



# *The Wisdom of Proverbs*

Sunday, December 7, 2025

## Living A Life Of Integrity

Proverbs 11:3, *"The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them."*

Proverbs 20:7, *"The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."*

Proverbs 19:1, *"Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool."*

A man's character is the outward expression of his internal values. Of all of the character traits found in the word of God, integrity is one of the most valuable. Indeed, all of the other good character traits are dependent upon integrity to be of any value.

- If a man is faithful, but lacks integrity, his faithfulness will fail.
- If a man is honest, but lacks integrity, his honesty will turn to dishonesty.
- If a man is truthful, but lacks integrity, then someday his truthfulness will turn to lies.
- If a man professes to be ethical, yet lacks integrity then the day will come that his ethics will become situational.

To live the life that is pleasing to God and ultimately successful, we must have integrity.

So today as we talk about this important topic we want to first establish what integrity is. Second, we will talk about the breastplate of integrity. Next, we will look at how to maintain integrity. Finally, we will finish up with an examination of the rewards of integrity.

So here we go, **What is integrity?** The dictionary defines integrity as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It is defined as moral uprightness. I've heard it described as being what you do or who you are when no one is looking. Our scripture foundation for this lesson gives us an insight into what integrity is. The Hebrew word carries the meaning of completeness, purity, innocence, respectability, spotless character. From this definition we understand that every venture we undertake in this life must be done so with integrity. We understand that integrity determines the outcome of the venture.

This same Hebrew word is used in the plural when it refers to a part of the wardrobe of the High Priest. One of the parts of his breastplate was called the Thummin. When this is properly translated it is used as an emblem of complete Truth. The High Priest had to walk in complete Truth, which is in integrity. It was through the Urim and Thummin that the will of God was revealed to Israel. In our lives, if we expect to know the will of God, then we must also walk with integrity.



# *The Wisdom of Proverbs*

Now let's take a look at this **Breastplate of Integrity** or Righteousness. Just as the High Priest was clothed to do service for God, so are we clothed in our service to the Lord. Look at Ephesians 6:13-17, *"<sup>13</sup>Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; <sup>15</sup>And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* This passage is giving us what is commonly called the armor of God. Let's take a quick look at the whole armor and see its use and we will quickly ascertain that the breastplate is perhaps the most critical piece of the armor that we wear. The helmet, the shield, the sword, the shoes, and the girdle are all important, but fighting without integrity can, and will, lead us to failure.

**The Girdle of Truth.** We possess the truth. We pass the truth from one generation to the next. It must be protected so that it is not damaged in the process.

**The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace.** The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace. By having our feet shod with the gospel of peace means that this gospel goes wherever we go. We should walk in peace with those around us.

**The Shield of Faith.** Hebrews 11:6 says *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* This speaks of the foundation of faith which is believing that He is. It's our knowledge of God. Faith as a part of the armor also has a purpose. Ephesians 6:16 tells us, *"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."* Because of our faith or our knowledge of God we will be able to quench the darts or arrows of the enemy.

**The Helmet of Salvation.** Without a helmet the head is left unprotected. The head is the seat of knowledge and authority. Our knowledge of salvation is what provides and protects our spiritual authority. Without this protection and assurance we are prey to false teaching and deceptive guidance.

**The Sword of the Spirit.** Many of the elements of the Christian armor are defensive, or protective in nature. Not so with the Sword of the Spirit. It is a weapon of warfare. God did not just intend for us to live in a defensive posture, but to also aggressively counter the enemy. The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is our best weapon of offense.

**The Breastplate of Righteousness.** The breastplate's position denotes its significance. It was designed to cover the upper torso of the body. When positioned correctly it covered the vital organs of the heart and lungs, which are the source and sustenance of life. Without this critical piece of armor an individual could be mortally wounded with little effort. Just as the breastplate of the High



# *The Wisdom of Proverbs*

Priest symbolized absolute truth or integrity, so also does the breastplate of righteousness symbolize integrity for us.

We must guard our very existence with integrity. If our heart is not covered with integrity then we too may suffer a mortal wound. Our every thought, word, deed and action must be governed by integrity.

So if integrity is important it then is also important to know how to go about **Maintaining Integrity**. As we have already stated, the word integrity speaks literally of being sound or complete and whole. The just man who walks in his integrity is a man who strives to live in perfect harmony with righteousness. This righteousness is not his righteousness, but God's righteousness. So a man, in order to walk in integrity, must walk according to the Word of God. He is saying that he desires to be submitted to the will and desire of God. He will still struggle with his sinful nature and influence, but ultimately he will strive to walk in integrity. It is worth noting that Israel was a nation that God commanded to have integrity. God would not be pleased with any people who were less than totally and completely committed to Him. We find at various times that Israel would struggle with her integrity and if it failed she drifted away from God. It is an example to us that it is impossible to completely serve God without integrity. When we allow our integrity to be compromised we are distancing ourselves from the Lord.

