

Joseph 3 - Integrity

We are moving on to the next challenge that Joseph had as he proves and strengthens himself in Pharaoh's prison. He started off with the mission that his father had for him in the family shepherding business. Then God gave him a vision of how he was to fit in His plan. At that point, he was untested and unproved. He was immature. However, even though God has plans for someone, they can fail to step into those plans. For instance, when Paul got saved, Jesus made it known that he was a chosen vessel who was going to bear His name to the Gentiles. And yet, Paul was genuinely concerned that he could fail and be cast away. (Acts 9:15-16, 1Cor 10:27). Joseph's sense of mission would be the thing that will carry him through on all of his trials. In fact, this part of the series of messages from Genesis could be titled, "Joseph: a man on a mission." Having a clear vision is a start, but then there are components to the carrying out of that mission. For the sake of his spiritual growth, Joseph grew into the mission through the tests he is facing. So far, he has stood up to his brothers' sinful ways, served under bondage, and resisted temptation. He didn't give up when it wasn't fair. He built a spiritual momentum that carried him forward. Now he is going to face a challenge of integrity. Having integrity can be self-deceiving, though. The way we commonly prove our integrity is to be able to maintain that integrity under trial. This new situation is There are all kinds of ways that having integrity can be revealed. This new situation will provide several opportunities to prove Joseph, but we will specifically look at how Joseph was impartial and only pronounced what God had told him.

1. Impartial -

Joseph started building a reputation for integrity in spite of his recent temptation to live for self. He was impartial and decent in all his dealings while in prison.

Gen 39:21-40:23 But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

²²And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

²³The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

Under the pressure of his unjust situation, he just kept doing the job that was set before him. What he had done for his father and Potiphar, he now did for the keeper of the prison. An important way to stay beyond reproof is if you are completely impartial in all your dealings.

1Pet 3:15-17 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

One of Peter's points here is that your testimony has got to be unassailable. He addresses the conversation, or lifestyle, of the believer. We might not be perfect, but we don't want to *give* people an excuse to not listen to us. He also points out that whatever we are going through is because we are always in a position to carry out God's will. It's a good thing that Joseph lived justly because he couldn't know that this will set him up as God's will continues to unfold.

Gen 40And it came to pass after

these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

²And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

³And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

⁴And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

Joseph *served* the butler and the baker. Having a servant's mentality, Joseph would build a reputation with them for impartial treatment. They would get the idea that he really did have their interests at heart.

⁵And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

⁶And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.

⁷And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?

⁸And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.
[Evidence of Joseph's continued sense of mission]

⁹And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me;

¹⁰And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot

forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

¹¹And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. **[This is an important position. The butler, a man in a position to poison the Pharaoh, had to be very trusted with what he drank. Such a position also was held by someone who had a role advising the Pharaoh.]**

¹²And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:

¹³Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

¹⁴But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

¹⁵For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. **[Joseph was able to identify with the butler.]**

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head:

¹⁷And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

¹⁸And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days:

¹⁹Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

Joseph did not give any special treatment to the men but was completely impartial with them. He acted totally impartially given his situation and his relationships.

²⁰And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

²¹And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

²²But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

²³Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Prov 11:3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

2. Integrity -

Joseph has stayed on mission, built spiritual momentum, and is now distinguishing himself with his integrity. It would actually be able to apply these characteristics to all the situations he has been in, but each situation has emphasized one characteristic above the others. At the beginning, his integrity was not tested and his momentum was just starting. At Potiphar's house he had spiritual momentum, but it would be in prison where his integrity would become distinctly manifest. The difference here, was that Joseph could have tried to hedge his bets and given two glorious interpretations, "just in case" the baker should have made it after all. Or, he could have devised something else that was nebulous and sounded like a horoscope that could be interpreted in a hopeful way but not make him look bad if anything went wrong. Of course, this would have required him to ignore what God had given him and to go with whatever advantage he imagined this

would give him. This would only be because he doubted God and thought that God's way was too risky.

Honesty pays, but it doesn't seem to pay enough to suit some people.

— Kin Hubbard

Winning is nice if you don't lose your integrity in the process.

— Arnold Horshak

Prov 19:1 *Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.*

Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom.

