

## HBC SINGLES RETREAT – Oct. 24-26, 2008

### INTRODUCTION:

Integrity is a character quality that seems to be in short supply in our generation.

**How would you define Integrity??** How is it different from just righteous living or godliness? (you drive 4 hours ... to listen to a guy who can't even define his subject matter)

**Simple Definition:** "soundness of moral principle and character; uprightness; honesty"

– **Consistency** to your system of moral values ...

-- As opposed to **Compromise** and **Hypocrisy** and **Corruption** ...

**My Def: Integrity is consistently living in harmony with your moral world view** – for us Christians that would be a biblical world view – no matter the situation; no matter the people involved; no matter the pressure brought to bear; you still consistently live in harmony with your moral world view – Can terrorists have integrity?? Who is making the judgment as to soundness of moral principle or what constitutes honesty? The respect accorded your integrity derives from the respect accorded your moral world view – tied to some general consensus with respect to honesty and moral character

Cf. a person living by convictions ... if you do not believe there are any moral absolutes, then you will not admire someone who lives by their convictions; instead you will label them narrow-minded and intolerant

We are looking at integrity as it relates to consistently living out the biblical world view

If you look at the political realm you see failure after failure. It doesn't matter what side of the political aisle you sit on – the corruption and sexual scandals and pattern of lying and greed is the same. I get to see first hand in the business world how low integrity has sunk in the value system of some major corporations. They might say that their company values integrity as one of their primary cultural non-negotiables; but their actions speak louder – they really value the bottom line. Who cares about character and how you treat people as long as you can produce. Hopefully you have a situation where integrity is still valued.

I'm going to share a somewhat shocking personal illustration of my first job experience when I moved to the Baltimore area after graduating from seminary. I had decided to support myself rather than seeking a career position in some type of ministry context – that's a story for another time. But I say it is shocking in terms of how naïve I was ... and it was shocking in terms of how blatant was the practice of exploitation and deception. I have learned a lot since those days.

### Illustration of **Design and Funding**

I like speaking on this topic of Integrity because the Lord has made me strong in this area. You can go to any of the people I work with and ask them whether they would trust me. That makes it nice when you have a situation where someone is trying to knife you in the back or slander you. If it comes down to trusting Joe VP or trusting what Paul Apple tells you, I have earned the benefit of the doubt. It may have taken 27

years ... but I have earned that reputation.

My goal for this short three part series from the Psalms written by David (characterized as “*a man after God’s own heart*”) is that you would be reinforced in this important area of Integrity so that it is your lifelong conviction not to waver. **A life of integrity does count for something.** I want you to walk away with that conviction.

So that is the goal for this weekend – reinforcing the conviction in each of our lives that **WE PURPOSE TO LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY**

### **3 Areas where Integrity is Critical --**

- Lesson #1 – Integrity is Critical for Our Relationship with God = Foundational **(Psalm 15)**
- Lesson #2 – Integrity is Critical for Protection from our Enemies **(Psalm 7)**
- Lesson #3 – Integrity is Critical for Ultimate Success **(Psalm 26)**
  - No Condemnation before God
  - Rewards for the believer
  - Platform for Testimony before unbelievers

Integrity can be abused by others and devalued; But **Integrity cannot be destroyed.** It is a gift from God that comes by grace thru faith along with the new life that is ours in union with Jesus Christ. Think of it like a diamond that has been buried in the mud. Once you wash it off and display it, the brilliance still shines as brightly as ever. Think of Integrity as the essence of a life that pleases God. King David had a lot of faults and committed major sins; but he is characterized overall as *a man after God’s own heart* because he lived a life of Integrity. **1 Kings 9:4** God’s charge to Solomon after building the temple: “*As for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in **integrity of heart and uprightness**, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of David.’”*

(Hand out the lesson)

### **[LESSON #1: A LIFE OF INTEGRITY KEEPS YOU CLOSE TO GOD – PSALM 15](#)**

Psalm 15 is very short -- only 5 verses -- but it speaks to this issue of Integrity:

### **I. (:1) QUESTION THAT WE EACH MUST ASK: WHO HAS THE PRIVILEGE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH A HOLY GOD?**

Think through **examples** from  
-- the life of King David

*"O Lord, who may abide in Thy tent?  
Who may dwell on Thy holy hill?*

**A. Abide in Thy tent** (Ps. 61:4)

You don't just let anybody into your tent to dwell there

**Psalm 24:3-4 (very parallel)**

*Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
And who may stand in His holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood  
And has not sworn deceitfully.*

**B. Dwell on Thy holy hill**

Privilege of close companionship with a holy God; all about fellowship; our relationship

Do we really desire close fellowship with a holy God? Do we want to live in the light or hide in the darkness? Remember how Adam tried to hide in the garden when he was aware of his sin.

**II. (:2) GENERAL ANSWER: THOSE WHO LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY**

One whose life has been transformed so that it is now characterized by:

**Consistency** – what you see on the outside is consistent with who he is on the inside

Difference between Justification and the Fruit of Justification (**Silversides**)

**3 General Categories of Integrity:** Consistency between who we are on the Inside and who we are on the Outside:

**A. Overall Integrity** -- Internal Character reflected in how we live in general -- *He who walks with integrity*

The right kind of feet – go the right places (**Warren Wiersbe**)

The world is observing how we live; not just what we say; looking at the overall pattern of our lives; not for perfection

**B. Outward Integrity of Action = Righteousness** -- Outward Deeds as a reflection of a changed heart -- *and works righteousness*

The right kind of hands – do the right things

**C. Open (Transparent) Integrity of Speech and Thought Life = Truth** – Outward Speech as a reflection of our changed thoughts – *and speaks truth in his heart*

The right kind of lips – think and say the right things

(out of the heart the mouth speaks)

We don't think one thing and say something else

We don't have some type of hidden agenda

We don't deceive with flattery

We don't lie to ourselves

We submit to the truth of the Word of God – allow that to take every thought

captive to obedience to our Lord and Savior

Wrote college thesis on the **Sincerity of John Bunyan** – **Gordan Runyan**

This verse is saying that the worshipper must be sincere. "Sincere" comes from two Greek words that you might've heard spoken in the marketplaces. Our Sincere comes from **Sine** and **Cera**. Together, they mean "**No Wax**." When a potter fired his wares in the oven back then, it was common for the clay to crack. An unscrupulous potter would then take some wax and use it to fill in the cracks, then paint over it all and try to pass it off as a good piece of pottery. But a shrewd buyer of pottery knew that a simple test could show him if the pot was truly good or not. He held it up to the sunlight. Spots filled with wax would be plainly evident then as the light penetrated and shone through. A pot with no wax was thus a "sincere" pot. It had no wax. It really was consistent with its advertising.

