

## *Women & More*

### *All That Is Within Me*

November 15, 2012

“To be, or not to be: that is the question”—probably the most famous of all literary quotations; and words spilled from William Shakespeare’s pen in the opening line of a soliloquy in Hamlet. Sylvia Rubin of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote an article: “To Do Or Not To Do”, representing the Hamlet Syndrome by describing overthinkers who underachieve. Heavy stuff, but in short, “Do” or “Not” is asked by many with no intent of discovering an answer.

God’s Word answers questions! This lesson could pose the following: To Do Integrity, or Not; To Practice Integrity, or Not, what is the outcome, the difference, the benefit? And Scripture has the answer. We are called to obey God’s command to do right, and to have and to practice integrity at all times and in every situation! There’s reward, safety and guidance for the one who chooses integrity and there is the opposite for those who do not. Charles Stanley warns, “We will reap what we sow, more than we sow, and later than we sow!”

In the early morning of June 9, 2012, I awoke to hear birds reminding that they arise to ‘be’ what God has created them to be, and, therefore, to ‘do’ what God has created them to do: sing, fly, mate, nest, and rest—would that we! And in a sermon from Matthew 10:7b “*The kingdom of heaven is near*”, urging believers to “keep on keeping on”, the presenter told about a three-year study of the Alleghany Ant (in the Northeast) where it was discovered that one small colony moved 15 tons of subsoil to the surface and burrowed 5 and ½ feet down. These industrious diggers exhibited integrity and represent “keeping on at a thing”!

Of integrity, Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon said, “You need not say, ‘I am true’: be true. Boast not of integrity, but be upright. So shall your testimony be such that men cannot help seeing it.” Jesus, our supreme example, demonstrated absolute integrity in His life and ministry on this earth, in His every conversation, and in His deference to the Father’s will for Him—to die for the sins of the world!

Webster defines integrity 1 : adherence to a code of values : incorruptibility  
2 : soundness  
3 : completeness.

Only God can make us incorruptible, sound and complete! Pastor Joe Williams in an article called *The Complete Life* wrote, “Completeness has a conclusive ring to it; a finishing touch. When we have Christ, we are complete; we have everything we need to be full and complete...we have everything we will ever need to meet every demand made upon our life. There is nothing greater than God and He is resident in every Christian life in His Holy Spirit.”

Colossians 2:9-10 “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup>and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.” Proverbs 11:3 “The **integrity of the upright guides them**, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity (lying).” What is within each of us—naturally? Is integrity always within the believer, or do ingenuousness and deceit come in regularly and choke it out? Integrity is a choice! It is as a fork in the road—often there is only a split second to make a choice for integrity or not. We must plan—make right choices—ahead! Scripture gives us some graphic examples from Jesus’ lips:

**1. Choose salvation:** enter through the narrow gate—Matthew 7:13-14—“**Enter through the narrow gate.** For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup>But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” Jesus exhorts us to enter the gate with integrity—Him! It will be the gate less-used; the road less-traveled—choose Christ!

**2. Choose to watch out for false teachers—**Matthew 7:15-21—“**Watch out for false prophets.** They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup>**By their fruit you will recognize them.** Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

<sup>19</sup>“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Thus, **by their fruit you will recognize them.**

<sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” The fruit borne by teachers will prove them true to the gospel of Jesus Christ—having integrity—or not!

**3. Choose to hear God’s words and put them into practice—**Matthew 7:24-27—“**Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.** <sup>25</sup>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup>But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Did we get the lesson? Everyone who **hears His words and puts them into practice** is like... a wise man who built his house on the rock!

Psalm 7:8 (David) “...let the LORD judge the peoples. Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, **according to my integrity**, O Most High.” Psalm 78:72 “And David shepherded them with **integrity of heart**; with skillful hands he led them.” See, before David shepherded Israel, he shepherded sheep. And he would need integrity of heart for both! Proverbs 13:6 “**Righteousness guards the man of integrity**, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.”

**INTEGRITY NOT**—what does it look like—as if we didn’t know? Lack of integrity in Scripture often costs the practicing their life.

► Integrity is clearly missing from David’s son, **Adonijah**, who, feeling robbed of being king as eldest son, asked for Abishag as his wife—the beautiful young woman who had kept the very elderly King David warm in his last days. He made his appeal through Bathsheba with evil intent which God revealed to Solomon, and which cost Adonijah his life, in 1 Kings 2:20-25—“*I have one small request to make of you,’ she said. “Do not refuse me.’*

*“The king replied, ‘Make it, my mother, I will not refuse you.’*

*21 “So she said, ‘Let Abishag the Shunammite be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah.’*

*22 “King Solomon answered his mother, ‘Why do you request Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? **You might as well request the kingdom for him**—after all, he is my older brother—yes, for him and for Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah!’*

*23 “Then King Solomon swore by the LORD: ‘May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request! 24 And now, as surely as the LORD lives—he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised—**Adonijah shall be put to death today!**’*

*25 So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died.”*

► **Gehazi** was the servant of the Prophet Elisha and record of him is found in 2 Kings chapters 4, 5 and 8. For the most part he was a dutiful and valuable servant. But he made a decision to trample his integrity which would cost him more than anyone, anywhere, or anytime would ever want to pay!

