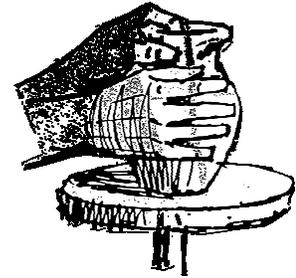


His Workmanship: Westside

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

Daniel's Heart of Integrity by Jeff Hamilton

We expect difficult times to challenge our faith, to try us by fire, and to show our true character, Rm 5:3-5. But prosperity is also a challenge to the follower of God, Pr 30:7-9. When we lose sight of our need for God, it is easy to stray, Deut 32:15. We tend to think that what we have is because of our own ability—but that is dangerous “stinking thinking,” Deut 8:17. Daniel remained faithful to God even in his prosperity. Daniel had integrity that showed.

Wholeness. *Integrity* means to be complete, upright, innocent of willful wrongdoing, having a clear conscience. *Integrity* is a mathematical term, from the word *integer*, which is a whole number—related words are *integral*, meaning “essential to completeness,” and *integrate*, which means “to form into a whole, unite; end separation and bring into a unit or unified whole.” A person of integrity is whole and complete; his actions, thoughts, and words are the same—he is not double-minded but single-minded, cf. Mt 6:21-23; Jas 1:6-8; 4:8.

Job was such a man, Job 1:1, 8. Even when Satan tried to bring him down, he held to his integrity, Job 2:3. He remained the same and would not let go, 27:3-6. The entire key to Dan-

iel's success was his unwillingness to compromise his values and standards. This is not to suggest that he was any stronger, greater, or more able than we, but His allegiance and love for God was the single priority in his life, and we often fail in this commitment.

Success from God. Daniel had a very secure and sound future working in the palace of the king. His integrity had earned him favor with the king's staff; he was found to be ten times better than the other servants in the eyes of the king, Dan 1:20; he was living in the lap of luxury and comfort. He could easily have claimed credit for the successes he found in his life. Life had given him lemons, but he made lemon Italian gelato. His wisdom, his quick thinking, his character, and his integrity had provided him a place of favor in this seemingly unfavorable circumstance. But Daniel knew better than to take credit for something he knew God had done. Any successes we find, any grace, any compliments on character, any praise for a job well done is only possible by the molding and shaping of our lives and characters by our loving Father. Only the ignorant will claim to have achieved standards of diligence or excellence through their own hard work and in-

nate honesty. No, at our core we are selfish, self-seeking, and fickle. Any positive characteristic we find in ourselves has been developed by the grace and care of a God Who loves us and wants only good things for us.

Daniel was only about 19 or 20 years old when he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, plenty young to be naive. Any fear or reservation, any lack of boldness, any instability or wavering could easily have changed the course of the many lives he would save by giving Nebuchadnezzar the dream. It would have been easy to fear a man who, history tells us, was the most powerful man in all the world. But Daniel's heart was aligned with God's—he was one with God—and his devotion was unshakable. It took faith. God had shown Daniel that He was with him and that He was greater than Daniel's captors (through His faithfulness to Daniel and his friends in Daniel 1). “If God be for us, who can be against us,” Rm 8:31.

Two other words are closely related to this idea of integrity (integrated oneness with God): upright (strong moral rectitude) and blameless (without reproach, not guilty or culpable, not responsible for wrongdoing, faultless).

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“As for me, You uphold me in my integrity and set me before Your face forever,”

—Psalm 41:12, from p. 1

None of these three words indicates flawless perfection—that a person never sins. Rather, they indicate an attitude or character of a person who chooses to walk with God, to be loyal and faithful, not to degrade himself or walk the path of sin, Gen 17:1. David was this kind of man, Ps 27. He knew where he stood before God and the direction he was heading, so he kept his innocence. He was a man of truth, of righteousness, of integrity, both in man’s eyes and God’s, 1 Kg 3:6; 9:4. Yet we know about David’s sins. It isn’t a lack of sin that defines the upright man, but his attitude toward sin.

Truth and honor, not perfection. Too often we put more demands of perfection on ourselves and our fellow man than God requires. It is not that we tolerate or expect sin, but we should never expect or demand sinlessness. What we should demand is true integrity, true uprightness, and true blamelessness from ourselves and others, Phil 2:14-16; Col 1:21-23; 1 Thes 3:12-13. You see, this is not some lofty goal that only elders obtain. It is a characteristic which ought to be displayed in every Christian. Isaiah gave a beautiful description of integrity, 33:15-17. The upright man always trusts God. God’s trustworthiness is the basis of his integrity—his confidence in God, Ps 26:1. He trusts in an unchanging God Who is sure, so he can be sure and unchanging, as well, because his defense is God; cf. Ps 37:37; Pr 2:21-22; 1 Thes 3:13; 5:23.