Contrast with the woes Christ proclaimed against the hypocritical Pharisees = those who had no integrity – **Matt 23:13-33**

They tried to look righteous on the outside but were totally corrupt on the inside  
Integrity defines who you are; what can people expect from you; how will you act in different circumstances;

Someone has said:

**What you say should always be what you do because that reflects Who you really are!**

### **III. (:3-5) SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF WHAT A LIFE OF INTEGRITY LOOKS LIKE IN FOUR KEY AREAS**

#### **A. Integrity of Refraining from Piling On Or From Hurting Others (:3)**

1. In Speech -- No Slander or Gossip – *He does not slander with his tongue*  
Look at how King David responded to the cursing of **Shimei**  
**2 Sam. 16:5-14**

Temptation to gossip – even about things that are true

Temptation to have the scoop and spread tales that hurt the reputation of Others

Tongue is a powerful weapon – James 4; Proverbs

Can we hold things in confidence?

Do we always have to speak our mind and tell everything we know?

Can others trust what we say to be true?

Phil. 4 – think on those things that are good

2. In Actions -- No Meanness (to his neighbor) – *Nor does evil to his neighbor*  
Look at how King David in his kindness looked out for **Mephibosheth**  
**2 Sam. 9**  
Do we know how to kill our enemies with kindness?

3. In Relationships -- No Compromising Our Loyalties (hurting a friend by what we listen to or say) – *Nor takes up a reproach against his friend*  
Friendship and loyalty between David and Jonathan  
**1 Sam. 18-20**

**B. Integrity of Fellowship – Choosing Believers as our Close Companions (:4a)**

*"In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,  
But who honors those who fear the Lord;"*

1. Rejects a Reprobate

- Are you more comfortable spending time with believers or unbelievers  
... or does it not matter to you?  
Do you see people from the perspective of their allegiance to the Lord?

What does it mean to reject a Reprobate ... vs. what does it not mean?

2. Honors those who fear the Lord

cf. 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Cor. 6:14-18

this means no favoritism – even when some believers might not seem  
“cool” to be with; some are more needy than others

**C. Integrity of Commitment Despite Personal Cost (:4b)**

*"He swears to his own hurt, and does not change;"*

He keeps his word -- even when it costs him something

**D. Integrity of Finances (:5a)**

*"He does not put out his money at interest,  
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent."*

1. No Exploitation (Deut. 23:20) -- taking advantage of the vulnerable  
usury, etc. – submit your financial dealings to the Word of the Lord; be  
willing to lose potential income; the Lord has a right to tell us what to do with our  
money; cf. Christ charging the rich young ruler with what to do with his money – he  
could not submit to that

2. No Dishonesty

Bribes, extortion, etc.

How about integrity in how we report our income and pay our taxes

Look at all the Christian organizations that need to be so careful with how they manage  
the money entrusted to them; embezzlement is a huge problem

Look at Judas – kept the purse for the disciples ...  
“Follow the Money” is a good investigative technique

**Can you be trusted:**

- in your speech
- in your actions – how you treat others
- in your commitments – keeping your word
- in your finances

**(:5b) CONCLUSION: THE SECURITY OF THOSE WITH INTEGRITY**

*"He who does these things will never be shaken"*

Psalm 1 – picture of a tree firmly rooted and standing tall

In **James Patterson and Peter Kim's** book, The Day America Told the Truth, (May 1991) they polled the American public to ask, "What are you willing to do for \$10,000,000? They found that:

- 25% would abandon their entire family
- 25% would abandon their church
- 23% would become prostitutes for a week or more
- 16 % would give up their American citizenships
- 16% would leave their spouses
- 10% would withhold testimony and let a murderer go free
- 7% would kill a stranger
- 3% would put their children up for adoption

Two-thirds of Americans polled would agree to at least one of the above, and some agreed to several.

Transition to next message from Psalm 7 that will speak about the protection and deliverance God offers to those with Integrity;

Integrity offers the solid ground of a foundation that pleases God

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**QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**David Silversides: The Characteristics of a Justified Sinner**

**1. A Question we should all ask –**

Who can draw near to the tabernacle of the Holy God; looks beyond the symbol to the thing symbolized; Who can draw near to God and find acceptance with Him; many in Israel drew near to the symbol but their heart was far from God; Is. 57:19 – Eph. 2:16-18; Jews described as those near and the Gentiles as those far off; but in Christ both draw near to the heavenly holy place by the Spirit through Christ the mediator; the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, ended up praying to himself and went down again without ever drawing near in his heart; David addresses this question to the

Lord – He sets the rules for access; sincerity alone is not enough

## **2. A Question to which the Bible gives 2 kinds of answers**

a) the legal grounds on which a man is accepted with God; basis on which God justifies a guilty sinner; the basis of acceptance = Christ's righteousness and His atonement for sin; His merits imputed to every sinner who trusts entirely in Him; Rom. 3:20; not a matter of man's works; Rom. 8:33; "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved*"

b) the characteristics of the justified man; the character of the man who has been accepted; the justified man will be a changed man; no such thing as a believer who is not a changed man from what he is by nature; belief is a result of the renewing by the Holy Spirit; that work shows itself in the continued pursuit of holiness; 1 Cor. 6:9; the forgiven man is a changed man

