

# STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

## Strengthening Your Grip on Integrity

*Psalm 75:5–7; 78:70–72*



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Integrity is the opposite of hypocrisy. A person with integrity follows through on commitments and doesn't back down when something better comes up. A person with integrity refuses to use others for personal benefit, doesn't tend toward haughtiness, and has an accurate view of personal strengths and weaknesses. Integrity welcomes accountability, even when it comes through constructive criticism.

Integrity is solid like a rock. It won't crack under the pressure of circumstances, and it won't crumble when others leave. Integrity keeps one strong while under the white light of examination and the exacting demands of close scrutiny.

Though Christians should strive for personal integrity, we must remember that integrity does not equate to sinless perfection. No one can achieve that goal in this life. A person with integrity doesn't hide his or her shortcomings but confesses them to the Lord and to others. Let's learn more about integrity in this lesson.



### LET'S DIG DEEPER

#### 1. Integrity Test One: Adversity

Few things reveal the strength or weakness of our integrity as does the strenuous course of adversity. Just as a footrace tests the endurance of a runner, adversity tests the strength of our character. The Christian life, though, isn't a fifty-yard dash. It's a marathon with challenging hills, monotonous straightaways, and crowded turns. And no one endured the marathon of testing like Job, who lost nearly everything in a matter of hours. We read in his tear-stained journal that though God's tests pushed Job to the edge, he held on to his integrity (Job 27:1–6). Now, holding on to our integrity doesn't mean having to withstand adversity's flames with a smile on our face. God knows our frailty. What He looks for is the quality of our faith. And if we submit to God's sovereign wisdom in the midst of adversity, He will be just as pleased with us as He was with Job (Job 42:1–9).



## Quotable

*“That which  
will keep a  
ministry on target  
is a faithful  
commitment to  
the Word  
of God.”*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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### 2. Integrity Test Two: Prosperity (Psalms 75:5–7; 78:70–72)

How often we sigh and think, *If I only had more money*. Believe it or not, prosperity tests our integrity just as much as adversity—and sometimes more so. In the midst of suffering, we have one goal: survival. Adversity forces us to trust in God, and often we feel His presence more than ever. But when prosperity falls on us, Satan wants us to get puffed up with pride and stop trusting God, who warns: *don't get conceited*. In Psalm 75:5, to the wicked He says, “Do not lift up your horn on high, / Do not speak with insolent pride.” In the midst of prosperity, we must *keep the right perspective*. God will humble the proud (Psalm 75:6–7). On the other hand, God does exalt the humble who hold tight to their integrity. The Lord took David, a lowly shepherd, and exalted him to the highest office in Israel (78:70–72). But to have David's kind of integrity in the midst of prosperity, we must continually open our hearts to the Lord, and we must endure His scrutiny and correction.



#### A CLOSER LOOK

##### *Humility: The Foundation of Integrity*

*“I said to the boastful, ‘Do not boast,’  
And to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up the horn;  
Do not lift up your horn on high,  
Do not speak with insolent pride.’”*

—Psalm 75:4–5

When we work hard and exert time and effort to achieve a goal, what's wrong with taking the credit? What's wrong with tooting our own horn? That's what the godless thought in Asaph's day. They relied on their own strength and pointed to their great power when they achieved success. But they forgot that all of their abilities came from the Lord. They neglected gratitude, and their pride took over their hearts. God hates pride. The Lord has promised that those who boast in their own strength will be humbled—He will break their horns (Psalm 75:10). So when we succeed, to whom should we give credit? There's nothing wrong with acknowledging our own gifts and talents. But when we forget that they originate with God, we will begin to slide down the slippery slope of pride. Let's use the success God has given us to proclaim His strength and not our own strength.



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### LET'S LIVE IT

For our integrity to be refined as silver, we must submit ourselves either to the scalpel of adversity or the probing light of prosperity, depending on our circumstances. That's when we'll find out what we're really made of.

This study on integrity has provided two lingering lessons:

1. No amount of adversity should alter personal integrity.
2. No amount of prosperity should weaken moral integrity.

Each day we must examine ourselves, just as the apostle Paul commanded in 1 Corinthians 11:28!

**Has your integrity been put to the test lately? Did adversity tempt you to compromise in order to relieve the pain? Or did prosperity tempt you to compromise in order to retain the comfort of your possessions? Think about your most recent trial, and evaluate the quality of your integrity as a result.**



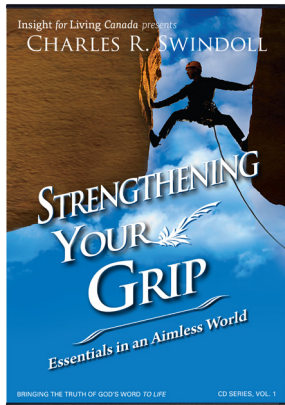
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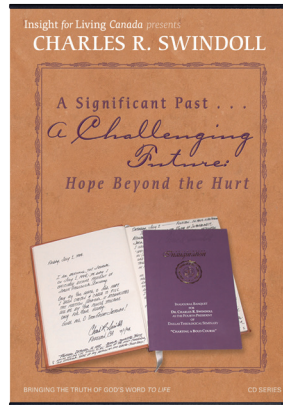
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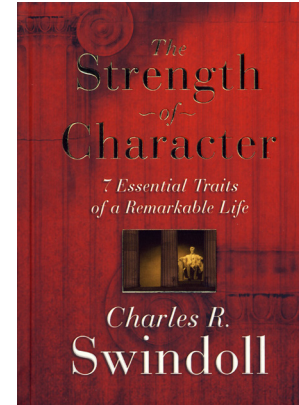
## Tools for Digging Deeper



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