

CULTIVATING A LIFE OF INTEGRITY

(Part 1: Psalm 26)

Personal integrity is essential to the life and ministry of every Christian. Integrity is crucial if we are to live like Christ and represent Christ in the world. Integrity describes the quality of being whole, undivided, uncorrupted and consistent. Integrity is being the same person in private and in public. A person of integrity is someone whose behavior matches his/her beliefs, whose conduct corresponds with his/her confession of faith and whose character is consistent with his/her stated convictions. Psalm 26 is all about cultivating such godly integrity. In this psalm, we will learn five fundamental ways on how we could cultivate a life of personal integrity.

1. *Submit yourself to God's* _____.

Our ultimate goal in living a life of integrity is to gain the pleasure and approval of God. Hence, cultivating personal integrity begins with God's vindication of our life. David pleads to God to vindicate or judge him not for sake of his own reputation before others but for the sake of the reputation of God and the integrity of His name (Psalm 26:1). David approached God with such confidence in his prayer because of the testimony of his upright life before God and his unwavering trust in the Lord. His claim of personal integrity does not mean sinless perfection but rather a sincerity of purpose and single-hearted devotion to honor, obey and trust the Lord (2 Cor. 1:12).

David also submits himself to God's intensive scrutiny and refining work (Psalm 26:2; Heb. 4:13). God's probing of our life is not only thorough but also painful and purifying. God who is our Divine Refiner could test our integrity by allowing us to go through the purifying fires and refining flames of trials (Job 1:8-12). One of the effective tests of our integrity and character is how we respond to adversities and suffering.

2. *Savor God's* _____.

What ultimately motivated David to live a life of godly integrity is the steadfast love and enduring faithfulness of God (Psalm 26:3). God's steadfast love pertains to His loyal and unwavering commitment to His covenant relationship with His people. Having entered in a covenant relationship with His people, God has bound Himself to act in loyal, faithful, generous, gracious, saving and sustaining love towards us (Rom. 8:38-39). God's faithfulness, on the other hand, refers to God's complete trustworthiness in keeping His Word and utter reliability in fulfilling His promise. It means that God always speaks the truth, accomplishes His purpose, carries out His plan and realizes His promises. The greatest and highest motivation for living a life of integrity is this loyal love and unfailing faithfulness of God (Gen. 39:9; 2 Cor. 5:14).
