

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge 9: Integrity

Session 2: The Surefire Way To Be Known As A Man Of Integrity

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Welcome to Man in the Mirror Men's Bible Study. Before we get going, let's go ahead and do a shout out. I'm really excited about today's shout out. It's a group called Pray Station. It's a group of 15 college friends who are joining us on Mondays at 7:00 PM. "We have graduated and are moving on to find ourselves in the purpose of our lives." Don't you just love that? How awesome is that? Josh Gunter is the leader, and they are from Brentwood, Tennessee, and meet around the Brentwood-Nashville area. So I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm and a rousing welcome to Pray Station. One, two, three: Whooh.

Welcome, men. We are really honored to have you as part of the Bible study. Alright, so we're doing the journey to biblical manhood. Today we are in the second week of the Integrity Challenge. The faith and life objectives the first week would be the head. Last time we were together the big idea was for the head that integrity is a one-to-one correlation between my Bible, my belief, and my behavior. We talked about that and talked through it. The faith and life objective: I'll understand what it means to live as a man of integrity, one-to-one correlation, who exhibits the character of Christ to a watching world.

Then today we're going to be working the heart piece of it: I will pledge to be a man of complete integrity in every situation with my whole heart by relying on the example and power of Jesus. Then Bret Clemmer will do the hands piece. I will know how to live in complete integrity in my marriage, relationships, work, and finances. So he'll get down into the get-your-hands-dirty part of it.

Today's message is called The Surefire Way to be Known as a Man of Integrity. I didn't mention it last time, and I hesitate to mention it today, but I'm going to mention something, but I'm going to start by asking you, what is your word? Do you have a word? My word has always been, and it remains, integrity. That's my word. Now, it's actually not my word; it's my dad's word. And so I kind of caught it from my dad. Some people have the advantage of having a father who was just absolutely and completely moral and of the highest standards of integrity. That was my dad. I know that because he was in air conditioning. I talk about air conditioning from time to time.

My dad was in air conditioning, and so he would hire me in the summers to be his attic rat. So I would crawl around up in the attics and do duct work repairs or try to ... I don't even remember what I was doing up there, but I was doing it for the money. But my dad was doing it to give me the opportunity to

watch him, to be together, and from him, I caught integrity. And so that's my word. It's always been my word. It's the most important thing to me.

Your word might be faith. It might be hope. It might be love. It might be money. I don't know, whatever it is. But integrity is such a powerful word. For example, I know that I remember the first time I heard an ethnic slur. It was against Jews. And I was so stunned. First of all, one of my good friends, Ander, was Jewish, and I knew he was Jewish.

I was so stunned because we had never ... I had never heard a racial or ethnic slur in my home. That's the kind of morality that my dad had. I knew that if any of us had ever uttered such a slur, I figured out if we had ever uttered such a slur, that we would still, I'm one of four boys, be black and blue today because he just wasn't going to tolerate that because of his integrity.

And so it's a great advantage to grow up that way, but a lot of other men are trying to figure out even today what it means to live as a man of integrity. So we each have a narrative in our mind about how honest we even want to be in our lives. So what I want to do today is I want to give you this surefire way that you could be known as a man of integrity.

But it's not just about having the information that I'm going to give you today. If it was just about the information that I was going to be giving you today, then we would all have slam dunked integrity a long time ago because am I going to tell you anything today you haven't already heard? I am actually going to rearrange it a little bit, and I'm hoping that it will be insightful. But bottom line is that nothing I'm going to say today is something that you probably have never heard before. So if it was just about having the right information, we would've all slam dunked integrity a long time ago.

In addition, I'm going to show you how you can add to this information the strength to be the man that you already want to be. So, if you would, turn in your Bibles to Galatians 5:19. The first thing I want us to do is just answer the question, is God's moral code just a bridge too far? When you look at the standards of the Bible, like the Ten Commandments, they seem to be right, but when you actually try to do them, it's very difficult to do the Ten Commandments.

How many of you for the last 10 days have kept all of the 10 commandments? Raise your hands? You see, it's just difficult. So you have to begin to wonder, is Christianity just a bridge too far? Can we actually live the way that God would have us live as men of integrity? We know what it was in the Old Testament. They could not keep it.

