



The Inescapable Ought

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Note: The following content is a raw transcript and has not been edited for grammar, punctuation, and word usage.

0:00:00.2 Andy Stanley: Today, we actually begin a brand new series entitled Your Integrity, Our World; Your Integrity, Our World, and I will explain the title in just a minute. And next week, I'm gonna give you our official definition for integrity for this series. But to just get us started, we know what integrity is, right? Integrity is the resolve and really the courage, as we're gonna discover, it's the resolve and the courage to do the right and noble thing just because it's the right and noble thing. You just do the right, noble thing because it's the right, noble thing when it benefits you and you do it when it costs you because people of integrity just do the right thing because it's the right thing; that is the reward, even when it costs you... Actually, especially when it costs you. Those are the people that we cheer for. Those are the heroes, the people that do the right thing even when it costs them, even when there was a less costly alternative.

0:00:51.3 AS: You may be familiar, you probably are with this phrase: "structural integrity" "structural integrity" Structural integrity is a building science phrase, and here's the technical definition: The ability of a structure to withstand its intended load without failing due to fracture or fatigue. And unfortunately, we have seen in recent days what happens when a structure is cracked and is fatigued and is not able to bear the load it was supposed to bear. We've seen the devastation when structural integrity is compromised. And what we've discovered and what you know and what you've seen throughout your life, just in some capacity, is that the damage isn't isolated. The damage isn't isolated to the compromised beam or the compromised column, is it? The entire structure is affected because when a load-bearing structure fails, the load is transferred. When a load-bearing structure fails, the load is always transferred to, and potentially, overload surrounding support structures. The failure of one part impacts the failure of others because the stress is transferred and the load is transferred to other parts of the building.

0:02:06.5 AS: Now, as you would imagine, and as you can guess where we're going with this, the same is true for you and the same is true for me. The same is true for all of us, that a failure, a failure of personal integrity, a failure of personal integrity adds stress to the persons around us, right? This isn't new, but this is easy to overlook, especially when we're being tempted to sacrifice our integrity because not to is gonna cost us something, and it just seems too difficult to tell the truth, and too costly to do the right thing. But a personal failure of integrity for everybody, no matter how old you are, you transfer the stress to the people closest to you, and oftentimes, the people you love the most. The failure of integrity of one family member, what happens? It transfers the stress to other members of the family. If you're a teacher or a school administrator, you get this. You got a straight A student, high B student, a top performer academically, and suddenly, they just don't seem interested. They're not motivated. Their grades plummet. And your first guess is that something is going on where? At home, that's right.

0:03:16.7 AS: Some of you have experienced extraordinary marital stress, conflict between you and your husband or you and your wife, not because either of you had a failure of integrity, but because your high school student, your high school son, your high school daughter, a college son, a college daughter, maybe a graduate school, maybe they're out,



maybe they're married and there's been a failure of integrity with one of your kids and it's created... You feel the stress of that. It's connected to you. And it's creating more stress, even in a relationship because you can't agree on how to respond how to discipline, how to embrace or to stand back from a son or a daughter because of the decision they made that really had nothing to do with you. Companies, we've seen this. Entire companies have imploded because of the decision of a CEO or a leadership team, where hundreds and hundreds of people lose their job. Fostering, I was... Foster parents, gosh, we've seen this up close and personal. That failure of integrity with a father or a mother or both parents, it just... It causes kids to spiral. It creates, in some cases, generational problems, generational poverty, generational drug addiction.

0:04:22.3 AS: The point is simply this: The load, we just can't kid ourselves, the load is always, always, always transferred, that the consequences are never isolated, that your personal failure of integrity impacts some other persons. But your integrity, when you maintain your integrity, when we maintain our integrity, when I maintain my integrity, it also impacts some other persons, as well. So this is a really, really, really big deal. In fact, when we think about our community and our nation, our world, our families, I don't know of anything that's more important corporately, nationally. That's our title: Your Integrity, Our World. My integrity, our world. Your integrity, your family, your community. My integrity, my family, my world. This is one of the reasons why integrity is actually a universal expectation. And this is very interesting. This is what makes a hypocrite out of all of us. We're gonna talk about that, I think, in week three, so don't miss week three, 'cause everybody loves to be called a hypocrite. If it's been a while, don't miss week three, right?