— Thomas Jefferson

The reward for doing right is mostly an internal phenomenon: self-respect, dignity, integrity, and self-esteem.

— Dr. Laura Schlessinger

One of the frustrations of counseling is dealing with people of low integrity. Low integrity is one of the factors in the general scope of people's problems. Some who come for counseling often only want a way to manipulate their circumstances, not to become a better person or to do the right thing. The most common way this manifests itself is that they abandon the Biblical discipline because it "didn't work." They might try the Biblical way but if it doesn't work right away they fall back to their old ways.

Ps 26:1,11 *A Psalm of David. Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.*

11But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

After taking sometimes years of developing their problem they expect everything to change over night. If you

don't get your way and you fall back, then it only proves that you didn't mean it to begin with.

Psalms 15:1-5 Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

²He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

³He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

[So far, these things can be practiced even by a person of low integrity.]

⁴In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

⁵He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

It is in vs. 4,5 where integrity comes into play. One can justly hold the vile in contempt and honor the God-fearing, but integrity dictates that you honor *all* commitments, even if they are made to the vile and your disadvantage.

It's a funny thing about integrity. If he *had* given the wrong interpretation, wouldn't that have jeopardized his standing with the butler later? For a person with low integrity, life is a gamble. They have to take a chance which of their plans might work the most to their advantage.

For the person of integrity, when there is an issue of right or wrong, there is no need to ask what will be the most profitable choice, how to come out on top, or how to get ahead. *The person of integrity simply does what is right.*

Job 31:6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

Ps 41:12 And as for me, thou

upholdest me in mine integrity,
and settest me before thy face for
ever.

3. Mission integrity -

Having a mission coupled *with* integrity is different than just having a sense of mission. Merely *identifying* the mission is *useful*, but it also allows for mission failure if the mission is no longer "fun," or profitable. Having a sense of mission coupled with integrity will drive you in the mission. Having a Godly mission will naturally lead to integrity. Staying true to God's mission will drive you. If you have integrity, doing the right thing is the *only sensible* thing to do.

John 6:66-68 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

⁶⁷Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

⁶⁸Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

John 8:31-32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
³²And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

When Jesus was talking about truth, it was not merely whether $1 + 1 = 2$, which is freeing in its own way especially when you have to balance your checkbook. He was talking about the freedom from guilt, depression, and the judgment of an eternal Hell. There are differences between knowing the truth, owning the truth, and the truth owning you.

- We *know* that air is necessary for

life. That is knowing the truth.

- We take *possession* of that truth when we test it out and *use* the knowledge, not just take it for granted. We do this when we discover that botulism flourishes without air...we don't take for granted that the lack of air kills and discover that we must use the truth of anaerobic organisms to keep from getting poisoned. We own the truth when we master the knowledge and *use* it.
- The truth *owns us* when we realize that we are 30 feet under water and our oxygen has run out and we employ every part of our being to get to the surface of the water.

This is what drove Paul in Romans 1.

Rom 1:14-18 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Paul saw himself as a debtor to all. He *owed* it to all to preach the Gospel. The Gospel and the reality of Hell owned him.

- People believe in the truth that God is real the same way the devil believes in God.
- People own the truth that God is real when they use that

knowledge to get saved.

- The truth owns people when we believe that getting the gospel out by every means is a matter of life and death for the world.

When it comes to integrity in the serving Christian, the truth owns you.

- Going to church will not depend on what you get out of it.
- Going to church will not depend on whether it is in your best interest (even though it is).
- Serving God to your fullest will not be stopped because someone didn't get it right, was immature, or even backslidden when they dealt with you.
- Taking care of God's business will be a joy.
- Taking care of God's business will *always* be fruitful, even if it doesn't look like it.

Joseph stayed true to his mission no matter who it offended and what advantage he missed. *That* is integrity.

1. Impartial - Gen 39:21-40:23, 1Pet 3:15-17, Prov 11:3
2. Integrity - Prov 19:1, Ps 26:1,11, 15:1-5, Job 31:6, Ps 41:12
3. Mission integrity - John 6:66-68, Matthew 5:6, John 8:31-32, Rom 1:14-18