In Galatians chapter 5, though, we begin to learn that there's even a higher standard. We're not going to look at the Sermon on the Mount today, which is Matthew chapter 5 and following, but Jesus, it looks like he's even raising the bar. He says that he is not coming to abolish the law of the prophets but to fulfill them, and not one letter, not one jot or tittle will disappear from the law until all of it is accomplished.

He says, you heard it said, if you murder somebody you're under the penalty of judgment, but I'm just saying if you call somebody a fool--higher bar. You've heard about adultery. You've heard about oaths. You've heard about divorce. You've heard, "Love your enemies," hate your enemies, you know, love your friends, hate your enemies. "I say love your enemies."

So Jesus actually appears to create a higher bar. Well, in many cases he's not actually changing the standard; he's just clarifying it because the scribes and the Pharisees had confused what the law and the prophets were saying. But you do see that Jesus definitely carries over this moral code, if you will, into the New Testament.

We also know that law, the Old Testament is grace, and the New Testament is grace. Most people think the Old Testament is law and the New Testament is grace. The law was given through Moses lasted 430 years, but Abraham was given what? He was declared righteous by his faith. So actually law was a part of the deal, and now the purpose of the law today is just to basically tutor our hearts to know that we can't keep it.

Then in Galatians chapter 5, beginning at verse 19, the acts of the sinful nature are obvious. This is why it's not about having the information. They're obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery. By the way, you can exegete these words on your own. The meaning of them for our purposes today is close enough. You're already within 95% of knowing exactly what it means in all its detail, sexual immorality, 100%, by the way, on that one, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft.

See, words like witchcraft, though, they kind of throw you off because they're thinking, "Oh, well this is old-fashioned." Yeah, but look at the other words: hatred, discord or divisions, jealousy, anger or fits of rage, selfish ambition. There is a kind of ambition which is not selfish; selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy, drunkenness, orgies. So there you go. No, because it says this is a representative list, not a comprehensive list because he goes on, Paul says, "and the like." So here are a few examples of the things that I'm talking about that are the acts of the sinful nature.

Then he goes on, "I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God," very, very ... So, is God's moral code just a bridge too far? When you're investigating Christianity and you see the demands of the gospel, isn't it a bridge way too far? Turn with me to Matthew 5:17. I mean, why not just give up? Why not just give up? Here's why: Matthew 5:17, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth." I already said that piece. Verse 19: "Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others ..." Uh-oh, I'm the teacher. So are you. I'm teaching you. You're teaching elsewhere and then even in families. "Anyone who breaks any one of least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven."

But whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. So we want to practice and teach God's moral commands. By the way, this is theology, and I don't do a lot of theology because there's so many different ways of looking at it, but I've always found this one really helpful, that the Old Testament has three kinds of law. It has ceremonial law, judicial law, and moral law.

I've always found this to be extremely useful, something I picked up in seminary. So ceremonial law would be slaying the animals and blood splattering, splattering blood. We don't do that anymore. Judicial law, a guy's ox falls in a ditch, and you didn't take care of it. So now what do you do with the dead ox? Judicial law is moved on to the current situation, except in places where they see a lot of oxes that fall in ditched, of course, and then moral law, God's moral law.

These are the, typically, in Christianity it's typically considered to be the Ten Commandments. But it just looks like a bridge too far. So do I have your attention yet? What do you do? Is it just a bridge too far? I'm trying to teach you the surefire way to be a man of integrity. So far it looks like I'm showing you the surefire way that there's no way that you can do that.

There is a way. Turn to Romans 13:8. This is the verse I want you to remember for the day, okay? We'll look at many verses, but this is the verse that I really want you to see, from 8 to 10. Really 9 and 10 is enough for us today. The commandments--do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet, those are out of the 10, examples from the 10, and whatever other commandment there may be, the ones that Paul was talking about, plus, and those, and the like, all of it--whatever other commandment there may be are summed up in this one rule: Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. I love what the Living Bible says. The Living Bible is a paraphrase. It's all 10 are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to anyone. That's why it, love, fully satisfies all of God's requirements. It is the only law you need.

I feel like I just cut the largest diamond ever found with a single stroke. Oh, actually it was the Apostle Paul that did that, but I found it. Now I'm sharing it with you. There is this single law. So I just ran off several different versions of this uber-interesting verse. The Message, another paraphrase, you can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is love.

