

Christian Ethics 1

GMSAM Youth Training Ministry

Curriculum Outline

Course: Christian Ethics and Youth/Young Adults

Course Description

This course is a study of Christian ethics for the everyday life with sound Biblical principles and practical applications. The student will learn Christian standards that would help them grow, mature, and strengthen their personal relationship with God. This course will teach them how to deal with various issues they will encounter in ministry.

Course Outline

Introduction

- I. Absolute Truth
- II. Integrity
- III. Conviction
- IV. Falsehood
- V. Accountability
- VI. Integrity of the Heart
- VII. Integrity of Character
- VIII. How to Build Integrity
- IX. Integrity in Ministry
- X. Becoming A Person of Discernment
- XI. Conclusion

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INTRODUCTION

Integrity touches every area of our lives. Our integrity affects our relationships and integrity goes with us every day. We are going to find out in this course that God is more interested in our integrity than our ministry. Without integrity our ministry will not stand because the lack of integrity erodes our reputations and our reputations influence people's perception of us.

Remember: The world is not reading their Bibles. They are reading us!

“The righteous man walks in his integrity” (Prov. 20:7)

I. ABSOLUTE TRUTH

We need to understand “absolute truth” before we can walk in integrity. Without truth we have no standard to guide our conduct, and when there is no truth we are open for lies, which deceive us. The truth of God's Word is the standard by which we can “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,” (Eph. 4:1)

In this world you cannot trust opinions, traditions or values. We can only trust the Word of God as the final word on all matters of faith and practice. There is a difference between truths as the Bible says it, and “truth” as the world says it. We might term it absolute truth and relative truth.

- Absolute truth believes that there are some things that are true for all people, for all times, and for all places.
- Relative truth says the line of right and wrong is different for everyone. It says truth can be defined in contradictory ways and still be correct. What is right for one person in a given situation may not be right for another person in that same situation.

There are three things that must exist in order to have absolute truth. This is so because man has tried to set the standard for right and wrong within himself. Truth has the standard for right and wrong within itself. Truth as defined by many has become man-centered. In other words, each person considers themselves the judge of whatever is right and wrong in any given situation. Truth has to be God-centered and not man-centered.

Jesus was the perfect expression of truth on earth (1 John 14:6). God's nature and character define truth. God defines right and wrong, but truth is not something God decides; it is something God is. Most people accept a standard of truth when it comes to mathematics or spelling. But in the area of conduct or behavior many resist a standard of truth outside themselves and want to be the judge of right and wrong (Jg. 17:6, Jg. 21:25).

In those days, everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Notice that everyone decided what was right and wrong; they chose what the standard for their conduct was. There is

something else in this verses that is important. These verses tell us that there was no King in Israel. When there is no standard, people will do what they think is right for them.

Truth must have or be three things. Truth must be:

A. Truth is Objective.

Right and wrong, truth or falsity must be objective. A true standard of right and wrong must exist independently of what we think or feel. If not, truth could (and probably would) change from person to person

B. Truth is Universal.

This standard (absolute truth) must apply to all people in all places. If not, truth could change from culture to culture, or nation to nation.

C. Truth is Constant.

This standard must be unchanging. If not, truth could change from generation to generation.

In Christ, Jesus, we have absolute truth that we can always depend on (Eph. 4:20-21, John 14:6; John 17:17) In Jesus, truth is not merely ethical truth, but truth is in all it fullness and scope. He is the perfect expression of truth because the absolute truth is in Him. God's nature and character defines truth. God defines what is right and wrong, by whom He is. Truth is not something God decides; it is what God is.

II. INTEGRITY DEFINED

The world is not reading their Bible. They are reading you and I. Our standards must be much higher than the world's standards. Without standards that are above the world, we will find that Christianity will sink to the level of the world, following its standard of right and wrong.

- Integrity is “a firm adherence to a code or standard of value; It is the state of unimpaired; soundness; the quality or condition of being undivided.
- Therefore, integrity is a way of life, a style or standard of living. It is not something that we are to turn on or off at will.
- Integrity is a life that is committed to faithfulness.
- Integrity touches and affects all that a person is and all that a person does.
- Integrity is character, which functions in love, forgiveness, unselfishness, and with a pure reputation.
- Integrity is being real with people, not wearing a false face and not phony.
- Integrity is being guileless, not cunning, sly and devious.
- Integrity is keeping our word, regardless of what it costs us.

- Integrity is being trustworthy.
- Integrity is humility, even in the midst of great success.

Integrity has characteristics. These characteristics included uprightness, righteousness and truth in the heart (Ps. 15:1-2). Integrity includes paying a vow, doing what you say you will no matter what it costs (Eccl. 5:5; Num. 30:2) Integrity is speaking truth (Eph. 4:25). These are a few characteristics, but there are many more.

III. CONVICTION

Conviction is a very powerful influence and is formed by the attitude and belief of the heart. When a person's convictions are based on the Word of God, true character is formed.

People of integrity are people who refuse to compromise their convictions. The disciples in the beginning had to show their character and integrity in the midst of difficult situations. Jesus was gone and now it was time for the disciples to stand. The disciples were willing to surrender all to fulfill their calling and hold on to their convictions.

➤ **What is conviction?** It is the fact or condition of being without doubt.

A. Conviction is being absolutely sure.

Conviction is something that you are absolutely sure about and truly believe in, regardless of the opinion or words of threat that come from others.

B. Convictions are learned by association.

Convictions are determined by what we spend time with, where we go, and how much desire we have for something. Basically, conviction determines our conduct.

C. Conviction comes from the Word.

We are instructed to operate in the convictions that are based on the Word of God (Rom. 12:2). This Scripture tells us to get our minds renewed so that our will can come into line with the Will of God. As our will lines up with the Word of God our convictions will be seen by others.

The Bible is full of men and woman who would not compromise their faith in God; rather, they stood on the Word of the Lord (their conviction that what God said was true, no matter what man said). We can see these people in the Old and New Testament.

1. Daniel had convictions.

Daniel had made up his mind to live his life according to his convictions (Dan. 1:8)

2. Daniel would not compromise convictions.

Daniel refused to compromise his prayer time, though he "...knew that the writing was signed..." (Dan. 6:10). It cost Daniel a night in the lion's den.

3. Refusal to bow to the emperor's command.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow to the image of the idol and so they faced the furnace. It is interesting that they said, "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve they gods," (Dan. 3:18)

4. Rehab the heathen is sure of Jehovah as God.

Rehab risked her life to protect the spies. She had heard and did "...know that the Lord hath given you the land..." (Josh. 2:9) There was danger in hiding the spies from the king of Jericho, but she did what her convictions told her was right.

5. Stephen, though threatened with death, spoke out his convictions.

It is a tough thing to know that you are about to die, yet speaking that which you are sure of. He knew that his testimony and preaching were coming against the religious spirits of that day and place. His testifying of Jesus standing at the right hand of God brought about his stoning (Acts 7:55-60). Yet Stephen would not compromise, and died for his convictions.

6. Paul preached the Gospel, despite the religious people's opposition.

Paul was convinced so greatly about the truth of the Gospel, he underwent terrible treatment that some might be saved. He preached when he knew it would cost him a beating (2 Cor. 11:24-26).

7. Conviction is not always seeing things come out as you wish.

Many in the Bible had convictions, yet did not receive as we tend to wish or hope for (Heb. 11:13-15). These people did not receive what they believed; yet they did not flinch or back up from their conviction. These people never gave up. That is why they are in the "Hebrews Hall of Faith"

D. People of Conviction are Loyal and Obedient to God.

In Genesis chapter thirty-nine (39), we find that Joseph was placed in Potiphar's house. While he was there, Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. Joseph denied her, not because he was afraid of Potiphar coming home and he might be killed; having an illegitimate child or a sexually transmitted disease.

No, it was a conviction that kept him from committing sin. Joseph did give the reason to Potiphar's wife why he would not compromise. It was because his loyalty to his master and because it was a sin against God (v.9).

Through Joseph's life he had become a man of integrity and would not compromise. God prospered Joseph everywhere he went and he became a great leader. Integrity is the substance that leaders are made of.

IV. FALSEHOODS

Without integrity, our talents, gifts, and abilities cannot be used to further the Kingdom of God. If people cannot trust us, they will not receive from us. The gifts that God has placed in us will not have an effect on people because they know our actions and those misguided actions speak louder than anything else.

A. What is a Lie?

- A lie is any intentional, deceptive communication done through speech or action.
- A lie is giving out information that is not accurate.
- A lie is giving out information that is distorted or misleading to another person.
- A lie is being deceitful, treacherous or disloyal to other (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; I Tim. 4:1-3).

B. Why do People Lie?

- Lying is a choice, based upon character. People lie because they want to:
 - They lie to control or manipulate people.
 - They lie to control or manipulate a situation for their own benefit.
 - They lie to get out of trouble.
 - They lie to avoid embarrassment and not suffer shame (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

C. Practicing Falsehood (Lying) is Destructive.

- Practicing falsehood not only damages the person who lies.
 - Lies hurt others and God hates it (Prov. 6:16-19)
 - Lies destroy the confidence of others in us. People will not trust those who practice falsehood.
 - Lies cause people to resent, become suspicious, and be disappointed in us.
 - Lies erode a person's ministry, and rob them of the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Lies rob a person of their reputation, especially of those in leadership.

D. Definitions of Falsehood

Falsehoods can be classified under several headings.

1. Slander is falsehood.

- Slander is the misrepresenting, defaming or destroying of someone's reputation (Ps.101:5; Eph. 4:31)

2. Deceit is falsehood.

- Deceits is to mislead, to beguile, or to cause someone to believe a lie (Ps. 101:7; Jas. 1:26)

Once the truth is mixed with untruth, it loses its power and the ability to accomplish anything. Truth is a positive force for good. When mixed with untruth, the positive force is negated, for even 1% untruth with 99% truth makes it untruth.

By practicing honesty, we give no room for the enemy to operate. When we practice falsehoods then we are practicing what the father of lies does (John 8:44).

Honesty is a must (a necessity) in all areas of our lives. Honesty in finances, difficult circumstances, relationship, in school, and on the job is all being a witness for Christ.

V. ACCOUNTABILITY

As people of integrity, we need to remain accountable to others, especially when we enter into leadership. There are many advantages to remaining accountable to someone. People are not an island unto themselves, and when we have wise counsel around us there is protection.

A. Accountability Will Help Protect Us Against the Wiles of the Devil.

- Assumption is the lowest form of wisdom.
- Breaking down the word "assume" is very enlightening as to what comes about because of it. It puts "u" and "me" in a very detestable position.
- Sometimes the wise counsel will receive by being accountable will keep us out of pitfalls (Prov. 13:10, 18, 20; Prov. 27:17).

B. Accountability Will Keep Us From Making Mistakes.

- Many times wise mature Christians, who have walked through what we are walking in now, can offer sound advice.
- People who are sensitive to the voice of God can be a help to us.
- They have experienced things that we may even feel are a "Why me" situation, when it is very common to the Christian (Prov. 11:14; Prov. 19:20, 21)

C. Accountability Will Keep Us Away From Pride.

- Accountability help protect our character.
- There are pitfalls in the ministry.
- There will be times when people will praise us and even will at times use flattery on us and this can cause pride to rise within us.
- The seventy returned from ministering and were rejoicing over being able to cast out demons. (Luke 10:17-20) Jesus put things back into perspective by telling them to “rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

D. How Do We Know If We Are Being Accountable?

1. We are accountable when we are not defensive.

- We can know we are being accountable when we are not on the defensive about the actions we are taking.

2. We are accountable when we are teachable.

- A person who is accountable will be able to receive correction when they are wrong, without getting bent out of shape.
- Humility is a great quality that God can use.
- We need to realize that we can be wrong and not know it.
- If we cannot be corrected without offense, then we cannot stay on track with God.
- The person who cannot be corrected is **not humble**.

3. We are accountable when we are reachable.

- A person who is accountable does not hide from people, but walks with them.
- This person is real and open with nothing hidden.
- To hid from others means we have something we do not want discovered by others.

4. We are accountable when we are sincere.

- A person of honesty and trustworthiness will speak the truth and care about others well being.
- When we function under pretense, we are not being sincere.
- This is a person that tries to manipulate another, so as to gratify their desires.
- Sincere people will not do this.

E. We must have someone to be Accountable to?

1. We are accountable to God.

- God is the one who created us, and knew us before the foundations of the earth.

- He is the only one who gave us our assignment in life (Jer.1:5).
- He has not only assigned us our station in life, He has also empowered us to accomplish all He has called us to do (Jer. 1:7-10).
- We will stand before the Bema Judgment seat and give an account of what we have done in this life (Rom. 14:12; 2Cor. 5:10).

2. We are accountable to each other.

- When we are accountable to each other, it keeps us from being deceived.
- We are to be honest with everyone, but must be careful as to who we communicate our problems to (1Cor. 12:26-27; Gal. 5:25-26; Rom. 12: 9-13).
- Most people don't like being accountable to others.
- When we run from accountability, it shows a rebellious side of us.
- We should wonder why we don't like to answer to people if that is the situation in our lives.

VI. INTERGRITY OF THE HEART

One of the most important characteristics that can be in a Leader is integrity of the heart. This is very important to consider when selecting someone for leadership. God knows our hearts so it is no problem with Him. However, when the choosing is being done by the Pastor or ministry Leader, it becomes critical to weigh a person's integrity.

- Integrity is the substance of which true men and women of God are made.
- Integrity will keep us when all others around us are failing

Abimelech

- The story of Abimelech shows the power of integrity.
- Abimelech, in ignorance, was about to commit adultery with Sarah, but the Lord stopped him (Gen. 20:1-6).
- Abraham compromised his integrity and almost got Abimelech in trouble.
- It was Abimelech's integrity of heart that caused God to intervene in a dream and kept him from causing Sarah to commit adultery.
- Integrity saved Abimelech (vs. 3-5). Abimelech did not know she was married.
- He had been lied to about her status as a woman.
- Abimelech was being totally honest in his heart about the situation.

God told Abimelech that He saw the integrity of His heart (v.6). God recognized integrity when He sees it. Sometimes, we will fail or fall below our intentions; however, the integrity of our heart will keep us.

- This integrity is a state of completeness.
- It is innocence; it is to be perfect or to have come to perfection; it is simplicity; it is to be totally upright in our dealings with others.

- Because of integrity, Abimelech made the right decisions and did not sin against God.

A. Holy Spirit Checks Us.

- The Holy Spirit will “check” us and true integrity will also produce a “Check” within us (Eph. 4:30).
- When we grieve the Holy Spirit, we should ask ourselves why the Holy Spirit is grieved inside of us.
- If there is no peace in our heart, then we may be starting to compromise integrity.
- The Holy Spirit will not “check” us if we are going in the right direction.
- It is when we are about to get off into error or head in the direction that will bring harm that He will quicken us with a lack of Peace.

Actually, since He gives peace, it is when we fail to have peace that He is “checking” or “quicken” us to change or to think about what it is we are about to do. If the peace of God does not rule in our heart, we should be asking ourselves, why? (Col. 3:15).

The peace of God should rule, arbitrate or umpire every situation in our lives. When we make right decisions, we will sense an assurance in our heart, and feel the witness of the Holy Spirit in our heart that we have made the right decision.

B. Integrity of the Heart Begins With Knowing the Lord.

In the Old Testament Israel knew God’s acts, but knew very little about him in an intimate way (Ps. 103: 7; Hos. 4: 1). God brought an indictment against Israel, with three charges in verse 1.

- God said there was no truth or faithfulness in Israel.
- God said there was no mercy or kindness in Israel.
- God said there was no knowledge of God in the land or intimacy. God was dealing with Israel’s integrity.

God showed faithfulness, kindness and a desire for intimacy with Israel, but the children of Israel would not return these qualities. Actually, the whole chapter 4 of Hosea, God is pointing out the sins of Israel. Just as Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea in this book, it was a type of Israel’s unfaithfulness toward God.

When there is a lack of knowing God, there can be no integrity of the heart (Hos. 4:13)

The New Covenant is written on the heart and is developed by the Believer knowing God. When we know God, we will cast off the religious activity for the relationship that satisfies.

For all of Paul’s qualifications, he did not know God intimately (Phil. 3:4-6). He was extremely religious, a “Hebrews of the Hebrews,” but he did not know God until he had the Damascus road experience.

VII. INTEGRITY IN CHARACTER

True integrity in character and ministry is pursuing excellence in every area of life and ministry. What begins in the heart must be cultivated to come to fruition. God is more interested in character than a ministry. God desires to develop our character. Character that is as God wants comes through time and often with great personal effort. God's number one purpose is that we be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). The image of Jesus is one of complete integrity.

A. What is Character?

- The Webster's New World Dictionary says that character is "a distinctive mark."
- It also gives us the understanding of "a distinctive trait, quality or attribute."
- It can also mean "the pattern of behavior or personality found in an individual or group; moral constitution."
- Lastly, we can see that it means "moral strength, self discipline, fortitude or reputation."
 - Character is the seat of one's moral being.
 - Character is the inner life of man.

It will reflect either the traits of sinful nature (being influenced by the world) or the traits of the divine nature (being influenced by the Word of God)

- Character is displayed in the actions of a person under pressure.
- Character is the total sum of all negative and positive qualities in a person's life.

For example, our thoughts, values, motivations, attitudes, feelings, and actions make up what we are. Our character does leave a distinctive mark upon the lives of others, especially children. When we allow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to "stamp out" our lives, then what we leave with others will be more powerful.

B. What Character is not?

1. Character is not what a person is ideally.

- Character is not just what a person will ideally become some day.
- Character is what a person is at the present.
- When pressure comes to a person's life, the real person, the real "you" comes out.
- A person may act one way while the blessings of God flow in, but act another way as pressure and trials come.

2. Character is not actions.

- Character is not only how a person acts, but also included thoughts, motives, and attitudes.

3. Character is not just public relations.

- Character is not just wisdom on how to deal with others and bad situation, But living a life consistent to Biblical principles.

4. Character is not limited in scope.

- Character is not limited to relationships between Christians, but in all relationships.
- Character is not limited to a personal relationship just with our spiritual family, but also with our natural family.

As wickedness become worse in these last days, the need for Godly character increases. Character development comes only from discipline through the Word of God; there are no short cuts. Therefore, these people will not be the newly born-again ones, but the mature (2 Pet. 1:3). God has provided Believers with everything they need to develop a mature Christian character as they follow the Lord (Phil.1:6).

B. Secret Sins

- One of the reasons why Christians need the Holy Spirit to deal with their heart is because of secret sins.
- These are the hidden sins that we commit in our thought life, bad attitudes or wrong motives that no one really knows about (Dan. 2:22, 28).
- Man has a desire to hide his sins and faults, but the father shines the light of the Holy Spirit on these areas so that we will deal with them. This is for our own good.
- When there is no repentance of hidden sins, lives and ministries will fall apart.
- God does not initially expose these sins, but deals with the human heart individually.
- However, if the individual does not repent of the hidden sin, it will not be hidden forever. God will allow it to be exposed.
- We need to keep the fruit of repentance in our lives (Ps. 19:12; Ps. 51:6; Ps 32:3, 5)

C. The Tragedy of Our Secret Sins

- Saul has a good start, with excellent attributes. However, God knew that he would not last. He knew his character would not stand the pressure of being king of Israel. From the chart below, we see the steps to his downfall

Beginning

I Samuel
Anointed King (v. 1)
Strong, mighty man (v. 6)
Great warrior (13:4)

Sin

Soulish
Independent-spirit
Tried to murder David
Sought witchcraft(v. 9, 22)

Ending

I Samuel 31
Stripped of Kingdom
Humble Heart
Committed Suicide

- David was known as a man after God’s own heart. Yet, there were problems in David’s life with secret sins. David had things on the inside of him others did not know about, not even Samuel. However, this did not stop God from calling David a man after His own heart.
- **Why?** It is because David was a man that was quick to repent when the sin was exposed. This is an attribute that the entire Body of Christ should be exhibiting, instead of putting on a false face and acting as if all is right between them and God. A heart that is quick to repent will be a heart like David’s.

<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Sin</u>	<u>Ending</u>
I Samuel Anointed King Mighty warrior Musician of the Lord Faithful, Loyal Great Leader Built Tabernacle of	Lust	II Samuel 11, Ps. 32 & 51 Disloyal to his men Committed adultery Committed murder Tried to cover his sins Brought judgment to people David whole family

- Solomon was the promised king to follow David. He had been given (by God) the responsibility of carrying out the dream of God in David of building a Temple that matched (as close as humanly possible) the greatness of God.

<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Sin</u>	<u>Ending</u>
2 Chr. 17-12 Anointed King Humble person of prayer Temple builder The greatest kingdom The greatest wisdom The greatest wealth	Proud Greedy, Wrong-values, Self-confidence	I Kings 11., Eccl. 1 Turned his heart from God Worshiped idols Vain philosophy Sinned in the sight of God His Kingdom taken away Sought to kill Jereboam

These leaders were successful at the beginning of their ministries, but experienced shame and disgrace in their lives. These men were anointed by God and had good qualities.

Sometimes when we are extremely blessed and the blessings of God seem to be rolling in, we let our guard down and the enemy sets traps for us. Also, we step out with God and we never fully deal with our character flaws. Always remember that God is more interested in character than ministry, but without character, ministry does not last. The way that God deals with us is through His word and the conviction of the Holy Ghost. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 12:7-11)

E. The Purpose of God.

The purpose of God is to do several things in our lives that will produce good results in us if we let Him deal with our character.

1. We are to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

- The number one purpose of God is for us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).
- Paul wrote to the Corinthians about being changed into the likeness or image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

2. We are to be purified.

- The number two (2) purpose of God is for us to be purified. We all have things in our lives that we must put away.
- It must be purged out of our lives. To purge is “to refine, to make pure, to change by heat” (Is. 1:25; Ps. 51:7)

3. We are to develop spiritual fruit.

- The third (3rd) purpose of God for us is to develop spiritual fruit.
- God has designed us to bear much fruit (John 15:1-8).
- As long as we stay attached to the source, then the life of God flows to us so that we can bear fruit for His glory.

4. We are to be vessel fit for service.

- The fourth (4th) purpose that God has is to make us vessels fit for His service.
- We, as vessels, have flaws and God want to remove those flaws so we can better serve Him (2 Tim 2:19-20; Jer. 17; 1-10)

F. Areas of Character

There are seven (7) areas that we should show forth-godly character in.

1. We are to show godly character in our spiritual life.

- God wants us to have a spiritual life that is consistent and stable so that we are not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.
- There needs to be an unshakable trust in God.

2. We are to show godly character in our personal life.

- Bad habits are bad examples for others.
- We are to be disciplined, and not give over to appetites of our flesh.
- What we do in private eventually effects what people see in public.

- What we are on the inside will always come to the outside.

3. Our home life is to reflect God's character.

- Our homes need to be in order.
- Without character in our home, there will be no successful home life.

4. Our social life is to reflect God's character.

- Friendships will reflect character.
- Loyalty and trust are two main ingredients in having and keeping friends.
- As Christians we come into contact with people every day.
- Are we showing forth a good witness?

A. Our educational life is to reflect God's character.

- Education alone does not produce character, but thorough discipline, persistence and patience, higher level of education can be achieved.
- We can always learn every day as long as we stay teachable.
- We do not know it all.
- With an education, we can see better how to minister to our fellow man, whether in the church or in the secular life.

B. God's character is to be seen in our ministerial life.

- Our character is at the foundation of our area of service.
- Without character the ministry will not last, and usually does a lot of damage to others. I Timothy chapter 3 and Titus 1 gives us the qualifications for leaders of character

C. God's character is to be seen in our marital life.

- When we develop character qualities, then we are able to meet the needs of our spouses.
- God ordained marriage and honor the covenant between husband and wife.
- Satan would like to destroy marriages and to separate families.
- A strong, Godly marriage is a witness to others (Eph.5:25).

VIII. HOW TO BUILD INTEGRITY

Integrity should be a way of life. Integrity is not something that we do around certain people only. Integrity is what we walk before people every day. Integrity is not something we are born with, but it is a quality of life that can be developed. The Lord has called every one of us to show forth this fruit in all areas of our life. Those who are

called by His name are called to be people of high integrity in everything we do. Integrity is not an option. It is a must for all Believers.

We can build integrity in our lives by taking up certain attributes.

A. We Must Be Determined to Love and Fear the Lord.

- When we love and fear the Lord, then we have allowed the will of God to be the most important thing in our life (Ps. 86:11, Ps. 112:1, 7-8).
- We love and fear the Lord when are more interested in pleasing God than man.
- We obey the Lord because of the love relationship.

B. We Must Be Determined to Grow Into the Word of God.

- The Word of God gives us a sure foundation on which we can build on (Ps. 119:130, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- Sometimes Christians don't make good decision because they are ignorant of the Word of God.
- God corrects, trains, and matures us through His Word.
- The Word of God causes our faith to grow and reveals God's Will for our lives.

C. We Must Be Determined to Walk in the Truth of God.

- Walking in truth means to stay away from all falsehood, false promises and exaggerated claims.
- This also means that we are to take steps of obedience to reveal truth (Ps. 119: 9-11 John 14:23-24).

D. We do this by fulfilling what we promise.

- When we keep our promises, we build and keep a good reputation.
- Faithfulness is what will keep and good reputation.

E. We do this by being genuine with people.

- God has created us.
- We are unique and we are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- So why would we want to imitate anyone?
- We should not copy other people styles, mannerism or words.
- We must trust what God is doing in us.

F. We do this by not being double-minded in our values.

- People should not have to wonder where we stand in our values.

- Sometimes the truth cost us, but if we don't pay the price, our integrity can and should be questioned. We should find out what God's Word says and then take our stand on the side of truth.

G. We do this by allowing the truth to set us free.

- When there are lies, then there are people in bondage.
- Our first rule should be telling the truth, and always pursue the truth in all we do.

H. Determined to Live and Moral and Holy Life.

Today, Christian are bombarded daily with sensuality, erotic, filthiness, lust, perversion, nudity and open sexuality (1Thes. 4:7-8, 4: 3-5). Whether, it is in magazines, television or on the street corners, these and other demonic forces have to be warred against. These forces come to rob us of our integrity.

- We need to be on guard at all times so as not to fall into situations where our integrity could be compromised.
- Purity should be a standard that we set if we are going to maintain our integrity.
- Immorality attacks holiness.
- There has been a lot of damage done to the Body of Christ by those who have fallen into or practice sexual impurities (2 Tim. 3: 1-3).
- Holiness is a daily choice that we make when we decide to live a pure life.

I. Determined to be a Prayer Warrior.

Paul has urged us to pray continually (1Thes. 5:17). Jesus often went away by himself to pray to the Father. Our prayer life sustains us when everything else fails. When friends come against us and our integrity is questioned, the Word and our prayer life will carry us through. Prayer will sustain us in the time of temptation.

- Prayer is not some formula we use to get our needs met.
- Prayer must be founded upon faith.
- Our faith is what we use to obtain the promises of God. It takes faith and acting on the Word of God.

J. When making decision, pray for wisdom and understanding.

- We must pray for guidance and God's power to enable us to deal with the problems we are facing.

K. We must cast our cares upon Him.

- Through prayer we give our worries, doubts and fears to the One who can carry them.
- Leave these frustrations with God and do not pick them back up.

- To pick them up is to carry them again till the next time we pray and try to lay them down again.
- It is a vicious cycle, never producing what the Word of God says we can have freedom from worry and fear.

L. We have to believe we receive.

- When we pray, believe that God has answered our prayers (Mark 11:24).
- God would not have said this if He did not mean it.
- The answer is ours the moment we believe, not when it manifest in the sight of our natural eyes.

M. We must be honest with God.

- Why would we think we can hide things from God, who sees all things?
- We need to come before God open and honest.
- He will never upbraid us for our wrongs or mistakes, but He can never fix what we will not be honest about and give to Him openly and honestly.

N. We have to get rid of unforgiveness.

- Unforgiveness will keep us from receiving the answers to our prayers.
- Unforgiveness is to harbor resentment, which hinders our relationship with others and with God.
- A forgiving heart keeps us free from the bondage that comes with unforgiveness.

O. Being Determined to Have a Positive Attitude.

Our attitude speaks louder than our words. Our attitude is a reflection of what kind of person we are. We can only hide a bad attitude for so long. When we are under pressure our true attitude comes out.

- Bad attitudes may come out when we are not given our way.
- Bad attitude may come out when our patience is tested.
- Bad attitude may come out when people mistreat us.

Can we come away from these situations and still have a good attitude. Our attitude affects our work, spiritual life, relationships, health and thankfulness. If we are short tempered, unsociable, or uncooperative, then these negative attitudes need to be dealt with. Through the Word, prayer, and the work of the Holy Spirit these areas can be changed.

P. Being Determined to Use Our Spiritual gifts to Build up the Body of Christ.

- Few people ever live up to their potential, finding what their gifts are (1 Pet. 4:10-11; Rom. 12: 4-6).
- These people lack motivation, dedication, or incentive.
- These people cannot be a blessing to the Body of Christ or to people in general.
- To be a man or woman of integrity we have to make ourselves available to God and let Him use us to bring glory to Himself.
- People of integrity have a love for people and are willing to help meet their needs
- We cannot do this when we withdraw from people; we lose our integrity in the eyes of those who need us.

IX. INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY

The work of the ministry takes hours and hours of service. There is constant communication with God and people. Jesus' ministry had nothing to do with position, but had everything to do with servant hood. Servant hood is not in the doing, but in who we are.

Not everyone is call to Pastor or be Evangelists, but we have all been given the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). "

- Everyone who is born again has been given this ministry by God, so they can go and reconcile others back to God.
- This is everyone's area of service.
- In verse 19, it says, "He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."
- God has given us the word to give to others that will restore.
- In verse 20, He has made us "ambassadors." In other words, we have been given the authority to take Word to others.

A. How to Develop Integrity in Ministry

1. We are to put God first in all we do.

- God must be top priority.
- God is our total source of supply (Matt. 6:33).

2. We are to guard our heart from being defile or being overcome by the world.

- This world that we live in offers many opportunities that can rob us of our integrity (1 John 2:15-17).
- We should guard our heart so the world's way of doing thing does not contaminate, pollute, or defile us.