## **3. The Character of the man saved by grace (:2-5a)**

a. His aiming at consistent holiness --

he walks soundly, honestly in accordance with the Word of God; Abraham charged to walk uprightly (perfectly);

working righteousness – obeying the commandments of God

speaks the truth in his heart – not merely with his voice; but thinks the truth and believes the truth; his speech is the fruit of what he thinks in his heart; a restraint in his speech; a rejoicing in truth and not iniquity; doesn't blurt out everything he knows; not always a virtue to "speak your mind" – only if what is in your mind is good; speak what is beneficial; our speech is to be seasoned with grace; not foolishness of speech, carelessness or indiscriminate use of tongue

b. Loyalty to the Lord's Cause –

his estimate of others is based on a clear-cut allegiance to the Lord; not on the basis of personal advantage or charm or personality; but ungodliness vs godliness; How do you evaluate people? A Christian has more in common with any other believer than with any unbeliever; Christ not ashamed to own us as His brethren; beware of the sophistication of the world; would you rather be with the Lord's people than with the mighty of the world; be a lover of good men; doesn't mean we have nothing to do with the ungodly; we should not be equally at home with those who are at enmity with God; an oath that commits you to something that is not sinful but just not advantageous to you must be fulfilled – even if made foolishly; inconvenience is not a basis for breaking our word (sin is);

## **4. The Security of the Godly (:5b)**

**Wiersbe:** Who is worthy to live with God? Only through Jesus Christ can we "dwell in God's holy hill." David always was a little bit envious of the priests. When we read the Psalms, we find David saying such things as, "Oh, those priests. They are able to walk in the temple of God. I can't do that. I can't go into the Holy Place." Spiritually he could, but physically he couldn't. Because we are in the Lord Jesus Christ, we can come

boldly into the presence of God, not just to visit Him but to live with Him.

David describes the kind of person who is able to live with God. He must have the right kind of feet ("walks uprightly") and hands ("works righteousness"), lips ("speaks the truth") and heart. What we say with our lips always has to come from our heart. Verse 3 also talks about the tongue: "He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend." This is the person God welcomes at His front door and says, "You come and live with Me." That person has clean feet, clean hands and a clean heart that produce clean words and clean motives, one in whose eyes a vile person is despised. His eyes look upon only what is right and good.

**VanGemenen:** "The '*blameless*' walk is the manner of life characterized by integrity. The word *tamim* signifies a moral way of life. It is not synonymous with '*perfect*' but with an attitude of the heart desirous of pleasing God (cf. 18:24; 101:2,6; 119:1; Matt 5:48; Eph 1:4; Col 1:22). Noah was such a man (Gen 6:8), as was Abraham (Gen 17:1). The walk of integrity was required both before the Flood and before the law was revealed at Sinai. Regardless of what God requires, the blameless man does God's will on earth. Such a man is blessed by the Lord (84:11-12)."

**Craigie:** "In the history of Christian and Jewish worship, there have emerged two extremes toward which the worshiper may be tempted to move. On the one hand, there have been times when the holiness of God has been stressed so powerfully, that the ordinary mortal has felt it impossible to approach God in worship or prayer. On the other hand, the open access to God in prayer has sometimes been so stressed that admission to God's presence becomes a thoughtless and casual matter. Between these two poles, there is a proper median: there is indeed access to the Holy God in worship and prayer, but it must be employed carefully, not casually, with appropriate preparation and reverence. Psalm 15 provides a guide to such access; it reflects the wisdom, prior to entering the divine presence in worship, of reflecting upon the requirements presupposed of the worshipper."

**Spurgeon:** Re "never be moved" – "No storm shall tear him from his foundations, drag him from his anchorage, or uproot him from his place. Like the Lord Jesus, whose dominion is everlasting, the true Christian shall never lose his crown. He shall not only be on Zion, but like Zion, fixed and firm. He shall dwell in the tabernacle of the Most High, and neither death nor judgment shall remove him from his place of privilege and blessedness."

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Lesson #2 – Integrity is Critical for **Protection from our Enemies** (Psalm 7)

[LESSON #2: A LIFE OF INTEGRITY COUNTS FOR SOMETHING – PSALM 7](#)

**BIG IDEA:**

**INTEGRITY ENSURES PROTECTION FROM FIERCE ADVERSARIES SINCE THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE WILL VINDICATE THE INNOCENT AND EXECUTE THE WICKED**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Remember how we ended **Psalm 15:**

*"He who does these things will never be shaken"*

Concept of Security and Protection and Vindication – all necessary because of:

- the Strength of the Adversary and
- the Severity of the Struggle

**1 Pet. 5:8** – *"Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* Interested in attacking our integrity; compromising our relationship with God and our testimony to unbelievers

**Eph. 6:12** *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."* That is why we need the armor of God

This second lesson will focus especially on **the Struggle** ... the various **Conflicts** ... the arenas where our Integrity will be challenged and attacked and tempted

Two Key encouraging verses from Proverbs:

**Prov. 10:9** *"He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out."*

**Prov. 28:18** *"He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, but he who is crooked will fall all at once."*

Need to **brainstorm:** Where does our Integrity come under attack? What types of strategies are used by Satan? Maybe you have some stories to tell of where you were faced with a difficult decision and you chose the path of Integrity – what struggles or conflicts have you faced?

