

# Living a Life of Integrity | Proverbs 11:5

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Date: 02 June 2021

[ 0 : 00 ] I want you to look at Proverbs chapter 11 and verse 3. That'll just be our verse that I think kind of gets a setting for the whole chapter. You know, as well as anybody, that this book is Proverbs.

It is dad sitting down with his son and saying to him, I will tell you some truths, it'll change your life. And so this whole chapter is full of them.

I kind of rounded them all around verse 3. The Bible says in verse 3, The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

Father in heaven, I pray that you would give me wisdom and help me to speak in a way that would bring honor to your name and give the credit due to your word and you that ought to be given.

I pray, God, you'd change us, grow us, and mature us. I pray, God, for those that don't know you, that tonight they would hear the truth and be saved. And I'll give you great honor and glory and praise for all you do.

[ 1 : 06 ] In Jesus' name, amen. You might like to circle the word, but, in this verse. That is one of the most common words. You know, I always tell you I like to look for common words.

I think the most common word in Proverbs 11 is but. And you say, what in the world? So dad said, now son, this side does this, but this side does this.

And he ought to catch the contrast. He ought to be able to figure out, as dad teaches him, you can choose life or you can choose death, you can choose blessing or you can choose cursing, but there's two sides to the equation.

If you just jump real quick back up to verse 1, you're going to find a word but. If you just go down there, that's it. I've got time to go with it more than that. You're just going to find a bunch of them. And the whole point is he's saying there's two sides, two ways, the right way and the wrong way.

Now, before I jump into the chapter, I do want to say this to all of us, and especially maybe those who are listening, I want you to notice four words in verse 3 right now.

[ 2 : 16 ] Now, guide them, destroy them. Now, son, you can listen and be guided and have direction and know what to do with your life, or you can do this other and you're going to be destroyed.

That's a pretty rough, that butt hangs right in the middle of some really bad stuff. I can enjoy what wisdom is out there, and I can enjoy what to do with my life, and I can find the direction I ought to take, and I can find the path I ought to take, or I cannot.

And if I don't, it's not like I just don't find the right path. According to Solomon, what he's telling his boy is going to destroy you. I would like you to look at verse 3 and look at the word upright.

If I were Greg here, I'd make some good plays on words, like, you know, the uprights are always downright bad before they get saved. But can I remind you who the upright are here? Can I remind you?

Nobody got upright by doing right. Nobody got upright by being good. Nobody got upright by standing upright. They got upright because they saw that they couldn't do right, and they turned to one that could make them right.

[ 3 : 27 ] And the way I'm going to go to heaven when I die is not by what I've done, but what he did. And the way I'm going to go to heaven is not by how good I am, but how good he is. Now, I'd like you to go to the other side of the equation again, and I want you to look at the word transgressor.

A transgressor, that's somebody who intentionally or unintentionally is disobeying the law, disobeying the rules. Son, there are people that know what's right to do, and they just don't do it.

There's people out there, son, as you step out of here, there are people out there that they just break the rules. They just decide they're not going to do what they ought to do. They're transgressors.

And on the other side, there's upright. There's those who decide, man, I love God. Because I love God, I love his law. And because I love God, I love what's right, and I want to do what I'm told to do.

I want to listen to my father. I want to do what I'm told upright. Or I'm a transgressor, and I say, I don't really want to listen to anybody. I want to do what I want to do. And then you notice, if you would, there's a contrast between integrity and perverseness.

[ 4 : 35 ] Integrity is being complete. It's being whole. It is being respectable. It is being consistent and following the course in front of you.

And you say, an upright person who lives out his uprightness gets direction. An upright person who lives out his uprightness gets direction. An upright person who is complete and whole and consistent and respectful and says, man, I'm going to live out what Jesus did in my life.

That's all we do. When I live a holy life, I'm not living a holy life. I'm just living out what Jesus did in me. I'm just letting what he did in me out so I will do that. But the other guy, he's perverse.

He's perverse. And that means he's distorted. He's vicious. He has a disposition to cross, to vex. He's unaccommodating. So this other guy on the other side of the equation is doing what's wrong.

