

## **BIBLICAL ECONOMICS**

### **THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15**

#### **B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, 2 Corinthians 8:16-24**

1. **They care for the church—earnestly care (v.16-17).**
2. **They have a reputation for the gospel, a testimony for witnessing (v.18).**
3. **They are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister (v.19-21).**
4. **They are diligent in many things, but especially in collections (v.22).**
5. **They are partners of the minister (v.23).**
6. **They are to be loved by the church (v.24).**

We have examined two areas in this portion of 2 Corinthians 8.

\* *The Passion of Titus*

\* *The Praise for the Assistant to Titus*

\* *Next, the Precautions for Security and Integrity*

**3. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21) Stewardship— Offerings— Ushers: men who handle collections (ushers) are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister.**

**2 Corinthians 8:19-21 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup>“And not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this **gracious work** [*gift* or *grace*], which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,

<sup>20</sup>taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

<sup>21</sup>for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

### **THE PREPARATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS FOR SECURITY AND INTEGRITY—2 Corinthians 8:19-21**

**2 Corinthians 8:19-21 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup>“And not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by

us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,  
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administration of this generous gift;  
<sup>21</sup> for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the  
Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

**2 Corinthians 8:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> “**For we have regard** for what is honorable, not only in the sight of  
the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

The dread of damaging his testimony was the catalyst for him to provide honest things in the sight of the Lord and men. This word phrase “**for we have regard**” or in another translation “**provide**” is from the word *pronoeeo* {*pron-o-eh'-o*} which means “**to foresee or think beforehand, to provide, to care for a thing.**” The word reflects the attitude of the apostle’s concern about conducting himself with behavior that was above board.

Paul had a purpose to live above the boards and do what was right. He took great pains to do what was honorable before Christ and men. God used the apostle in a great way because he was a man of integrity. Integrity, just what is it? **Webster Dictionary** defines it this way: “**An unimpaired condition or soundness, adherence to a code of moral values, and the quality or state of being complete and undivided.**” What does integrity mean? In a nutshell, it means “**soundness, completeness, and honesty.**”

Beloved, we are facing a number of crises in our nation that threaten our very existence as a free and peaceful people. One of the most serious problems we face is the integrity crisis. A war is being waged in the hearts of our people, whether they are Christian or heathen.

It is a war between *Deception vs. Truthfulness; Loyalty vs. Disloyalty; Conviction vs. Convenience; Purity vs. Perversion; Trustworthiness vs. Treason and Treachery; and Honesty vs. Hypocrisy.* We face an integrity crisis because integrity seems to be losing or is lost all together in the moral conscience of our country.

Some Americans have committed acts of treason, selling defensive and military secrets for thirty pieces of silver to those who could rob us of our liberty or hold our nation hostage. Married couples struggle to keep their vows, choosing to divorce one another, instead of endorsing Biblical principles of forgiveness, restoration, humility, and loving one another till death. A person's word today has become almost worthless, laying the foundation for anarchy.

Mothers shirk their responsibilities to their unborn babies by slaughtering them in what should be the safest and securest place in the world for their child, their wombs. Because of a lack of integrity, that place which nurtures life has become the graveyard, the butcher block of convenience and lustful living. Two million American babies each year enter the portals of Heaven because they were aborted. If they could speak one day,

I'm sure that some may ask the Lord, "Why? Why did my mother kill me and not love me at all?"

Because of the integrity crisis, unstable Christians will not make up their minds to totally sell out to the Lord. They are double minded and unstable as James says ([James 1:8](#)).

**James 1:8 (NASB)**

**<sup>8</sup>“Being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”**

Carnal Christians are trying to serve two masters and are failing ([Matthew 6:24](#)).

**Matthew 6:24 (NASB)**

**<sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”**

God's people need a strong dose of integrity like some of the saints in Scripture. When we scan the Scriptures, we find that they reveal a number of insights concerning the issue of integrity.

## **1. The Direction of Integrity**

Integrity is to guide the life of the Christian. Notice [Proverbs 11:3](#).

**Proverbs 11:3 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup>“The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.”**

When we examine the life of Joseph, we find that his integrity guided his life. It guided him in a number of situations.

- When he was tempted, and taunted by his brothers.
- When he was sold into slavery.
- When he was entrusted with the management of Potiphar's affairs.
- When he was tempted by Potiphar's wife and refused to give in to her seduction.
- When he was committed to prison after being falsely accused and forgotten by the butler. He did his best and found favor with the prison keeper.
- When he stood before Pharaoh, making sure to give God the glory for the interpretations of Pharaoh's dreams.
- When he was promoted and Egypt lay at his feet.
- When his brothers were at his mercy, he forgave them and cared for them. The integrity of the upright shall guide them and preserve them.

