

## Aspects of Character ~ Integrity ~ Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the word “integrity,” what comes to mind. What exactly does it mean?
2. The word integrity is related to what other words? Do they give you a better sense of the meaning of integrity?
3. The first dictionary definition (soundness or wholeness) is most often applied to a structure or a physical object, say the girders in a bridge, an engine block, or a piece of pottery. Can it be applied to a person as well? What happens to something that does not have integrity?
4. We frequently think of a man of integrity being honest and trustworthy, but integrity is more than that. It also means firmly adhering to a code of moral values; what’s the difference between being trustworthy and being incorruptible?
5. What does the Bible have to say about integrity?
  - A) Integrity means treating people fairly and honestly. (Leviticus 19:35-36, Deut 25:15, Proverbs 16:11-13)
  - B) Integrity is giving your word and keeping it. (Exodus 8:28-32)
  - C) Integrity will protect you. In Psalm 25, David prays that integrity and uprightness will protect him. How can it? (Psalm 25:21, Proverbs 2:7-8, 10:9, 11:3, 13:6)
  - D) Integrity is more valuable than riches. (Proverbs 28:6)
  - E) The Lord will test and judge your integrity. (1 Chronicles 29:17, Psalm 7:8)
  - F) The Lord hates lies and lack of integrity. (Zechariah 8:16-17)
  - G) It may be difficult to maintain your integrity. (Job 2:3, 2:9, Proverbs 29:10)
  - H) Your character can be corrupted by bad company. (1 Corinthians 15:33)
  - I) Integrity will be rewarded. (1 Kings 9:4-5, Nehemiah 7:2, Psalm 41:11-12)
  - J) Your integrity should set an example. (Titus 2:7)
6. Who do you know that you would describe as a person of integrity? What sets this person apart from other people of a similar age and position?
7. Among individuals or groups of people who affect your life directly or indirectly, who has the most integrity? The least?
8. If people who know you were asked for five words that describe you, would integrity be one of them?
9. What can you do to improve your integrity?

## Aspects of Character ~ Integrity ~ Leader's Guide

1. When you hear the word "integrity," what comes to mind. What exactly does it mean?

The dictionary has several meanings for the word integrity:

- 1) an unimpaired condition, i.e., soundness, wholeness,
- 2) firm adherence to a code of moral values, i.e., incorruptible, honor,
- 3) the quality or state of being complete or undivided, i.e., completeness.

Synonyms of integrity are honesty, unity, and incorruptable..

2. The word integrity is related to what other words? Do they give you a better sense of the meaning of integrity?

- The word is related to:
- 1) integer (a whole number with no fractional part),
  - 2) integral (necessary to the completeness of the whole, or entire, complete),
  - 3) integrate (to form or blend into a whole, to unite with something else)
  - 4) integration (incorporation of all as equals in society)
  - 5) integument (something that covers or encloses, a membrane or husk)

3. The first dictionary definition (soundness or wholeness) is most often applied to a structure or a physical object, say the girders in a bridge, an engine block, or a piece of pottery. Can it be applied to a person as well? What happens to something that does not have integrity?

4. We frequently think of a man of integrity being honest and trustworthy, but integrity is more than that. Look at the second definition and describe the difference between being trustworthy and being incorruptible.

Trustworthy means worthy of confidence, or being dependable. Applied to a person, it means someone who can be trusted.

The second definition of integrity is: firm adherence to a code of moral values, i.e., incorruptible, honor.

Incorruptible is quite a bit more than (merely) trustworthy or honest. It literally means *incapable* of corruption, i.e., absolutely cannot be bribed or morally corrupted; totally just and upright. (A secondary nearly obsolete meaning, but found in the Bible, is something not subject to decay or dissolution, but we won't worry about that now.)

5. What does the Bible have to say about integrity? (Scripture verses are below)

A) Integrity means treating people fairly and honestly. (Leviticus 19:35-36, Deut 25:15, Proverbs 16:11-13)

- B) Integrity is giving your word and keeping it. (Exodus 8:28-32)
- C) Integrity will protect you. In Psalm 25, David prays that integrity and uprightness will protect him. How can it? (Psalm 25:21, Proverbs 2:7-8, 10:9, 11:3, 13:6)
- D) Integrity is more valuable than riches. (Proverbs 28:6)
- E) The Lord will test and judge your integrity. (1 Chronicles 29:17, Psalm 7:8)
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- G) It may be difficult to maintain your integrity. (Job 2:3, 2:9, Proverbs 29:10)
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- I) Integrity will be rewarded. (1 Kings 9:4-5, Nehemiah 7:2, Psalm 41:11-12)
- J) Your integrity should set an example. (Titus 2:7)

6. Who do you know that you would describe as a person of integrity? What sets this person apart from other people of a similar age and position?

