

MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SEMINAR II

Theme: “The Foundations for Pentecostal Faith and Practice.”

Leadership and Integrity

**Written by:
H. Lynn Stone**

INTRODUCTION

The English word “integrity” is defined by Webster as “moral soundness” in the sense of being whole or complete. It comes from the word “integer” which means a whole number, or, literally, a number that is “untouched.” That is, nothing has been taken from its completeness. An apple is *one* apple if it is whole and entire. Otherwise, it is said to be *half* an apple, or a *slice* of an apple, or a *piece* of an apple. So the primary meaning of integrity refers to that which is whole. It is bound together in oneness. It has not had any pieces or “bites” taken out of it.

The word integrity has come to be used especially to denote honesty and uprightness. But it is honesty in a total sense of everyday living rather than simply in reference to an incident or singular occasion. If a car dealer one day sells one car in which he is forthright and truthful it can be said that he is honest that day in that transaction. But if the car dealer every day sells every car with forthrightness and truthfulness it is said that his dealership has integrity.

A leader that has integrity is much more than one who has a few occasions to be honest. To have integrity a leader must be honest in all of his dealings. Integrity in leadership characterizes every area of one’s life. By its very definition, if a church leader is to have integrity it will be more than integrity at church. There will also be integrity at home, at work,

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 2

and in interaction with people in public places such as restaurants, service stations, hotels, airplanes, etc.

I. The Integrity of King David and the Idolatry of Solomon

When the Lord appeared to Solomon after the dedication of the temple He spoke of the integrity of his father David's heart.

Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in *integrity of heart* and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel' (I Kings 9:4-5, NKJV).

Notice that integrity is closely associated with "uprightness." The Hebrew word comes from a root which means to be straight or even. Solomon was encouraged to have a heart like David that was both "complete" and "straight" in its obedience to God.

So there are two dimensions of integrity in Godly leadership. The first is the dimension of wholeness. Leadership must be understood to be "one." It cannot be divided between factions or groups. The same integrity of wholeness must characterize every aspect of leadership regardless of the "importance" or "power" or "standing" of the individual or group.

The second dimension of integrity in Godly leadership is the dimension of being "straight." Such leadership must always demonstrate consistency in both words and actions. A leader's life and words must be upright and truthful without pretense or duplicity. It remains "straight" and unchanged regardless of the changing winds of popularity or the differing waves of circumstances.

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 3

An excellent example of the integrity of David's leadership is found in the story of the men who "remained with the stuff" in the 30th chapter of I Samuel. While David and his men were away from their home town of Ziklag, the Amalekites smote the city. All of their possessions were stolen and their families taken captive.

David and his army of 600 men chased after the enemy. When they came to the brook of Besor, 200 of the men were so weak they could not cross over the river. So they stayed behind to guard the supplies that could not be transported over the water while the others chased the enemy. The Lord gave David and his men a miraculous victory. Not only were all of the families and possessions recovered. They also took all of the "spoils" of the defeated Amalekites.

When the victorious army of 400 men returned, the "wicked men" and "men of Belial" did not want to share the spoils with those who had stayed behind. They said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart" (I Samuel 30:22, NKJV).

But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us" (I Samuel 30:23, NKJV). David made no distinction between the 400 men who continued on in battle and the 200 men who stayed behind to watch over the supplies. Regardless of who actually fought in the battle, it was the Lord who had given them the victory over the enemy.

David said, "As his part is that goes down to the battle, so shall his part be that carries by the stuff: they shall part alike" (I Samuel 30:24). The following verse adds,

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 4

“And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.”

In today’s church world there are many parallels of those who “go forth to battle” and those who “remain with the stuff.”

- The preacher usually “goes to battle” while the family “remains with the stuff.”
- The senior pastor “goes to battle” while the associates “remain with the stuff.”
- The worship leaders “go to battle” while the nursery workers “remain with the stuff.”
- The overseer “goes to battle” while the secretaries and staff “remain with the stuff.”

The integrity of leadership demonstrated by David recognizes the principle of equality which David established. Every person is equal in God’s kingdom. Each one is gifted with grace by the Spirit of God. Some are called to go forth into more publicly recognized ministries while others are called to serve in more private ways. But all are servant ministers in the army of God. Regardless of the demonstration of public warfare, it is God who gives the victory. Therefore, all are to be fully commended and rewarded with the “spoils” of victory in an equal manner.