**2 Personal Examples:**

- Conflict over methodology of market research: Call up and lie and see what you can find out – VP involved – "I could stuff you in a drawer"
- Conflict over fairness in giving away a raffle prize at a corporate event – Owner involved

This is David's testimony here – also want to think of examples from **the ministry of the Apostle Paul** who came under great attack on many occasions  
(Hand out the lesson)

**Psalm 7:1-17 – Courtroom scene** – exact background from the life of David is not known; but his integrity is under attack: he is being falsely accused of having unjustly maligned and attacked someone (maybe King Saul) – exactly the crime that is being committed here against David himself

## I. (:1-2) THE RIGHTEOUS TAKE REFUGE IN GOD FROM FIERCE ADVERSARIES

### A. (:1) The Role of Protector

#### 1. Our Responsibility = Take Refuge

*‘O Lord my God, in Thee I have taken refuge’*

We have a Supreme Court that is infallible where we can make our case and know that we will get a fair hearing and a righteous verdict  
Our Integrity Ensures Our Protection

#### 2. God's Responsibility = Deliver Me

*“Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me”*

We must recognize that we are unable to save and deliver ourself; no amount of argumentation or pleading our case can deliver us. We are at the mercy of God and His providential dispensation; we are subject to the timing of God as He works out His will and implements His justice

But make no mistake that we are in a spiritual war and Satan is chasing after us – look at how Satan loves to cause prominent spiritual leaders to fall morally in a way that is scandalous and brings shame upon the church

### B. (:2) The Role of Attacker

(cf. 1 Peter 5:8 quoted above -- the attacks of Lion #1 = Satan)

#### 1. The enemy pursues

*“who pursue me”*

#### 2. The enemy cripples

*“Lest he tear my soul like a lion”*

#### 3. The enemy devours

*“Dragging me away, while there is none to deliver”*

Do you watch any of the public TV channels where you can see the savagery of the lion stalking, then attacking and then devouring its prey. Not a pretty sight; will tear the carcass limb from limb; nothing left to be salvaged

David saw his life from this perspective of vulnerability – fleeing as a fugitive for many years; under the constant threat of discovery and death – despite the Lord's promises regarding his kingship; despite his attempts to live a life of integrity

His struggles were real; his struggles were terrifying

How about the **Apostle Paul** describing the attacks against his character, against his apostleship and against his ministry? Certainly his ministry was characterized by integrity ... but look at the details he provides in **2 Cor.** of all of his hardships and sufferings – yet he was not bitter – he still embraced the will of God along with all of the suffering – *“I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”* Tremendous book to study ...

- list all of the **hardships** he details here
- then study all of the passages in 2 Cor. that highlight the **integrity** of his lifestyle and ministry –
  
- **patient enduring** of sufferings (1:6) – must be willing to pay the price – not always immediate deliverance like for Daniel’s friends from the fiery furnace
- ministered in **holiness** and **godly sincerity**, not in fleshly wisdom but in the **grace** of God” (1:12)
- not **vacillating** or being intentionally deceptive regarding his travel and ministry plans (1:17)
- “I call God as witness to my soul” – **transparent life** inviting the accountability of God (1:23)
- (2:17) not peddling the word of God, but as from **sincerity**, but as from God, we speak in Christ **in the sight of God**
- (4:2) 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”
- (6:3) giving **no cause for offense** in anything, so that the ministry will not be **discredited**, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God ...”
- (10:11) Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present
- chap. 12 neither Paul nor Titus took advantage of the believers in any way; instead they sacrificially gave of themselves; no craftiness or deceit

## II. (:3-5) INTEGRITY ENSURES PROTECTION

We need to remember our definition of Integrity

**My Def: Integrity is consistently living in harmony with your moral world view –**

**Simple Definition** mentioned earlier: "soundness of moral principle and character; uprightness; honesty"

in the Hebrew, the word integrity meant completeness, moral innocence, or perfection.

The exact opposite of compromise.

- A. (:3-4) Integrity means:
- doing no injustice
  - not harming a friend
  - not taking advantage of someone

How can Satan present to us occasions to fail in these areas mentioned here??  
Why is maintaining our integrity such a challenge?

Remember how quickly we can lose a good reputation that we have built up over a long time ... still we may need to do some rebuilding if we have fallen; confess our sins; repent; seek forgiveness; rebuild the good foundation

- B. (:5) We need protection against those who would:
- pursue my soul
  - overtake it
  - trample my life
  - “lay my glory in the dust”

### III. (:6-11) THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE WILL VINDICATE THE INNOCENT

- A. (:6) Provoking the Appointed Judge to Action

1. “*Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger*”
2. “*Lift up thyself against the rage of my adversaries*”
3. “*And arouse thyself for me*”

Why? Because “*Thou hast appointed judgment*”

- B. (:7) Preparing the People to Receive the Verdict

“*And let the assembly of the peoples encompass Thee;  
And over them return Thou on high*”

Speaks as if the Lord has temporarily allowed evil to proceed unchecked; now is returning to His throne and executing judgment

Wants to see the visible rule of righteousness in the land

- C. (:8-11) Promising Vindication for the Men of Integrity

1. Explaining How God Judges –

**what are some of the characs. of God’s judgment???**

- a. Universal Judgment  
“*The Lord judges the peoples*”
- b. Searching Judgment – Nothing Hidden from the Judge  
“*For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds*”
- c. Righteous Judgment from a Righteous Judge
- d. Righteous Indignation  
“*a God who has indignation every day*”

## 2. Expecting Vindication for the Righteous

Key Verse: *“Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me”*

*“Establish the righteous”*

*“My shield is with God,  
Who saves the upright in heart”*

## IV. (:12-13) THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE HAS PREPARED WEAPONS OF EXECUTION

*“sharpen His sword”*

*“bent His bow and made it ready”*

*“prepared for Himself deadly weapons”*

*“makes His arrows fiery shafts”*

Response to this threat should be the fear of God and Repentance

## V. (:14-16) THE WICKED WILL GET WHAT THEY DESERVE

### A. (:14) They Traffic in Wickedness

*“Behold, he travails with wickedness,  
And he conceives mischief, and brings forth falsehood”*

