

PSALM 101 – COMMITMENT TO WALKING WITH INTEGRITY

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Illustrations and Facts that emphasize that true integrity is a characteristic that is often overlooked...
- B. As we open our Bibles to Psalm 101 we see that David understood the great value and importance of personal as well as national and familial integrity... But he realizes that such integrity begins with him!
 - 1. We don't know for sure the background of this psalm, but it would fit well either the period of time when David took the throne or when the Ark of the Covenant came to Jerusalem.
 - 2. David understands such an important event demands a commitment to integrity so he says, "I will walk with integrity of heart" - He's not concerned with how others are going to act, he knows he can't control their hearts and motives, but as for David, he will walk by integrity (**Ps 101:2**)
 - 3. As we consider David's commitment to a heart and walk of integrity, we see lessons all of us can apply to our own lives. Lessons that are needed more & more as the majority of our society seems to value and possess true integrity less and less! God's people are people of integrity!

PSALM 101 – DAVID'S PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO WALKING WITH INTEGRITY

- A. David understood that true integrity was the result of a personal commitment to pursuing it:
 - 1. From the very start of this psalm David emphasizes the characteristics which are going to define the manner in which he governs and lives... steadfast love and justice (**Psalm 101:1**)
 - a. These words may sound at first like David is praising God for His love & justice, but David isn't necessarily singing about God, but singing about steadfast love & justice to God
 - b. In context, it appears David is not just praising God for these, but making a personal commitment to being characterized by steadfast love and justice himself. This is certainly not surprising coming from the one called "a man after God's own heart"
 - c. We think of love & justice as opposite sides of the coin, but the two qualities are actually inseparable from one another. David saw integrity as being characterized by both!
 - 2. He understands true integrity begins in the heart with a pursuit of a blameless life (**Psalm 101:2**)
 - a. The NIV reads, "I will be careful to lead a blameless life" → The words "ponder" and "be careful" shows David's seriousness... He was deliberate about it and put effort into it!
 - b. He'll ponder the way of blamelessness – He will study what it means to be blameless and learn from those who live in blamelessness... Like a student who's pursuing a degree
 - c. He devotes himself to walking with integrity → Integrity means, "Adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty." It's a devotion to always doing what is right, to acting according to God's standard, dealing by truth & honesty
 - d. He wants integrity that comes from the heart... The outwards would not matter unless the heart was in the right place! A principle Jesus often emphasized (**Matt 15:18-19**)
 - 3. Practically, he commits himself to not put anything worthless before his eyes: (**Psalm 101:3**)
 - a. Integrity isn't something that just happens – As a virtue that must be developed it is also one that must be guarded & protected... David guarded his like a precious treasure!
 - b. David understands what many know, but are unwilling to admit... The things we see and hear do have an impact on us. He wouldn't buy into the "It won't affect me" attitude

- c. This is similar to how Solomon instructed his “son” to live (**Prov 4:24-27**) and the personal commitment Job made when it came to looking at young women (**Job 31:1**)
- 4. The lesson for us is that integrity is a valuable characteristic that must be pursued and protected:
 - a. We have to make a deliberate decision to be people of integrity, especially in age of moral relativism, situation ethics, and self centered morality. We must go against the flow!
 - b. Takes commitment like Job’s – He wouldn’t sacrifice his integrity for anything (**Job 27:3-6**)
 - c. It shouldn’t matter if it is in our home, our work, our play, or our religious life... we must be people of strong character, unwavering morals, and uncompromising convictions!
 - d. We must guard our hearts, for it is in the deepest chambers of our hearts that true integrity is formed and maintained and it is from our hearts the a life of morality will flow! But are we feeding our hearts & minds things that compromise integrity?

