

## *Women & More*

### ***Losses and Crosses***

February 28, 2013

Charles Spurgeon: “‘I am a Roman!’ was of old a reason for **integrity**; far more, then, let it be your argument for holiness, ‘I am Christ’s!’” 1 Corinthians 3:23 “...and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.” **Christ is the epitome of integrity**, and He is **integral** to our integrity! The definition of integral is 1 : essential to completeness 2 : formed as a unit with another part (Christ in us the hope of glory), 3 : composed of parts that make up a whole (the Church—the Body of Christ) 4 : Entire! Integrity’s components include: keeping covenant and promises; honest always without any deceit; generous and just; truthful, merciful and faithful; discerning; good steward; tirelessly doing right, and more—representing attributes that we cannot have on our own. Christ must form the **character of integrity** within us through His word and His Spirit.

Integrity is an action, an aim, an accomplishment, yes, but the definition from *Webster* includes: 1 : **adherence to a code of values; incorruptibility** 2 : **soundness** 3 : **completeness**. Scripture contains the code of values in the Law and in what Jesus told believers to do and not to do; as sinners we are corruptible and the Lord Jesus makes us incorruptible; and He provides sound doctrine, and, finally, we are complete in Christ. So all the dictionary definitions of integrity are found in Jesus Christ—and we can know them as we trust in Him for salvation and allow Him to sanctify us as we follow Him daily.

There is the integrity of a person, yes, but there is integrity—or not—in anything built. “The fuller a vessel becomes, the deeper it sinks in the water,” said Spurgeon. “If you would feel how utterly powerless you are apart from the living God, attempt especially the great work of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, and you will know, what a weak unworthy thing you are.” We must not become so involved in the work of the Lord that we are unfaithful to the Lord of the work. We must love Him, worship Him, praise Him, thank Him, and then serve Him. **And we must do it all with integrity!** God will take care of what we go through; but we must take care how we go through it—‘walk’ it.

Integrity in our ‘walk’ with God daily: Micah 6:8 “*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*” And the very prophetic Amos 3:3 “*Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?*” We need to have agreed with God to ‘walk’ with Him after we are saved. What is the life that walks with God? First of all, **the life that walks with God is marked by integrity!** Remember “*Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him*” Genesis 5:24.

Earlier, in Genesis 5:21-24 we read “*and he died*” over and over until we get to Enoch; this man didn’t die. At age 365 while walking with God, God took him! Here is a beautiful prophecy of the ‘taking up’ of the Church to come, but today’s emphasis is on his ‘walk’ with God! Hebrews 11:5 is New Testament commentary on the Old Testament account: “*By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*”

A prophet and contemporary of Adam, Enoch was ‘**taken**’ with God—a man full of the word—before God *took* him because He was pleased with him. And Jude 14 tells us that Enoch saw Jesus and prophesied the ultimate fate of the ungodly back in the Book of Beginnings: “*Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the **ungodly** of all the **ungodly acts** they have done in the **ungodly way**, and of all the harsh words **ungodly sinners** have spoken against him.’*”

Enoch was not born walking with God. There was a decision made to ‘walk’ with God with all his heart—to be a man full of the word of God—to practice fellowship and intimacy with the Almighty and practice faithfulness. Scripture proclaims in Genesis 5:22 “*And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.*” When Enoch had a particular son in his 60s, it changed him; he began to ‘walk’ with God. That event caused him to commit completely to God—to **practice integral integrity**! Methuselah means ‘*when he is dead it will be sent*’ referring to the flood. God would be patient with the ‘ungodly’ world—969 years worth; the length of Methuselah’s record life—before sending His judgment, saving only Noah and his family.

Oswald Chambers: “There comes a mist and a blinding rain: And life is never the same again.” There will come a time in the believer’s life when he/she will make the decision to unreservedly ‘walk with God’—keeping in mind that some like Paul commit to follow, making Christ Savior and Lord, at salvation. Sadly, though, some will never decide to follow Jesus—they’ll not lose their salvation, if they truly know Him, but they’ll not ‘walk’ with God or be conformed to Christ’s image, they’ll not be a witness to others, build up the kingdom of God, or participate closely with God’s purposes in the world.

A vibrant Christian—believer and Christ-follower—is marked by the following:

- 1) has repented of sin and received Jesus Christ as Savior—trusting Him alone for salvation; followed Him in believer’s baptism, and
- 2) has chosen to make Christ Lord of her life and follow Him implicitly,
- 3) and, she daily receives, believes and obeys God’s inerrant Word.

**Integrity is to be practiced particularly in the place where God has put us!**

*Your Place*

Is your place a small place?

Tend it with care!—He set you there.

Is your place a large place?

Guard it with care!—He set you there.

