



“Raising the Bar of Integrity”

Part 17

I. I NEED INTEGRITY IN MY BATTLES.

“The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. They also carried off Abram’s nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom” (Genesis 14:11-12).

“Everything is permissible’—but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is constructive” (1 Cor. 10:23).

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

Integrity will include:

1. Preparation “One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan” (Genesis 14:13-14).

2. Pursuit “During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people” (Genesis 14:15-16).

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

II. I NEED INTEGRITY IN MY DEVOTION.

“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High” (Genesis 14:18).

“This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means ‘king of righteousness’; then also, ‘king of Salem’ means ‘king of peace.’ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. Just think how great

he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!... And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’” (Hebrews 7:1-4, 15-17).

“And he blessed Abram, saying, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.’ Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything” (Genesis 14:19-20).

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made” (1 Corinthians 16:2).

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

III. I NEED INTEGRITY IN MY POSSESSIONS.

“The king of Sodom said to Abram, ‘Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.’ But Abram said to the king of Sodom, ‘I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share’” (Genesis 14:21-24).

“Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:14-19).