

Proverbs 21:3: To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

1 Peter 3:16: Keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to all of you. It is my deepest prayer that this devotional finds all of you well, and beginning to live in hope that this dark and fear-filled time of endurance will eventually be behind us. I also pray that the warm week to come will fill our souls with hope of even warmer days...yes, even though we as Northerners know that there will likely be colder days ahead!

I'm sorry that this will not be a positive upbeat devotional to sustain your walk in Christ this week. Instead this is a message that I need to speak on—that I have to get off my chest. I want to talk about Integrity today as a part of our Christian nature.

Webster's Dictionary defines Integrity as: 1 : firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values : incorruptibility. 2 : an unimpaired condition : soundness. 3 : the quality or state of being complete or undivided : completeness.

Perhaps a simpler definition of Integrity is this: Integrity is who you are when no one else is looking.

Recently the Christian world has been deeply shocked, saddened, and angered by the revelations about a couple of high profile Christian leaders who have been found to have committed abhorrent abuses against women in their ministries. The spiritual, physical, emotional damage that has been done to the women around them, and the triggering these stories evoke in so many other women who have been abused in other situations, is a catastrophic wound to the soul of Christ's Church. I'm not using hyperbole when I say that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been tarnished in millions of souls around the world because of the predatory actions of these men who claimed to follow Christ. I worry for their eternal souls in this specifically because of the absence of any shame that I can find in their hearts. I am reminded of Christ's words "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be thrown into the sea. (Mark 9:42) and Christ's parable of the Tree and its fruit: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7: 21-23). What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his only soul?

Friends, we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. Our sins are covered by the blood of Christ that he shed on the cross for our sake and for the sake of the world. We still sin, we are still sinners saved by grace, but we are on a journey in, and towards, holiness in Jesus Christ. Part of Christian integrity is having the courage to admit our failures to ourselves, to the Lord and yes to others (especially if they have been wounded by us) so that we can have true integrity in our faith and life in Jesus Christ. Part of Christian integrity is also being willing to stand alone for justice and for truth and for Christ when all others have gone their own way. Christian

integrity calls us to loneliness to the things of this world so that our holiness in Christ may be trusted by others and, above all else, true to the inner voice of our soul.

May the Spirit of Jesus Christ blow deeply into our souls so that the integrity that He lived, in devotion to His Heavenly Father throughout his entire life and death, would become our integrity as well.

Peace of Christ to all of you. Rev. John

Prayer for Integrity

Heavenly Father, You are good and righteous altogether and I come to You today, confessing that I have not lived my life the way that You would have wanted, nor did I choose the path that You would have wished for me to take.

I confess my lack and come to You in humility of spirit, knowing that in Your loving-kindness, You forgive those that are of a contrite heart. Father, I want to turn my life around and live in a way that is transparent before You. I want to live a godly life that is pleasing to You and a life that brings glory to Your name. Lord, I do not want to grieve or quench the work of the Holy Spirit in my life any more, and know that the only way to please You is to walk in spirit and truth, and to live each day in submission to Your guidance, and empowered by Your grace.

Cleanse my heart of sin, forgive my foolishness and teach me Your ways I pray. Father, I want to change my behaviour to reflect those of Jesus and I want the thoughts of my mind to be pleasing in Your sight. I want to be a person of integrity, and live a life that is godly and full of grace, and I can only do so as I abide in You and rest in Your love. Teach me Your ways and give me a teachable spirit so that in the days to come I may live out holiness in Christ Jesus, knowing that this is Your will for my life.

Thank You that You have been faithful to me even when I proved unfaithful, and in Your grace, I step out into the future with my hand in Yours. In the strong name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

Hymn: To the River (Brian Doerksen) https://youtu.be/45lLXIn_Q1U