

Good and Bad Integrity

Presented by Lauren Stibgen

Air Dates: February 24 – 28, 2025

Day One

Let's face it, unless we are working in a faith-based organization, our work can bring us closer to walking in the way of the world than we would like. Not everyone we come into contact with whether a boss, colleague, customer, or vendor will be an example of how we should walk in our work life as Christ followers. And, even if we are working for a faith-based organization or are in ministry, we are not immune to running into sin!

We often think of integrity at work as being honest. While this is one way we can reflect integrity, as Christians we are called to a higher standard of the integrity of our faith. If you profess your faith at work, this is especially important- does your walk match the talk or could someone who doesn't know Jesus question the integrity of your faith?

Temptations that take you farther from the integrity of your faith can come around the corner when we least expect them. Perhaps it is falling into using language that isn't honoring God. Being around people who use a lot of, well, "choice words" can lead us into using the same. Perhaps it is other behavior like attending happy hour after work instead of heading home.

However, sometimes we are not the problem. In the case of Joseph, he held his integrity while his employer did not. He consistently had to withstand advances from his employer's wife. After denying her many times and even running away from her, she lied and said Joseph came after her! Joseph's integrity and her lack thereof, landed him in jail!

In many cases, unwelcomed advances at work are considered harassment and should be reported to a manager or to another authority at work. While you should be afforded protections from this type of unwanted advance at work, sometimes maintaining your integrity can feel very costly. I don't think any of you would end up in jail, but I won't make light of what may happen if you hold your integrity and deny someone's advances at work!

Relational integrity at work can take many forms other than the unwanted advances—or harassment—we see in the story of Joseph. Work can also be a place where the door of infidelity creeps open all too often. According to Forbes, 40% of people have cheated on a partner with a colleague. Proximity, time, late nights in the office and work trips all contribute to this. And the higher someone climbs the ladder, the more likely they are to engage in infidelity.

Stay faithful in your walk with God and guard yourself against temptation.

Day Two

Are you making work an idol? Idol's surrounding work can impact the integrity of your faith. What are some of the idols that can crop up?

Remember, an idol is a person or thing other than God that you worship more than God. The most common way work can become an idol is the amount of time you spend working and how it keeps you

away from your time with God. Perhaps it is constantly missing small group Bible study because you are working late or not taking quiet time in the morning because you are rushing off to work. Have you worked on Sundays and stayed away from worshipping at church?

What about people we encounter during the course of our business? A boss, an expert, maybe even a colleague. The boss asks a lot of you, and it is taking you away from God. Or you are hanging on the achievements of an expert in your field or a colleague's great success that leads you to talk more about them than God.

Does the killer of comparison have you working extra hard on your work or your overall image at work? How much energy do you give this?

As followers of Jesus, we are called to worship the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and strength and to give God glory, not man. In the Bible, we can turn to Daniel's example of the faithful integrity. Daniel worked for King Nebuchadnezzar. He was one of a handful of the Israelites who was deemed smart enough to serve. We notice first Daniel did not accept the name given to him by the king.

He also did not eat of the foods the king gave and only ate fruits and vegetables since the meat was unclean by Old Testament standards. Most notably, Daniel did not bow down to the statue erected of the king. He held the integrity of his faith and did not worship the idols of the king. You can read more about this in Daniel 2-6.

In the workplace we need to be mindful of the idols that may creep in to challenge the integrity of our faith. Again, as professional followers of Jesus, we are sometimes the first introduction to Jesus someone will have! How are you holding this integrity at work?

Day Three

A sellout. Have you been one? Or have you experienced this at work? You confided in someone, placed trust in them. Maybe you shared a personal secret, juicy bit of office gossip, or maybe you even asked for help discreetly without someone knowing. Suddenly, everyone seems to know! It is terrible. You are the talk of the office and didn't even mean to be. A sellout.