### B. (:15-16) They Will be Trapped in Their Own Traps

#### 1. The Pit

*“He has dug a pit and hollowed it out,  
And has fallen into the hole which he made”*

### **Story of Haman and Mordecai in Book of Esther**

#### 2. The Pate

*“His mischief will return upon his own head,  
And his violence will descend upon his own pate”*

## VI. (:17) PRAISE THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

*“I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness,  
And I will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High”*

Look at David – study his prayers and praise of His Lord; he worships God from the foundation of a life of integrity

**1 Chron. 29:17** *“Since I know, O my God, that You try the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things”*

We have already looked at the Apostle Paul – the integrity of his ministry and his confidence that the Lord would protect and vindicate him

We might face some fearful struggles; but we can take refuge in a God who will ultimately vindicate a life of integrity

**Transition:** Preparation time for praise and worship Sunday morning

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### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) To what extent can we rely on our conscience to determine whether we are living a life of integrity? If we have done injustice to another, will we even be aware of it? Are we actively asking the Lord to try our hearts and minds and search us?
- 2) What type of a judge is God? What is revealed in this psalm about God as Judge? Are we comfortable having God as our Judge?
- 3) Contrast how powerful the wicked looks to us when they are attacking us (vs.1-2) vs. How helpless and futile the wicked are proven to be when they get what they deserve (vs. 15-16). Look at the weapons the Lord uses against the wicked.
- 4) What should determine the measure and nature of our praise to God who both delivers us and vindicates us?

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### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

#### **David Silversides: What to do when Falsely Accused**

##### **1. David’s Distress (:1-2)**

Enemies represented like wild animals, pursuing him to tear him in pieces; The fiercest of our enemies are subject to God’s Providence; prayer is never a waste of time; because God does not lack to the power to answer;

##### **2. David’s Innocence (:3-5)**

He protests (not that he is sinless) in the form of an oath that he is innocent of that of which he is accused; the general charge is given in vs. 3; more specific in vs. 4 – the slander was that he was a traitor and scheming against Saul; initiating the problem; David had done the exact opposite: had delivered Saul even when he had the opportunity to kill him (1 Sam. 24:9-10, 17; 26:7); David did not take the providential opportunity as divine guidance; he had been given the ideal opportunity to kill Saul; not

an automatic indication of what we should do; governed by the Word of God; David was willing to be punished for any real guilt

Acts 25:11 – Paul took the same tact – claiming his willingness to bear the civil punishment if he had committed any crime

### **3. David's Appeal (:6-11)**

1 Pet. 2:21 – Christ committed Himself to the righteous judge as well; God never gets it wrong; never believes any misrepresentation of us; knows what is true about us; it seems as if the Lord has vacated His judgment seat; asking that the Lord manifest that judgment; God is not misled by slander and gossip; Faith and a good conscience bear fruit in prayer; come to God when we are slandered

### **4. David's Confidence (:12-16)**

God's delay is longsuffering, not indifference. *"The goodness of God leads to repentance"* (Rom. 2:4). Ps. 50:21 – God is not like man; Ultimate judgment is ordained and sure; God has ordained the means by which the wicked will be cut off; an element of instrumentality in the sin itself as related to the judgment that then comes upon that sin;

### **5. David's Praise (:17)**

Faith settles David into a confidence of what he knows will come to pass so that he can praise in the present; according to God's righteousness; God is never unrighteous in bestowing His mercy

### **What do we do when we are unjustly treated or accused?**

- Ps. 109:4 – turn to God in prayer
- the certainty of ultimate justice; Commit our cause to Him who will judge righteously
- the knowledge of God; He is never deceived about us despite how men might accuse
- the things that God has promised are to be certain in our lives – gives us patience; delivers us from bitterness and despair

**Finlay MacIver:** Righteousness and Holiness Mark the Way to True Assurance and Confidence

- Holderness Reformed Church

(Remember these are OT times; very difficult for us to understand the aspect of personal righteousness that the psalmist appeals to)

The situation: **2 Sam. 16** – Absalom has revolted and has taken over Jerusalem and King David is met by Shimei on the road who has created quite a disturbance;

Throwing stones at him and insulting him; Accusing David of having done evil to Saul; Why not kill him? Loving his enemy as a servant of God; have to commit our enemies to God; the assembled peoples under the rulership of God are supposed to act in a civil sense (not us responding as individuals)

*"Judge me according to my righteousness"* – cf. Book of Job – Difficult concept for us – But *our righteousness is as filthy rags*; we have no righteousness of our own; How do we harmonize this? Not an isolated expression; Look at the last judgment as well in Matt. 25 where the Lord seems to be judging on the basis of works; cf. not having the

wedding gown of the imputed righteousness of Christ; the necessity for holiness; without holiness no man shall see the Lord; David claims to be walking in the way of holiness and righteousness as opposed to hypocrisy or Pharisaism; cf. the holiness movement which is about perfectionism

**VanGemeren:** “The psalmist puts his case before the Lord, ‘*the righteous judge*’ (v.11) in the face of the false accusations of the enemies (vv.1-2). He believes in his own heart that he has not done anything to deserve the ill-treatment of his adversaries....

The situational aspect gives way to an eschatological dimension in David’s expectation that the Lord will rule over the nations. When the rule of God is established, the righteous will no longer be harassed by the wicked. On the basis of this faith, the psalmist leads us to rejoice in the righteousness of our God. Christians can join with the spirit of the psalm as they look forward to the rule of Christ over the nations and the execution of justice and righteousness on earth (cf. 2 Thess 1:5-10).

The specific genre of Psalm 7 has been difficult to determine because it contains elements of an individual lament (vv. 1-2), an oath (vv.3-5), a psalm of Yahweh’s kingship (vv.6-12), and a thanksgiving hymn (v.17).”

