

Ingredients of Integrity

Genesis 6:1-9:17

Introduction

We live in a world of violence and corruption. In 1900, there was one murder for every 100,000 people in the United States of America. By 1974, that statistic had risen to one for every 10,000 people. That means that every year, one out of every 10,000 people in America die a victim of murder. In 1987, there were over 10,000,000 property crimes. In fact, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) stated that the likelihood of a person in America experiencing a violent crime has increased fifty percent in the last decade alone.

Violence has become a way of life. In fact, it is promoted in the standard media. By the time the average child reaches twelve years of age, he has watched 13,500 hours of television. That is twice as much time as he will spend in school. By the time he finishes that exposure, he has seen 14,000 deaths. That is one every hour. He has observed over 100,000 violent crimes. That is one every eight minutes. We are breeding a violence saturated generation.

Even the popular music of today and the rock culture is filled with lyrics suggesting violence. If you have believed the lie that every generation has its music, and this is the music for this generation, you need to see me, because I will let you see the lyrics. They have changed dramatically and evidently, you are unaware. Perhaps that is why last year, there were over 70,000 assaults against teachers in our public schools.

Violence is not the only problem in America. We have a problem with corruption, immorality, adultery,

homosexuality, nudity, profanity and all are considered acceptable and are even portrayed by the media as legitimate lifestyles.

The unwed pregnancy rate among girls under the age of sixteen has increased eighty percent in the past ten years. In America, there are 10,000,000 alcoholics, and 1,000,000 of them are junior high kids. White collar crime has also risen dramatically in the last ten years. It is not surprising to hear of a banker, a financial investment group, an investor, or a religious leader being indicted for fraud, tax evasion, manipulation of interest, and downright embezzlement.

Now I have not listed these sins to get our sermon off to a great start or to be dramatic. I really want to answer a question that comes as a result of hearing of just a few of the things that are happening in this country. The question is, "How in the world could I as an individual or us as a family survive the immorality of this generation? And not just survive, but how can we impact our generation for Jesus Christ?"

Four Essential Ingredients of Integrity

The solution is found in a story in the Bible. It is in Genesis, chapter 6 – the story of Noah and his family. I want to discover with you today, ingredients of integrity that will help us not only survive the immorality and ungodliness of our generation, but help us to make a difference. We are not here to coast our way to heaven; we are here to make an impact as salt and light. How do we do that? We find the

solution in Genesis, chapter 6. We will begin with verses 1 and 2.

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

Now there may be some who would like me to state a position on the debate that has been raised as to whether these were fallen angels or humans. Perhaps you have heard or been involved in such a discussion. I do not want to preach a sermon on this debate, but let me at least give a couple of reasons why I do not believe this is the demonic world.

- First, if they were demons, they would not have been referred to as “the sons of God”.
- Furthermore, if they were good angels that had not yet fallen, they would not be looking or “on the prowl” for women. Satan and his horde had had to leave heaven, and the angels remaining in heaven were being confirmed in their goodness by remaining with God.
- Thirdly, angels, according to Jesus in Matthew, chapter 22, do not have the ability to procreate – I believe that is the intention of that text. Procreation is a human phenomenon, a human miracle. God has given us the ability to procreate; to bear children. Why? Because God promised that through this would come a Redeemer. Angels have no reason to procreate, they are created beings to worship God.

I think, the context in these verses would indicate that God has a problem not with fallen angels, but with men.

Notice verse 3.

Then the Lord said, “My spirit shall not strive with men forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”

I think this is a reference to the sons of God; the “ben Elohim”; the godly line of Seth. It is a godly line that is becoming weak. Why? Because they are intermarrying with ungodly women of the flesh – the ungodly line of Cain (that we are given in Genesis, chapter 4). So there is the intermingling of these two races that will bring about the necessity of judgment.

Well, enough of answering a question you probably you were not asking anyway. Let us continue to verses 5 through 9.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

The Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”

(now notice the word “But” in verse 8),

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

These are the records of the generation of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

The word “blameless” could be translated, “a person of integrity”. “Integrity” is defined as, “uprightness of character”. Noah had it. However, that does not really tell us much about Noah, other than he was a man of great character.