Part of integrity is knowing when to mind your words and when to keep confidences at work. Your integrity in this manner can earn you deep trust with colleagues and bosses but if you fail in this, it can have devastating consequences on you or the person you sellout.

Our Lord Jesus had a sellout at work—Judas. Now, Jesus had the advantage of being all knowing and knew Judas was part of the plan for the salvation of the world from sin and death. But he still had someone he worked with every day, trusted with the money, and dined with turn on him—literally to the point of his death on the cross. Judas did it for money. The picture we receive of the betrayal is even worse. Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek to indicate to the soldiers which one was Jesus.

Ultimately, Judas regrets his deep betrayal of Jesus. He tries to give the money back and ultimately takes his own life in terror and grief over what he had done.

Keeping your integrity of faith at work is reliant on you not being like Judas! At work, you won't sellout someone to the point of death, but you could very well impact how someone is perceived. The Bible warns of the tongue's power repeatedly.

The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4).

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil (Proverbs 15:28).

Remind the people to be subject to the rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to be gentle toward everyone (Titus 3:1-2).

Simply, don't be a sellout! Keeping your integrity of faith at work is incumbent upon how you choose to keep confidences and lift others up—not tear them down.

Day Four

How do you handle reporting results at work? Results can mean different things depending on the job you hold. Whether the results are directly related to the financial wellbeing of your company or not, everything you report on can impact the results of your company. From the number of customer interactions you make a day to balance of a cash drawer, integrity counts!

God wants us to work with integrity. He doesn't want us to over or under report anything. The story that comes to mind when I think of finances and reporting results is of Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. The early church in the book of Acts was built on the financial donations of its members. People sold their belongings to pool and share all their resources. Ananias and Sapphira seem to have been well off. They had a large plot of land they sold off to contribute.

After the sale Ananias came along and gave money to the disciples and stated it was everything he had from the sale of the land. Well, it wasn't. He had held back a certain amount and not reported it. Ananias was struck dead. Even more alarming, Sapphira came along a few hours later with her share of the sale and affirmed that they had given all the money. You guessed it, she was struck dead too. It wasn't that they didn't give all the money to the church. It is the fact that they did not accurately report their gain to the disciples. While we don't know for sure from God's word, it is quite possible they could have given and been honest and still been alive to see the flourishing early church.

It may be tempting to report you made a few more sales calls than occurred, but this will ultimately show in the results. Anything you think will make you look better in the short run will ultimately come to light. And remember, our God is a God who sees everything—even the things you think are hidden. Keeping the integrity of your reporting is one way you can be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

Day Five

As we think about having integrity at work, there is no greater example to us than our savior, Jesus Christ. Perfect in every way he showed great integrity in his work. In every way, Jesus was true to those around him.

Part of showing integrity is being faithful with your work and to the people who depend on you. What does faithful work look like? Again, let's think about Jesus. His work was to spread the gospel alongside his disciples. It included healing the sick and blind and providing attentive hope to people who were outcasts in society at the time. He showed up to bring the truth to crowds of people from sunup to sundown. One could never question he had an incredible work ethic.

How do you show up for your employer? What about your colleagues? Something simple like being on time for work or even being on time for a meeting goes a long way. Perhaps you offer to help a colleague struggling to complete a project or having a health struggle. Is it sharing an encouragement to someone who is feeling down? Can you pray with someone who has a hardship? Maybe you stick to a difficult project and see it through when everyone else complains. Like Jesus, can you stand up for the oppressed?

Jesus, God as man was faithful to fulfill his purpose on the cross to take away the sins of the world, and he also asked God for help.

Jesus calls out to God, *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done”* (Luke 22:42).

Jesus cried out for help, but he ultimately knew God’s will would be done.

This goes for you too! When you don’t feel like you can endure and be faithful to your work, cry out to Jesus for help!

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
(Romans 8:31)

God is for you. He also established every step of your life beforehand.

Your faithfulness to your work and reflecting Jesus will help others see your integrity.