Evil vs. integrity. Imagine Daniel’s circumstances (Dan 6:4) in our current government. How likely would politicians be able to find something somewhere to pin on someone they despised? Notice that the wicked in general don’t like those with integrity. Evil

men make the upright a target, Ps 11:2; 37:14; 64:4. They hate the blameless, Pr 29:10. Their goals are in opposition to those of integrity, Pr 29:27. Why? Because they don’t like the concept of sin, so they mock sin and those who avoid sin, Pr 14:9. They don’t like being told they are wrong, even indirectly, Amos 5:10. In other words, they can’t stand that there is someone successful at living better than themselves.

Daniel’s enemies found no fault in him, so they turned to another scheme: they made being right a “wrong,” Dan 6:5-9. This deception is an abomination to God, Is 5:20; Pr 17:15. Today society calls this “political correctness.” Something that once was right is declared to be a wrong for political reasons, not moral reasons.



Daniel maintained his integrity, Dan 6:10. Integrity is not defined by others. It is the choice of following God’s ways, Pr 10:29. Integrity guides a person into making the correct decisions, Pr 11:3,5. It is a clear marked highway that leads away from evil, Pr 15:19; 16:17. Integrity protects the righteous, Pr 13:6. Daniel knew exactly what he needed to do. There was no question as to how he would respond. He had already

made the decision years before. He did not compromise his principles simply because others declared them to be wrong.

Integrity and salvation. Daniel’s integrity made an impression on the king. When he was reported to the king and punished, the king was displeased and sought to find a way to deliver Daniel, 6:14-16. But he could not save—only God could rescue Daniel. The king knew that Daniel constantly served God. You see, walking with integrity influences those around you, Pr 20:7. That is why integrity is so important for leaders in the church, such as evangelists, Tit 1:7; 2:7-8; 1 Tim 3:2, 10. Daniel was saved because of his integrity, Dan 6:17-23; cf. Job 4:6. Integrity is a source of security—it preserves our hearts, Pr 10:9; Ps 25:21. The nature of our God is to deliver and rescue the righteous and destroy the wicked, Dan 6:24-28. Knowing this, is integrity the path you choose to walk? See 2 Pet 3:13-14.

I pray to have a heart like Daniel’s. I am so easily distracted (divided) from my devotion to God, so easily led astray by my own wants and desires, my own plans and purposes. Oh, that God would pour into me a heart of integrity and character that would bring Him the glory, praise, and honor due His name! *“Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name,”* Ps 86:11.

Social Gospel, from p. 3

human race. It preaches Christ as a great social reformer rather than as a spiritual Savior. It limits His work to earthly benefits for mankind. Paul said, *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,”* 1 Cor 15:19. The social gospel can only leave man spiritually naked!



God makes my heart clean in 2015 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." —Ps 51:10

Social Gospel, James P. Needham

The social gospel is a philosophy in religion that the church should concern itself with worldly problems rather than spiritual ones. It is more interested in ecology, biology, psychology, and sociology than in theology. It is more concerned about preserving the whooping crane and alligator than about preaching Christ the preserver of souls. It spends more time fighting earthly pollution that may damage the body than with fighting spiritual plagues that will certainly damn the soul, Mt 10:28.

The social gospel is more interested in feeding the body than in nurturing the soul. Its goal is education, not salvation; recreation, not sanctification; fraternity, not eternity. It concerns itself with the "new morality" rather than with immortality; birth control rather than self-control; ministering to the "inner city" rather than seeking the heavenly city; slum clearance rather than with sin clearance.

The social gospel philosophy is more interested in helping men make a living than in helping them make a life. It is more concerned with civil rights than with spiritual fights; civil laws rather than spiritual flaws; revolution rather than revelation; civil disobedience rather than spiritual obedience; communism rather than faith, repentance, and baptism.

The social gospel is a lame duck spiritually because it is without the power to fulfill the lasting needs of the

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Discipleship Here At Home

VA School Board, from p. 4

whether children and parents are sufficiently serious about their religious beliefs. "To demand children at 14 to attest to their religious beliefs, while they are still in training and have not come to firm religious beliefs, is unfair to the child and certainly usurps the parents' authority," said one irate parent.

What an abomination! Educated citizens with authority in the US think it is OK for a government entity to interrogate a child about his religious commitments! Board chairman Michael Payne claimed, "State law on the issue is very vague, and I would like the General Assembly to clarify the law for school districts." Really? First, if it is vague, then what can possibly justify such a flagrant anti-American interpretation of the law? Second, if the Virginia state legislature actually intended this First Amendment violation, then it should be impeached and removed from office. The school board should join with the homeschooling families to go to the courts to get such a law struck down. As offensive as this religious intrusion is, it makes no sense. Parents have a natural right to educate their children just like they have a natural right to dress them and feed them. Secular parents have the same right that religious parents do. So why was this even an issue for the board?