B. When David committed to walking with integrity, he committed to hating the works of the wicked:

- 1. David knew that everyone would not share his desire for steadfast love, justice, blamelessness, and integrity and so he made known his intolerance for wickedness: (**Psalms 101:3b-5**)
 - a. When David saw wickedness and unfaithfulness it tormented him... Remember, he’s a man who deeply loves the Lord so he was greatly troubled by the unrighteousness he saw
 - b. We may think David’s words sound harsh & maybe even an overreaction, but remember he deals with wickedness not only as an individual but as the king of Israel, so he must punish evildoers since he has been given that authority and role by God
 - c. David’s words in this psalm remind me of the way Lot’s soul was tormented by the wickedness he was subjected to because he was a righteous man... The Greek word indicates Lot had become very worn and beat down due to the sin he saw (**2 Pet 2:7**)
- 2. There are four types of evil doers whose works David refuses to tolerate:
 - a. Those Who Fall Away – Also translated faithless men... In their relationship with God they turn aside from serving God to serving themselves or this world. In their relationship with other men they’re unfaithful to their agreements, turning aside from their word
 - b. A Perverse Heart – It means twisted, distorted, crooked, perverted... One who turns aside from what he knows to be right. His way of thinking & his way of life is corrupted
 - c. A Slanderer – This has more to do with their words than actions... It’s a person who goes about speaking hurtful words, whether true or false, in order to hurt other people
 - d. A Haughty & Arrogant Person – A person of pride, one who is full of himself... one who’s pride bubbles out from their heart even to the way they look – One who is puffed up
- 3. He upholds integrity by not only standing for what is right, but standing against what was wrong:
 - a. He refuses to allow their works to cling to him → Same word (cleave) for a marriage relationship. David won’t let their mindset & sinful behavior become part of him
 - b. He keeps them far away so he can keep his innocence → He sees the pervasive power of influence. He knows even if he doesn’t want them to influence him, if they stay close to him they will. He can’t stay innocent in heart with such contaminants around
 - c. He will punish them – As king he has the right to execute justice if they harm others and to carry out judgment as they transgress certain parts of God’s law... Won’t ignore sin!
- 4. Certainly, as we read this psalm we see David in a unique role of being the king of Israel:
 - a. We may find it hard to apply this psalm because David is talking about personally punishing those who are doing wrong and we know that we cannot do this

- b. But his disdain for their sin, his lack of tolerance for evil, & the way he distanced himself from such people are all things anyone who wants to pursue integrity must do!
 - c. No we aren't kings or rulers of any kind so we cannot personally avenge evil, but we can limit the influence of evil in our lives and in the lives of those we have influence over
- 5. Like David, if we are going to be people of integrity we must take a stand against wickedness, injustice, and immorality in the lives of other people: **(Prov 8:13; Rom 1:32; Rom 12:9)**
 - a. Some say, "I don't do that, but I don't care if you do" – They may choose not to drink, curse, lie, steal, or whatever it is but they wouldn't condemn another person for it
 - b. How do we react to sin and a lack of integrity? Does it entertain us? Are our hearts tormented by it? Have we let ourselves become desensitized & accustomed to it?
 - c. Can it really be said that we are people of integrity if we surround ourselves by those who are dishonest, unrighteous, & immoral? Don't deceive yourself, they will impact you!