0:05:31.7 AS: Here's the thing: We all, we may opt for loopholes. In other words, I might look for a workaround or a loophole so I don't have to tell the whole truth or so I don't have to be completely transparent or so that I'm not completely honest. We might look for loopholes and we might make excuses when it comes to our personal decisions, but here's what I know about you, we've never met: You expect integrity from the people closest to you and people around you. You expect it from your leaders, your preachers and your teachers, your spouse, your boss, your employees. You expect integrity from the people around you, whether you're a person of integrity or not. Or just to be sort of crass: Thieves don't expect to be stolen from. They're like, "What?" "Well, you stole from me?" "Well, yeah." "Well, I didn't expect that." "Well, you do it." "It doesn't matter what I do. I did not expect that from you," right?

0:06:18.4 AS: Unfaithful spouses do not expect to be cheated on. And don't raise your hand on this one, okay? But when you were in school... Not that one, we're moving on, or that one. Or this could be... This day could end very differently than you anticipated. But when you were in school, again, don't raise your hand, guys, in school, if you ever cheated on middle school or elementary school, maybe middle school, high school, college, you cheated on a test, and you cheated on the test and you got by with it, nobody caught you, and you made a better grade than you were supposed to make. And then you get your test paper back, imagine this, this didn't happen to any of us, but imagine. So you've cheated, you got by with it, you're like "Man, I made a B? Shouldn't have made a B, should have passed it." You're looking at your grade. And you start looking at your test paper and you realize your teacher misgraded the paper, and you got cheated a couple of points. What would you have done? Oh, well, no, you would have marched right up there to his or her desk and said, "Hey, you misgraded, you took a few points away that you need to give to me." It didn't matter that you cheated to get them, you expected your teacher not to cheat even though you're a cheater. Like I said, this eventually makes hypocrites of all of us.

0:07:29.2 AS: And I know none of... This doesn't apply to any of you, but those employees that waste time at work, not us, but there are... This happens. This happens, there are people who just they shop online at work, they do all kinds of stuff, it's crazy. Yeah, they waste... They're eating up their employer's resources, wasting time at work, but, and they never tell their employer, right? But when the paycheck comes out, when the hours are totaled up, when they get their



check every couple of weeks, they expect for the employer to pay them exactly what they agreed to. I may cheat you at work, but by golly, if I think you've deducted something from my paycheck, or you didn't count hours, I am in your face. Why? Because regardless of our personal integrity, regardless of our consistency, it's a universal expectation. It's an inescapable expectation. And all of that brings us to something extraordinarily significant.

0:08:23.0 AS: And this is a little deep. For some of you who have been waiting for something deep, this is it. Okay, this is deep. And this is what we're gonna talk about for the next few minutes because I didn't even plan to include this in the series, but as I worked through this content, I thought this is so foundational, and even though it's somewhat introductory, this is what I wanna talk about the next few minutes because this whole idea of the duplicity, the expectation we have of others that we don't even have of ourselves, to some extent, it points to something so foundational when it comes to our lives and so foundational when it comes to integrity. Integrity, the whole idea of integrity, assumes and ought to, we readily appeal to, that we assume everyone around us is accountable to. Let me read that again: That integrity assumes, and then the fact that you just expect people to tell you the truth, they signed the contract, they're gonna follow through, integrity assumes and ought to, you just ought to do that, that we readily appeal to, you didn't do what you ought to do when you talk about that, that we assume everybody around us is accountable to.

0:09:32.0 AS: You lied to me. You lied to me. Implication even though we've never discussed the pros and cons of lying. I just assumed you know you're not supposed to lie. We've never talked about it. We've never sat down before we signed the contract and said, "Okay, before we go through this contract, let's talk about what's right and what's wrong." You don't do that before you sign a contract. You don't do that before you enter into a relationship because you just assume people know what they ought to do and what they ought not to do, and they're assuming the same thing about you. You lied to me. You lied to me. "Well, yeah, but we never talked about whether lying is right or wrong." "Well, I just assumed you know you're not supposed to lie." Now, I didn't decide lying is wrong and you didn't decide lying is wrong. Everybody just knows, don't they?

