**Integrity Without Limit**

*Job 2:9-10*

**Introduction**

1. Integrity – firm adherence to a code of especially moral…values. (Webster)
   1. From Latin root, integer, meaning “intact.” Or from French root, intégrité, meaning “innocence, blamelessness; chastity, purity.”
   2. Speaks of wholeness, especially as it pertains to a moral guideline, or a standard.
   3. **Job 2:9** – integrity – *ṯumâ*; innocence. (Strong) (All major translations render it “integrity.”)
      1. Feminine of – *ṯôm*; completeness; figuratively, prosperity; usually (morally) innocence. (Strong)
      2. Job had a sense of wholeness to him as it pertained to his relationship with God. (**cf. Deuteronomy 6:5** – the kind of wholeness of which the Law spoke.) (**cf. Job 1:1, 8; 2:3** – God about Job.)
2. It seems that the world has a view similar to that of Job’s wife – that integrity has a limit.
   1. It is reasonable to hold fast to integrity until it is not reasonable.
   2. That there is a limit of suffering, or an area of life in which integrity can be compromised understandably.
   3. Some say things like, “God wouldn’t really want you to have to go through this,” or “God doesn’t really expect you to always act this way (do what He says is right).”
3. Situational ethics as an example:
   1. The idea that what is ethical can be changed by the situation is a form of integrity with limit.
   2. However, this is foreign to God’s word – it matters not what situation we find ourselves in, God’s word rules.
4. Does God expect us, and require us to hold fast to our integrity before Him in any circumstance? Yes, He does.
5. The Conflict of Job
6. Job’s Suffering
   1. Job before the suffering – **Job 1:1** – feared God, and was faithful – **Job 1:4-5** – led his family spiritually.
   2. The Devil’s suggestion – **Job 1:9-11** – Job’s integrity has a limit!
   3. Job’s suffering commenced:
      1. Lost his property, possessions, and servants.
      2. Lost his kids.
      3. **Job 1:22; 2:3** – didn’t sin but held to his integrity.
      4. Lost his health.
7. Job’s Wife’s Plea
   1. **Job 2:9** – After going through all of this with him, and then seeing him suffering directly, Job’s wife became the tool of Satan’s temptation for Job to turn his back on God.
   2. Job’s wife:
      1. Job was a righteous man. He feared God. He was directed by wisdom. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT HIS WIFE WAS AN IMMORAL PERSON.
      2. Job’s response indicates she was not normally like the immoral women – **Job 2:10**
      3. “Job’s response expressed a pained disappointment; surely he had every right to expect better things of his wife! Instead, she spoke as the impious – women of folly – spoke. Her speech is beneath the dignity of one who had lived in such a relationship with God as she had; respect for God should have produced a wiser answer to the problem.” (*A Commentary on Job*, Homer Hailey; 44)
   3. There is no indication that before the affected health of Job his wife lost her faith. However, it is evident that there was a limit to what she would endure, and remain faithful in.
8. Job’s Response
   1. **Job 2:10** – Job’s response showed resolve to remain true to God.
      1. **Job 1:20-22** – Job was leaning on what he knew about God, and thus keeping his faith.
      2. His understanding of life, and especially the reality of suffering may have been shaken.
      3. However, he maintained the goodness of God in this moment, and held to his integrity.
   2. **Job 1:21** – he did not suggest by these words that God had done this to him, but merely realized that God was the one from whom his original blessings came, and he maintained his faith.
      1. HIS SUFFERING DREW HIM NEAR TO THE ONE HE KNEW WAS THE GIVER OF GOOD THINGS.
      2. HE DID NOT LET HIS SUFFERING DRIVE HIM AWAY.
   3. Job’s belief was that God expected him to maintain integrity – that integrity is not to have a limit before God. (THIS IS EXACTLY THE CONFIDENCE GOD PLACED IN JOB WHEN CONVERSING WITH THE DEVIL.)
9. Life is filled with tests of our integrity. The strong one is not shown to be such merely in times of peace, but especially when times are hard – **Proverbs 24:10**
10. Integrity Without Limit
11. In Trial and Tribulation
    1. When it comes to suffering for doing good, or while doing good Christians should not think it strange – **1 Peter 4:12-16**
       1. The tendency to think it strange comes from the notion that adhering to God’s law hedges us from suffering.
