

“I Will Walk With Integrity”
Psalm 101
Rev. Min J. Chung
(Lord’s Day Service, Sunday, July 29, 2018)

Psalm 101

I Will Walk With Integrity
A Psalm of David.

¹ *I will sing of steadfast love and justice;*
to you, O LORD, I will make music.

² *I will ponder the way that is blameless.*
Oh when will you come to me?

I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;

³ *I will not set before my eyes*
anything that is worthless.

I hate the work of those who fall away;
it shall not cling to me.

⁴ *A perverse heart shall be far from me;*
I will know nothing of evil.

⁵ *Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly*
I will destroy.

Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart
I will not endure.

⁶ *I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,*
that they may dwell with me;

he who walks in the way that is blameless
shall minister to me.

⁷ *No one who practices deceit*
shall dwell in my house;

no one who utters lies
shall continue before my eyes.

⁸ *Morning by morning I will destroy*
all the wicked in the land,

cutting off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.

Introduction

This psalm is written by David as he begins his reign as king. He writes about standards which he holds himself and others to as leaders. These standards apply not only to government, but to all kinds of leaders: parents, teachers, spiritual leaders, and Christians living in the world. Like David, we are all sinners who fail to live up to these standards. Still, integrity is a valuable standard for us to uphold in our lives.

I. Integrity is living in and for the eyes of God – what is integrity [0-2]

A Psalm of David.

*¹ I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O LORD, I will make music.*

*² I will ponder the way that is blameless.
Oh when will you come to me?*

*I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;*

integrity

The world's definition of integrity is: moral uprightness or the state of being whole (as in the word "integer"). It implies to be the same in private and in public. This worldly definition is centered on approval of human beings—others and self.

On the other hand, the biblical definition of integrity is centered on God and what He sees when He looks at us. It is completion, fullness, perfection, and blamelessness from His perspective. God Himself is perfect, and we should live as full and blameless in the eyes of God.

I will sing

David sings as an expression of being blessed by God. Apart from a relationship with Him, we could never live in such integrity and perfection. But as recipients of God's grace and strength, everything we do is singing and worship. Whether in work or relationships, we can sing and live in integrity because we live within and for the eyes of God.

steadfast love and justice

The content of David's song is steadfast love and justice (law). These characteristics are attributes of God, which David also ought to imitate as the king of Israel and a representative of God. As Christians and leaders, we need to be balanced in both love and law. Law checks love that would otherwise be overly indulgent and harmful. Love checks law that would be unduly harsh and harmful. What we need is fullness of both, not just partial love and partial law.

Oh when will you come to me

This declaration shows David's holy frustration and struggle to live in integrity, but also his ardent faith that God's presence will make living in integrity possible.

2 Samuel 6:9 – *And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?”*

David used this phrase when he prayed as the Ark of the Covenant was coming to the Israelites. In both passages, David asks for the presence of God, as symbolized by the ark, awaiting His empowerment to enable him to live with integrity. We need God’s help in order to be people of integrity.

I will walk with integrity of heart within my house

Just as David makes a commitment here, we need to be people who consistently live in integrity wherever we are. We need to live in integrity at home first. In other words, if we want to be famous at work, then we need to be famous at home in the eyes of God.

2 Samuel 11:4-5 – *So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. ⁵And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, “I am pregnant.”*

Here we can see David’s failure to be faithful at home. Starting when David first saw Bathsheba to when they laid together, David deliberately acted upon his sinful desires. He goes on to murder Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, to cover his sin. This was an enormous sin by a godly man, showing that no one is immune to sin. Still, we need to represent and place our faith in our perfect king Jesus, despite our sinfulness.

II. Integrity is hating what God hates within us – how to attain integrity [3-4]

³ *I will not set before my eyes*

anything that is worthless.

I hate the work of those who fall away;

it shall not cling to me.

⁴ *A perverse heart shall be far from me;*

I will know nothing of evil.

before my eyes

David makes a commitment to live in integrity. Eugene Peterson interprets this verse as, “I refuse to take a second look”. We must choose to turn our eyes away from sinful things, refusing to take a second look.

not cling to me

The more we look at temptations, the more they cling to us and grow as addictions. We need to be cautious of potential addictions and fight at the very beginning, before our emotions and desires wander further.

who fall away

Faithless men swerve from the right course and yield to other influences – this is the opposite of steadfast love. People with true faith will never outright fall away (apostate), but still have the sinful potential to be lured away if we continue to look. We need to fight because we are so prone to wander.

A perverse heart

Here in verse 4, sin has progressed into “A perverse heart”, a twisted mind and will. Verse 3 was about vulnerabilities, but it can grow into our deliberate wills.

I will know nothing of evil

The New Living Translation writes this verse as “I will have nothing to do with them”. We need to disassociate ourselves from any people or things that will distance ourselves from God. We need to declare war within our hearts.