0:10:15.2 AS: Here's something you rarely hear. I hope you've never heard this. I'm not suggesting you say this, but here's something we rarely hear: "Yes, I lied to you, so what? Why, well... Why are you making such a big deal out of this?" But if there is no objective, outside of us sense of justice, injustice, right or wrong, think about this: Why make an excuse for our behavior? "I cheated. Yeah, I cheated. So what? What's the big deal? Yeah, I lied to you, yeah. Well, why are you making such a big deal out of that?" Well, what we usually hear is, "I didn't lie. I didn't lie." Implication: Lying is wrong. I didn't lie.

0:10:53.9 AS: So we're gonna talk about this next time. We lie about lying so people won't think we're liars. Let me go over that again: We lie about lying because we don't want people to think we're liars because we know there's something wrong with being a liar, even though we did it anyway. Somehow, we just know, right? Now, what we might hear, what probably all of us have said at one point is: "Now, the reason I lied is... Let me tell you why I lied." But why not just decide lying is not wrong. It'd be a lot easier. Then you don't have to make excuses. You go, "Yeah, I lied. Yeah, I cheated. Yeah, I was unfaithful. Why are we even talking about this? I mean, come on. You're holding me to an account. You're holding me accountable to a standard you just made up. Somewhere along the way, you just decided lying is wrong, cheating is wrong, unfaithfulness is wrong. You just made that up. That's your standard. That's your truth. That's not my truth. You can't hold me accountable to a list of things you just made up. Besides that, we never went over them. We never sat down and we never even covered this stuff. So you have no right, you have no right to hold me accountable to some standard of right and wrong, just and unjust that you just made up any more than I have a right to hold you to my standard."

0:12:12.2 AS: But we know better. It's inescapable. We just know better. We throw those things out as excuses from



time to time. But somehow, we just know better because if we're gonna see, there is an ought to that stands outside of you and over you that didn't originate with you. It just is. There is an ought to. And again, it's not applied universally the same way in every culture and every season or in every, in a generation. But there is a general sense of ought to that stands outside of you, you did not make it up, and over you that didn't originate with you or me, and we can't escape it. Now, here's, again, the hypocrisy, it's just amazing. We've all done this. We might deny the existence of ought to with our actions because we don't always do what we ought to do, right? We may deny this universal sense of ought to with our personal decisions because I know I ought to, but I'm not gonna do what I ought to, and I know I ought not do that, but I'm gonna do it anyways. So we may dismiss and deny that there's some universal sense of ought to with our actions, but never with our reactions. We react to ought to whenever someone doesn't do what they ought to, and it hurts us, or it hurts someone that we love.

0:13:43.0 AS: Now, so what does all this have to do with integrity? Everything. And here's what it has to do with it: If there is no ought to that stands outside of you and holds sway over you, in other words, if that doesn't even exist, and if you're someone who just believes that the material world is all there is and nature's all it is, I understand that. You have good reason. There's good arguments we made for that. But if that's your worldview, if there is no ought to that stands outside of you, that holds sway over you, that holds you, to some extent, accountable, then integrity, let's not kid ourselves, integrity is nothing more than a tool that you use to get your way until it gets in the way, and then we just throw it away, and we just do whatever we want to. "But you promised, you promised." "You're right, I promised. And when I made that promise, I meant it, but I don't wanna do this anymore. I just don't want to." "But you promised." "I know I promised. And I'm telling you, in the moment, I meant it, but I don't wanna do this anymore." When integrity is anchored to nothing more than courtesy or societal expectations, it's so fragile and we just discard it when it's inconvenient, when it gets in the way. And why not? This is not anchored to anything, but my opinion. You signed the contract. I signed the contract, and when I signed the contract, I intended to keep the terms of the contract. But hey, a bigger opportunity has come along, so I'm out.