       2. Paul noted the opposite – **2 Timothy 3:12; Acts 14:22**
       3. **(v. 13)** – even Christ’s suffered – in our suffering we have fellowship with Him!
       4. WHEN WE THINK IT STRANGE, WE MAY TALK OURSELVES OUT OF MAINTAINING OUR GOODNESS BEFORE GOD.
       5. Instead we are to hold fast to our integrity that the evildoers will be ashamed – **1 Peter 3:15-16**
    2. We can’t talk ourselves out of faithfulness because of the suffering we’re going through.
       1. This temptation comes from listening to the world.
       2. They view the faithfulness the Bible calls us to as radical, and unreasonable.
       3. Their mind is on the temporal.
       4. We must have ours on the eternal!
    3. SUCH IS A TEST (TRIAL) OF OUR INTEGRITY! – IS IT GENUINE? (**cf. 1 Peter 1:7)**
    4. Does God speak of a limit to our integrity in the face of tribulation? No – **Revelation 2:10** – faithful to the point of death.
12. In Relationships
    1. Some hold to their integrity in relationships only when it suits them, and only when the other party is holding to their integrity as well.
    2. Are we to hold to our integrity in our dealings with others even if they are not acting appropriately?
    3. I will limit my integrity in relationships to my friends?
       1. Jesus addressed the idea some had about a limit for integrity in relationships – **Matthew 5:43** – limited to neighbor.
       2. Remember – integrity is firm adherence to a code – there is a standard involved.
          1. God is our standard in relationships.
          2. **Matthew 5:44-45, 48** – we are called to the standard of God. (He loved us while we were His enemies.)
          3. **(v. 48)** – Perfect – complete. (Integrity – intact; whole)
       3. **Matthew 5:46-47** – loving only those who love us DOES NOT SHOW THE STRENGTH OF CHARACTER THAT LOVING OUR ENEMIES DOES. (Integrity is about exhibiting character.)
    4. I will limit my integrity in relationships to those who treat me with goodness?
       1. Integrity is not really about who we are before others, BUT BEFORE GOD – our dealings with others should be governed by this.
       2. Is there anything anyone can do to us that would warrant our mistreatment of them? – **Matthew 7:12** – this is across the board.
       3. We should never repay evil with evil – **Romans 12:17-21**
          1. NOTE THE GOAL – **(v. 21)** – overcoming evil. (I.e. combatting sin.)
             1. Retaliating with more evil will only compound the evil.
             2. Our goal is to get rid of the evil if possible.
          2. **(v. 19)** – God is the avenger – THIS IS NOT OUR PLACE.
          3. **(v. 20)** – by HOLDING FAST TO OUR INTEGRITY we will bring shame on the one who is not, and perhaps bring them to repentance.
13. In the Church
    1. The church is to support the truth – **1 Timothy 3:15**
    2. However, the church is composed of many members – **Romans 12:4-5** – and each member must maintain their convictions.
       1. The whole is made up of parts.
       2. The whole can only support the truth if each part supports the truth.
    3. What limit is there, if any, to our standing for the truth?
       1. What if the majority of the church decides to disobey God, or promote some false doctrine?
       2. Do we have to stand firm in our conviction of the truth even if we’re drastically outnumbered?
    4. **Revelation 3:1-6** – church in Sardis – the majority were not faithful, but there were those who had not followed the crowd.
       1. Church autonomy – each local church is independent of the other, so if one apostatizes, the other can remain faithful.
       2. Similar with individual Christians – when others take the wrong road we don’t have to follow!
       3. God will judge us individually. (Not that we can persist in worshiping with a church in error, but we don’t have to be involved in the sin with them.)
    5. Christ is the head – **Ephesians 1:22-23** – WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR FIDELITY TO CHRIST, NOT THE CHURCH.
       1. I.e. if the congregation we’re a part of decides to move in an unscriptural direction, we “hold fast to the head.”

**Conclusion**

1. We must maintain our integrity before God no matter what.
2. The integrity God demands knows no limit.
3. Whatever life may bring – good or bad – and in whatever occasion we find ourselves, we must be true to God.