This is the type of obedient integrity that causes God to say, “I will establish the throne of your kingdom.” When leadership is “whole” and “straight” according to the directions of God’s Word, the leader’s sphere of influence will be as the leadership of a king in a righteous kingdom that has been established by God Himself.

But God also told Solomon what the consequences would be if his leadership was not filled with integrity. Notice carefully how God contrasts David’s leadership of integrity with a leadership that is not patterned after obedience to God’s Word.

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 5

But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples (I Kings 9:6-8, NKJV).

God Himself declares that leadership without integrity is a leadership that serves “other gods.” Without integrity, leadership is in reality a type of idolatry and false worship that will cause God to cast away His people. God will not accept the worship of a man or a church that gives to Him an “apple with a bite taken out of it.”

These words contain a strong warning to the church today. We live in a secular and political world where integrity in leadership is literally mocked. To the world the truth is nothing more than a convenient tool that can be twisted at will to meet one’s individual goals. Political expediency exploits one group of “voters” or “followers” against another. Anyone who dares express a difference of opinion is labeled as a traitor to the country and an heretic to his religion.

Such worldly displays of a lack of integrity must never be allowed in the leadership of the church. God has plainly warned us that if the leaders ignore His commandments and statutes He will cast us out of His sight and the church will become a “byword among the people.”

But God has better plans for His people. He is anointing leaders, both in local churches and in regional and national offices, with integrity like David. Leaders in the church today are being called to a new vision. They are recognizing God’s calling of every saint into the work of ministry. They are learning the importance of treating all persons as equals. They are accepting the responsibility of looking to God’s Word in

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 6

order to live with integrity and uprightness at home, in the workplace, before the world and in the prophetic worship in Spirit and in truth.

II. Integrity in the New Testament

Even though the word “integrity” is not used in the New Testament, the embodiment of integrity is found in the words for *sincerity* and *truth*. Both thoughts are expressed by Paul in I Corinthians 5:8 where he gives instructions concerning partaking of the communion service. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of *sincerity* and *truth* (I Cor. 5:8).

The Greek word for sincerity refers to that which is clear when seen and judged in the sunlight. It is obvious in this passage that Paul is referring to the Word of truth as being the light which judges us. So Paul lifts up integrity as a lifestyle that is brought under the judgment scrutiny of the Scriptures. Under the intense light of the Word and Spirit of God the believer’s everyday life is seen as clear and pure.

The English word “sincere” probably originates from two Latin words which mean “without wax.” It seems to refer to an old Roman custom whereby furniture was placed outside the house in the heat and brightness of the noonday sun. If the furniture was made of inferior wood, or crafted by unskilled workmen, its deceptive flaws would be covered over with a type of hard wax that was difficult to detect inside a room. In the sunlight the wax would begin to melt and the furniture would be seen to be flawed. If the furniture was indeed “sincere,” the light of day would actually emphasize the beauty of the furniture. It had the integrity of a true workmanship which stayed the same regardless of the light and heat under which it was judged.

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 7

Paul used the word for sincerity two other times in his writings. He said in his second letter to the Corinthians, “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly *sincerity*, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (II Corinthians 1:12). Here Paul emphasizes the integrity of one’s everyday speech and communication.

Later Paul said, “Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with *sincerity*, like men sent from God” (II Corinthians 2:17, NIV). In this passage Paul emphasizes the integrity of one’s words in relation to the teaching and preaching of the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel we preach is not for sale. The preacher of the Gospel cannot be bought – neither by money, nor by popularity, nor by election, nor by appointment.

The opposite of integrity in the New Testament is the Greek word HUPOKRISIS. It is the word from which we get the English words “hypocrisy” and “hypocrite.” In the Greek world this word was used to describe an actor on the stage of the theater. His words and actions were not real. They were merely learned scripts to be played out for the pleasure of a fun seeking crowd.

Jesus used the word HUPOKRISIS to refer to religious leaders of His day. He said they “outwardly appear righteous” but inside they are “full of *hypocrisy*” (Matthew 23:28). He warned the disciples to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees, “which is hypocrisy” (Luke 21:1).

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 8

Paul warned of the day when men would depart from the faith, “speaking lies in *hypocrisy*; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:2). Peter urged the believers to lay aside “*hypocrisies*, and envies, and all evil speaking” (I Peter 2:1).