0:15:25.5 AS: Now, let's think about this as... This is so disturbing, isn't it? I know it's... Anyway, sorry. So I want us to think for just a minute about this at a national level because the implications of this just go on and on and on. If there is no ought to that stands outside of us and holds sway over us, integrity is reduced to a tool government uses to get its way until those particular rights and wrongs and justice and injustices get in the way. And then whoever controls the government just decides I don't know, "From now on, this is right and that's wrong 'cause we just make it up." So determining what's at the bottom, and again, whether you're atheist or not, a religious person or not, a Christian person or not, this is for all of us. This impacts all of us. This impacts all of us everyday. This impacts all of us today. Before this day is over, this dynamic is gonna come into play in your life. In fact, for some of you, it's coming into play right now because you're thinking, "Why is he talking about this? Because I've had my mind made up and I'd sort of built up a case and built a case for what I'm gonna do and got a head of steam. As soon as this is over, I'm gonna go out there, we're gonna have that conversation and I'm gonna do what I ought not do. And he's talking about this, how did he know?" Your husband called me. [laughter] That, no, I... This is just because this is just the reality we wrestle with every single day.

0:16:37.4 AS: This tension isn't gonna go away. So determining what's at the bottom or the foundation of integrity, if there's an anchor at all, what it's built on, has huge ramifications. Because if integrity is not connected to anything, if it's not supported by anything that actually exists, if it's not grounded in anything other than our opinion, and if it's not grounded, specifically, as we're gonna see, in the Divine, then again, let's not kid ourselves. Integrity. Integrity, what's right and wrong? Ought, ought not, just, unjust, noble, virtuous. It's fluid, right? It's fluid. It will be defined and redefined by personal and public opinion. It's just gonna be defined and redefined by majority rule.



0:17:22.3 AS: Okay, now, let me ask you this question, and I'm gonna let you vote on this in a minute. And don't leave, okay? And don't... Just to make a point: Should women be allowed to vote? Or should they? Or let's just vote, okay, if you think women should be allowed to vote, let's just... Raise of hand. Do you think women should... This is not a trick question, guys. It's like... I cheated on you? Yeah, yeah. So here's my question and don't answer this out loud, unless you're sitting by yourself somewhere or driving. Why should women be allowed to vote? Based on what? Now, I know what it's based on. For me, I don't wanna be locked out of the house this afternoon, so I'm all for women voting. But once upon a time the majority said no, and then the majority said yes. And if there's nothing more to that topic than the majority, where does that leave us? Some may say, "What about the Constitution?" Well, that's another good illustration. What... Are the rights? Again, you don't have to answer this out loud, just to get us thinking. Are the rights guaranteed by our Constitution? Are they anchored to anything other than the opinion of the authors?

0:18:35.2 AS: Let's take another one. I know this is so emotional, but slavery? Many thought it was right, and just, and moral because it was natural. And many in the world today, we can't even comprehend this in our way of thinking, in a Western way of thinking, modern way of thinking. But many in the world today think it's right, it's moral, it's just, and it's natural that some people were born to be ruled and other people were born to rule. It is as natural and as clear to them as the opposite is clear to us. We don't think that way. But who's to say? And what if the majority swung the other way? Would you swing with it? If not, why not? Let me dig a little bit. Do you just think you're better than all of those people in other parts of the world that think slavery is fine? Do you think you're better than them? You think you're just naturally morally superior to them? Or is there more to it?

0:19:38.1 AS: And if you think it's wrong, based on what? And the outrage at the very thought is an appeal to an ought; it just happened. You just know, there's something that is like "Andy, I can't even believe you're talking about this. This is disturbing to even talk about. I just know." And you wouldn't even have to come up with reasons. Even if you gave me four reasons why slavery is wrong and immoral, and I shot all four of them down when the conversation was over, you wouldn't be convinced. Which brings me to this: Does your outrage rest on anything more substantial and less fluid than your personal opinion, or even a personal conviction? Because a personal conviction is just an opinion that you say louder with more angst; same thing, right? Or your life experience: "Well, in my life experience..." Okay, so what?

0:20:27.9 AS: You had a life experience. Everybody has a life experience. I mean, come on, is the foundation for your moral outrage over something like slavery, or we can go right down the list, there's so many things... What's it founded on, what's it grounded in? I know it just seems self-evident to you, but behind the fact that it's self-evident to you, there are people all over the world it is not self-evident to them, so who's right? Or is there a right? Or do we just get to make this stuff up until it's inconvenient and we decide we wanna do something else? So if there's no ought and ought not that stands outside of us and holds sway over us, then right and wrong, just and unjust, is just determined by majority rule, in the case of a democracy. But it's determined by minority rule in the case of a dictatorship, or a fascist regime, or a theocracy. People with the power, they just make stuff up. They decide what's right, and what's wrong, and what's moral, what's immoral. But it's even worse than that. It's even worse than that. And you're thinking "How could it be worse than that?" In fact, just say "How could it be worse than that?"