The New Living Translation, The Living Bible is the paraphrase, the New Living Translation, "Love does no wrong to other, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. A bridge too far, love fulfills all of God's commands. And the NIV, ESV, Strong, NASB, they all talk about the fulfillment. Love is the fulfillment of the law, or love fulfills the law. So that's it.

That all said, how can we summarize this? It's the gospel of Jesus. So there is a way, a surefire way to be known as a man of integrity, even against what looks like a moral code that is a bridge too far, and that is simply just do whatever love would do. That's the Big Idea today: **Just do whatever love would do.** Whatever the situation you're in, just do whatever love would do. All you have to do is walk around and ... Now, these things are all analytically, clinically, in a textbook, in a classroom, they're easy when we're with compatriots.

Of course it gets hard when the person in front of you, you haven't made piece yet with the fact that our culture has evolved so that people sit at traffic lights and look at their emails and cell phones. I have a brother who he just goes on a rant on this every now and then. But I saw this happening, and it's a culture shift. I do it, for crying out loud. So I said, "Well, I can either get mad every day that I am on the road for the next however, how many years until I die, or I can just accept that this is the way it is." That's the heat of the moment. That's when you decide whether or not you're going to just do whatever love would do. What would love do in that situation?

By the way, my rants, fits of rage, the whole Paul thing, my wife and I on Sunday had, and it was a first, we were sitting in second in line at the traffic light not too far from here, on our way to take her mom out to dinner. The light turned green, and the two cars at the front of both lanes, neither one of them moved. They were both ... I've never seen that. That was my first. That was the first time that the first car, both of them were looking at their emails.

So I just made a shift when I saw this so that I wouldn't constantly be compromising my integrity on the road, give them the point. So I have a simple rule. I count off three seconds, and then I give quick horn honk. I don't do it with any malice or anything like that. I just, I know that it's they're looking at their email, and they missed the light, and that's our culture.

So just do whatever love ... For me, I think that's what love would do. It's just, give them three seconds of grace, and then give them a quick horn honk, not a three seconds of grace and, "Errrrr!" or a "boom!" No. Honestly, I said just do. I'm not sure just think whatever love would do. It's actually do. I actually have a harder time in the thinking part because what I want to do many times is buy a pickup truck, and get it jacked up, and put a chrome horn on the front of it, and just go around banging these people, but that was before I kind of came to the conclusion of what love would do.

What does love in action look like? We're done in Romans. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 13:4. What does love look like in action? Here it is, 4 through 8, very simple: "Love is patient." You might want to read along instead of ... You might want to put a "my" in front of each of these: "My love is patient." Or you might substitute "I am patient" for the word "love."

"Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil," pushing the guy in front of you that's looking at his cell phone off the road with your chrome bumper, "but rejoices with truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

That's what love in action looks like. This week I changed phone carriers. I've been very happy with my company for decades. They've never done anything that makes me want to change, but I needed a different carrier that had a higher signal in rural areas because my wife and I, as many of you know, have taken up camping in mostly national and state parks.

So I went online to unlock my existing phone, my phone. They put you on a payment plan, and I've had it long enough that I own the phone. So I went online to unlock it, filled out the paperwork, and they said that they would send me an email with the information to complete the process. Then I called the carrier that I had researched, that I wanted to go with, and I told them what I was doing. The young man who's an extremely nice guy, who I really like, and I think he's basically a really decent guy, he said, "Oh, well, that's no problem. You can come in right now, and we'll make the changeover. Once you've requested it, that's it, and we can make it happen."

So I said, "Oh, okay." The email said ... Wait. The salesman said, "Come on in. We'll take care of it." So I went in, and I was there for one hour and 20 minutes and finally said, "You know, I actually have to leave right now. So goodbye." Unfortunately, we were at a stage in the transaction where he had already done whatever he was going to do, and I'm actually at that point now a customer of the new carrier. But my phone with the old carrier is not yet unlocked. So that means that the SIM card for the new carrier doesn't work in the locked phone.

And he said, "Gosh, I'm really sorry about all this." So just do what love would do. So I didn't blow him away. But from Tuesday afternoon when I started the process at around two o'clock, all day Wednesday, and until about 10 o'clock yesterday morning, I had no phone service and no texting service either. This is my only phone. I'm one of those guys that have cut the cord. This is the only phone that I have. It's the

only phone number. Plus, it's my business phone, or my ministry phone. So I'm completely out of commission for this whole time.