**Kidner:** Regarding 7:3-5 – “The oath of innocence: The three *if*-clauses, culminating in the challenge flung down in verse 5, reveal a deeper hurt than persecution, namely slander. Like Job’s great protestation (Jb. 31, one of the moral peaks of the Old Testament), David’s reply reveals something of his code of honour, as well as the thrust of the accusation (the *this* of verse 3), which alleged that he dealt in bribes and treachery. (Absalom, with admittedly more subtlety, proved how damaging a ‘smear campaign’ could be against a David not yet idealized: cf. 2 Sa. 15:1-6.)”

**Spurgeon:** Re vs. 2 – “It is a picture from the shepherd-life of David. When the fierce lion had pounced upon the defenseless lamb, and had made it his prey, he would rend the victim in pieces, break all the bones, and devour all, because no shepherd was near to protect the lamb or rescue it from the ravenous beast. This is a soul-moving portrait of a saint delivered over to the will of Satan.”

**Spurgeon:** quoting William Dyer on vs. 17 – “To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless him for miseries is the way to remove them: no good lives so long as that which is thankfully improved; no evil dies so soon as that which is patiently endured.”

**Leupold:** “There is always something particularly dastardly about committing injustice against a man who lives at peace with one. This appears to have been the charge raised against David. One almost gets the impression that he is referring to a slander which had just been freshly devised and had just come to his ears. The ‘*this*’ seems to have some such emphasis. With strong indignation the writer interrupts himself. Not only had he not done the evil charged, he had even done the very opposite: he had delivered his enemy, who had no cause for the enmity that he harbored against David.”



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### **Lesson #3 – Integrity is Critical for Ultimate Success**

[LESSON #3: A LIFE OF INTEGRITY ENABLES YOU TO PASS THE ULTIMATE TEST – PSALM 26](#)

#### **BIG IDEA:**

**THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION FOR THE MAN OF INTEGRITY – RATHER A FOUNDATION FOR CONFIDENT LIVING, GENUINE WORSHIP AND EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

- We have looked at the **importance of Integrity** for our relationship with God (Psalm 15); lots of good background from the life of King David – showed us what a life of integrity looks like
- We have looked at the **Struggle the Conflict** – when enemies would attack our integrity; when we need to appeal to God for protection and vindication – Psalm 7 and the ministry of the Apostle Paul from 2 Cor. – God is a righteous Judge; has all knowledge; never gets fooled; He will do the right thing by us

Now we want to praise the Lord and worship Him this morning for some of **the Benefits of Integrity – Integrity is Critical for Ultimate Success**

**What do you feel are some of the benefits of Integrity**  
(then handout the lesson)

#### **I. (:1-7) INTEGRITY IS THE BASIS FOR VINDICATION = A SUCCESSFUL APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT**

Very similar to the material from last session from Psalm 7 – so we will go quickly here

A. Desired Verdict = Vindication

*“Vindicate me, O Lord”*

B. Necessary Examination

*“Examine me, O Lord, and try me;  
Test my mind and my heart”*

Do we have this same attitude of transparency – Go ahead Lord and check me out thoroughly ... check out my thought life; probe my motivations; look at my heart desires; test me completely and deeply

Cf. value of self examination before partaking of the Lord’s Supper – designed as a regular time for asking God to search our hearts

C. Grounds for Innocence

1. Overview

- a. Consistent Integrity (Walked the Walk) – no hypocrisy  
*“I have walked in my integrity”*  
 King David could say that despite his serious sins  
 The Apostle Paul could say that – we saw from 2 Cor.

What are **examples from the life of Christ** that speak to His walking in integrity despite the pressure of opposition and such serious threats of personal harm

- as a child growing up – the foundation at a young age for his integrity
- the Temptation account – when Satan attacked him on three specific fronts
  - would not take any shortcuts
- we have seen the contrast between his walk and that of the Pharisees
- the testimony of the Father on the Mount of Transfiguration – *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased”*
- they could not find any charges to level against him .. but had to pay witnesses to trump up false accusations; cf. qualif. of elder as being “blameless” = man of integrity

- b. Unwavering Faith (Kept the Faith)  
*“And I have trusted in the Lord without wavering”*  
 Consistency and Perseverance are important

- c. Secure Relationship  
*“For Thy lovingkindness is before my eyes”*

- d. Careful Obedience  
*“And I have walked in Thy truth.”*  
 Biblical world view – not just humanistic moralism or ethics  
 Conscience informed by the word of God  
 Has developed biblical convictions to live by

Look at the **testimony of Job – 31:4-8 – Lived a life of Integrity**

*“Does He not see my ways and number all my steps?  
 If I have walked with falsehood, and my foot has hastened after deceit,  
 Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, and let God know my integrity.  
 If my step has turned from the way, or my heart followed my eyes,  
 Or if any spot has stuck to my hands,  
 Let me sow and another eat, and let my crops be uprooted.”*

## 2. Specific Examples

- a. Separation from Sinners  
*“I do not sit with deceitful men,  
 Nor will I go with pretenders.  
 I hate the assembly of evildoers,  
 And I will not sit with the wicked.”*

What is our relationship to unbelievers supposed to look like?

b. Sacrifice for Sin

*“I shall wash my hands in innocence,  
And I will go about Thine altar, O Lord”*

D. Thanksgiving and Testimony

*“That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,  
And declare all Thy wonders.”*

Sunday morning – time for thanksgiving and praise and testimony – our integrity is a cause for glorifying God, not boasting in ourselves

**II. (:8) INTEGRITY ALLOWS ONE TO BE AT HOME IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

*“O Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house,  
And the place where Thy glory dwells.”*

Remember how we started the weekend from Psalm 15 --

*“O Lord, who may abide in Your tent?  
Who may dwell on your holy hill?”*

**III. (:9-11) INTEGRITY SEPARATES ONE FROM THE FATE OF THE WICKED -- DELIVERANCE AND GRACE SHOULD BE THE EXPECTATION INSTEAD**

