

Lesson 3 - God's process of building Integrity – 2

Learning Objectives

1. Integrity in possessions
2. Integrity in sexuality (passion)

POSSESSIONS

God is testing our motives

God tests the motives of our hearts. He is making us to be those who seek Him at the level of our motives. (1 Chron 28:9). Is it God whom we trust or is it materialism?

The journey of the Israelites

The Lord was teaching them this one lesson that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (*Deut 8:2-3*). He allowed them to hunger and then He fed them. They were not to seek after the material needs of life but they were to seek Him as the motive for their life. God provided their material needs.

Did the Israelites learn this lesson? No, they did not, but the majority of them perished in the wilderness. (*1 Cor 10:5*). All these experiences that happened to the Israelites were written as a warning for us that we should not set our hearts on the material needs of life as they did. (*1 Cor 10:11*)

God is our habitat – learning from creation

There was a process in creation. God first created the form and then He created that which filled the form. In the first three days of creation, God created the form. In the remaining three days, God filled each form. It was all completed sequentially and finally, Man was created. What was the habitat for Man?

If we were to say that all that was created before creating Man, both form and filling, is his habitat then we make the material world our provider. If the material world is our provider, then we will worship the material world.

Yes, since we are created out of matter, we need the material, but our habitat is God. (*Acts 17:28, 1 Cor 8:6*). This is our unique distinction. We eat to live, but we do not live to eat. We do not pursue the material but we pursue God. This is the uniqueness that Man was to bring into creation.

The first temptation

What was the devil tempting Jesus to do? Jesus had fasted forty days and nights and He was hungry. Food is needed and the devil was suggesting that Jesus could convert the stone into bread and satisfy his physical need for food. Yes, he was challenging Jesus to prove Himself as the Son of God.

The Lord's answer shows the crux of the temptation. (*Mat 4:4*) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD **ALONE**, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.' "

Life choices will have two options. One will be the bread option, which is to make choices based on meeting material needs. The other is the word of God option. Opting to choose God's word takes into consideration that our material needs will be met. When we make choices for bread (material needs), we will move far away from the word of God or the purpose of God for our lives.

Choices that we make reveal the motives of our hearts

Integrity before God is who we are in the heart. The heart is about our motives. When we choose the bread option in life's choices, we prove that in our hearts, we have enthroned Mammon.

Abraham and Lot

We see this incident where Abraham and Lot decide to part company as there was a quarrel between their herdsmen. Abraham requested Lot to choose the land first and Abraham would go the opposite direction. (*Gen 13:8-12*). How would we have responded at that moment if we were there as a friend of Abraham? Would we not have counselled Abraham otherwise?

Lot now chose the land. He immediately chose the green plains of the river Jordan. What would we have done had we been in Lot's place and our uncle invited us to choose the land? Would we have done differently?

The irony is that we all know that the story of Lot had a bad ending. We also know that the tragic story started with this choice. Yet, it seems all of us are sure that we would make the same choice knowing the consequences. This is how seriously we are driven by materialism.

Abraham's faith

Abraham's eyes were on God and not on the land. He was looking for an eternal city (*Heb 11:8-10*). Look at the blessing of God on Abraham. Abraham and his descendants are enjoying the land after 4200 years. When we choose the word option in life's choices, we will experience the blessing of God beyond our imagination. We must walk by faith, not by sight. This is our victory over materialism.

The Rich Young Ruler (*Mk 10:17-24*)

He came to Jesus seeking eternal life. He was a good man in our eyes, and he had kept the works of the law from his youth. He would qualify as a man of Integrity by human standards.

The Lord tested him at the level of his motives and asked him to sell all that he had, give it to the poor and then take up his cross and follow Him. He was not willing to obey and follow Jesus.

What did this man trust? He trusted his material wealth. To have eternal life, he would have had to stop trusting wealth and instead place his trust in Jesus. This he was not willing to do. He wanted to keep his wealth and have eternal life as well. This is why Martin Luther said that there has to be the conversion of pocket book. Many have not given up their trust in wealth but want God at the same time.

PASSION (Sexuality)

Character is who we are in the dark. Who are we when no one sees us? Our entire person – body, soul, mind and spirit needs to be pure and holy before God. Can this be done in our own strength? This is possible only with the enablement of the Holy Spirit.

The covenant relationship of marriage

Sex is a beautiful experience that God gave for the husband and his wife to enjoy in their marriage. Marriage is a covenant relationship instituted by God. God is in a covenant marriage relationship with His people. In the OT He reminded the people of Israel that they were His wife. (*Hos 2:14-15, 19-20 / Isa 54:5 / Jer 3:14*) The same covenant marriage relationship between Christ and the church is expressed in the New Testament. (*II Cor 11:2 / Eph 5:26-27*)

God instituted the covenant relationship of marriage between a man and his wife to demonstrate His covenant marriage relationship with His people. Marriage must be held in high esteem for it represents the covenant marriage relationship of God with His people. In this lofty institution of marriage, sexuality was given for the husband and his wife to hold and nurture in tenderness and full expression between them. This is the boundary line for sexuality. (*Heb 13:4 / 1 Cor 7:2-4*).

Sexuality was also given for us to demonstrate faithfulness between the husband and his wife and bond their covenant marriage relationship. If we infringe sexually, we are being unfaithful in our covenant marriage and we are also being unfaithful to God for marriage is God's institution not human.

The devil will relentlessly attack us and seek to make us fall in the area of sexuality. Making us fall sexually will make man and his wife go against each other and also go against God.

What are the dynamics for victory over sexual temptation, for we are all tempted?

Joseph's victory (*Gen 39:9-12*)

Joseph walked in the fear of God. The woman was offering herself to Joseph but he was living in the fear of God.

The fear of God enabled Joseph to draw the line of relationship with this woman, who was tempting him. He made it clear to her that she was his master's wife and that is the line he would not cross.

Joseph was conscious that he was a man and he was getting allured by her. By the fear of the Lord, he maintained a safe physical distance from her.

Though she tempted him day after day, Joseph could withstand the temptation because he walked in the fear of the Lord.

Then when she finally trapped and grabbed him to have sex with her, he fled for he knew that his body would be aroused and he would not be able to handle the temptation. It was the fear of the Lord that enabled Joseph to flee.

King David's defeat (*II Samuel 11:1-4*)

David saw a visual that allured him. He forgot that his body and his eyes belonged to God and he was a steward. Instead of relying on the fear of God, he gave in to the visual that he saw. ‘

David gave in to the visual and the visual turned into adultery of the heart. (*Matt 5:27-28*)

When David wanted Bathsheba to come to him, the messengers told him that she was another man's wife. David did not heed the warning bells.

David forgot that we cannot fight and win over sexual temptation in our own strength. Victory is only in the enablement of the Holy Spirit.

Yielding to the Holy Spirit is the sure way to victory. (*Gal 5:16*) and we must remain constantly yielded to the Holy Spirit to remain victorious.

More lessons for victory

1. Be focused on your God-given task. Joseph was, but King David was not.

2. Never linger around sin. Joseph did not. David did.
3. Never pursue sin. Joseph did not. David did.
4. Heed the warning bells – David did not heed
5. Flee from sexual sin. Joseph did. David did not.

Conclusion

However terribly we may have fallen into sexual sin, there is forgiveness with Jesus. King David repented and God forgave him. He had to face consequences for his sin but the Lord was gracious to him.