

The Integrity of Job

By Mark Mayberry

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INTRODUCTION

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines "integrity" as "(1) firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values: *incorruptibility*; (2) an unimpaired condition: *soundness*; (3) the quality or state of being complete or undivided: *completeness*. For synonymy, see *honesty*."

Having been used since the 14th Century, the noun integrity is derived from Middle English and Middle French back to the Latin *integer*, which means "whole or entire."

Biblical examples of integrity include Abimelech, King of Gerar (Gen. 20:1-7) and David, King of Israel (Ps. 78:70-72).

Genesis 20:1-7 (NASB95) — 1 Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. 2 Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." 4 Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? 5 "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 "Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

Psalms 78:70-72 (NASB95) — 70 He also chose David His servant And took him from the sheepfolds; 71 From the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance. 72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them with his skillful hands.

Exhortations to integrity occur repeatedly in the Wisdom Literature (Ps. 15:1-5; Prov. 11:3; 20:7; etc.).

Psalms 15:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth

in his heart. 3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

Proverbs 11:3 (NASB95) — 3 The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.

Proverbs 20:7 (NASB95) — 7 A righteous man who walks in his integrity— How blessed are his sons after him.

THE TEXT

Consider the testimony of the text (Job 1:1-5, 20-22).

Job 1:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. 2 Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. 3 His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

*Job 1:20-22 (NASB95) — 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” **22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.***

THE LORD GOD

Consider the testimony of God (Job 1:6-12, esp. v. 8; 2:1-6, esp. v. 3).

*Job 1:6-12 (NASB95) — 6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” **8 The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”** 9 Then Satan answered the Lord, “Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 “Have You not made a hedge about him and his*

house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." 12 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.

Job 2:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. 2 The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." 3 **The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."** 4 Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." 6 So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

HIS WIFE

Consider the testimony of Job's wife (Job 2:7-10).

Job 2:7-10 (NASB95) — 7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. 9 **Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"** 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

HIS FRIENDS

Consider the testimony of Job's friends: Eliphaz the Temanite (Job 4:1-6) and Bildad the Shuhite (Job 8:20-22).

Job 4:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, 2 "If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking? 3 **"Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands. 4 "Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees.** 5 "But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed. 6 **"Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope?"**

Job 8:20-22 (NASB95) — 20 **"Lo, God will not reject a man of integrity, Nor will He support the evildoers.** 21 **"He will yet fill your mouth with laughter And your lips with**

shouting. 22 “Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, And the tent of the wicked will be no longer.”

THE MAN HIMSELF

Consider the testimony of Job himself (Job 6:1-4, 22-30; 7:11-21; 27:1-6; 31:1-40).

*Job 6:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 **Then Job answered,** 2 “Oh that my grief were actually weighed And laid in the balances together with my calamity! 3 “For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas; Therefore my words have been rash. 4 “For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, Their poison my spirit drinks; The terrors of God are arrayed against me.*

*Job 6:22-30 (NASB95) — 22 “**Have I said, ‘Give me something,’ Or, ‘Offer a bribe for me from your wealth,’ 23 Or, ‘Deliver me from the hand of the adversary,’ Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand of the tyrants’?** 24 “**Teach me, and I will be silent; And show me how I have erred.** 25 “How painful are honest words! But what does your argument prove? 26 “Do you intend to reprove my words, When the words of one in despair belong to the wind? 27 “You would even cast lots for the orphans And barter over your friend. 28 “**Now please look at me, And see if I lie to your face. 29 “Desist now, let there be no injustice; Even desist, my righteousness is yet in it. 30 “Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern calamities?***