So he looks at him and says, son, what's going to happen? I've given you a proverb, the integrity of the upright. So I would like to ask everybody just for a second, let's just make sure we're upright.

[ 5 : 46 ] I used to read the Old Testament. It used to really bother me. I'd be like, man, I hope I'm upright. I'm reading this upright stuff. I hope I'm upright. I'm reading this blameless stuff. I hope I'm blameless.

And David will say stuff in the Psalms. He'll be like, I know I'm right. I know I'm perfect. I'm always like, how in the world do you say that? But you and I can say that. We can say it not because of who we are, but we can say it because of what Jesus has done to us.

He took my sin and put it on him. And he took his holiness and put it on me. And I'm going to go to heaven tonight because I have trusted Jesus Christ and what he did on the cross of Calvary.

So would you contrast integrity with perverseness in verse 3? Would you notice that one guides and the other destroys? Would you know tonight that if we don't do the right thing, we're going to get destroyed?

In 2 Samuel 16 and verse 23, you get the story of Ahithophel. And he's a perverse man. He's the guy that the verse could be written after.

[ 6 : 54 ] And it is the counsel of Ahithophel when he talks to Absalom. Everybody likes him. David likes him. He's a genius guy.

2 Samuel 16, 23. You talk to Ahithophel, you get good advice. But Ahithophel was a smart guy, but he wasn't the right guy.

He had a brain, but he wasn't right. He knew how to make the king like him because he could give real good advice. He's Bathsheba's grandfather. He advises Absalom on how to kill David and take the kingdom.

I mean, he's smart. So when it was David, he's like, I can give you great advice. I'm for you. And then one day, David's out and the other guy's in. And Ahithophel's like, well, honey, he just got to like me, you know. I'm going to keep my job.

So I give him good advice. I'm going to tell him how to kill David. Well, God sends old Hushai in there and he helps him not accept that advice and it's rejected. And when Ahithophel finds out that, you know, no matter how smart I am, he gave the right advice, by the way.

[ 7 : 54 ] If I had followed that, David had been a goner. But God had to take care of David. God did take care of David like he always takes care of his man and keeps his word. And in 2 Samuel chapter 17 and verse 23, Ahithophel saw that his counsel wasn't followed.

And he went home, put his house in order and hanged himself and died. Every time I read that, I'm like, well, that's pretty cold and calculating. Okay.

Ahithophel didn't take my advice. I ain't in too good of shape here. I think I need to get out of Dodge. I just see him walking in the house, going around the house, scurrying around, getting out his wheel and saying, baby, there's the wheel.

Let me give you the passwords, everything on the computer. And here's all the bank accounts that we got. And here's where everything is we got here. And I just want you to know all that. And she said, well, I appreciate that, honey.

What's going on? He said, I'll be back. I'm going to go to the bedroom. A few minutes later, she goes in and there's you hanging. And he killed himself. If you decide to walk in truth, the Holy Spirit will guide and direct you.

[ 8 : 56 ] You and I have the privilege of being guided and directed by the Holy Spirit of God. I need to stop and tell you how he direct us now. You're not a Pentecostal. You're not getting some word from the Lord.

But you got a word from the Lord so you can have a word from the Lord because you got a word from the Lord. But you didn't get a word from the Lord like they do where it's like something spooky happened and a word fell on me. That's not what happens.

You got the word in your hands. Amen. And so when you read the Bible, God says to you, hey, you need to say you're sorry. Hey, you need to get that right. Hey, you need to do this. Hey, you need and you're reading it and you're like, how in the world does this book know what's going on with me?

But I'm always astonished. It's like he lives with me and he knows me and it's like he's alive. And that's what the Bible, that's what God says about the Bible. Shows us what we're doing wrong. Shows us what we're doing right.

Directs us into doing right. By the way, everybody in this room is going to make mistakes. I was listening to the book on Charles Spurgeon. And Charles Spurgeon said, I love his church, a great church.