C. David also upheld integrity in his life by upholding those who were innocent, faithful, and righteous:

- 1. David did not just condemn those who practiced wickedness against others, but he also vowed to stand up for those who were the object of their attacks: **(Psalm 101:5, 8)**
 - a. He won't sit by and do nothing as he sees the names and lives of good men be destroyed by those who lacked integrity. He took it personally and did something about it!
 - b. Who were these neighbors? Were they prominent people? Were they the rich? Were they people close to David? Not necessarily, they were anyone who was being hurt!
 - c. David, as king, was likely a busy man, but he was not too busy to stand up for these people
- 2. He upheld integrity by treating those who were faithful & blameless with special favor **(Psa 101:6)**
 - a. David probably is referring to the employment of people in his courts and service who were characterized by honesty, integrity, uprightness, solid morals, and reliability
 - b. But where do you suppose David would go to find such people as this? Would it not be among the faithful to God who would thus share his same appreciation for integrity?
 - c. By showing preference to people who walked in integrity, David was teaching others that integrity is something to be valued, appreciated, protected, and even rewarded
- 3. He also pursued integrity by surrounding himself with people of integrity **(Psalm 101:6)**
 - a. What kind of reputation would David have had if he surrounded himself with people who practiced unrighteousness, even if David himself was living a good moral life?
 - b. He not only shows the faithful favor, but brings them to dwell with him – Could be literally, but it more likely is used in the figurative sense of regular association and friendship
 - c. What a relief it would have been to know you had a friend and a supporter in the king of the land! What a sight it must have been at David's own table where he brought some of these faithful, but often cast aside, to dine with him (like Mephibosheth)
 - d. People of integrity both naturally and purposefully surround themselves with other people of integrity → They value it and only want positive moral influences persuading them
- 4. People of integrity today will uphold & appreciate others who are also striving to live by integrity:
 - a. True integrity will not allow us to sit idly by as innocent or faithful people are being hurt, slandered, or mistreated. Justice calls us to get involved and come to their defense
 - b. This doesn't necessitate a personal "cutting off" the evil doers, but it does call for God's people, people of integrity, to stand up and stand with the innocent **(Ezek 22:29-30)**
 - c. People of integrity realize that evil companions corrupt good morals, but they also know good companions will help build & maintain good morals! **(1 Cor 15:33; Prov 17:17)**

D. David not only committed to standing with integrity in his government role, but also in his home:

1. Many men lead good lives of integrity in their public life, but within the walls of their home they lead a very different life. But this was not the case with David: **(Psalm 101:7, 2b)**
 - a. Many will labor hard to protect their public image but they give their home life very little attention at all... If only those walls & doors could talk, oh the stories they would tell!
 - b. David was going to be a very busy man... Between punishing evil doers, defending the mistreated, and ruling in the kingdom, his time would be very precious! But here he has a commitment to not neglect instilling an appreciation for integrity in his home!
 - c. I can see David repeating words like this on a regular basis to his children and those who'd abide in his presence, emphasizing honesty is always the best policy! **(Psalm 15:1-5)**
 - d. Sadly, his home didn't bare the marks of integrity. How much of this lay right on David's shoulders we may not be sure, but something had a powerfully negative influence on his children. It seems likely David did not always maintain the resolve he shows here
2. David's resolve here reminds us of the dedication with which Joshua protected his home when he said, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" **(Joshua 24:14-15)**
3. If we are going to be people of integrity, it must be a something that starts within our own homes:
 - a. Some Christians, even preachers, have been very active personally & greatly respected by those who know them for their faith, but their home is a wreck spiritually. Some are so busy in business, serving others, or doing for the church their family is neglected
 - b. You want to change the world for the better? You want to help others spiritually? You want to reach lost souls? Start with your home, your grandchildren, your family!
 - c. People have said character is what you are when no one is looking... the same is true of integrity. But people of integrity live the same way whether they are in their home, at church, or at work because they don't care who is looking... they're living for God!

Conclusion: There is one phrase in the psalm we have not discussed. It's the end of verse 2 when David writes, "Oh when will you come to me?" David seems to understand in some sense that God's presence is with those who walk in integrity, steadfast love, and justice. Is God walking with you? Are you walking with God?

Several years ago, in Long Beach, California, a fellow went into a fried chicken place and bought a couple of chicken dinners for himself and his date late one afternoon. The young woman at the counter inadvertently gave him the proceeds from the day-a whole bag of money (much of it cash) instead of fried chicken. After driving to their picnic site, the two of them sat down to open the meal and enjoy some chicken together. They discovered a whole lot more than chicken--over \$800! But he was unusual. He quickly put the money back in the bag. They got back into the car and drove all the way back. Mr. Clean got out, walked in, and became an instant hero. By then the manager was frantic. The guy with the bag of money looked the manager in the eye and said, "I want you to know I came by to get a couple of chicken dinners and wound up with all this money. Here." Well, the manager was thrilled to death. He said, "Oh, great, let me call the newspaper. I'm gonna have your picture put in the local newspaper. You're the most honest man I've heard of." To which they guy quickly responded, "Oh no, no, don't do that!" Then he leaned closer and whispered, "You see, the woman I'm with is not my wife...she's uh, somebody else's wife."