*Job 7:11-21 (NASB95) — 11 “Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. 12 “Am I the sea, or the sea monster, That You set a guard over me? 13 “If I say, ‘My bed will comfort me, My couch will ease my complaint,’ 14 Then You frighten me with dreams And terrify me by visions; 15 So that my soul would choose suffocation, Death rather than my pains. 16 “I waste away; I will not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are but a breath. 17 “What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him, 18 That You examine him every morning And try him every moment? 19 “Will You never turn Your gaze away from me, Nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle? 20 “**Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself? 21 “Why then do You not pardon my transgression And take away my iniquity?** For now I will lie down in the dust; And You will seek me, but I will not be.”*

*Job 27:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 Then Job continued his discourse and said, 2 “As God lives, who has taken away my right, And the Almighty, who has embittered my soul, 3 **For as long as life is in me, And the breath of God is in my nostrils, 4 My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit. 5 “Far be it from me that I should declare you right; **Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.** 6 “I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach any of my days.***

*Job 31:1-40 (NASB95) — 1 “I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin? 2 “And what is the portion of God from above Or the heritage of the Almighty from on high? 3 “Is it not calamity to the unjust And disaster to those who work iniquity? 4 “Does He not see my ways And number all my steps? 5 “If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, 6 **Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity...***

Regarding Virgins/Maidens (Job 31:1)

Job 31:1 (NASB95) — 1 “I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?

Regarding God (Job 31:2-4)

2 “And what is the portion of God from above Or the heritage of the Almighty from on high? 3 “Is it not calamity to the unjust And disaster to those who work iniquity? 4 “Does He not see my ways And number all my steps?

Regarding Honesty (Job 31:5-6)

5 “If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, 6 Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity.

Regarding Lust of the Eyes (Job 31:7-8)

7 “If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart followed my eyes, Or if any spot has stuck to my hands, 8 Let me sow and another eat, And let my crops be uprooted.

Regarding Lust of the Flesh (Job 31:9-12)

9 “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor’s doorway, 10 May my wife grind for another, And let others kneel down over her. 11 “For that would be a lustful crime; Moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges. 12 “For it would be fire that consumes to Abaddon, And would uproot all my increase.

Regarding Treatment of Slaves (Job 31:13-15)

13 “If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves When they filed a complaint against me, 14 What then could I do when God arises? And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him? 15 “Did not He who made me in the womb make him, And the same one fashion us in the womb?

Regarding the Poor & Needy, the Widow, & the Orphan (Job 31:16-23)

16 “If I have kept the poor from their desire, Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, 17 Or have eaten my morsel alone, And the orphan has not shared it 18 (But from

my youth he grew up with me as with a father, And from infancy I guided her), 19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, Or that the needy had no covering, 20 If his loins have not thanked me, And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep, 21 If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan, Because I saw I had support in the gate, 22 Let my shoulder fall from the socket, And my arm be broken off at the elbow. 23 "For calamity from God is a terror to me, And because of His majesty I can do nothing.

Regarding Idolatry (Job 31:24-28)

24 "If I have put my confidence in gold, And called fine gold my trust, 25 If I have gloated because my wealth was great, And because my hand had secured so much; 26 If I have looked at the sun when it shone Or the moon going in splendor, 27 And my heart became secretly enticed, And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, 28 That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, For I would have denied God above.

Regarding Attitude (Job 31:29-30)

29 "Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, Or exulted when evil befell him? 30 "No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for his life in a curse.

Regarding Hospitality (Job 31:31-32)

31 "Have the men of my tent not said, 'Who can find one who has not been satisfied with his meat'? 32 "The alien has not lodged outside, For I have opened my doors to the traveler.

Regarding Transgression (Job 31:33-37)

33 "Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, 34 Because I feared the great multitude, And the contempt of families terrified me, And kept silent and did not go out of doors?

35 "Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, 36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. 37 "I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him.

Regarding the Land (Job 31:38-40)

38 "If my land cries out against me, And its furrows weep together; 39 If I have eaten its fruit without money, Or have caused its owners to lose their lives, 40 Let briars grow instead of wheat, And stinkweed instead of barley." The words of Job are ended.