0:21:38.0 AS: Yeah, I know. Thanks for asking. How could it possibly? I mean, this is terrible. And here's why: Because if there is no Divine lawgiver, if all there is is what we see, and what you see is what you get, and that's it, then we can't even hold the people in power responsible. We can't judge them, because there's no objective standard by which to judge them. I'm just judging them based on my opinion, my truth, my life experience, the way I was raised. And I'm holding them to an account, I'm holding them accountable, to a standard they never subscribed to to begin with and I don't want them holding me accountable to a standard that I never subscribed to to begin with either, so we're at a stalemate. And it's even worse than that, because if there is no objective standard by which to judge, if all there is is



matter, they actually had no choice in the matter.

0:22:39.5 AS: Because matter doesn't decide, matter just is. Choices, decisions require free will; and in a purely... You know this, in a purely materialistic world there's no free will. Free will is an illusion, it's a trick of evolution, it's not actual, it's not real. We experience decision-making, but we're not actually making decisions because of physics and chemistry, natural law; it can't decide anything. It just is. So at the end of the day, the people who see the world differently than us, we can't judge them, we're holding them accountable to something we just made up. Unless there's an ought to that we're all accountable to, that holds sway over us, and judges us. If that doesn't exist, in the end, it really is just survival of the fittest, evolution by natural de-selection. If there is no Divine, and if there is no Divine lawgiver, it's just self-serving opinion, it's just majority rule. And integrity just becomes a useful tool to help other people feel guilty, and to hold them accountable, and to meet our expectations until it's not. And then at the end, ought to is just up to you; the ought to is just up to me.

0:24:12.5 AS: But we know better. We know better. We know better. Even if you aren't sure about a personal god, you know better. Even if you walked away from God. I mean, even if you've read all the books, in your personal experience day-to-day before this day is out, you know better. There is something outside of you that's bearing down on you. And here is the amazing thing, and this is what I don't think I can convince all of you of today, but if you'll hang with us for the next few weeks, I hope someone or something will convince you. The moment... This is so amazing to me. The moment that we attempt to justify a behavior in our minds... Okay, think about this: We're gonna have one of these before the day is over. The moment, the moment you try to justify a behavior in your mind, "I shouldn't, but I'm going to" "I should not tell her that, but I'm gonna tell her that anyway" "I shouldn't lie" "I should show them" "I should, but I'm not" "I shouldn't, but I am" as soon as you enter into that internal argument with yourself, you acknowledge the Divine whether you believe in it or not, you acknowledge accountability to something that you did not create, and you can't shake.

0:25:43.7 AS: Paul, the Apostle Paul, he explained it different and better, and his is a lot shorter, so I'm just gonna read you his, but I get 30 minutes so I just couldn't read this and dismiss. But I will tell you this is better, and he's writing to Judean and Galilean Jesus' followers, they're new Christians, sons and daughters of Abraham who were raised on Torah, they were raised on the law. And here's something we can understand if we stop and think about it, these 1st century, and 2nd century too, but especially these 1st century Judeans, Galileans, sons and daughters of Abraham, their consciences were fine-tuned to the Law of Moses. I mean, fine-tuned. And sometimes your conscience can be too active, like you're too sensitive to things. So like 10 years, I know we can't get off on this, but like 10 years after the Resurrection... It's such a great story. Ten years after the Resurrection, Peter who's been with Jesus the whole time, the whole ministry, Peter gets to the door of Cornelius' house, and Cornelius is a Gentile, and Cornelius has invited Peter over to talk about Jesus. Isn't that what Peter's supposed to do? Like, Go ye therefore into all the world. How about you just go up the street? This isn't like a big deal. Actually, it's a day and a half journey.