This linguistic and Biblical picture of a “hypocrite” is a vivid lesson in integrity for leaders of the church today.

In much of the world, religious services have become very popular, drawing tremendous crowds. Many times this is the marvelous fulfillment of the Lord’s promise that He will pour out of His blessings on all flesh. What a joy it is to be able to worship with thousands of brothers and sisters in Spirit and in truth. Yet at other times huge crowds are lured into large venues in the name of “worship” when in fact the “service activities” degenerate into little more than the entertainment of a “fun-seeking” crowd.

Church and worship leaders must beware of the dangers and temptations that Satan places on “center stage.” The Devil knows the subtle appeal of the “theatrical world.” He loves to distort the sincere integrity of true worship “in spirit and in truth,” into the “hypocrisy” of acting out a script in order to please a fun seeking crowd. This is especially dangerous in the day of worship services that have production television appeal and big crowds with fat pocketbooks.

III. The Integrity of Paul and the Hypocrisy of Peter at Antioch

Throughout the history of the Book of Acts and his epistles, the Apostle Paul models a leadership that is full of integrity as opposed to the hypocrisy of the stage. Possibly the best historical example of Paul’s integrity is found in the Epistle of Galatians where he recounts the confrontation between himself and Peter at the church in Antioch.

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 9

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his *hypocrisy*, so that by their *hypocrisy* even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" (Galatians 2:11-14, NIV).

The King James Version uses the English words "dissembled" and "dissimulation" in verse 13, saying, "And the other Jews *dissembled* likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their *dissimulation*." But the Greek word that is translated "dissimulation" is HUPOKRISIS. It is always translated "hypocrisy" in the rest of the New Testament. The word for "dissembled" is SUNUPOKRINOMAI. It is made up of the verb form of HUPOKRISIS and the preposition SUN or "with." Strong says it means, "to act hypocritically in concert with."

When Peter first came to Antioch he ate with the Gentile church members. God had revealed to him that there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles. In fact, Peter strongly defended the Gentile believers in his confrontation with the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 11).

But Peter's actions at Antioch were not according to the truth he himself had proclaimed to the Jerusalem Jews. After he had fellowshiped for a time with the uncircumcised Gentiles at Antioch, some prominent Jewish leaders came down from Jerusalem who taught that believers must be "circumcised" in order to fully be a part of God's kingdom. After their arrival Peter would no longer sit down and eat at the table with the Gentiles because he did not want to "offend" the Judaizers. When Peter chose

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 10

not to eat with the Gentile believers at Antioch, many other Jewish believers (even including Barnabas) followed his example.

When Paul saw what Peter had done he confronted him face to face in a public setting “because he was clearly in the wrong.” The King James Version says, “he was to be blamed.” Notice carefully Paul’s accusation against Peter and those who followed his hypocrisy. “They were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel.” The King James Version says, “they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.”

It should be noted that Paul is not here criticizing the cultural tradition of the Jews that every Jewish male should be circumcised according to the law. Both Peter and Paul were Jews who adhered strictly to the law. But the early church had already declared that God did not require the Gentile believers to come under the requirements of the law of circumcision (Acts 15).

When Peter first came to Antioch he was warmly welcomed by the uncircumcised Gentile believers who were the first saints to be called “Christians.” He did not hesitate to worship with them and to sit down in fellowship to enjoy a common meal together. He “lived like a Gentile” among them and was accepted as a brother in the faith. His ethnic birth and culture of being a “Jew” did not affect their common bond of love and fellowship.

However, when the Jerusalem Jews came down to Antioch the scene changed. These Christian Jews taught that it was wrong to eat a meal with a Gentile who had never been circumcised.

In effect, they felt and taught that by following the law of Moses they were “more holy” than the uncircumcised Greeks. Many of them insisted that circumcision was

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 11

required in order to be saved even though it was clear that Peter did not believe such. Through special revelation God had vividly shown to Peter that He would pour out of His Holy Spirit on the Gentile believers in the same way He had poured out His Spirit on the Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost.

Therefore, Peter's lack of integrity was not a doctrinal issue. His hypocrisy was a practical issue. He was willing to live like a Gentile as long as no Jews were present. But when the Jews came he disassociated himself from the Gentiles in a manner that implied that he agreed with the Jews. Paul said that the effect of this action was that it compelled the Gentiles to live like the Jews. That is, if the Gentiles really wanted to be "holy" they would have to adopt the cultural traditions of the Jews which were summed up in the ritual act of circumcision.

