in Titus 3 to encourage us to be people of integrity in matters of civil government and with the horizontal relationships we have with our family, neighbors, work associates and colleagues, and society. He left us the standard in which to live by, namely: we are subject to rulers and those whom we hold in authority. We are to live obediently and to be ready to actively do whatever we can that is good in our families, neighborhoods, churches, and places of work. We are to slander no one and instead we are called to be peaceable, considerate, and gentle toward everyone. A very tall order if you really think about it.

So, what does this mean? Are we just to bow down in obedience to those in authority over us who may wish to harm us? No, we are not. Recall that as believers our first and foremost allegiance is to Jesus, not a political ideology, government policy, corporate policy, or person. However, we are called to obey our government and those whom we report to well because we are not above the law or policy. The key word in the previous sentence being well. We must pray daily for those in authority and for wisdom and discernment and to be aware of what is happening in our world because we may be the only light this dark world may ever hear or see. We must educate ourselves in the government of our country and policies at our places of employment, learn how they work, vote, and possibly run for office ourselves always bearing in mind what Daniel 2:21 tells us regarding this, *“He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars.”*

YOUR TURN: Pray before rereading Titus 3:1-2 and ask the Lord to reveal to you His purpose for you in this lesson.

- o Define the word integrity in your own words.

- o God gives us biblical examples in the Old Testament of people who were called people of integrity. Read the following verses below and make notes as to what you noticed about them and the example of their integrity.
 - Noah - Genesis 6:9
 - Abraham - Genesis 17:1
 - Jacob - Genesis 25:21
 - David - 1 Kings 9:4
 - Job 1:1,8; 2:3, 9; 4:6; 27:5; 31:6

As stated above, Jesus did not use the word integrity, but he did call for purity of heart, singleness of purpose, and purity of motive. Read the New Testament verses below and make notes of what Jesus says about these matters.

- o Purity of heart - Matthew 5:8

- o Singleness of purpose - Matthew 6:22

- o Purity of motive - Matthew 6:1-6

- o Think about a current situation you are dealing with either at work, home, or in your neighborhood. Are you dealing with the situation as a believer or are you allowing your flesh to rule over your thoughts, words, and actions as are listed in Galatians 5:19-21?

- o Pray and ask the Lord to help you create a plan of how you will peaceably, considerately, and gently deal with the people in your situation the next time you meet about this issue if it is ongoing and if a resolution has not been reached. If the issue has been resolved, ask the Lord to reveal to you how you can release any pride, arrogance, or bitterness that you may be harboring the next time you meet with this same group of people.