

Announcer

Welcome to transformed by the word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Debora 0:20

Thanks for joining me for Episode 12 of transformed by the word. Today's topic is walking in integrity. Integrity is defined as the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to a strong moral and ethical principle, or value.

The word integrity evolved from the Latin adjective integer, meaning whole, or complete. The Bible contains several examples of people who demonstrated strong integrity, even in the most challenging circumstances and powerful temptations like Moses, Job, and Jesus.

One person who is known for his integrity in American history, is Abraham Lincoln. In fact, his nickname was Honest Abe when he was working as a young store clerk in New Salem, Illinois. According to a story, whenever he realized that he had shortchanged the customer, by a few pennies, he would close up the shop, and deliver the correct change, regardless of how far he had to walk. His life of integrity continued, even through his adult life, as he served in various roles as a lawyer, a state politician, a congressman, and eventually the President of the United States.

Abraham Lincoln once said, commitment is what transforms a promise into a reality. Commitment is the stuff character is made up of. It is the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity, over skepticism.

When I think of the character trait of integrity, I can't help but recall a man in the Bible that God Himself pointed out as a man of integrity. Who is it? That man is Job. We see in the beginning of the book of Job, that it opens up with the very first line stating, there was a man in the land of us whose name was Job. And that man was a blameless and upright, and one who feared God, and shunned evil. Just a few verses later, we get to peer into a meeting in the heavenly realm, where Satan and other beings came to present themselves before the Lord. And God asks Satan, where he came from. And Satan replied to God that he had been going to and fro on the earth, walking back and forth on it. Then the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil. Well, Satan goes on to say to the Lord, that the reason Job fears God, or has respect and reverence for him, is because God has protected and blessed him that if God removed his protection, Job would certainly curse God to his face.

Well, God permits Satan to wreak havoc in Job's life, just to prove him wrong. Many difficult things happen to Job following this meeting. He loses his property, and his children and his good health. But through it all, Job does something amazing. He worships God!

Job holds fast to his faith and his integrity. It never wavers. Even Job's wife says to him, Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die. Job's friends come and they try to comfort him, but they add to his pain and distress, implying somehow that Job must be a sinner and have done something wrong to bring about all of this disaster in his life. But Job holds fast to his integrity. Even in his distress, he cries out to God, but he never wavers in his faith.

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In the end, God blesses Job. After he prayed for his friends, God gave him back double for what he lost. I encourage you to read the book of Job if you've never done so. This is an incredible story, demonstrating the powerful impact of a life of integrity.

It was God who declared that Job was a righteous man, a man of integrity. Don't you want God to recognize you? As a person of integrity? I certainly know that I want him to see me as a woman of integrity.

The author CS Lewis said, integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. Are you living a life of integrity? Well, I know that God dealt with me in this area of my character.

Shortly after I surrendered my heart to Him. I was so excited about my new relationship with Jesus, that I started a habit of praying every day asking this question, God, please show me anything in my life that is not pleasing to you. And guess what? As soon as I would pray that prayer, God would reveal things to me. I remember one time that I uttered that prayer. And I was immediately convicted about a financial area in my life that God wanted me to address. You see, I was in the military. And I had moved from Florida, to West Virginia. And I had actually bought property and built a house in West Virginia, and had no intention of ever moving back to Florida. But I was still claiming Florida as my home of record for state income tax purposes. Because for military members, there were no state tax taxes taken out of your pay if you lived in Florida. And if you're in the military, you know that you can claim any state is your home of record, even one that you don't currently live in.

Now that I was a Christian, and I was asking God, if there was any areas in my life that were not pleasing to Him. The Holy Spirit made me aware of that one area in my life that he wanted me to deal with. Well, I decided to make it right. And I began paying the proper state taxes to West Virginia, even paying back taxes to make it right. If I wanted my character, to reflect the character of Jesus Christ, I had to do the right thing, even if nobody but God knew that I had been taking advantage of the system to avoid paying taxes.

Well, let's consider another person featured prominently in the Bible, who exhibited the character trait of integrity. That person is Moses. In the book of Exodus, we learned that Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and they were headed towards the promised land. They went to Mount Sinai, where God gave Moses the 10 commandments for the people. Well, while Moses was up on the mountain receiving these commandments from God, he left his brother Aaron, in charge of the people at the base of the mountain. And they got into big trouble by making an idol to worship. God got so angry with the Israelites that he told Moses that he would destroy them, and make Moses into a great nation. Well, what did Moses do in this situation? He immediately pleaded with God, not to destroy them. Now he could have pridefully accepted God's suggestion to make him into a great nation. But instead, he interceded for the sinful and rebellious people pleading with God to preserve their lives. Let's also look at his brother Aaron in the situation. In Exodus chapter 32, Aaron allowed the pressure from the people to relax his standards, and lead him into sin.

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Now, Moses had been up on the mountain a very long time. And the people didn't know what had happened to him. And they decided that they need needed to make a god. That's a God with a little g, or

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an idol, to worship, and to protect them. Well, they pressured Aaron to do something. And so he formed a gold idol, and built an altar, and proclaimed a feast before this false idol. When Moses came down from the mountain, he ended up destroying that gold image. And he said to Aaron, what did this people do to you, that you have brought so greatest sin upon them. So Aaron said, Don't let the anger of my Lord become hot. You know, the people, that they are all set on evil. For they said to me, make us gods that should go before us. As for this, Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him. And I said to them, whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me and I cast it in the fire, and this golden calf came out.

Well, here we see that Aaron is lying to Moses about what happened. Now, when Moses was with him, Aaron appears to be a godly man. But when Moses was not there, Aaron allowed the pressure from the people to lead them in their sin. Integrity demands that we do the right thing all the time, whether someone's watching or not.