[ 9 : 56 ] So we got a lot of problems. He said, I got problems. Y'all got problems. But thank God, you know, the Lord's been good to us anyway. Because none of us are perfect, but we can get direction. Amen. We can get things right.

You're going to make mistakes. Just get them right. I would like to ask you now to go back to chapter 11 and verse 1. And we'll go through a couple more of these proverbs.

But I need to know, am I upright? Now, I didn't ask, are you right? I'm not even asking if you're right with your wife or right with yourself.

Have you come to a place where you know you sinned against the holy God? I know that 99.9%. But maybe somebody's listening and you're not saved.

You're not going to heaven when you die. And there's only one way to be made upright. And the way you're made upright is when you realize how you aren't able to be made upright. But God loves you and he loves you in spite of you and in spite of what you're doing.

[ 10 : 55 ] The Bible says in Romans 5.8, but God committed his love toward us. And while we were still sinning, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And you know, he died for us.

When did he die for us? When we got right? No, he knew you couldn't get right. So he died when you couldn't get right to make you right. And that's how I get to be upright. Now, go back with me, if you would, to Proverbs chapter 11 and verse 1.

As I go through the chapter with you, and I'll probably still be in this chapter again next Thursday night, Lord willing. But if you look at this, you're going to find out that a person of integrity practices honesty in business.

In Proverbs 11.1, he said, a false balance is something God hates. It's an abomination to the Lord. And we ought to underline the word Lord in our Bible because it's really not what are the common business practices and what's everybody else doing and how do I get along with everybody else?

Because when we read things, we look for the word Lord. We look for the word God. We look for the word King. We look for the guy who makes decisions.

[ 12 : 00 ] American culture doesn't decide what's right. Baptist culture doesn't decide what's right. God decides what's right. He says here, he says a false balance is an abomination to the Lord.

But boy, the Lord loves a just weight. It's his delight. God wanted his people to be honest in the weights that they used. In Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 35, he said, you shall not do unrighteousness.

I don't want any unrighteous. Don't y'all do wrong. Not in judgment. Not in the way you measure things. Then the way you weigh things. I just don't want y'all doing wrong.

Verse 36, he said, I want you to have a just balance. If you had your Bible open, you don't underline this. It's just, just, just, just. For just. He said, I want you to have a just balance.

A just weight. A just effort. A just hand. Shall you have. And then here's the reason. It's just right in the middle of the verse. I am the Lord your God.

[ 13 : 01 ] And since I am, I can tell you what I want. And not only that, what's beautiful is, you know, he never gets over what he did for them. And I think I ought to never get over what he did for me.

It says, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Now, maybe you've forgotten that, you know, because he's going to say this generations later. You're still going to be bringing it up.

He's going to say, I'm the Lord your God. I'm the one who got y'all out of Egypt. It's been a long time since 1962. In 1962, I was a hell-bound, hell-deserving little boy that had not gotten saved.

But he saved me. And he changed me. And he made me a new person. I am the Lord your God. Don't forget Jesus.

God rules. And he's the one that saved us. And he's the one that gives us new life. If you would, go down to chapter 11 and verse 4. If you're saying, boy, it looks like you skipped verse 2.

[ 14 : 07 ] That was covered real well last time with Trent. So we skipped verse 2. Go down to verse 4. Contrast riches and righteousness. There's a word, but, in the middle of it.

And, again, it's the same. You know, the lessons are pretty much repetitive. You know, you kind of live out who you are. You know, when you're upright, you do right.

And when you're perverse, you do wrong. In verse 4, it says, riches profit not in the day of wrath. Sooner or later, I'm going to die.

I got close once. But sooner or later, I am going to die. And when I die, it won't matter how much money I have. And it won't matter how good the doctors are. Because you can't hire a good enough doctor to keep you alive when God's ready to take you home.

And so here's a poor man. Or here's a rich man. And either one of them are thinking to themselves, I need to be able to get the best doctor. I've got to get good doctors to get me out of this.

[ 15 : 09 ] And he said, buddy, when bad stuff happens, money doesn't really save. I love the word, you know, it's just the Bible for you. But riches and profit right there side by side.