A. Description and Destiny of the Wicked

1. Description of the Wicked

*“sinners”*

*“men of bloodshed”*

*“In whose hands is a wicked scheme”*

*“And whose right hand is full of bribes”*

2. Destiny of the Wicked

*“Do not take my soul away”*

B. Description and Destiny of the Man of Integrity

1. Description of the Man of Integrity

*“I shall walk in my integrity”*

**Prov. 20:7** *“A righteous man who walks in his integrity – how blessed are his sons after him.”*

2. Destiny of the Man of Integrity – Tremendous Blessings

a. Enjoying Redemption

*“Redeem me”*

- b. Enjoying God’s Grace  
*“be gracious to me”*

**IV. (:12) INTEGRITY RESULTS IN CONFIDENT LIVING, GENUINE WORSHIP AND EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY BECAUSE OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE AND GRACE**

**A. Confident Living:** *"My foot stands on a level place"*

**B. Genuine Worship and Effective Testimony:** *"In the congregations I shall bless the Lord"*

**CONCLUSION: LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO A LIFE OF INTEGRITY**

**3 Areas where Integrity is Critical --**

- Lesson #1 – Integrity is Critical for Our Relationship with God = Foundational (**Psalm 15**) -- not always easy; struggles, conflicts, strong opposition
- Lesson #2 – Integrity is Critical for Protection from our Enemies (**Psalm 7**)
- Lesson #3 – Integrity is Critical for Ultimate Success (**Psalm 26**)
  - No Condemnation before God / Confidence
  - Rewards for the believer
  - Platform for Testimony before unbelievers

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**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Can we be satisfied with a life of integrity, or are we always craving for the attention and praise of men? This is a good test as to whether our orientation is to really please our Lord (when no one can see what we are doing but Him) or whether we are more motivated by being a man-pleaser.
- 2) What does Vindication accomplish? Isn't it enough that the Lord sees our obedience and will reward us accordingly?
- 3) How can we reach out with the gospel to sinners without associating with them in a manner that would compromise our goal of holiness? What was the example of Jesus in this regard?
- 4) Is our worship characterized by holiness? Do we *“love the habitation of God’s house?”* Do we *“bless the Lord”* publicly as we have opportunity?

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## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

### **David Silversides: Where the Believer's Heart Is**

A plea that God would look upon David's righteous cause and support him; David in trouble and being falsely accused and slandered; maybe when he fled from Absalom; his enemies plot against him and slander him and scheme;

#### **1. David's Cause is Right (:1-3)**

May seem self righteous, but this is not the case; David knew how to pray for forgiveness of sins as well; Absalom stole the hearts of the people and turned them against David who was God's anointed; pleads for God to act as a judge on his behalf; David declares his confidence in the Lord; the Lord will keep Him; declares his willingness to learn; he wants to know if there is anything wrong in his heart that needs to be put right; be made aware of what is lacking; endeavoring to walk according to the light he has; God's promised faithful love is precious to David; resting upon the promises of God

#### **Lessons:**

- God does delay the vindication of what is right; we often have to wait in patience; Justice will be done in the end
- True independence is found in dependence upon God; 1 Cor. 4:3-5; the Lord knows the truth of the matter

#### **2. David's Category is Clear (:4-5)**

Not just social preference but he had not joined in the schemes and plots of the wicked; peer pressure can easily pull us in to fall in with schemers; he wouldn't fight the Lord's battles with the devil's methods

#### **3. David's Place Seems Wrong (:6-8)**

Ex. 40:30 – washing of hands by the priests; walking before the Lord in a good conscience; the end doesn't justify the means; God able to bring him back to the courts of the Lord without any scheming on David's part; never resort to sinful expediency; David looks forward to declaring the works of the Lord in thanksgiving; as we walk in the truth the Lord will bring him back to the temple;

- the importance we should attach to God's ordinances of worship – David had a longing to be back in Jerusalem; he was not content to just settle somewhere else;

#### **4. David's Destination Depends on God's Verdict (:9-10)**

He acknowledges God as the one who judges all; don't treat me as the ungodly; the Lord distinguishes the wheat from the tares; He will not forget one true believer; separate from the world;

#### **5. David's Prosperity is Assured (:11-12)**

By God's grace he will persevere in faithful obedience; no longer struggling; on an even place; his faith has been strengthened through prayer

**Kidner:** “In each of Psalms 26-28 the Lord’s house comes into view. In Psalm 26 the worshipper, as he approaches, is searched by God’s demand for sincerity (cf. Pss. 15 and 24) and, in the last verse, rejoices to have found access. In Psalm 27 he sees this house as sanctuary from his enemies, and as the place of vision, face to face with God. In Psalm 28 he brings forward his petition, spreading his hands as a suppliant towards the holy of holies, and receives his answer.”

**Spurgeon:** Re “*Judge me, O Jehovah*” – “A solemn appeal to the just tribunal of the heart-searching God, warranted by the circumstances of the writer, so far as regarded the particular offences with which he was wrongly charged. Worried and worn out by the injustice of men, the innocent spirit flies from its false accusers to the throne of Eternal Right. He had need have a clear case who dares to carry his suit into the King’s Bench of heaven. Such an appeal as this is not to be rashly made on any occasion; and as to the whole of our walk and conversation, it should never be made at all, except as we are justified in Christ Jesus . . .”

**Leupold:** “‘*Prove me to be right.*’ This is said in the face of charges, spoken or assumed, that the writer has been a hypocrite, and that the ills than now befall him are proof of this fact. But the man has served God in sincerity to the very best of his ability . . . He has lived his life as in the sight of God in all sincerity and still does so. It is God’s verdict that counts; that he knows right well, and so he appeals to the Supreme Court for an inspection. but at the same time, since he has been living his life as before God’s eyes, he can say with assurance: ‘*Tried is my heart and my mind.*’ This second statement may appear to be a bold claim, but the writer is about to offer evidence for what he claims. It must be remembered that he always claims that he is not what his opponents claim he is.”