I want to give four ingredients of integrity that we can discover from this text. These ingredients are essential in your life and mine, if we are to ever survive the lure, the pull, the temptation, the obstacles to living a godly life in America today.

Integrity is purity in the midst of immorality

1. The first ingredient is this – integrity is purity in the midst of immorality.

Look again at verse 5, and notice several characteristic words of this generation.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

What a sad lot. They never had a good thought about them. Every thought continually was only evil. This was the record of that generation.

Right in the middle of this corrupt, sinful world is a flickering light – Noah and his family, who were

godly. His godliness was an indictment. In fact, I am convinced that a person of integrity will follow God even when it is unpopular. Noah discovered, in effect, when God was going to move, and he decided, when God came to him, that he would move with Him.

Hebrews, chapter 11, which we have studied in detail at an earlier date, discusses this. Let us refresh our memories with the fact that Noah was entered into the “hall of faith”. Look at verse 7 of Hebrews, chapter 11.

By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

There Noah was, an indictment upon his ungodly society. The words “he condemned the world,” do not mean much to us, yet we use similar phrases all the time. We might say that, “we’ve got to fight the world” or “we’re against the world”.

What do they mean? These phrases are a reference to the world system. What is the world system engineered by? The desires of perhaps fame, health, popularity, pleasure. All of these things grind the wheels of this world system into full gear. When we are an indictment on our world, what are we doing? We are living in such a way that we are not after these things or after these pleasures.

It says in this verse, that Noah rebuked or “condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith”. Why? Because Noah was willing to consider the approval of God more important than the applause of men.

How did Noah do that? Well, we know, through the chapters in Genesis, that he did it by what he did; that is, building an ark, and by what he said. The New Testament refers to Noah as “a preacher of righteousness” (II Peter 2:5). So, he not only lived a godly life, but he spoke the word.

There is a great debate today as to what generates the best kind of evangelism? Is it lifestyle evangelism or is it confrontational evangelism? Do you just live it and hope people get saved or do you pound people into the corner and ask them all the questions? Which do you appreciate most?

A man I respect was asked that question one time. He answered, “Well, let me ask you this question, ‘Have you ever flown?’”

“Yeah, I have.”

“Well, when you’re 30,000 feet up, which do you appreciate most, the left wing or the right wing?”

“You appreciate both.”

Noah did both, as seen in his life.

Integrity is obedience in the midst of ridicule

2. Let me give a second ingredient – integrity is obedience in the midst of ridicule.

Look at Genesis, chapter 6, again. Let us begin reading at verse 13 and read to the end of the chapter.

Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood [or cedar wood]; you shall make the ark with rooms [could be translated nests], and shall cover it inside and outside with pitch.

“This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.

(we do not know for certain what that measurement is, but we know that the ark will measure longer than one football field),

“You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”

Now this boat looks a little bit different from the kind you and I have seen in our Sunday school material. This boat, when it was finished, looked more like a floating barge. It was almost square and was three stories high. It was like a box that floated. It has been discovered, when these measurements were put to the test, that this vessel was almost impossible to capsize. That was important, because the tidal wave, the torrential rains, the hurricane-like weather was going to come, and this boat had to remain upright. Now continue to verse 17.

“Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under

heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.

“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.

(this is perhaps, an indication that the rest of the family will believe as well),

“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.

(by now, Noah is scratching his head),

“Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind [or species], two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.

“As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.”

Then Noah said, “You must be joking. Are you serious, Lord?”

“I’m not joking.”

Noah has just been asked to build a boat longer than a football field, and three stories high (approximately forty-five feet high). And, by the way, they were not building buildings with stories until the tower of Babel. It is also going to weigh about 18,000 tons and sit in his back yard somewhere. That is what God said to do.

(Chuckle) “Right!!”

Notice, as we continue to the last verse of chapter 6, or verse 22, that Noah’s obedience was comprehensive.

Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

Also notice chapter 7, verse 5.

Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him.

Look as well, at the last part of verse 9 of chapter 7:

... as God had commanded Noah.