Scientists now say that a series of slits, not a giant gash, sank the Titanic. The opulent, 900-foot cruise ship sank in 1912 on its first voyage, from England to New York. Fifteen hundred people died in the worst maritime disaster of that time. The most widely held theory was that the ship hit an iceberg, which opened a huge gash in the side of the liner. But an international team of divers and scientists recently used sound waves to probe the wreckage, buried in the mud under two-and-a-half miles of water. Their discovery? The damage was surprisingly small. Instead of the huge gash, they found six relatively narrow slits across the six watertight holds.

Small damage, invisible to most, can sink not only a great ship, but also a great reputation. Proverbs 4:18 says, *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* Our pathway, as just men, is to be a pathway seen as a shining light to those around us. That means that we follow higher standards than the standards of the world. It also means that we value the things of God far above the things of the world. When we enter into business transactions it is not the philosophy of the world that should guide us. Rather our business is to be conducted with integrity. We honor our word. We pay our bills. We make honest evaluations. We speak the truth in love. Ananias and Sapphira are prime examples of what happens when we lack integrity in our business dealings.

If we live in the Spirit, we must also walk in the Spirit. When we received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we received a new life and a new nature. In order to maintain the new nature we must walk in ways that feed and strengthen that nature. This means to live, walk, and act with integrity. If we



# *The Wisdom of Proverbs*

are going to profess to be Spirit filled we must be Spirit led. It is tragic that so many people who profess to be Spirit filled do not deal uprightly with people. Truthfully, the only way to grow in the Spirit is to let the Spirit lead and guide you, and as you do, you are strengthened in the Spirit by the choices you have made. It helps to ask yourself on a regular basis, "Am I responding in a way that maintains my integrity before God, before others and myself?"

Let's finish up today by taking a look at **The Rewards of Integrity**. In Psalm 26 David gives us an insight to the rewards and blessings of living a life of integrity. As you study this Psalm you will notice that David was only able to proclaim what he did because of his commitment to live a life of integrity. Without integrity he could have never asked God for the things listed here, nor could he perform the actions that he does.

The first thing we notice in verse 1 is that David willingly asks for the Lord to judge him. Verse 1 says, *"Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide."* He can do this because he has walked in integrity. When an individual lives a life of righteousness there is no fear in having God judge them. It is the individual who has lived deceitfully that fears the judgment of God.

I want to point out here that David was not perfect. David had some faults and failures. But his desire was to be right with God and get those things taken care of.

Secondly, because David had walked in integrity he states that he can trust in the Lord and that a life of integrity will keep him from sliding. This literally means that he will not waver. Only a person who has integrity can stay the course and not allow circumstances to turn them aside.

Thirdly, he is not afraid to ask God to examine his heart. Verse 2 says, *"Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart."* It is when our integrity is compromised that we hesitate to allow God to examine our heart. It is interesting that the Hebrew word for reins is the word for kidneys. The kidneys purify the blood in the body. This use of the word here means the most secret part of a man or the motives of a man. David said that down to the motive I want you to examine me.

Next, he states the blessings he has found that come with walking in integrity. We don't have time to talk about each one today, but I will list them for you from Psalm 26.

1. The lovingkindness of the Lord is ever before him;
2. He walks in truth;
3. He does not sit with vain persons;
4. Nor does he fellowship with those who are deceitful;
5. He hates those that do evil;
6. He does not spend time with the wicked;
7. He is pure and clean in the presence of the Lord;



# *The Wisdom of Proverbs*

8. He is thankful and proclaims the works of God.
9. He loves the house of God and being in His presence.

David continues on in this Psalm and petitions God to keep him from evil influences. And then he goes on to declare his intention to continue to walk in integrity. I want you to notice this here. Verse 1 says, *"Judge me, O LORD; **for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.**"* So David said in the past I have walked in integrity. But now let's look at verse 11 and see what that says. It tells us, *"But as for me, **I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.**"* It is not enough to have walked in integrity in your past, you must continue to do so daily. It must be a daily commitment to everyday walk in integrity. In five minutes you can destroy a reputation that has taken years to build.

Now let's look at the last verse. Verse 12 says, *"My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD."* Because I have walked in integrity my foot is in an even place. In other words, I am on solid ground and I can worship the Lord in the congregation because I have walked and will continue to walk in integrity.

Who else but David can so beautifully portray a life of integrity? This is the man that the Bible says was after the heart of God. It is one thing to read what David wrote in Psalm 26 about choosing to live a life of integrity and it is something totally different to hear what God has to say about David's life. In Psalm 78:71-72 it states, *"<sup>71</sup>From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. <sup>72</sup>So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."*

God-given talent and ability are to be commended. But to have those and not have integrity is defiling. David was a man that God equipped to lead the nation of Israel, but within his own heart David had to determine to exercise that talent and ability with integrity. What a wonderful testimony that in His Word God declared that David utilized both skill and integrity. I wonder what God is saying about you and your life, about me and my life?