7. Among individuals or groups of people who affect your life directly or indirectly, who has the most integrity? The least?

From surveys and previous discussion of this topic, the people perceived as having the most integrity tend to be nurses, pharmacists, doctors, teachers, clergy, funeral directors, artists, accountants, missionaries, and volunteers.

Those perceived as having the least integrity are lobbyists, politicians, telemarketers, auto salespeople, advertising practitioners, labor union leaders, lawyers, bosses, and real estate agents.

Interestingly, police officers rank high on integrity, about the same as teachers and considerably higher than clergy.

8. If people who know you were asked for five words that describe you, would integrity be one of them?

9. What can you do to improve your integrity?

When you stop to think about it and if you are absolutely honest with yourself (are we ever?), this is a very difficult question. We all like to think we are at the top rung of the integrity ladder. Remember, integrity is far more than simple honesty or dependability. It also means wholeness, completeness, and *LISTEN UP*, *incapable* of corruption, i.e., you absolutely cannot, under any circumstances, be bribed or morally corrupted; you are totally just and upright. You do not cheat on or shave just the tiniest little bit off your taxes, even though no one is watching.

How do you go about improving your integrity? It ain't easy.

## Aspects of Character ~ Integrity ~ Scripture for Q5

### 1. Leviticus 19:35-36 (New Living Translation)

<sup>35</sup> “Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or volume. <sup>36</sup> Your scales and weights must be accurate. Your containers for measuring dry materials or liquids must be accurate. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

### Deuteronomy 25:15 (New Living Translation)

<sup>15</sup> Yes, always use honest weights and measures, so that you may enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

### Proverbs 16:11-13 (New Living Translation)

<sup>11</sup> The Lord demands accurate scales and balances; he sets the standards for fairness.

<sup>12</sup> A king detests wrongdoing, for his rule is built on justice.

<sup>13</sup> The king is pleased with words from righteous lips; he loves those who speak honestly.

### 2. Exodus 8:28-32 (New Living Translation)

<sup>28</sup> “All right, go ahead,” Pharaoh replied. “I will let you go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord your God. But don’t go too far away. Now hurry and pray for me.”

<sup>29</sup> Moses answered, “As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the Lord, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will disappear from you and your officials and all your people. But I am warning you, Pharaoh, don’t lie to us again and refuse to let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.”

<sup>30</sup> So Moses left Pharaoh’s palace and pleaded with the Lord to remove all the flies.

<sup>31</sup> And the Lord did as Moses asked and caused the swarms of flies to disappear from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. Not a single fly remained. <sup>32</sup> But Pharaoh again became stubborn and refused to let the people go.

### 3. Psalm 25:21 (New Living Translation)

<sup>21</sup> May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you.

### Proverbs 2:7-8 (New Living Translation)

<sup>7</sup> He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. <sup>8</sup> He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.

Proverbs 10:9 People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall.

Proverbs 11:3 Honesty guides good people; dishonesty destroys treacherous people.

Proverbs 13:6 Godliness guards the path of the blameless, but the evil are misled by sin.

### 4. Proverbs 28:6 Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and rich.

### 5. 1 Chronicles 29:17 (New Living Translation)

I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

Psalm 7:8 (New Living Translation)

The Lord judges the nations. Declare me righteous, O Lord, for I am innocent, O Most High!

6. Zechariah 8:16-17 (New Living Translation)

<sup>16</sup> But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and that lead to peace. <sup>17</sup> Don't scheme against each other. Stop your love of telling lies that you swear are the truth. I hate all these things, says the Lord."

7. Job 2:3, 9 (New Living Translation)

<sup>3</sup> Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause."

<sup>9</sup> His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die."

8. 1 Corinthians 15:33 (New Living Translation)

Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character."

9. 1 Kings 9:4-5 (New Living Translation)

<sup>4</sup> "As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and godliness, as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, <sup>5</sup> then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever. For I made this promise to your father, David: 'One of your descendants will always sit on the throne of Israel.'

Nehemiah 7:2 (New Living Translation)

I gave the responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for he was a faithful man who feared God more than most.

Psalm 41:11-12 (New Living Translation)

<sup>11</sup> I know you are pleased with me, for you have not let my enemies triumph over me. <sup>12</sup> You have preserved my life because I am innocent; you have brought me into your presence forever.

10. Titus 2:7 (New Living Translation)

And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching.