

Wanted: Men of Integrity


“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business”
(Acts 6:3).

Oxford English Dictionary defines “integrity” as “the state of being honest, upright, sincere.” The Hebrew root word denotes, “whole, sound, unimpaired.” It would be great to have leaders with integrity.

Howard Hendricks in *A Life of Integrity* relates a story of a man who left his workplace each day with a mountain of sand in his wheelbarrow. The security guards went through the sand, convinced that they would find stolen property. They could not find anything. Every day the same thing happened. Finally, they realized he was stealing wheelbarrows. The man in this story lacked integrity and honesty.


It is increasingly difficult to find men and women of integrity. However, the Bible abounds with examples.

Biblical Examples

 Joseph was a man of integrity. He had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with Potiphar’s wife. She found him quite desirable.


“His master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master’s wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is


with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:7-9).

 Job was another man of integrity. “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause” (Job 2:3).

Job’s wife recommended that he forget his integrity. “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die” (Job 2:9).

Job experienced many trials, but still declared, “Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me” (Job 27:5).

 The Psalmist David believed he should be a man of integrity. “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee” (Psalms 25:21).

 Paul was a man of integrity. He said that he had “lived in all good conscience before God” (Acts 23:1). He was rewarded for his integrity with a slap in the mouth (Acts 23:2).

Integrity—A Must for Leaders

The apostles decided that seven deacons should be chosen to wait on tables. One of

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the qualifications was that they would have to be men of “honest report.”

Later Paul told Timothy, “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless” (1 Timothy 3:10).

Deacons had to be proven blameless—men of integrity. Integrity does not happen overnight. It takes time.

Pastors, elders, and bishops also had to be men of integrity (blameless.) Integrity is a qualification for anyone in leadership.

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2).

“If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre” (Titus 1:6-7).

**“When good people are promoted,
everything is great,
but when the bad are in charge, watch
out!”
(Proverbs 28:12, *The Message*)**

Temptations in Christian Service

Temptations in Christian service usually take place in the following areas.

Finance

Leaders must be careful in matters of finance. There needs to be proper accountability of funds and complete honesty. This causes others to trust the leader. Leaders need to be faithful in their financial obligations in the community and the church. They must be careful to fulfill the vows and pledges that they make. They must not rob God but faithfully pay tithes. Judas' integrity was bought for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). In Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira lost their integrity and their lives over money.

Poverty brings many temptations, but leaders must strive to be men of integrity.

Relationships with the Opposite Sex

This area of temptation causes many leaders to fall into sin and destroys their ministry. Paul advises, “Flee fornication!” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Run from it!

When this temptation comes, we need to be like Joseph. He responded, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9).

Every day Potiphar's wife continued to tempt Joseph. Joseph finally, “left his garment in her hand, and fled” (Genesis 39:12).

“But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away” (Proverbs 6:32-33).

“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

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Be careful whom you touch or even look at. Do not be alone with a person of the opposite sex (unless it is your spouse).

Power

Leaders have not been called to be big men, lords over God's heritage.

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3).

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

Truth—Honesty

At times leaders may also be tempted to protect themselves by not telling the truth. It is important for them to men of their word. They should always do what they say that they will do. They should always speak the truth and never lie.

"All liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8).

Adversity, Trials, and Problems

Problems can cause leaders to look for comfortable ways to escape. But they should stand their ground without compromise. Martin Luther said, "Here I stand. I can do no other."

Daniel is a classic example of integrity. He continued to pray three times a day, even when it meant being thrown into a lions' den.

The three Hebrew children refused to compromise and worship an idol. They

realized that as a result they could be thrown into the fiery furnace.

Study Questions

1. What is meant by "integrity"?

2. In Acts 23:2 what reward did Paul receive for his integrity?

3. Why did Joseph refuse to lie with Potiphar's wife?

4. Job experienced many trials but still declared what?

5. Show (using the Scripture) that integrity is a qualification for deacons and other church leaders.

6. What are some of the areas of temptation in Christian service?

7. How can leaders maintain integrity with finances?

8. How can leaders deal with the temptations concerning the opposite sex?
