

Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 20:16-30

16 Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for foreigners.

17 Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.

18 Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.

19 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler.

20 If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.

21 An inheritance gained hastily in the beginning will not be blessed in the end.

22 Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.

23 Unequal weights are an abomination to the Lord, and false scales are not good.

24 A man's steps are from the Lord; how then can man understand his way?

25 It is a snare to say rashly, "It is holy," and to reflect only after making vows.

26 A wise king winnows the wicked and drives the wheel over them.

27 The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts.


28 Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.

29 The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair.

30 Blows that wound cleanse away evil; strokes make clean the innermost parts.

DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 20:16-30

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When I read Proverbs, I see a father giving instructions to a son. A father who has seen and been through a lot in his own life. As I am now getting into the later years of my life, I understand how important it is for a parent or grandparent to share thoughts and experiences with their children and grandchildren. As Christians, we are called to share with others the things of God we have learned in our lives and continue to learn.

When I read these verses the thing that jumped out to me is that the integrity of a man or woman is so important, if you plan on sharing your wisdom with others. The old saying "Do as I say, and not as I do" does not hold up today. In fact, it never did. We all are examples in life, whether we want to be or not. Integrity in the New Testament means "honesty and adherence to a pattern of good works."

Jesus is the perfect example of a man of integrity. He was tempted in every way we are, yet He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). Christians are called to be like Jesus. In Christ, we are new creations and can be considered without blemish before God (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Ephesians 1:4-8). In Christ, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit at work in us, sanctifying us and making us more like Jesus (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). We are also to strive to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13). It is by God's power that we become increasingly people of integrity. We are called to obey God and, in so doing, to be people of uncompromised morality and integrity. Christians should be those who adhere to the truth and who do good works.

As we look at these 15 verses, we see the difference between a man with integrity and one without, whether it is in dealing with finances (verses 16 and 21), the counsel of godly people (verse 18), our tongue (verse 19), or in honoring our father and mother (verse 20). Living with integrity in a world where the corrupt seem favored, not to mention our battle with our own sinful nature can be challenging. We can find encouragement in 1 Peter 3:13-18. To live with integrity is to follow the example of Christ. And we can only live with true integrity by His power, which He graciously and freely gives to all who are His (John 16:33; Philippians 1:6; Ephesians 1:13-14).

Questions:

1. How do you measure your integrity, against man or God?
2. Has anyone ever questioned your integrity unjustly and made false accusations?
3. Do you have a community of believers in your life that can help you keep your integrity?