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Pat Wilkes, Tim Huelsman—asthma

Bill Dennis—adjusting pacemaker and meds

Nell Free—pacemaker, heart, back pain

Hannah Huelsman—polycythemia, thickening of blood; heart murmur, acid reflux, chest pain

Kirk Johnson—MS

Menards—aging; Lloyd, diabetes, weak;

Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP

Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; arthritis

Judy and Mike Strand—hepatitis trtmnt

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

weakness—makes recovery longer from recent illness

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

·Frank Savarese—surgery on salivary gland 1/19

·Bill Dennis—in St. Anthony's Hospital for infected knee; will go to rehab facility this week

·Kaylee Chavez—age 10, at St. Jude's in Memphis for brain cancer treatment; donate at www.youcaring.com, type her name at top

·Hannah Huelsman—allergic reaction to penicillin

·Judy Strand—Hep C; on liver transplant list

·Liz Kosik and kids—flu and upper respiratory

·Chris Bennett, former member—all tools for biz stolen; recovering from fall, fractured pelvis

·Buford Wrather, Cheryl Reames's dad—stroke, complicated by Parkinson's; in CO Springs

·Ed Fink—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors. Undergoing chemo this month

·Christine Adams—recovering from ankle surgery, using cane; has returned to work 1/2 days

·Lloyd Menard—unable to walk, memory failing

·Sylvia Chapman, Brett's grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo

·Judy Sartin's friend, Vicky Keys, passed away last week; pray for her husband and family

·Judy Sartin—rotator cuff injury and leg bruising from fall

·Brittany Tope's mother—breast cancer in spine; pain in broken ribs which tumor has injured; grandmother—on dialysis

·Pat Wilkes—knee drainage Tues; also bursar impingement on right shoulder causing severe pain

·Chad Meyers of Smoky Hill—acute renal failure;

Denny Meyers's mother in rehab after fall

·Sharon Rupinen, Sandra Perry's sister—surgery recovery

·Melanie Baughn's mother—in OK has renal failure and cellulitis

·Jennifer Clayton, former member—severe lyme disease; heart, spine, neuro issues

·Kenny Boyd's coworker Kim Phillips—asks our prayers for heart problems

·Frances Blackwelder of Grand Junction—blood clot

·Rick Robbins, friend of Howells—brain surgery

Remember Greg Geiss, Paul Alfaro, and

Elaine Isbell, who need prayers, support

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes; heart

valve issues recently diagnosed

Directory Mark Reingrover asks to be

removed from directory and asks our prayers for

help with spiritual problems.



Exposing current thoughts & trends *religious freedom*

VA School Board Questions Homeschoolers, by Mark Horne

Goochland, VA, parents have received a letter demanding that their fourteen-year-olds submit their own written statement to the directors of a government entity to explain their religious beliefs. They were also warned that, if the bureaucrats were not satisfied, they could call them to appear to give a personal account and be questioned. Secular or unbelieving parents can homeschool, so how can the religious beliefs of the child matter?

Hundreds of passionate parents went to last week's Goochland School Board meeting to protest the action and a "religious exemption" policy. The policy put in place by the school board in 2013 required children ages 14+ who wanted to be home schooled to provide a statement about their religious beliefs to the school system. The board reserved the right to bring the child and his parent(s) in for a hearing.

Last Tuesday, however, after listening to many people's concerns, the board voted to repeal the policy. The school board will vote once again to ratify the same policy at its next meeting for some reason. Members have informed parents that they plan to vote again against requiring a statement of faith (but in favor of the option of a faith hearing). As for parents who received a letter asking for their children to provide a statement, that is currently suspended until the final vote takes place.

The Home School Legal Defense Association said the policy violates Virginia law. State law allows children undergoing religious training to be taught at home without having to defend their beliefs. The Virginia religious exemption statute gives families a right to an exemption from school attendance based on the religious training the parents are providing the child—regardless of beliefs.

So how has a right of parents to education their own children been re-interpreted by the school board as an authorization to separate a fourteen-year-old child from his parents for the purpose of probing his religious commitments and evaluate his sincerity?

Note that this vote to repeal the policy (temporarily?) in no way implies an admission that the school board was legally out of bounds in demanding such a religious statement from each child. The bad news is that the school board will continue to reserve the right to require parents who homeschool their own children to submit to a hearing. At such a hearing, government bureaucrats would judge

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meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
720-295-4530

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, Lesson 2, "I Have Become A Christian! Now What?" Jim Reingrover

- **Sermon**, "Lessons from First Peter," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **Questions answered**, "Why Don't We Wear a Cross or Have One on Our Wall?" Larry Campbell

Wednesday night: New study in

Daniel: Determined to Walk with God, Lesson 4, chapter 3. Get materials for Wednesday adult classes from the church's website under "Member Files."