## **2. The Diligence of Integrity**

The person with integrity fulfills his obligations, whether they are required of him or not, or when no one is around to observe him. Jacob demonstrated integrity when he paid for what he was responsible for, whether he had to or not ([Genesis 43:12](#)).

**Genesis 43:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>“Take double *the* money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake.”**

A reputation for integrity is worth far more than money you might save by compromising it. A person's integrity is truly seen when he thinks he is alone, but he is not.

An unscrupulous salesman was delivering a bid that his company had made for an engineering firm. He was ushered into the office where he would present his bid to the firm. After a brief introduction, the firm's representative politely excused himself for a minute. The shady salesman quickly noticed the bid of his competitor lying on the desk. Unfortunately, there was a cold drink covering up the total amount of the bid. He gazed out into the inner office and noticed there was nobody to see him sneak a peek. He lifted the Pepsi can and got the surprise of his life. Rather than a cold soda, it was a bottomless can filled with BB's. The quiet office was filled with the sound of BB's racing across the desk and spilling onto the floor. The firm's representative then returned to the office and showed the dishonest salesman the door.

Integrity is demonstrated more when people are not looking than when they are. Daniel continued to pray to the Lord even when his life was endangered. His integrity is what his enemies used to try and destroy him ([Daniel 6:1-5](#)). God overruled his enemies and protected His servant.

**Daniel 6:1-5 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom,**

**<sup>2</sup>and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss.**

**<sup>3</sup>Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.**

**<sup>4</sup>Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of corruption*, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was *to be found* in him.**

**<sup>5</sup>Then these men said, “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him with regard to the law of his God.”**

### 3. The Discipline of Integrity

The person with integrity fulfills his word or promises no matter how much time has elapsed. In [Joshua 14:6-12](#), God made a promise to Caleb to give him land that he wanted in the Promised Land.

#### **Joshua 14:6-12 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup>“Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea.

<sup>7</sup>“I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as *it was* in my heart.”

<sup>8</sup>“Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the LORD my God fully.”

<sup>9</sup>“So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.’”

<sup>10</sup>“Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today.”

<sup>11</sup>“I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in.”

<sup>12</sup>“Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim *were* there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”

Over forty years later, the Lord fulfilled His promise to Caleb because God’s Word is reliable. Let me ask at this point, “Is your word reliable? Would you honor a promise over forty years old?” We should honor our word, especially the promise or vow we made to our spouse. If you promise to love and cherish your spouse till death-do-you-part, then keep it no matter what length of time has elapsed. Integrity provokes discipline in doing what is right.

### 4. The Defense of Integrity

Integrity has a preserving influence in our own life and in our family.

#### **Psalm 25:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup>“Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You.”

#### **Proverbs 20:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup>“A righteous man who walks in his integrity— How blessed are his sons after him.”

Integrity walks hand in hand with uprightness. These two are to be our body guards to protect us from evil. Uprightness affects our desires and makes us learn God's requirements in order to strive and obey them. Integrity is what we claim to be and keeps us from being something we are not. Our integrity is to be consistent, affecting our life every day.

**John Wesley** was working in his garden one day when a neighbor came by to visit. The neighbor attempted to jolt Wesley by asking what he would be doing now if he knew Jesus would return that day. Wesley surprised his friend by saying, "I would go right on doing what I'm doing." May we too, live in such a way that Christ could return at any time and we would be comfortable continuing the task at hand.

Consistent, public integrity also helps to provide a person with a spiritual shield against false accusations of wickedness.

**1 Peter 3:16-17 (NASB)**

**<sup>16</sup> "And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.**

**<sup>17</sup> For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong."**

We find that Samuel was a man of integrity.

**1 Samuel 12:3-4 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup> "Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you."**

**<sup>4</sup> They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand."**

We have examined four important elements concerning integrity.

- *The Direction of Integrity*
- *The Diligence of Integrity*
- *The Discipline of Integrity*
- *The Defense of Integrity*
- *Next, the Desirability of Integrity*

## **5. The Desirability of Integrity**

Integrity is far more valuable than wealth and riches. Because of its value, we should desire it in our own life.

**Proverbs 19:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity Than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.”

**Proverbs 16:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup>“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

It is ironic that people cheat or are dishonest because they feel they will not get what eventually will not satisfy them. Do you find yourself sacrificing integrity for personal wealth? You will lose if you do. You will lose your integrity and blessings.

## 6. The Dependability and Delights of Integrity

Integrity produces stability and success.

**Proverbs 12:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup>“A man will not be established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous will not be moved.”

