How Can Integrity Be Identified?

- The Greek words *aletheia* and *alethes* are translated “integrity” in the New Testament and mean “truth or the state of being true.” Jesus is referred to as a **man of integrity** because He lived wholly in accordance with God’s complete truth. (Mark 12:14)

- The Old Testament Hebrew word for integrity is *tamam*, from the verb *tamam*, which means “to be complete, to finish.” (Proverbs 13:6)

- A person of moral integrity is the same in the dark as in the light—not double-minded with contradictory thoughts, words, and actions. (Proverbs 11:13)

- To have moral integrity is to be undivided and consistent in your mind, will, and emotions regarding what is right and wrong. (1 John 2:15)

> “Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.” (Proverbs 10:9)

How Can Ethics Be Explained?

- Ethics (used as singular or plural) is a standard of moral principles that determine what is right or wrong for individual or group behavior. (Psalm 19:8)

- The word “ethic” comes from the Greek word *ethikos*, which at the root means “moral character.” (Proverbs 12:4)

- In philosophy, ethics is the study of various systems of right and wrong conduct. It examines good and bad motives, judgments, and consequences. (Psalm 119:144)

> “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

The 5 Systems of Ethics

1. **Cultural ethics**: Morals are determined by popular opinion.

2. **Situation ethics**: Morals are determined by what appears to be most loving.

3. **Emotive ethics**: Morals do not exist; judgments of right or wrong are not valid because feelings are neither right nor wrong.

4. **Behavioral ethics**: Morals do not exist; all human conduct is the result of genetic makeup or environment.

5. **Biblical ethics**: Morals are determined by the Bible, the unchanging Word of God.

> “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)

The Biblical Mandate for Morality

- The Bible indicates that everyone has moral responsibility because everyone has been created in God’s image. (Genesis 9:6)

- The Bible explains that even nonreligious people have God’s moral law written on their hearts. (Romans 2:14–15)

- The Bible describes sin as the source of moral failure. (James 4:17)

- The Bible exhorts Christians to allow God’s moral character to be displayed through them. (1 Peter 1:15–16)

- The Bible shows how temporary moral decisions have eternal consequences. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

- The Bible reveals Jesus Christ as the answer for moral failure. (Ephesians 4:22–24)
Surface Causes for Lack of Integrity

Cultural Ethics
• Have your values been swayed because of the belief that "everyone is doing it"?
• Have you looked for loopholes in the law or workplace to justify financial gain?
• Have you spent excessive money or time in an attempt to gain recognition and acceptance?

Situation Ethics
• Have you lied to protect another person's feelings or desires?
• Have you permitted a bad situation to continue because you didn't want someone overbearing or irresponsible to get upset?
• Have you felt justified taking items without asking permission because you felt you really needed them?

Emotive Ethics
• Have you thought, This can't be wrong because it feels so right?
• Have you indulged your desires to your own detriment?
• Have you felt you could say anything you wanted, no matter how your words hurt others?

Behavioral Ethics
• Have you justified your negative behavior saying, "I just can't help it"?
• Have you blamed your negative responses on your family upbringing?
• Have you defended your inappropriate actions, thinking, I was born that way?

In the book of Judges, the people of Israel fell into seven cycles of sin because, as the last verse says ...

"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."
( Judges 21:25)

Key Verse to Memorize
"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."
( Psalm 119:11)

Key Passage to Read
Psalm 101

The Ethics Exam
• Is there a principle about it in God’s Word? (2 Corinthians 4:1–2)
• Is it beneficial? (1 Corinthians 10:23)
• Is it self-serving at someone else's expense? (1 Corinthians 10:24)
• Is it setting an example you would want everyone else to follow? (1 Corinthians 11:1)

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.”
( 2 Corinthians 13:5)

The Integrity Interrogation
• Am I choosing to do this in order to look good in the eyes of others? (Galatians 1:10)
• Am I doing this only to receive financial gain? (Proverbs 15:16)
• Am I willing to do this even if I don't get the credit? (Luke 14:11)
• Am I doing something unethical because I know I will not be found out? (Hebrews 4:13)

"All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD."
( Proverbs 16:2)

Arguments and Answers on Ethics
• Argument: “People have integrity as long as they are true to their system of ethics.”
  Answer: From a human point of view, you have integrity if you are completely true to your system of ethics. However, since God created the universe and established His laws for all people, if your ethical system violates His system of right and wrong, then from God's point of view your system is flawed ... you cannot be a person of true integrity. (Psalm 24:1–4)

• Argument: “There are no moral absolutes—the issue of right and wrong varies from person to person and culture to culture.”
  Answer: Moral absolutes are both transcultural and transhistorical. In one country it may be right to drive your car on the right side of the road, yet it may be wrong in another country. However, in every country it's always wrong to intentionally drive into a crowd of children, killing innocent lives. While many laws are based on a country's changing wants, God's moral laws are based on His unchanging Word. (Psalm 119:89)

• Argument: “The wide diversity of opinions regarding what is right or wrong proves that there are no moral absolutes.”
  Answer: No, just because a test has multiple choice answers does not mean that all the answers are correct. Most often only one is correct. Likewise, just because a culture accepts an immoral custom doesn't make that practice moral. (Psalm 119:137–138)
• **Argument:** “A democratic culture that protects freedom of speech and religion must also accept freedom of morality and reject moral absolutes.”
  
  **Answer:** No, in a free society, you can hold to moral absolutes. Freedom of speech simply guarantees your right to speak—it doesn’t guarantee that what you speak is right. Often through open dialogue people are able to see the fallacy of their thinking. A democracy simply guarantees both your right to be right and your right to be wrong. (Psalm 19:7–9)

• **Argument:** “Morality cannot be legislated.”
  
  **Answer:** God’s commandments regarding morality are the foundation for all civil law. Interestingly, some of these ethical standards are not only legislated but consistently appear in every culture. For example, vengeful, premeditated murder is illegal in every society, as is stealing another man’s wife. (Exodus 20:13–17)

• **Argument:** “Christians should not impose their morality on others.”
  
  **Answer:** Understand the difference between personal ethics and social ethics. Personal ethics are beliefs about the way you should or shouldn’t dress, talk, parent, spend money, and express your sexuality, etc. For example, you have a right to wear your hair whatever length you choose.

Social ethics apply to what is right or wrong for a society—the belief that a man has the right to express his sexuality by raping his neighbor, even his wife, clearly violates the rights of another. Therefore, personal rights end when your actions threaten or damage another’s life, liberty, or property. Christians should not impose their morality on others, but they can impress others with their Christlike attitudes and actions. They should become educated on effectively speaking out, as well as campaigning, voting, and electing candidates who represent godly values. (Matthew 5:14–16)

• **Argument:** “In a free society a pro-choice position on abortion should be honored as an issue of personal ethics.”
  
  **Answer:** In a free society a woman should have personal choice over her own life, but not the right to take someone else’s life—that of the unborn child who has a separate heartbeat, a unique DNA (genetic code) and often a different sex and blood type. Those who actively oppose abortion believe it is not a matter of personal ethics, but rather a threat to the lives of others in society. (Proverbs 24:11–12)