Upon the recommendation of a captive Jewish servant girl in his home, Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, came to Elisha for healing from leprosy. The prophet told him to go and dip seven times in the Jordan River to be made clean. Though Naaman didn’t want to, his attendants counseled him wisely; he did and was healed. In 2 Kings 5:15 we read: “*Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, ‘Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. **Please accept now a gift from your servant.**’*” Elisha refused to accept a gift for Naaman’s healing by God!

Verse 20—“*Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, ‘My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him.’*” So, Gehazi ran after the commander and received two garments and two talents of silver from him. When Elisha asked his servant where he had been, Gehazi lied: “*Your servant didn’t go anywhere.*” But Elisha said to him in verse 26 “*Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants?*”

In 2 Kings 5:27 Elisha made the pronouncement that Naaman's leprosy would cling to Gehazi and his descendants forever—woe—*“Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presense and he was leprous, as white as snow.”* The cost to Gehazi and his descendents was very great: they would be lepers all of their lives!

► **Lot and Lot's wife**—Luke 17:30-32 tells about the way things will be when Jesus returns—*“It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed: 31On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. 32Remember Lot's wife!”* Let's reiterate some of the tragic details: Sodom and Gomorrah were doomed for destruction by God! He had judged these cities because of their extreme sin. The two angels God sent who had come under Lot's roof as guests were being threatened by the men of the city. Genesis 19:5 *“They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.’”* Then Lot does an unimaginable thing—trampling all over his integrity: he offers his two daughters to the men instead to do with as they please.

The angels told Lot and his family to get out of the city, now, and the young men that were pledged in marriage to Lot's daughters refused to leave because they thought he was joking. Does this remind us of warnings to evacuate in the latest hurricane up north? Some heeded warning and some did not. It is sadly clear that Lot did not have the integrity of influence that he should have had with these young men who perished as a result. When Lot hesitated, the angels grabbed Lot, his wife and their two daughters and *“led them safely out of the city”*. But against the angel's specific warning, Lot's wife—as she is always referred—would trample her integrity and look back at her beautiful home, her belongings, and her city to her tragic death. She was turned into a pillar of salt.

► **Sapphira**, along with her husband, **Ananias**, lied to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:1-2—*“Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.”* This husband and wife conspired together to sell a piece of property and mislead others to believe they were contributing the full amount of the sale to the church. They agreed to lie to the Holy Spirit, first, then to Pastor Peter and the whole congregation. If they had sold the property, kept some back for their own use and admitted to that, and gave a portion to the church that would have shown integrity. Three hours after Ananias died for lying Sapphira came in and Peter questioned her, and in verse 9 *“Peter said to her, ‘How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.’”* She learned of her husband's death just moments ahead of her own.

Charles Stanley again: “Anytime you find something in the Word of God that doesn’t match your mental grid, it is time to change your grid.” If we live in integrity, then God will take care of the results, but if we trample our integrity then the consequences of our choice will be up to us. Know that we may be deservedly put to death for the lack of integrity, or we may be called to ‘die’ for it—in God’s hands as a witness. Scripture is replete with examples of both:

**INTEGRITY YES**—doing the right thing; making the right choice!

♥Uriah the Hittite demonstrated integrity when he was called home from the battlefield by King David to sleep with his wife Bathsheba and thereby cover the adulterous affair that had produced pregnancy, he refused. He said he would not sleep in his own bed with his wife while the troops were out in the fields. This integral decision cost Uriah his life: he died by treachery.

♥Salome—the feminine form of Solomon—mother of the Zebedees was a woman of integrity. At one point she asked something for her sons—James and John—that seemed a little over-the-top: Remember she asked Jesus if He would let one of them sit on His right and the other on His left in His Kingdom? Salome was a close follower of Jesus, and a very proud mother, and she was present at the cross and later at the tomb with Mary Magdalene. When she saw the two being executed on either side of Jesus, did it remind her of her request? We know that God honored Salome’s request in a way she could not have imagined: Her sons, along with Peter, were in the inner circle of disciples—they accompanied Jesus to His transfiguration; yes, but James was the first disciple martyred, and John the Beloved—given custody of Jesus’ mother—was later exiled on the Island of Patmos to write the Revelation of Jesus Christ!

The Old Testament overflows with the integrity of women like Ruth and Hannah and Jochebed and Abigail and Esther to name a few. And the New Testament women are almost too numerous to mention: the mother of Jesus, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Elizabeth, Anna, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla and Mary Magdalene. These women exhibited integrity in their thinking, in their attitudes, in their speech, and in their actions.

Proverbs 10:9 “*The man of **integrity** walks **securely**, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.*” Remember that Wisdom and Folly call out to the same people! Psalm 25:21 “*May **integrity** and **uprightness** protect me, because my hope is in you.*” Psalm 85:8 “*I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints—**but let them not return to folly.***” The simple and those who lack judgment are taken in by Folly’s call. Rev. Charles Stanley warns: “The devil is intent on robbing our integrity.” We must fortify ourselves in the righteous Word of God!