

**TOPICAL STUDY OF PROVERBS  
CLASS NOTES, SPRING QUARTER  
MARCH-MAY 2017  
AUDITORIUM CLASS  
CASSEL HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**LESSON FIVE. INTEGRITY VERSUS FALSEHOOD.** Proverbs 11:3; 19:1; 20:7;  
28:6

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Read Proverbs 11:3; 19:1; 20:7; 28:6.** *Based on these verses, how would you define integrity?* Did you notice how often crookedness is placed opposite of integrity in these proverbs? So, honesty and truthfulness are definitely a part of integrity; but there are other aspects as well.

The Eiffel Tower is one of the most recognizable landmarks on the planet. Built as the grand entrance to the 1889 World's Fair, the tower receives more visitors every year than any other tourist attraction in the world. But when it was built there was ferocious opposition. A group of leading artists and writers, filed a petition that read:

“We, the writers, painters, sculptors, architects and lovers of the beauty of Paris, do protest with all our vigor and all our indignation, in the name of French taste and endangered French art and history, against the useless and monstrous Eiffel Tower.”

History vindicated Alexandre Eiffel. In 1889 he was roundly condemned. Today he is praised. His story shows us that what matters is not the opinions others have of us and what we do – these will change according to what is culturally fashionable – but holding onto what we believe to be the values and wisdom of God. That, I believe, is a good description of integrity.

2. Back in August of last year during David's absence, I presented a lesson on Joseph, in which I presented two of his outstanding qualities. One of them, I stated, is integrity. Let's spend some time defining integrity to refresh your memories. In doing that, we will first look at some Biblical personalities that exemplify integrity. There are several Biblical characters, besides Joseph, who the scriptures tell us had integrity: In **I Kings 9:1-5**; we read:

**Now it came about when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord, and**

**the king's house, and all that Solomon desired to do, that the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. And the Lord said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. And 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 Israel'.**

So here we see that the Bible refers to David as a man of integrity. David himself speaks of this characteristic as a part of his personality in **Psalm 25:21; 26:1,11; 41:12**. Also, God in speaking to Satan the second time about Job; says in **Job 2:3**:

**"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."**

So, Job is another man who the Bible specifically describes as having integrity. Now, the scriptures don't specifically say that Joseph had integrity, but I believe that the biblical account bears this out. What do you think of when you think of integrity? Honesty? Sincerity? Uprightness? Yes, but that's just a part of the characteristic. Integrity involves the whole person as being sound, unbroken or undivided. When we speak of a person of integrity, we are speaking of a whole person, a sound person, a complete person; one who is mature and not lacking in an important moral characteristic. You see, the meaning of the word goes beyond just honesty and uprightness. One online dictionary defined integrity this way: **"Having integrity means doing the right thing in a reliable way. It's a personality trait that we admire, since it means a person has a moral compass that doesn't waver. It literally means having "wholeness" of character, just as an *integer* is a "whole number" with no fractions. Physical objects can display integrity, too — if you're going over a rickety old bridge that sways in the wind, you might question its structural integrity."** So you see that even material objects can display integrity and help us understand the concept of soundness; not lacking in an important characteristic.

*Why is integrity important to God?* Because many sins are evident when integrity is not demonstrated, as the verses that we read from Proverbs indicates. But

perhaps He also considers integrity important because that was a description of His creation. It had integrity until sin divided it. Sin interrupted the wholeness, the soundness, the completeness, the integrity of God's creation.

*How can God speak of David as a man of integrity and David himself refer to himself as such when he committed adultery and murder?* Because he was truly sorrowful for his sins and repented of them, which is an important part of integrity. Integrity doesn't mean that you are without sin. It does mean that you have all of the important moral characteristics; including the ability to admit and repent of a sin.

*Sadly, the characteristic of integrity is not demonstrated in the public arena much anymore (actors/actresses, sports athletes, government). If you agree, why do you think that is so?* Because to have integrity means you believe in absolutes, like honesty, truthfulness, faithfulness, self-control; in other words, the values and wisdom of God to guide you. People who lack integrity have nothing to properly guide them, according to Proverbs 11:3.

*The opposite of integrity—besides crookedness as we have seen in the Proverbs that we read—is exemplified as a double-minded man in **James 1:4-8**. After stating that the testing of one's faith produces endurance, James goes on to say **“And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith without doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.***

*Why do you think sincerity is an important part of integrity?* When we write letters we commonly end them with “sincerely”. Have you ever wondered why you do this? The practice has its origins in ancient Rome. Roman sculptors often concealed cracks in apparently flawless marble statues with melted beeswax. When the wax dried and crumbled, the angry purchaser sought compensation. Reputable sculptors guaranteed their work as *sine sera*, which means ‘without wax’. Hence ‘sincerely’. Likewise, we are called to be people of integrity whose lives—as well as our words—are true.

*Have the class read **1 Timothy 3:1-7** as well as **Titus 1:6-9**. Ask the class if they perceive the quality of integrity in the qualifications listed.*

*Why would Solomon say that it is better to be poor and have integrity than to be rich yet crooked in one's dealings, according to Proverbs 28:6?* The one who has integrity is morally superior to the one who doesn't.

*What blessings do you think are enjoyed by the children of a person who has integrity, based on Proverbs 20:7?* A good name or reputation, trust of those who knew the parent, a good role model.