

STUDY THREE: INTEGRITY

Introduction:

There are few things more important to a man than having *integrity* and a good name before God and man. The Bible is as valid today as it was thousands of years ago when Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived wrote: "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." (**Proverbs 22:1**)

If you have prayed Psalm 139:23,24 as suggested in our last study on accountability you may have been given a clearer understanding of the condition of your personal character and integrity and how you are viewed by those around you. You might ask yourself; "am I as good as my word or have I been living a life of lies and deceit?" "Is much of the pressure to get help coming from the hurting who love me as well as from my own realization that I had better do something about my problem? Or, maybe you are so deep into your addiction that you no longer care. Many of us at Keswick understand how you are feeling. Many have seen the pain in the eyes of our friends and loved ones as they watched us slowly slipping away. Many have been where you are, in that lonely place where integrity, respect, honesty and uprightness seem to be unrecoverable. Many also have known what it is like to believe that we could never climb out from under the weight of hopelessness that addiction causes. *Friend, Jesus Christ has turned our hopelessness into hope*, brought us out of that dark place where you may be right now and He wants to do the same for you. Will you let Him? Do you desire to enjoy the respect you once had from others? Do you want to be free from the life draining force of addiction? Are you actively seeking to follow the suggestions that have been laid out for you in the first two studies? Do you want to be able to hold your head up high in your family, at work and in your community as a person of good character, honesty and *integrity*?

We believe that everything we need to lead a victorious life is found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and everything we need to help us live our lives peacefully, joyfully and with integrity is found in God's Word, the Bible. We have witnessed this truth in the lives of many people, including our own. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do." (**2 Timothy 3:16, 17**) We are now going to continue trusting in the Bible to point you to the Living Word, Jesus Christ, as He is portrayed in the Gospel of John chapter 1 and the written Word; the Bible. "For the word of God is living and active.....; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (**Hebrews 4:12**) *Please read the following verses and use the space provided to write down what you think they mean and how they apply to your need for integrity, honesty, respect, sincerity and uprightness. Make it personal.*

- 1) (**Job 27:3-6**) "as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit. I will never admit you (*Job's miserable, accusing friends*) are in the right; till I

die I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.”

- 2) **(Proverbs 10:9)** “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.”

- 3) **(Proverbs 3:3,4)** “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

- 4) **(Luke 16:10)** “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”

- 5) **(1 Timothy 5:8)** “But those who won’t care for their own family, especially those living in the same household, have denied what we believe. Such people are worse than unbelievers.”

Let us pause here to remind you that we are asking you to *write down what each verse means to you and how it might apply to your personal life*. If you want to be committed to recovery, you must seek honesty, integrity and right living. According to these next verses we must quit lying to ourselves and others, and we must stop doing things that hurt other people as we seek to restore integrity to our relationships.

6) **(Psalm 15:1-5)** “Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?”

a. “He whose walk is blameless and who does what is right.”

b. “Who speaks the truth from his heart.”

c. “and has no slander on his tongue.”

d. “who does his neighbor no wrong.”

e. “and casts no slur on his fellowman.”

f. “who despises a vile man.”

g. “but honors those who are faithful to the Lord.”

h. “who keeps his promises even when it hurts.”

- i. "He who does these things will never be shaken."

7) Please take the time now to be open and honest about the ways that you have lacked integrity, honesty, respect, uprightness or dignity in the following areas of life:

- a. Your family

- b. The workplace

- c. The community in which you live

- d. Your friends

- e. Your church

- f. Other people

- g. Yourself

Obviously you must begin to stop the behavior that has you in bondage even while you are on the waiting list. The battle you are in is not peculiar to you alone. You are not unique. Consider the next verse and write how it can apply to your life.

8) **(1 Corinthians 10:13)** “But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can’t stand up against it. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.”

9) Even though you may be physically addicted, have you noticed that the battle you are experiencing takes place primarily *in the mind*? Following are verses that can help you fight this battle. Write down how they might help you.

a) **(Philippians 4:8)** “And now....fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”

b) **(Romans 12:2)** “Don’t copy the behaviors and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...”

c) **(Ephesians 4:22)** “Throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.”

10) Now perform a checklist to see how you are doing with the different things we have given you to help you sustain your period of waiting. If you are doing well you have good reason to be encouraged. If you are not doing well it is time to get going. We are greatly saddened by the number of those who have

wound up in jail or prison, mental institutions, homeless, with accelerated health problems and yes... even losing their lives.

All of the following suggestions can be found in the first 3 studies. **Have you:**

- a) Prayed to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior? (See lesson 1, pages 5&6) yes_____ no_____ When? _____
- b) Received encouragement, hope and comfort from God's Word, the Bible? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____
- c) Found a Bible believing church to attend? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____
- d) Talked with the Pastor or someone there to get help and accountability? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____
- e) Started the process of personal repentance as taught in lesson 2? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____
- f) Accepted responsibility for your actions and are you allowing others to help? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____
- g) Asked God to search your heart so that hidden offensive ways might be revealed? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____
- h) Finished the studies up to this point, the best you can? yes_____ no_____ If no, why not? _____

11) Copy and save these 8 action steps. We will refer to them again in our next lesson.

CONCLUSION:

Recovering will be almost like growing up all over again. We have seen that we need to become persons of integrity and "*put off*" all that is killing us and "*put on*" the Lord Jesus Christ. "Rather put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature." (**Romans 13:14**) The standards we once held had no real truth or limitations and so we exercised our right to do as we pleased-- to our own harm.

The privilege of becoming a "new creation" is a gift from God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) and "for by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by good deeds so that no one can boast." (**Ephesians 2:8**) But, in order for a gift to be useful, it must be received and opened. If you have received Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, God Himself, living in you. Now you must open the

gift and, in simple terms, use it. The Holy Spirit applies the Word of God in your life and empowers you to have a renewed mind. God's free gift of love allows you to live by the source of truth and loving standards which are found in the Bible. In the past you measured truth by whatever sounded right to you at the time. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." **(Proverbs 14:12)** Now you can have the *certain measurement of God's Word* and *the power in Jesus Christ* to live a life of integrity. **Be encouraged!**

Our last study will address the need to seek out like-minded people so that we can derive the very important benefits of fellowship.

Note: (Bible verses have been taken from the New International Version and the New Living Translation. Punctuation has been added to some of the verses in an effort to clarify or emphasize a main point.)

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