Like he said, riches and profit. And we're like, well, that is profit. That's, yeah, okay. Redundant there. But riches, they don't do anything for you in the day of wrath. But look what does something for us.

Righteousness. Riches or righteousness. And righteousness delivers from death. Now, will you stop and say, what's righteousness? Righteousness is right. Righteousness is being right.

But you can't be right. There's none righteous. Not a one. There's nobody righteous, not a one. There's none righteous. Not one is righteous.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But God saves us and makes us righteous. Money makes no difference to God.

[ 16 : 06 ] God, you're not going to offer God. God, if you'll get me out of this, I'll start tithing. God's going to be like, I don't really need you tithed, buddy. You can't bribe God. You might bribe a preacher, but you can't bribe God.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus ought to say something to us. I never noticed this until I heard a missionary preaching it. Don Bond was preaching it in the Nauti Keepa 30 years ago or whatever.

And he showed the contrast. He said, you know, everybody in the room would have figured that the rich man was the saved man. He went to church. Poor man was just laying on the ground begging. He was obviously cursed and the rich man was blessed.

And he made the comment in that day. He said, you know, everybody thinks riches means something special. And God's like, no, I was really looking at the other guy. Not riches, but righteous.

Not riches, but righteous. Now, if you hang around chapter 11, I don't know how far we'll get. If you hang around chapter 11, you're going to find out. I think I can get to it. Next verse.

[ 17 : 04 ] But anyway, I want to show you this real quick. We need to underline in this verse. We need to underline in verse four, day of wrath. Now, because you're a 2021 Christian, that doesn't resonate.

That doesn't sound to you unless you're a real Bible student. But this day of wrath, that's the tribulation period. That's when all, everything is going to break loose on God's people.

It's going to, the whole world's going to fall apart. I was listening to that in my Bible today as I was riding to a meeting I had today. I'd ride down the road and listen to the book of Revelation. And it's saying, you know, here's a third of them dying here and a half of them dying here.

Everybody, everybody's dying. Say, hey, when the bad stuff happens, money ain't going to help you. The Bible says in Romans 15, one, I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels, seven plagues that filled up the wrath of God.

In chapter 16 and verse one, he said, I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. I just, I think, you know, you know, it's preaching to the choir here.

[ 18 : 21 ] But our country doesn't believe it. God's angry. They don't like the word wrath. They like the word love. But you know, God's going to be pretty angry with sin and pretty angry with people that reject him and won't take him.

But knowing God, being righteous through the shed blood of Christ, frees us even from death, the grave, the worst that men could throw at us. Real profit's not found in money.

It's found in Jesus. Last verse, and we'll quit tonight. Look, if you would, at Proverbs 11, 5. Contrast the righteousness and the wickedness.

The righteous with the wicked. Look at 11, 5. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way, but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

There's a but right in the middle of that again. But we need to decide what's wicked. What's wicked? You know what makes a person wicked is they're not saved.

[ 19 : 26 ] Okay, so when I read the word wicked here, I'm not meaning Adolf Hitler. I'm not meaning some pedophile. I mean, when we read the word wicked, we immediately put in our mind, well, wicked are the really, really bad sinners.

But, you know, sin will take you to hell. Doesn't matter if it's a big sin or a little sin. If you don't trust Jesus, you're going to hell. And the wicked here are the people that are perverse enough to think they're good enough and what they do is enough.

And so these wicked, they'll fall by their wickedness because when you're wicked, you produce wickedness. When you're lost, when you're unsaved, when you're not born again, when you don't know Jesus.

Not knowing Jesus will make you produce stuff that people that don't know Jesus do. I mean, you're just going to be who you are. Now, let me just say this so we all know.

That doesn't mean you'll be really bad. Really good people are going to go to hell. You see, the Bible truth, if we take the Bible and look at the Bible, the Bible truth is that sin is every man going his own way and doing his own thing.

[ 20 : 34 ] It's me choosing what I think is good and what I think is right and me doing what I think is right. That's sin. There's only one way and it's not your way. And it's not my way.

