

Lent #3 - Integrity

Icebreaker Question

How would you define integrity? What is the opposite of integrity? What behaviours show integrity and which would show a lack of integrity? (Some examples of lack of integrity are provided on the second page)

Sermon Discussion

Pastor Josh used the example of hockey penalties and sharing streaming passwords to talk about the way we often justify things that we know are wrong. Can you think of other examples?

Jesus called the Pharisees and teachers of the law “blind guides”. Who would be some modern ‘blind guides’ especially those who influence Christians in negative or deceitful ways?

Has the verse about blaspheming the Holy Spirit being unforgivable troubled you? Did you find Josh’s explanation helpful? Recap/quote:

We should understand the term “blasphemy” as meaning “speaking against”, and in this case, the religious leaders were speaking against the abilities of Jesus and instead of giving credit to God - they were giving credit to Satan because they refused to see Jesus for who he was. And so this sin is not unforgivable in the sense that God will not forgive, but it is unforgivable in the sense that we can close ourselves off from receiving the forgiveness that God so eagerly wants to give us. The problem isn’t God, the problem is that we can have hard hearts - and refuse God.

Josh pointed out that the pride of the Pharisees got in the way of their ability to discern spiritual truth. Can you give an example of when you’ve seen pride (in yourself or others) have a negative impact on people? Or on the way we see and respond to God/Jesus? How might pride get in the way of showing God’s love to people around us?

What are some examples of “loopholes” that people, or Christians, or you(!) use to justify behaviour that goes against the law or good judgement?

Can you recall a time when you feel that you were too opinionated about something and came across as knowing more about a subject (perhaps related to faith/belief) than you should have? Were you (as Josh said) “so firm in your convictions that you became closed off to what possibilities could be right in front of you.”?

Pastor Josh said that oath-taking was a ‘common and serious practice in ancient Jewish culture’. Do we have anything comparable today?

What would be an example of a time when someone (maybe yourself) did something that was technically not wrong, but in reality crossed a line? Have you ever had to deal with guilt or regret from that kind of thing?

Can you recall some of the things Pastor Josh said comes with living lives of integrity? (freedom, peace of mind, better relationships, openness to God’s working) What are some other possible benefits?

The message concluded with 3 suggestions: evaluating how we justify our actions, saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ without ambiguity, and asking God to reveal how pride is affecting us. Which of these resonate the most or are motivating to you?

An example of a lack of integrity could be falsely claiming credit for someone else's work or consistently breaking promises. [↗](#)

Here's a more detailed explanation:

Dishonesty and Lying:

A person lacking integrity might deliberately mislead or deceive others, whether through outright lies or by withholding crucial information. [↗](#)

Broken Promises and Unreliability:

Repeatedly failing to keep commitments or agreements demonstrates a lack of reliability and a disregard for the trust placed in them. [↗](#)

Lack of Accountability:

Refusing to take responsibility for mistakes or actions, and instead shifting blame or making excuses, is another sign of a lack of integrity. [↗](#)

Disrespect for Boundaries:

Ignoring or violating the boundaries of others, whether physical, emotional, or professional, can be a sign of a lack of integrity. [↗](#)

Inconsistency:

Someone lacking integrity might say one thing but do another, or change their story to suit the situation, appearing unreliable and untrustworthy. [↗](#)

Unwillingness to Admit Mistakes:

A person with integrity acknowledges their mistakes and learns from them. Conversely, someone lacking integrity might refuse to admit wrongdoing or take responsibility for their actions. [↗](#)

Exaggeration:

Constantly exaggerating or embellishing the truth, even in small ways, can erode trust and demonstrate a lack of integrity. [↗](#)