Those with integrity have stable roots that are not moved. They are anchored in Christ. The stability and dependability that come from integrity lead to prosperity and blessing. Real success does not compromise integrity because that would violate God’s standards. If you violate God’s standards of right and wrong to be a so called “success,” then you have not achieved true success at all. You have not learned to live your life by God’s blue-print for living. You have also failed to understand the final consequences that await you on the path that you are plodding. Your path will lead to defeat, distress, dismay, discouragement, depression, destruction, and possibly death. To me, that kind of end does not describe success at all.

## 7. The Devotion of Integrity

Integrity is willing to lose personal fame, status, or wealth so that others will be protected, blessed, benefitted, or treated right. When we look at the integrity of John the Baptist, we find that he turned his followers over to Jesus, beginning with the baptism of Jesus. John turned his popularity and ministry over to the Lord so people would be saved and blessed. That was his responsibility and he fulfilled it as he said, “**He must increase, but I must decrease**” ([John 3:30](#)).

After the only year that Ted Williams’ legendary batting average ever dropped below .300, he went to the management and demanded a pay cut. Ted said, “I looked him straight in the eyes and said, “I’m taking a \$35,000 cut.” Maybe this explains why he never again hit below .300. Ted felt that this was the right thing to do with the owners of his team.

## 8. The Details and the Degree of Integrity

The person with integrity is faithful in all areas of life, especially in small, insignificant matters which enable and prepare him for greater responsibilities.

### **Luke 16:10-11 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”

<sup>11</sup>“Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of unrighteous wealth*, who will entrust the true *riches* to you?”

If we are unfaithful with earthly responsibilities, we will be untrustworthy and unfit to handle riches and responsibilities in God’s kingdom. Don’t let your integrity slip in small details or matters, and it will not fail you in crucial decisions.

## 9. The Durability of Integrity

The individual with integrity is not swayed by outward pressures, trials, temptations, and circumstances. **Job** and **Daniel** were durable examples of men with integrity that were not swayed by pressure.

### **Job 2:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup>“The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”

### **Job 2:9-10 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>“Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!”

<sup>10</sup> But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”

**Satan** came to God and said, “*If You let me deal with Job, he’ll curse you. He’ll turn his back on You. Take away his blessings, his riches, his family, and see what happens to his integrity.*” As the Lord allowed, Satan had a field day with Job. Yet, even when his family was killed, his crops were wiped out, and his house burned down, Job never lost his integrity, in spite of the discouraging and destructive statements from his own wife.

### **Job 27:5-6 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup>“Far be it from me that I should declare you right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

<sup>6</sup> I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach any of my days.”

**Job** says, *“I don’t care what happens, I will not walk away from integrity. I’m committed to this course. I adhere to these values. I will keep these standards no matter what. My wife can come down on me. My body can fall apart. My possessions and family can be taken from me, but I will not give up my integrity.”*

**Daniel 1:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup>“But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.”

Without integrity, we are open to evil influences and corruption. The influence of corruption creates instability and weakness in our character. When this happens, our service for the Lord isn't worth shooting because it is either pathetic or non-existent.

## 10. The Development of Integrity

Integrity provides a person with a clear conscience which enables and equips him to minister to other people. Our integrity develops opportunities for ministering to others.

**2 Corinthians 4:1-2 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,  
<sup>2</sup>but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

**Acts 24:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup>“In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men.”

Consistent Christ-likeness and godly character create confidence in us to be a witness to others. The confidence comes from the fact that we are not plagued by guilt from past offenses that have not been resolved. We are not worrying about our faults with others because they have been resolved or have never occurred. Our integrity helps us to lay aside any hindrances or weights that would hinder us from effectively serving the Lord and doing His will.

**Hebrews 12:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

## 11. The Discovery and Derivation of Integrity

If we are going to be people of integrity and truthfulness, then we must understand the three keys to obtaining integrity. How do we get it? We must realize....

### A. The Author of Integrity

Jesus Christ is the author of truth. The more we yield to Him, the more we will understand integrity and truth and demonstrate it in our life. We are given the mind of Christ so we can think God's thoughts and understand His ways ([1 Corinthians 2:16](#)).

**1 Corinthians 2:16 (NASB)**

**<sup>16</sup>“For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.”**

### B. The Source of Integrity

The source of integrity is found in the Word of God. The truth is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Peter 1:21 (NASB)**

**<sup>21</sup>“For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”**

The more we study, memorize, and meditate upon the Word of God, the more we will have the mind of Christ.

### C. The Guide to Integrity

The guide is the Holy Spirit who unites with our spirit when we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior.

**Romans 8:16 (NASB)**

**<sup>16</sup>“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”**

The Holy Spirit teaches us and convicts us when we lie.

We have seen so far in this portion of [2 Corinthians 8](#), three areas.

- *The Passion of Titus*
- *The Praise for the Assistant to Titus*
- *The Preparations & Precautions for Security & Integrity*
- *Next, the Persistence of the Second Assistant*