Jesus said, I'm the way. And so I can't come along and say, well, I like your way, Jesus. And like this happens all the time. Somebody will say to you, I think it's good for you. But see, it's not the way it works.

It's not good for you. It's either Jesus or it's not Jesus. So the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.

One of these guys will be directed and guided and smooth and pleasant. Look, if you would, at the verse, it says, the righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way.

And this directing his way, this directing here, that root word is it'll make it a straight way. It'll make it a smooth way. It'll make it a pleasant way.

[ 21 : 32 ] When you serve God, he works things out in your life. You found that out in the New Testament, didn't you? All things run together for good. Them who love God are called according to his purposes.

Romans chapter 8 and verse 28. We know that's true. But I want you to notice the righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way. Now, nobody's perfect.

Nobody's mature. Nobody's good. Everybody's messed up. Till you read Romans 5.21. And then you realize that through Jesus, we got a perfect record.

Now, that's what this blows your mind. We got a perfect record. When a person gets saved, he takes your past and does away with it and puts his past on your past.

I don't even know how to say it in English. But in Peru, I would often go to, I'd be working with somebody or I'd be going even to get my own paperwork done.

[ 22 : 38 ] And when you go to get your paperwork done, you got to, they run you through Interpol, which is international police. They make sure, has this guy got anything going on? And so everybody's got a file.

You don't know you got one, but you got one. Of course, you know it now because you got Facebook and Google. We all got files. But back then, I didn't even know I had a file. And I'm in there and they looked at me and said, we're going to look at what you've already done.

I'm like, this is not too good. I don't know what I've done, but what do you all got that I did? Of course, they didn't find anything. But you know, when they go to look at what you've done, when the devil calls for your file, he doesn't get your file.

Well, he does get your file. It does have your name on it. But the files have been fixed. And my file doesn't say Austin. My file does say Austin Garden on it, but it was Jesus Christ's file.

And now if they look up Jesus, they go, boy, you're a pretty bad guy. You should have gone to hell. He's going to say, I did pay for that price. See, it's the perfect. But as I am, 2 Corinthians 5, 21, he became sin for us that we might, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God.

[ 23 : 41 ] And at the righteousness of God, you were looking at the righteousness of God. And I messed up this week. But you're still looking at the righteousness of God. And some of y'all messed up.

And I might be looking at one of y'all that messed up. But thank the Lord. I know what you did. And you know what I did. And we know what each other did. And God says, I don't know what you did. I chose not to remember that. Say amen.

He'll go to God and say, God, do you remember when I? And he'll go, nah, don't remember that. But God, this guy over here, he knows I did it. And God's going to say, well, I don't know you did it.

I already erased that and buried that in the sea and put it behind my back and nailed it to cross and separated as far from the east as the west from you. But you live a righteous life.

The righteousness of this person who's right. That's what that means. Well, God did something, made you right. And you start living that way. And you know, when you do the right thing based on who God made you, God will direct your path and work in your life.

[ 24 : 45 ] What a God. If you agree with that, say amen. Now, somebody just might not be on their way to heaven right now. You might be here and you've never trusted Christ as your savior. None of these promises are true for you yet.

But they're already paid for. And they're already ready. Did you know, you want to hear a wild one? He has already reconciled the whole world to himself. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, maybe verse 19 or 20.

18, 19 or 20. He's already reconciled the whole world to himself. So all your stuff's already fixed. But to get it fixed, you're going to have to say, can I have that? And he's going to say, yeah, you can have it.

It's yours. See, the Bible says the wage of the sin is death. But the gift of God. I know what I deserve. I deserve death and hell. But I've got the gift of God, which is Jesus giving me salvation from what he did on the cross at Calvary.

So one of these guys is going to fall down. He shall fall. His own wickedness, his own tricks, his own traps, his own sin is going to catch him.

[ 25 : 48 ] He won't get away with it. He may think he's hiding it, but he'll get caught in his own mess. He gets tangled up in his own web, and the other guy's just going to truck it right on straight to heaven.

Because Jesus made the way for us. If you're not saved, I want to invite you to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.