

10. Integrity: Wholeness and Holiness (2Q 2010—Health and Healing)

Biblical material: Gen. 39:6–12; 1 Sam. 24:1–10; Dan. 6:1–10; Matt. 4:1–11; Rom. 1:26, 27; Eph. 3:14–21, Titus 2:7, 8.

Quotes

- In a disordered mind, as in a disordered body, soundness of health is impossible. *Cicero*
- If man thinks about his physical or moral state he usually discovers that he is ill. *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*
- The mind has great influence over the body, and maladies often have their origin there. *Moliere*
- A person who hides the truth that he or she is sick cannot expect to be cured. *Ethiopian Proverb*
- The most powerful thing you can do to change the world is to change your own beliefs about the nature of life, people, and reality to something more positive...and begin to act accordingly. *Shakti Gawain*
- Life is not the way it's supposed to be. It's the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference. *Virginia Satir*

Questions

Why is it so wrong to compromise? How do we maintain principle and not appear to be rigid and inflexible? Is this subject to do with behavior or with character? How are we made “whole” and what has this to do with holiness? How do we treat those whose integrity has been compromised? How do we avoid a Pharisaical attitude?

Bible discussion

Various stories illustrating integrity are referenced: Joseph with Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:-12); David's attitude to King Saul (1 Sam. 24:1-10); Daniel in Babylon (Dan. 6:1-10); Jesus during the Temptations in the Wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11). This is followed by material illustrating the abandonment of integrity and holiness (Rom. 1:26, 27); how the indwelling Christ makes us holy (Eph. 3:14–21); and the importance of example: “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.” (Titus 2:7, 8 NIV)

Comment

Much of the lesson quarterly occupies itself with maintaining integrity in terms of avoiding sexual sin or spiritual compromise. What does this say about what preoccupies us? Do we seek to avoid sin to maintain our integrity?—which sounds rather like the attitudes of religious leaders that Jesus condemned! We need to recognize that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” and “there is none righteous, no not one,” and go to the God of true healing for our integrity? The problem with concentrating on our own integrity is that we can become spiritually proud, and thank the Lord that we're not like the sinners next to us!

True integrity does not come from a self-centered preoccupation but from concerning ourselves with helping others. Jesus spent his time not worried about his integrity or how he was viewed by his peers, but in keeping his communion with his Father as the means of helping the sick, the poor—in fact, anyone who would come to him. He was in the business of making human beings whole, not in preserving his integrity, since he simply always acted in character.

So for us, our focus must not be on us and our own integrity, but how we can best represent God to those around us. The message is not us and our integrity—we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ. Certainly we avoid temptation and plead with the Lord for healing from our selfish sinfulness, but the danger in focusing on our integrity is to spend too much time in self-contemplation. I well remember talking with an elderly lady about her concerns—and she spent much time trying to recall any “unconfessed sins.” The problem this created was a fixation on herself and her behavior that made her completely unable to benefit others! As Charles Spurgeon commented, “I looked to Jesus and the dove of peace flew into my heart. I looked at my heart and the dove flew away.” We should focus on Jesus—fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Ellen White Comments

Abraham did not shut himself away from the people around him. He maintained friendly relations with the kings of the surrounding nations, by some of whom he was treated with great respect; and his integrity and unselfishness, his valor and benevolence, were representing the character of God. In Mesopotamia, in Canaan, in Egypt, and even to the inhabitants of Sodom, the God of heaven was revealed through His representative. {PP 368}

Remember that temptation is not sin. Remember that however trying the circumstances in which a man may be placed, nothing can really weaken his soul so long as he does not yield to temptation but maintains his own integrity... All the satanic legions cannot injure you unless you open your soul to the arrows of Satan. As long as you are firm to do right, your ruin can never take place. If there is not pollution of mind in yourself, all the surrounding pollution cannot taint and defile you. {TMK 248}

The religion of Jesus softens whatever is hard and rough in the temper, and smooths whatever is rugged and sharp in the manners. It makes the words gentle and the demeanor winning. Let us learn from Christ how to combine a high sense of purity and integrity with sunniness of disposition. A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity. {CM 73}

...even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. His failure teaches us that, whatever a man's intellectual qualities may be, and however faithfully he may have served God in the past, he can never with safety trust in his own wisdom and integrity. {PK 82}

You trust too much in your own feeble strength. You have great need of divine aid, of a power not to be found in yourself. There is One to whom you can go for counsel, whose wisdom is infinite. He has invited you to come to Him, for He will supply your need. If by faith you cast all your care upon Him who marks the falling of a sparrow, you will not trust in vain. If you will rest upon His sure promises, and maintain your integrity, angels of God will be round about you. {2T 71}