



Session 3: Integrity



Integrity is about moral consistency, being genuine and being faithful to God.

It's about how we live when no one else is looking. We are to live in private the same as we live in public because our 'Father sees what we do in secret' (Matthew 6). When we lack integrity we bend the truth, cheat, lie, pretend and mask who we really are. Integrity is about becoming the kind of person who does the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, all the time.

Previous session review

- Recap on your experience of the previous challenge. How did it go? Was it helpful?
- If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question: Where and how did you experience God last week?

Read

Read the passage several times through, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

As you read, look out for shockers and blockers.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Genesis 39.6–23

Joseph was well-built and handsome, and Potiphar's wife soon noticed him. She asked him to make love to her, but he refused and said, "My master isn't worried about anything in his house, because he has placed me in charge of everything he owns. No one in my master's house is more important than I am. The only thing he hasn't given me is you, and that's because you are his wife. I won't sin against God by doing such a terrible thing as this." She kept begging Joseph day after day, but he refused to do what she wanted or even to go near.

One day, Joseph went to Potiphar's house to do his work, and none of the other servants were there. Potiphar's wife grabbed hold of his coat and said, "Make love to me!" Joseph ran out of the house, leaving her hanging onto his coat. When this happened, she called in her servants and said, "Look! This Hebrew has come just to make fools of us. He tried to rape me, but I screamed for help. And when he heard me scream, he ran out of the house, leaving his coat with me."

Potiphar's wife kept Joseph's coat until her husband came home. Then she said, "That Hebrew slave of yours tried to rape me! But when I screamed for help, he left his coat and ran out of the house."

Potiphar became very angry and threw Joseph in the same prison where the king's prisoners were kept. While Joseph was in prison, the Lord helped him and was good to him. He even made the jailer like Joseph so much that he put him in charge of the other prisoners and of everything that was done in the jail. The jailer did not worry about anything, because the Lord was with Joseph and made him successful in all that he did.

Setting the scene:

- Joseph, favourite son of Jacob, has been sold as a slave by his jealous brothers and is now in Egypt.
- Bought by Potiphar, an officer of the Egyptian Emperor Pharaoh, he's elevated to a position of authority and respect within Potiphar's household.
- Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph continuously but he resists, knowing it would be a sin both against his master and God.
- Joseph probably expected to die – the reasonable outcome of an accusation of rape by a slave in those days. Perhaps it was the respect that he had previously won that resulted in a jail sentence instead. The fact that Joseph was not put to death by Potiphar could have meant that he was suspicious his wife was making false accusations.
- The reference to screaming is important. If a victim screams in a rape case, in Old Testament law it meant that they were innocent (see Deuteronomy 22.24, 27).

Reflect

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your shockers and blockers. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. Where have you seen a lack of integrity recently? What was the impact on individuals and the community?

Q2. What personal 'integrity challenges' are you facing?

Respond

Integrity challenge: this session leads us to explore the topic of integrity. As a group, create a challenge to help you address the issues of integrity in your own lives this week or choose one of the following ideas.

Challenge ideas:

1. Right move

Have you acted without integrity lately? This week, identify a way you have not acted as you know you should have and set it right. Have you taken stationery supplies from work? How about replacing them? Have you returned an outfit having worn it to a party? Go back to the shop and buy it. Have you spent excessive time at work browsing on the internet? Work some overtime and don't charge for it.

2. Accountability

This week find someone who you can be totally honest with and can trust. Establish confidentiality and then be open with each other and confess areas of weakness and pray together for strength. Perhaps you might want to come to agreement where you will hold each other accountable. Confession of our hurts, needs and struggles can become a big step towards a life of integrity.

3. Fair Play

Each time you get into a competitive situation this week – whether in sports, playing with your kids, or at work – aim to be open and honest. Do away with cheating or rule bending of any kind. Aim for truthfulness and transparency. You could even pray for the success of others and that they will do better than you!

'The world gets pretty tired of people who have Christian bumper stickers on their cars, Christians fish signs on their trunks, Christian books on their shelves, Christian stations on their radios, Christian jewellery round their necks, Christian videos for their kids, and Christian magazines for their coffee tables but don't actually have the life of Jesus in their bones or the love of Jesus in their hearts.'

*John Ortberg,
When The Game Is Over It
All Goes Back In The Box*

Group Prayer

Commit to praying for each other this week. Pray for God's peace to be with you in your hearts, minds, homes and places you work. Pray for the strength to live with increasing integrity over the next week.