I once read a story about the integrity of a famous preacher. At one time, Mr. P.T. Barnum, head of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, invited this preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon of London, to speak in the large tent at his traveling circus. He made every concession to make the offer attractive to Spurgeon. Barnum said he would provide the musical talent unless Spurgeon wanted to provide his own, and he would provide any equipment or manpower that Spurgeon desired. And Spurgeon could speak as long or short as he wanted to. There was only one basic stipulation. Barnum circus Association would take the gate receipts, and pay Spurgeon \$1,000 per lecture. Now, this was a generous offer in Spurgeon's day, and many would doubtless have said to him, what a wonderful opportunity to reach people for the gospel. But that's not what Spurgeon said. Knowing that it would be wrong to join hands with the world. He sent a written reply to Mr. Barnum. Here's what he said. Dear Mr. Barnum, thank you for your kind invitation to lecture in your circus tence in America. You will find my answer in Acts, chapter 13, verse 10. Very Sincerely yours, Charles H. Spurgeon.

Well, if Mr. Barnum had looked up acts 13:10, this is what it says, oh, full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? You see, Charles Spurgeon was not preaching the gospel message to become rich. He was preaching to bring glory and honor to God and to draw people into a relationship with Jesus Christ. He was not at all interested in promoting himself. He was only interested in fulfilling the plan and the purpose that God had for his life. Now the ultimate example of integrity is that of Jesus Christ Himself. After Jesus was baptized at the very beginning of his ministry, the Bible tells us in Luke chapter four, that Jesus was led by the Spirit Spirit of God into the wilderness for 40 days to be tempted by the devil.

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Satan then proceeds to try and tempt Jesus to sin in three different ways. First, Satan tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread to satisfy his physical hunger, because he had fasted for 40 days, not eating anything during that whole time. Secondly, Satan tempts Jesus to worship Satan, in return for all the kingdoms of the world, which is a ridiculous thing to offer God. But Satan tried it anyway. And finally, Satan tempts Jesus to throw himself down from the top of the temple, to test God's protection of him. In all three of these temptations, Jesus does not sin, and he rebuke Satan with the Word of God. Here's another example in the Word of God demonstrating the integrity of Jesus Christ is found in Matthew

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chapter 22, verses 15 to 22. Here's what it says. Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words, and they sent their disciples to him along with the herodian, saying, teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully. And you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

But Jesus, aware of their malice said, Why put me to the test, you hypocrites, show me the coin for the tax. And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, whose likeness and inscription is this, they said, Caesars and then he said to them, therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are Gods. When they heard it, they marveled, and they left him and went away.

The Pharisees were the religious leaders of that time, and they were trying to trip Jesus up, and to get them in trouble with the Romans. It is odd that they admit right up front, that Jesus was a man of integrity. In their statement, here's what they said, teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully. And you don't care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Jesus didn't act one way in front of the people that he was teaching. And another way when nobody was looking, he lived a life of complete integrity. And he is our ultimate example to follow.

Now, where are some areas of life where you might be tempted to cheat, thereby compromising your integrity? Well, we've touched a little bit on financial areas, like the paying of taxes, and being truthful about receiving the correct change for purchases.

What about honoring your marriage vows? When you're on a business trip? being faithful to your spouse, when you're out of town and out of sight?

What about not stealing from your employer by working all of the hours you claim on your timecard and not taking office supplies home from your job for personal use?

What about not cheating on an exam at school, even if it means that you will fail the test?

These are just a few examples where we might be tempted to do something that we believe nobody will know about. The Bible tells us in Hebrews four verse 15, that Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, but he never sinned. And that is why he can relate to us. And that is why His atoning sacrifice allows us our sins to be forgiven. If we want our lives to reflect the character of Jesus,

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We must be people of integrity. Now, if you've been convicted during this message of any area of your life that is not congruent with complete integrity, you can confess that to Jesus, and allow Him to forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. First, John one nine says, If we confess our sins, He is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. B

e willing to pray that prayer that I pray daily, when I first came into my relationship with Jesus. Every day I would ask Lord, is there anything in my life that is not pleasing to you? And then be willing to listen for an answer from God. And if God shows you something, be willing to make it right.

If you are listening to this message, and you've never surrendered your heart to Jesus, you can do that right now. Jesus wants to give you the power to live a holy and blameless life just like Job. It is only

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through the power of the Holy Spirit living in your life, that you can be blameless and upright. And you can have this power today.

It is by faith that we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. And if you are ready to place your trust in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Won't you pray this prayer with me, God, I confess that I'm a sinner, and I need Jesus in my life. I repent of my sins and I turn to you. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for me. He was buried and he rose from the dead. And I accept this by faith and invite Jesus to be Lord of my life, to reign and rule in my heart. Thank you for forgiving me, and saving me. Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer with sincerity, you are saved, and you now have the power of God, to live a life of integrity.

Won't you visit my website at [TBTWpodcast.com](http://TBTWpodcast.com) and let me know about your decision for Christ. So that I can encourage you and support you with the next steps in your faith.

My prayer for you is that you will govern your life by the truths of Scripture, instead of the ways of the world. That you will live a life of integrity and represent Christ well on this earth. I pray that from God's glorious, unlimited resources, he will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit, then Christ will make his home in your heart as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand as all God's people should, how wide how long, how high and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ. Though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Stay tuned for our next episode of transformed by the word where we will explore the topic of spiritual warfare.

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Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr, be sure to subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at [TBTWPodcast.com](http://TBTWPodcast.com). Until next time, be blessed.