3. We are to expect the best from ourselves and our ministry.

- God has a purpose for us and we need to fulfill this purpose with integrity and excellence.
- We should be careful to stay away from competition and stay motivated by the Holy Ghost and not ourselves.
- We should always stay away from selfish ambition because they do not seek the will of the Father (Phil. 1:14-17).

4. We are not to compare ourselves with someone else.

- Do not compare self to someone else or their successes or failures.
- We need to train ourselves to look to God for approval.

5. We are to be reliable and faithful.

- A person of integrity is consistent and they are reliable (Matt. 24:45-47).
- They are persons who can be counted on.

6. We must have a push, drive or zeal.

- People of integrity have eagerness or a drive about what they are doing.
- Do not allow self to become dull, sluggish, and slothful about our calling.
- Let the power of the Holy Ghost move us to a higher level of maturity.

7. Believers' are to have a higher moral standard.

- When we walk by God's standard, we stand out from among the rest (Dan. 6:4).
- When we have high moral standards, people sometimes are not comfortable around us.

8. We must not judge ministries.

- We should be careful not to judge a ministry by its ability or spiritual gift, but by the character of those behind it.
- Ministries last only because there are deep roots of integrity.

9. It is required of us to preach the true Gospel.

- We must always preach the true message of Jesus Christ (I Thess. 1:3-5).
- Men and women who are in the ministry cannot be man pleasers.
- They cannot seek the praises of men.
- People in the ministry must fear God rather than man.
- We must obey God rather than man.

X. BECOMING A PERSON OF DISCERNMENT

To discern means, “To go beyond the obvious or superficial,” or “to show a good judgment or understanding.”

- Discernment is one of the most important gifts a person of integrity can have.
- It is important because most of our failures happen because of a lack of discernment.
- A person of discernment is able to see through circumstances.
- Discernment helps reveals the motives of people so we are not misled.

We can develop the gift of discernment by:

A. Be Well Established in the Word of God.

- By reading the Word we can sharpen our discernment.
- Falsehoods are then quickly spotted.
- The word gives us the ability to see things from God’s perspective

B. Praying for Wisdom and a Sound Mind.

- There are a lot of things that are impossible to judge by our own understanding.
- We need God’s wisdom and a sound mind to be able to judge accurately.

The natural mind does not understand spiritual matters, and to more educate we are, and especially as we rely upon that education, it becomes harder to judge spiritually. God’s wisdom is what we all need.

C. Be Sensitive to the Prompting of the Holy Spirit.

- One of the reasons for the coming of the Holy Spirit is to teach us and reveal to us what is the heart of God.
- If our spiritual perspective and discernment are to be sharpened then we need to be willing to be taught.
- We can do this by receiving correction and by admitting mistakes.

The Holy Spirit also helps us to be people of courage and action. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we will not be intimidated by people or situations. Also, we will not compromise with the world.

D. Be Watchful.

- We cannot be discerning people unless we are watchful, alert, sober and wide awake.
- Watch for those who would try to influence you to get their way.
- Choose friends carefully.
- Be careful with what you share with others about your personal life.
- It is not wise to tell many people about personal trials or failures.
- You need to make sure that they are close, trusted individuals, mature in the Lord.

E. Be Stable and Established in Your Faith.

- We all need to prove new ideas or revelations with the established Word of God.
- Be sure that you are not tossed to and from every wind of doctrine that comes along.
- We are to always build on a sure foundation that is balanced.

Without discernment we are vulnerable and are open to deception. The world's philosophy can come in, along with the lies of the enemy, which are not readily recognized.

IX. CONCLUSION

All Believers are called to a life of integrity. Our lives are not our own. We should be committed to God's purpose. Our higher purpose is to serve and live for Christ. Are we willing to sell all, lay down our will, and serve a Holy God?

All Believers have to decide not to live as others live. God's Word sets a standard for us to live by. We will begin to change through the working of the Holy Spirit. God does expect us to change in our attitudes, thoughts and actions.

Christ came to establish a higher ethical standard. He wants His people to be salt and light (Mt. 5:13-16). Christ is calling us to be holy (Lev. 11:44; 19:2); righteous (Is. 45:21; Amos 5:24); to justice (Mic. 6:8) be honest; to stop pretending to be what we are not; to stop preaching what we ourselves do not practice; to stop praying for things that are contrary to God's Word (2 Cor.8:21; Heb. 13:18).

Conformity begins in our minds. Conforming to the world shapes our minds, lifestyle, speech and actions. The more we become conformed, the more we are weakened, defiled and even seared to where we are not sensitive to the things of God (1 Pet. 1:14)

We are to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:10)