

More to Life

THROUGH GOD'S WORD

SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD

Keep the Foundation Strong

Life Reference: I Peter 3:8-12

Focus Verse:

“The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him” (Proverbs 20:7).

Home repairs are one of my least favorite tasks. If the repair is complex—which with my skills can be most anything—it then involves calling a repairman, setting an appointment time, and then paying an unexpected bill.

A few years ago I noticed some water around a small foundational crack. I chose to be proactive and called a repair company. The cost was relatively small and the problem was soon fixed. End of story. It could have ~~ended differently~~~~been different~~ had I chosen to ignore the situation until it became a much bigger, and more costly, leak.

The same principle applies to our lives. A small chink may threaten to weaken our moral foundation. It may seem ~~minor~~~~insignificant~~—a small misrepresentation or a broken promise—yet there is a hidden danger. Little things can become big things. Proverbs 11:3 says, “The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.”

Life Reflection:

Can you think of a time in your life when something small became a test of your integrity?

How did you handle the situation?

Living with Integrity

What is integrity? We can describe it as honesty, strong moral principles, uprightness, or good character. In everyday language, it means always doing the right thing even when no one is looking (or will ever

find out). This is opposite the philosophy that “the end justifies the means.” An article in Forbes said, “Success will come and go, but integrity is forever.”

The Book of Genesis devotes several chapters to the life of Joseph, a young man who had many opportunities and temptations to compromise his integrity. Had he yielded to the voice of temptation, who would know? He was in a strange country with no one from back home “looking over his shoulder.” But Joseph did not waiver. He stood firm because he knew to do less would be an affront to God Himself.

“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”
(Genesis 39:9).

“A person is not given integrity. It results from the relentless pursuit of honesty at all times.”

—Unknown

Life Reflection:

Describe the difference between reputation and character.

Has someone disappointed you by compromising their integrity? How difficult would it be to regain your trust in them?

What are the long-term blessings of walking in integrity?

At some point in life, all of us will be tempted to compromise our integrity. It may come from outside pressure, such as a boss instructing us to lie about a business matter, or it may come from inside to escape the consequences of our actions. We can argue with our conscience. “It’s not that big a deal. I’m not hurting anyone else.” The argument doesn’t hold up. Our lack of integrity does affect others.

Life Response:

Why is integrity important? We can list many reasons, but let’s just look at three.

- 1) **Integrity gives us peace.** We don’t have to live with the guilt of knowing we settled for the easy way instead of living by our principles. We will have a clear conscience. (See Hebrews 13:18).
- 2) **Integrity brings trust.** If we are a person of honesty and character, others will trust us. Even those who would discredit us won’t be able to find anything evil to say about us. (See I Peter 3:16).
- 3) **A person of integrity becomes a role model.** We exhibit honesty and uprightness to a world that often lacks these important characteristics. Little compromises, little omissions, little untruths erode character. By paying attention to these things we affect those around us. (See Titus 2:7-8 and I Corinthians 11:1.)

Keep the foundations strong. Repair any chips or chinks now. Remember, we are preserving integrity for the next generation.

“The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him” (Proverbs 20:7).

Questions to Ask Myself

- 1) Am I the same in public as in private?
- 2) How do I treat others who cannot benefit me in some way?
- 3) Do I keep my word?
- 4) Am I truthful?
- 5) Am I willing to admit to myself and others when I am wrong?
- 6) Do I consistently live by the moral standards of God’s Word?
- 7) Have I made myself accountable to at least one person?
- 8) Do I seek to please God in all I do?

My Prayer:

Lord, my desire is to be a person of character—honest, truthful, and filled with integrity. When I feel pressured to compromise, give me strength to overcome. Make me aware of the little things that might undermine my character. Help me to live a life of integrity that I might please You and be an example to others.

More Life with God References

Proverbs 6:16-20
I Chronicles 29:17
II Corinthians 8:21
Proverbs 19:1
Psalm 41:11-13
Proverbs 2:6-8
Psalm 26:1-3

This Bible study was adapted from an article originally published in Reflections Magazine.