0:27:00.3 AS: He's invited to Cornelius' house, 10 years after the Resurrection. This is a guy who ate breakfast with his resurrected Savior on the beach, and Jesus said, Go into all the world, and he gets to Cornelius' house and it's like, "Ugh." And in his letter, it says he says, "This is the first time I've ever been in a Gentile's home." It's like what? Yeah, because their consciences was fine-tuned to the Torah and to the 1st century teaching of how Torah was supposed to be lived out. So when these Judeans and Galileans, sons and daughters of Abraham, when they realized these Gentiles, people like most of us, are beginning to worship their God and are gonna follow their Messiah and embrace Jesus as their Messiah as well, they were like, "Okay, wait, wait, wait. How are they gonna do this? They don't even know Torah. They don't even go to synagogue. They know nothing. How in the world are they gonna live a life that's pleasing to God when they don't have the law?" So Paul's like, that is a great question. So here is an answer. Here's what he says,



When Gentiles, talking about most of us, who do not have the law, because they just didn't grow up with it, they don't have it in their hearts; their minds or consciences aren't fine-tuned.

0:28:12.2 AS: When Gentiles who do not have the law do instinctively things required by the law, when they, as they begin to follow Jesus and they become more honest and they quit stealing, they quit cheating, and they quit cheating with their measure and their weights in the marketplace, when they begin to live better, more ethical, more moral lives, he says there's something that's intuitive, there's something that their conscience begins to be more fine-tuned, not to Torah, not to the law as given to the Jews. He says, But God's doing something on the inside, they just know those things are wrong. He says, when that happens, when they're like, suddenly you know that didn't bother me before, but now I'm like, I'm not doing that anymore. Remember Zacchaeus? He stole and stole and stole and stole, then he meets Jesus, like "I'm giving it all back, plus some." It's like, "Whoa, what happened? Dude, what did you read?" "I didn't read anything, I just met Jesus, I didn't have to read it. It's like suddenly, my eyes are open, I see the world a different way." He says, Paul, when that happens, they are... He says they are a law for themselves even though they don't have The Law. They have a law, they don't have The Law, they don't have Torah.

0:29:19.0 AS: But where did that come from? Where does this enlightenment come from? Where does this sense of right and wrong that suddenly their eyes are open to? Paul says they show... He said, I've been around. I've been all around the Mediterranean Basin inviting Gentiles to following Jesus, here's what I've discovered. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts. They show that the requirements of the law, not the sacrificial law, the how you treat other people law. The law are written on their hearts, their consciences. Their consciences are becoming, are starting to get fine-tuned to the Divine law of God that's for everybody. Then here's something we all experience everyday, and their thoughts... This is so interesting, and their thoughts sometimes accuse them. Isn't that weird? It's like your body is moving in this direction because you've decided what you're gonna do and your thoughts go, "Don't do that." It's like, wait, how many of me are there? I just had a thought that conflicts with the direction of my body and I had already made up my mind so do I have two brains? He says no. There's an internal tension now because they've been awakened to the Divine law of God. Their thoughts are accusing them, and at other times defending them. "Good job, good job, good job. Yeah, you're probably not gonna get a bonus now, but you did the right thing."

0:30:38.9 AS: She's in tears, he's in tears, your kids are upstairs crying but that was a conversation you needed to have. Good job. Gentiles who didn't have or know the Ten Commandments are condemned by their conscience and encouraged by their conscience any time they intersected with the law of God, whether or not they had the official law of God. So, ought to, ought to is not completely up to you, and ought to is not completely up to me. There is an outside agent. And this is huge. I just want you to think about this, especially if you're not a Christian or used to be, you're rethinking it. The moment, the moment we attempt to justify a behavior in our minds, we acknowledge the law of God written on our hearts. You say, I don't believe in God. I'm not saying you should or that you do, I'm just telling you. You've been wrestling with ought to your whole life, and you thought it was condition and societal conditioning and certainly there's certainly some of that, right? But I'm just telling you. You have experienced, and Apostle Paul talks about this in some of the other places, you have experienced the Divine, you have experienced an encounter with a God who loves you, who has written His law on your heart, and you know you didn't make it up, and you can't escape it. And you made a big, big, big bad decision.