**Yates:** Re vv.8-12 – “A Prayer for Vindication. ‘*Gather not my soul with sinners.*’ His plea is not that he may avoid death, but that he may avoid being grouped with the ungodly, whom he has so carefully avoided in life. In this prayer for special treatment, he prays for God to *redeem* and *be merciful* to him because he is going to continue to walk in integrity, stand firmly, and bless the Lord publicly.”

**Alexander:** Re vs. 6 – “‘*I will wash in innocence my hands, and will compass thy altar, O Jehovah!*’ To the negative professions of the two preceding verses he now adds a positive declaration of his purpose. Not content with abstaining from all share in the counsels of the wicked, he is fully resolved to adhere to the service of the Lord. He will cleanse himself from all that would unfit him for that service, and then cleave to the sanctuary where God dwells.”

**Harris:** A SONG OF AVOWED INTEGRITY

Theme: False accusations and slander bring longing for vindication and protection.

Occasion: No clue. Some think upon the assassination of Ishbosheth.

I. REQUEST. Ver. 1-3. “*Examine me*” (ver.2).

1. Protestation. Ver. 1. *"I have trusted in Jehovah."* The avowal of innocence when falsely accused, which does not, however, exclude a due sense of sin. He longs for vindication.

2. Prayer. Ver. 2. *"Prove me."* God's tribunal is just, and the Psalmist feels safe to trust himself to the divine Will for testing.

3. Profession. Ver. 3. *"I have walked in thy truth."* Here we have the assurance of a true soul that has been severely tried and is still confident that God sees and knows, and that he will take account and deliver.

## II. REVULSION. Ver. 4-8. *"I hate the assembly of the wicked"* (ver. 5).

1. Restriction. Ver. 4, 5. *"I have not sat."* His sincerity is shown by his complete separation from the ways and the haunts of the wicked. He has persistently kept aloof from evil-doers and has shunned even their companionship.

2. Repairing. Ver. 6. *"So will I compass thine altar."* He seeks the proper approach to God through the appointed sacrifices...

3. Regard. Ver. 7, 8. *"I love thy habitation"* (ver. 8). He shows his sincerity also by his ardent devotion to God's house...

## III. RESOLUTION. Ver. 9-12. *"As for me"* (ver. 9).

1. Prayer. Ver. 9, 10. *"Gather my soul"* (ver. 9). Thinking now of the reaping-time, the Psalmist declares his desire that he may be gathered with the godly when the harvest comes.

2. Purpose. Ver. 11. *"I will walk in mine integrity."* He resolves also to be upright and is conscious that he can do it only through the redeeming grace of God.

3. Position. Ver. 12. *"My foot standeth."* The song ends with a confident note of security. Beginning with a minor key, it closes in a paean of praise and thanksgiving.

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WHAT would you do if, when you visit the ATM to withdraw \$100, it dispenses \$250 because it has been incorrectly stacked with \$50 notes and not \$20 notes. Would you keep the cash or return it to the bank? If you return the money would it be because: (a) It is wrong not to return someone else's property; (b) It wouldn't be fair to the bank's shareholders; or (c) I might get found out and prosecuted for theft.

Each of the answers a, b or c is correct, with each representing one of the three main moral philosophies that guide our sense of what is right, according to Roger Steare, visiting professor of organizational ethics at Cass Business School in London and the author of ethicability.

**Answer a** represents our **principled conscience** - we do what's right because it is the courageous, fair or kind thing to do. We often use this conscience in our close relationships. The problem is that principles often conflict and doing the right thing can be difficult, Professor Steare says.

**Answer b** represents our **social conscience** - we decide what is right by considering the consequences of our actions on others. We use this most often at work and in communities. The problems associated with this might include marginalisation of minorities, that pleasure can be preferred over what's good and that the ends can be used to justify the means.

Finally, **answer c** represents **rule compliance** - we don't need to think because the rules tell us what is right and wrong. This is the most common moral philosophy used in business and remote transactions. The problem with rules is that they can cause us to stop thinking for ourselves and too many can promote rule breaking or stifle creativity. The three moral philosophies - principled conscience, social conscience and rules compliance - make up our integrity, or moral DNA, which guides the way we live. For everyone the balance between the moral philosophies is different, depending on personality and experience.

[http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/career\\_and\\_jobs/article4300898.ece](http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/career_and_jobs/article4300898.ece)

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Everyone should make up their own list of questions to comprise an Integrity Test – Here are some sample questions ... what can we come up with??

### **How Honest Are You?**

Take the Integrity Test!

1. You're a young lawyer who could lose your job if you don't bill enough hours. All your colleagues are padding their hours. Do you pad yours?
2. Your next-door neighbor offers to hook you up with free cable television. Do you take the offer?
3. You're an accountant who discovers that a company you're auditing is inflating its earnings. Your boss says to go along or you'll be fired. Do you comply?
4. You move to a state where auto insurance is sky high. Do you keep your car registered at your old address?
5. You're a CEO with a chance to make \$100 million by cooking the books. The worst penalty you could face is two years in a country club prison - and you could keep the \$100 million. Do you cook the books?
6. A friend offers you a dirt-cheap illegal sublet in a prime apartment building with a waiting list. Do you take the offer?
7. You don't have enough money to pay your taxes at the end of the year. Your accountant recommends some made-up deductions, saying the IRS doesn't audit anyone these days. Do you go along?
8. You're a minor league baseball player trying to make the majors. Most of your teammates are taking steroids to hit better. Do you also dope?
9. An HMO denies a certain treatment to a patient under your care. Do you lie to the HMO to make the patient's condition seem worse so they will get the treatment they need?



**10.** You're a car salesman paid on commission. All the other salesmen are saying that the next shipment of the hot new model everyone wants is due in three weeks - when it's really six weeks. Do you also say three weeks?

<http://www.cheatingculture.com/integritytest.htm>