This historical incident in the early church is a living picture of pure integrity (as well as unadulterated hypocrisy) in church leadership. In a splendid example of sincerity and truth the Apostle Paul retained his integrity even when it meant an open confrontation with church leadership. He remained the same in the presence of Gentile believers even though they were culturally different from the Jews. It mattered not to him if a believer was Jew or Greek, male or female, bond or free (Galatians 3:8). Regardless of race or ethnicity; regardless of gender; and regardless of position or profession, Paul treated all as equals in Christ.

The modern day church has struggled with integrity in its racial, cultural, ethnic and gender relationships. As leaders with integrity we must continue to pray for God's forgiveness for our "hypocrisy" in treating individuals differently according to such outward differences as color, gender, language, citizenship, profession, education and

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 12

social standing. Integrity in leadership means that we always remain the same regardless of who is in our presence. We treat all as equals in the community of the saints of God. We are not mere actors on a stage.

CONCLUSION

A few years ago, the owner of the jewelry store was pleased, looking at the excited faces of his ten year old son and his school buddy friend. He carefully removed the gem from the display case and set it on the counter. A few moments earlier as they had sauntered down the street past his shop he had told them, "Come in and I'll show you the largest diamond I've ever had in the store."

But the disappointment was evident on the faces of the two young lads as they intently eyed the gem. They had expected the town's "largest ever diamond" to be at least as large as a good sized jawbreaker. Maybe even as big as a baseball.

"Well, what do you think?" the jeweler asked, realizing that they were obviously expecting to see something quite different.

"My marbles are prettier," the son's buddy replied.

The boy reached into his pocket and pulled out a few of his prize marbles. Laying one of the more colorful ones on the counter in order to prove his point, he then firmly added, "See!"

The lad thought surely anyone with eyes could tell that the small, dull, clear, rough shaped diamond could not really be compared to his smooth, round, toy marble with all its beautiful hues of green, yellow, blue, red, orange and purple. The father smiled without commenting.

As the boys watched he placed a special high intensity lamp on the counter. "Put your marble in front of the light," the father encouraged his son's friend.

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 13

When the intense light hit the marble, the boy's first reaction was to quickly jerk the marble away from the lamp. He wanted to make sure his prize possession was not damaged. He was shocked and perplexed to see the bubbles and cracks that had appeared seemingly out of nowhere under the lamp's light. Most of all he was disappointed that the bright colors seemed to just "wash away" in the intense light. His beautiful toy marble looked more like plain glass.

But away from the light the marble was as beautiful as ever.

"Now look at the diamond," the jeweler said, interrupting the boy's perplexed thoughts.

He moved the precious jewel slightly back and forth, allowing the clear gem's expertly cut facets to reflect the bright decorative colors of the small shop.

The boys were enthralled. For the first time in their lives they understood the poet's words describing a diamond as looking like, "a rainbow cut into a thousand pieces."

The young lads had just learned a lesson for life. They had come to understand the difference between a toy marble and a jewel diamond. They saw the distinction between jewelry and glass when they are placed under a judgment light.

Those aspiring to spiritual leadership need to understand the lesson of the diamond and the marble. The gem is a jewel to be held close to one's body. The marble is a toy for a game that is played on dirt. Leadership with integrity is a precious gem to be desired.

There are as many dazzling colors in church leadership as there are in the world. Large crowds. Big buildings. Thunderous applause. Lucrative payrolls. Political friendships. Church success. Board appointments. Evangelistic accomplishments. Saved souls. Membership rolls. Signs and wonders. Fame and fortune.

Leadership and Integrity

Lecture

Page 14

But without integrity, leadership is nothing more than a “play-toy marble.” It is fun to play with. But under the intense scrutiny of the light of God’s Word such leadership will inevitably be exposed as nothing more than glass, filled with cracks and empty air bubbles.

Thank God that He is raising up leaders with integrity. Both laity and pastors are seeking to know the truth of God’s word and to lead the believers into a righteous kingdom. Regional, national and international leaders have a deep desire to be sincere leaders who recognize all persons as equals. Leaders today want to be diamonds and not marbles. “And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels” (Malachi 3:17).