Now what does love look like in action? Well, I tell you, if I thought this young guy was a conniver and a manipulator, I would do one thing. But I've decided to use Matthew 18 approach. I'm not going to go to his boss. I'm going to go to him. So sometime today I'm going back over to the store, and I'm going to make an appointment with him. I'm going to go back over to the store and I'm going to say, "I'd like to have what I would call a mentoring moment with you." Then I'm going to explain to him the consequences of his actions.

Then what am I going to do? Well, I'm going to wait because I am then expecting him to say, "You know ..." I'm expecting him to humble himself and to say, "Wow, I had no idea. I'm really sorry. I am never, ever going to let that happen again." If he doesn't say that, then I'm going to say, "Okay, this is the part where you should say, "I'm really, really sorry this happened, and I'm going to make sure that this never happens again. I've really learned a lesson here."

And I'm going to help him to do that, because why? It's the gospel. We don't give people a bridge too far. God doesn't give people a bridge too far. He gives them grace, the opportunity to come back from these things. I'm going to be patient; I am. I'm going to- I am! I'm going to be obsequiously kind, and so forth, and so on because that's what love does. Do you see this? This is part one. This is part one of The Surefire Way to be Known as a Man of Integrity. It's to just do whatever love would do. Now we still have a problem. We still have a problem. I've already alluded to it. I've already not alluded to it: I've already said it, and that is that we can all get this right here, but it's under fire. It's under the pressure of the moment where this because difficult, so we also want to answer the question, how do we find the strength to love God's way?

Again, it's not going to happen, you're not going to do whatever love would do just because you know it's the right thing to do. You're not going to be doing it just because you think it's really, really important that you do that because you make it a priority. It's not going to happen just because you really, really want it, you have the desire to do it. It's not going to happen just because that you're a strong-willed person and you can gut it out and make this happen. That's not it.

Zachariah 4:6 says, "'It is not by might or by strength,' says the Lord, 'but by my Spirit.'" Acts 1:8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." Paul talks about, "Resolving to know nothing among you except Christ and him crucified," and that he says, "I came to you not with a demonstration of man's wisdom but in the demonstration of the Spirit's power. I did not come to you with clever, persuasive speech, but rather I came to you with a demonstration of the Spirit's power." Why? "So that your faith," very precious faith, "might not rest on man's wisdom but on God's power," his dunamis.

So the strength to do this doesn't come from within. Now, a ditch doesn't dig itself. So you have to pick up the shovel, and you have to do the work, but the strength to do that doesn't come from within; it comes from, in the case of keeping our integrity, doing what love would do, it comes from allowing the gospel to work in us. Now, look, I know I'm going to run it over by doing this, but I really want you to see Galatians again. So go to Galatians, but go to Galatians chapter 3. I'm not going to run it grossly over, but maybe one minute.

Galatians chapter 3. Like I said, Galatians 2:16, "A man is not justified by observing the law." You see that? So keeping this moral code, that's not how we're saved or justified, justification, "but by faith." This is justification by faith, not by works. A man is not justified by obeying the law, by observing the law "but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law."

He never says observing the law is not important. He just says that's not how you're saved, because, "by observing the law, no one will be justified." You get it? Chapter 3, verse 3, "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" Verse 5: "Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law or because you believe what you have heard?"

Chapter 3, verse 21: "For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law." You would've been able to do it in your own strength, by your own merit. Verse 23: "Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law." Verse 24: So the law was put in charge not to be a bridge too far, but to lead us to Christ. So the law was put in charge to lead us "to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law." What are we under the supervision of? Just doing whatever love would do.

In whatever the situation, just figure out, don't worry about the 33 books of the Talmud. Don't even worry about all the 66 books of the Bible. Just do whatever love would do. It is the surefire way to be known as a man of integrity. Let's pray.

Our dearest father, first of all, we thank you for the beauty of your word. Oh my gosh, the idea that the key to integrity would be love, who would've ever thought it, and who would've ever thought the key to love would be your Holy Spirit. But, Lord, it's just so clear in your word, so I pray that these things that we have already heard many times before would be put together or restructured into a different way of thinking about them that would help us to relax, first of all, that you have not given us a bridge too far. We're not under the supervision of the law. The law is basically what tutored us that we needed the Christ because we couldn't keep the law, and so we have faith. Then the outworking of this faith, Lord, is just to do whatever love would do. Help us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.