Whatever your place, it is

Not yours alone, but His Who set you there.

—John Oxenham

In the New Testament, the disciple John writes a letter to his friend and a leader in the church, Gaius. 3 John 3—“*It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.*” John extols Gaius for **faithfulness to the truth**; his **‘walk’ in the truth**, and his **faithfulness in serving the brothers and his love for them**. Spurgeon: “**To walk in the truth, imports a life of integrity**, holiness, faithfulness, and simplicity—the natural product of those principles of truth which the gospel teaches, and which the Spirit of God enables us to receive.” In his letter, John also has praise for Demetrius, but scolds the-lacking-in-integrity Diotrephes for not cooperating.

Lack of integrity can be summed and pictured in the following manner:

-weakening; making crooked, folding

-breakable; collapsible, **corruptable**

-not firm; not solid, **unsound**

**-incomplete**; missing parts

-slipping; sliding, parting

-in jeopardy; in danger of becoming

**-compromised!**

Of Israel’s King Uzziah, V. R. Edman said, “He could stand poverty but not prosperity, work but not wealth, toil but not triumph, struggle but not success, duty but not distinction. His heart was lifted up, only to his destruction.” 2 Chronicles 26:16-19 “*But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. 18They confronted him and said, ‘It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God.’*” Even warned, Uzziah’s pride of place and position and possession wasn’t persuaded: and **his integrity was plundered!**

<sup>19</sup>“Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD’s temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead.” And verse 21a says that King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died.

On Sunday night, March 4, in a sermon on the defense of marriage, pastor mentioned contemporary Christian musician and songwriter, Ray Boltz, and how some 10 years ago he left his wife and four children announcing that he was ‘gay’. We can use any word we like to soften the sin of homosexuality, but it won’t soften it one bit with God Almighty. It is sin against God, against oneself, one’s family and friends, and in this case the Christian community who were once blessed by his songs, but don’t understand how. He’d sold some 4.5 million records, and the song for which he was best known, *Thank You* (for giving to the Lord), was the Gospel Music Association’s song of the year in 1990. How could something like this happen? Was Boltz ever really a Christian? We don’t know the answer to that, but we can be sure, as John Wesley said, “Whatever cools my affection toward Christ is the world.” This world is not our home; **the world will always compromise our integrity!**

Paul in Romans 1:18 announced God’s wrath toward sin of every kind, and gave special attention to the fact that God’s fury included giving them (sinners) over to an unbelievable lie because they **suppress the truth by their wickedness**: “*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*” And he described specific wicked, sinful actions done, and how God, Himself, **gave them over to sexual impurity and shameful lusts, the due penalty for their perversion** in verse 24 and verses 26-27, “*Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ...<sup>26</sup>“Because of this (continued and constant vile sin), God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup>In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.”*

Speaking of Israel then and our nation today, Scripture says in 2 Kings 17:15 “*They rejected His decrees and the covenant He had made with their fathers and the warnings He had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, ‘Do not do as they do,’ and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do.”*

This is heavy stuff. What can one Christian do? What must we do? Titus 2:7 “*In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.”*

Often spokesman for the other disciples, Peter said to Jesus in Luke 18:28-30—  
 “***We have left all we had to follow you!***”

29 ‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus said to them, ‘***no one*** who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ***will fail to receive*** many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.’” Loss is gain in Christ!

Paul’s instructions to us in Philippians 3:7-11 “*But whatever was to my profit I now **consider loss for the sake of Christ.** 8What is more, **I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ** 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

Philippians 4:7-9 “*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8Finally brothers, whatever is **true,***

*whatever is **noble,***

*whatever is **right,***

*whatever is **pure,***

*whatever is **lovely,***

*whatever is **admirable***

*— if anything is **excellent** or **praiseworthy**—*

*think about such things. 9Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 “*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. **They perish because they refused to love the truth and to be saved.***” And when one is persistent in refusing the **integrity** of the truth, at some point, appointed by God, they will not be allowed to see truth, but only delusion, in verses 11-12—“*For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”*

We need to make up our spiritual minds to go all the way with God—to finish well, all that God has called us to be and do. Edman in *The Disciplines of Life*: “The life with Christ as its grand subject is the life with wide horizons, worthy aims and entirely satisfactory accomplishment. It is the life defined by the Apostle Paul, ‘For to me to live is Christ’ (Phil 1:21). The measure in which we lose our life for Jesus’ sake is the measure of life’s breadth, height, depth, motivation and meaning.” See, what we lose, give up or are robbed of, and what we bear or endure upon this earth, will be a drop in our bucket—easily emptied—compared to the blessings bestowed by our God now and forever. Psalm 41:12 “*In my **integrity** you uphold me and set me in your presence forever.”*