Psalm 51:3-5 – *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. ⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

David’s repentance focused on God rather than his own pain and guilt. When we merely feel bad, it may not be true repentance because our focus is on decreasing our own displeasure rather than seeing the offense against God. As David says, “my sin is ever before me”, he sees and repents for his sinful motive – not just his external behavior. To overcome addictions, we need to daily fight our selfish heart in seemingly “good” or mundane actions. It is a blessing to be able to see our sin, but we must also be able to see God at the same time. If we only see our sin, we will be depressed. If we only see God, we will become arrogant and proud. We need to see our deeper sinful motives and God, together. Then, we can be humble people in love with God and hating sin. Integrity is hating the sin within us because we love God.

III. Integrity is helping others to live in integrity – how to help others [5-7]

⁵ *Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly*

I will destroy.

Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart

I will not endure.

⁶ *I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,*

that they may dwell with me;

he who walks in the way that is blameless

shall minister to me.

⁷ *No one who practices deceit*

shall dwell in my house;

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shall continue before my eyes.

David talks about people whom he would hire to work for the kingdom, and those whom he would not. He ultimately wants to hire people that will represent Jesus and influence the whole nation. Most of these listed characteristics show what integrity does not look like. But he also lists characteristics that display integrity.

a haughty look and an arrogant heart

“A haughty look” means you see yourself so high you look down on others. “An arrogant heart” in its original language means a “wide look”. There is pride in one’s own vast accomplishments. Together, these characteristics describe a proud and self-dependent person.

Slander secretly

“Slander” means a tongue of fire devouring others, hostile speech. It’s talking about the deadly effect of words spoken maliciously. David must have seen this a lot in a government of prideful leaders. People use slander to put others down and further exalt themselves.

deceit lies

Deceit and lies make up another strategy that people use to exalt themselves.

I will look with favor on the faithful in the land

After listing negative qualities, David starts briefly describing the character of someone he would hire.

minister

“Minister” implies service of authorities in government or in spiritual positions.

God is still searching for such faithful people to help expand His kingdom. Will you be one of them? We should be people who are humbled before the Lord and look at others with love, rather than looking down on others, because we know our own sin. Integrity and humility go together. At the root of pride is the inability to see your own sin.

When we fail to be faithful, we can see from David that we can be restored by God to be used again for His glory.

Psalm 51:10-13 – *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me now away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.*

Is it possible to be a spiritual influence if we are not faithful? From David's repentance in Psalm 51, we see God's restoration of His people. "Create" is the same term used when God created the world out of nothing – in the same way, we need God to create a new nature to fight our depraved hearts. As the psalm continues, David asks for empowerment from God to continue using him as king and restore his joy and willing heart for God that faded in sin. When we sin our joy in God can be lost temporarily, not salvation itself. We can even lose the anointing of the Holy Spirit temporarily. But through repentance we can regain these things, though it may take time. Verse 13 concludes, "Then I will teach" – God can still use us to influence others when we are restored.

IV. Integrity is a daily battle for the glory of God – how to fight [8]

⁸ Morning by morning I will destroy

*all the wicked in the land,
cutting off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.*

Morning by morning

It must be our daily lifestyle must be to repent and redeem. Sin needs to be dealt with constantly because sin is like weeds that grow every day.

Lamentations 3:22-23 – The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

God's steadfast "hesed" love for us never ends. God gives us new mercy to fight every day because He is faithful. That is why we can fight, day by day for His glory.

cutting off

Matthew 5:30 – And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell.

This verse metaphorically depicts the extent to which we must hate and battle sin. We need to cut off our desires and sins. Integrity is living for the eyes of God alone. Integrity is not perfection, but rather, the desire to daily engage in this spiritual fight – by His grace and for His glory. We need to see Christ as the ultimate, because we can never be perfect. So we fight from perfection not for perfection. Integrity is also humility. Not looking down on others but looking at fellow Christians side by side. Beware of getting caught up in temporary successes because we will all fail one degree to another. Instead, help others to fight out of a ceaseless love for God. Integrity is longing to see Him and longing to show Him off for His glory.

1 Samuel 13:14 – *But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command.*”

Acts 13:22 – *After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*

1 Samuel 13 is written before David is crowned king, while Acts 13 is written many years after his death. God maintains his identification of David as “a man after his own heart” despite all his sins. We tend to define others solely on the basis of their sins, but the Bible says sin is not the believers’ identity because sin is going to be gone when Christ returns. God sees us through our repentance, through the cleansing of Jesus Christ, not through our sins. Whether in our discouragement of failures or pride of successes, we need to turn and see that it is all about Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Therefore, do not be discouraged, it’s not about you. Do not be proud either, because it’s not about you.

Conclusion

Nancy Writebol, an SIM missionary in Liberia, was one of the first people to contract Ebola during the 2014 outbreak. After she was flown back to be cured, she flew right back to Liberia to serve. She said, “God is good. He was good before I got Ebola. He was good when I had Ebola. Whether he would have taken my life, or healed my body, in either case, he would have been good.” How can someone say something like this? We are all hell-deserving sinners, so whatever we go through in this life in Christ is mercy. So, we can continue on serving the Lord.

Even the greatest of kings will fail, but there is a King who will never fail. By the steadfast love and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may fight the good fight to live with integrity.