0:32:06.7 AS: And the only way to assuage your guilt and your conscience, is you had to start making other bad decisions. And your Heavenly Father says, "Come back. Come back from the edge. Come back from the brink. I don't want you to wrestle with this, because to wrestle with your conscience is to wrestle with me because I placed my law in your heart." The moment we attempt to justify a behavior in our minds we acknowledge the law of God written in our hearts, the rule of God, the kingdom of God. This is why I love to say that everyone should consider following Jesus,



because Jesus came to planet earth and he ignited and he launched and he initiated the rule and the kingdom of God on earth, and he placed his law in our hearts. And when you do the right thing, when you do the costly thing, when you do the thing that costs you financially, costs you relationally, costs you reputationally, costs you some followers, now you're not gonna get invited back, now you're not gonna get invited in, now your life's gonna be different because you did the right thing, you have intersected with the Divine because you obey the law of God written on your heart. You have participated in it. These are Jesus' words, I love this. You are not far from it.

0:33:28.5 AS: So, we're gonna talk about integrity from lots of different angles, but to get started, it's anchored to something beyond our fluid opinions, and it's anchored to something beyond anyone's fluid opinions or majority opinion. It's informed by a value system that stands outside of us, that stands over us, that puts pressure on us. And it represents what's best for us, and it represents what's best for the people around us. And the reason you know it's what's best for you, is because when someone treats you the way they ought not treat you, you appeal to the law of God in your heart and you appeal to the law of God that you hope is in their heart as well. It's more than simply being a good person, it's living in sync with the will of God. When you do what's right and it costs you, you declare the rule of God over you. You're not just making a good decision, you're not... This is what's so amazing. You're not just doing the right thing, you are declaring the rule of God over you, and you are participating in the kingdom of God, whether you meant to or not, and whether you believe in God or not. And when you insist that other people treat other people justly, and when you insist that other people treat other people right, and when you insist that other people treat other people fairly, you're participating in the kingdom of God as well.

0:35:06.9 AS: So wrapping this up. Integrity, we expect it, you can't not expect it, we celebrate it. Every time you see it, you celebrate it. Those are the heroes, right? And we can't escape it. But the question is this, the questions are these, I guess. How do you get it? For some of you, how do you get it back? How do you guard it? How do you model it for your kids? That's what this series is all about. So, don't miss part two of *Your Integrity, Our World*. Next time, we're gonna talk about how to position integrity as your guide. So I hope to see you then.

0:35:51.2 AS: But before you go, three questions to keep the conversation going, or to get the conversation going. Parents, my goodness, my goodness, please figure out a way to have these conversations and ask some of these questions with your children. And if you have answers to the first two of these questions, these are the legendary stories that should flow generation, after generation, after generation in your family, because when kids see their parents and grandparents get it right, it does something in their heart. Question number one, have you ever done the right thing because it was the right thing and paid a price as a result? Was it worth it? Your kids need to know those stories, grandkids need to know those stories. Number two, have you suffered personally because of someone else's lack of integrity? Yeah, this is just a reminder, over lunch, every small group can tell those stories. And then number three, would you commit Proverbs 11:3 to memory? This is gonna be our key verse throughout this series. I would love for you to commit it to memory. There's several different translations.

0:36:44.7 AS: I memorized it in NIV, but I'm gonna teach it out of the New American Standard Version, it says this, "The integrity of the upright will guide them," we're gonna talk about that next week, "but the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them." So, this is a big topic. It's as big as our lives, it's gonna intersect with your life before this day is even over. It's as big as our community. It's as big as our country. So, in addition to participating in this series yourself, I hope you will share it with some friends. It may make all the difference in the world to them. It may keep them from doing something they ought not do simply because somebody was talking about what they ought to do. They may be on the verge of a decision they will regret for the rest of their lives, and you could be the catalyst to keep them from moving in that direction. I'd love to pray for us and we'll go.



0:37:35.8 AS: Father, thank you. Thank you. Father, thank you for those of us who grew up with parents who just maintained their integrity throughout, it just inspired us, it just set a pace and a pattern for us, Father. For others of us who are digging out of a hole, we just never saw it, we didn't ever see it modeled, we never saw anybody suffer because of doing the right thing or doing the right thing, even when it cost them. So we just didn't have that category, and here we are kind of clawing our way forward. Father, wherever this lands with us, give us the wisdom to know what to do with it, and then give us the courage to do it. And I pray that as followers of Jesus, that we would lead the way, because our Savior, our Savior died for our sin and took away all of our excuses to live any other way. So Father, again, wisdom to know what's right, courage to do it, in Jesus name. Amen.

PREVIEW