This was comprehensive obedience by Noah. In fact, the word “build” is the same Greek word used in

the Septuagint and in the New Testament that is translated “prepared”. Turn to Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 1.

Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

Now, there is a tabernacle and as we continue in Hebrews, chapter 9, to verses 2 through 5, the word “prepared” is used, which is the same word used of Noah. Notice the way the tabernacle is prepared.

For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,

having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant;

and above were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

In other words, there was such comprehensive detail that, when they came to make exactly what God specified, they did it with such care. That is the idea of Noah building an 18,000 ton boat.

You would think Noah would get some scraps and just put the thing together. He might staple and scotch tape and think, “We’re going to make it – God will take care of us.”

Absolutely not. Noah built that ark in such a way that the word used means he comprehensively obeyed every detail. And, nothing was lost.

Now, use your imagination for a moment. I can just hear a neighbor coming along, and I am sure Noah had them coming all the time, to see this thing Noah was building. This was the eighth wonder of the ancient world. This was on the tour maps of all the people in that area. I can just hear the neighbors, “What are you building, Noah?”

“I’m building an ark.”

“What’s an ark?”

“Well, I won’t know until I finish it. I’ve never seen one before.”

“Why are you building it, Noah?”

“It’s going to rain.”

“What’s rain, Noah?”

“Well, I don’t know. I haven’t seen it yet.”

“What does an ark do, Noah?”

“Well, I do know that, it floats on water.”

“Floats on water? Noah, the nearest body of water, the Mediterranean Sea, is five hundred miles away. You missed it by a few miles. Wait. Did you say it floats like a boat? Let me see the specs to that thing.”

I can just see the neighbor. Noah wrote it all down on the clay tablet because he did not want to miss a thing. This guy probably picks it up and says, “Ha! Who gave you these things?”

“God did.”

“A lot God knows about building boats. He’s left some things out.”

“He did? Like what?”

“Well, there’s no mention here of sails or oars. How you gonna move this thing?”

“Never thought about that.”

“And also, you’re missing probably the most important thing on a boat – you’re missing a rudder. No mention of a rudder here. How you gonna steer it? Where’s the pilot’s wheel? Who’s gonna navigate this thing?”

“I guess God will.”

“Oh, and I suppose you’ve seen Him too.”

“No, I’ve never seen God.”

The reason I emphasize that particular point is because Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 7, mentions that Noah believed “things not yet seen”. He had never seen an ark. He had never seen rain. He had never seen God. But a man, or woman, of integrity is more interested in obeying the voice of God than, at times, the voice of reason.

Ladies, just imagine with me for a moment, how you would like to be married to a man who is considered the most eccentric, foolish man in the community? Think of it. I can just imagine Mrs. Noah going to the marketplace and all the ladies coming up, “Now, you dear poor soul, I’m sure you’ll go with that basket case of a husband, you poor thing.”

Kids, how would you like it if your dad was known as the biggest loser in the community? Don’t answer that – you will be in trouble if you do! You would want to disown him, right? Unless, of course, you share his cause. And they did. Chapter 7, verse 1, says,

Then the Lord said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.”

Well, the ark is finished, and I know you are familiar with the story, so I will move along a little quicker. They have finished perhaps, even bringing the animals, and have gone into the ark. I can imagine seeing Noah’s family go into that ark.

If I had been Noah, about this time I would get my digs in. “I’ve been preaching for one hundred twenty years and nobody has responded. I’ve been called a fool and every other name in the book for one hundred twenty years. My kids have been ridiculed; made fun of, and my wife also.”

Now would be the chance. And yet, I would imagine Noah responding somewhat differently. I would imagine Noah, before entering the ark, turning around. I am sure crowds have gathered; crowds have come to see this thing. Noah’s family has been hauling luggage and food from their home into the ark, and the crowds have come to watch. I would imagine that Noah would turn around. Now he is a suntanned man with deep lines in his face and calluses on his hands from hard labor. I would imagine one last time, he extends to them the invitation to enter the ark. He might say something like, “Don’t you understand? Judgment is coming. Haven’t you heard? Methuselah died. Won’t you enter the ark?”

We know from the estimations of scientists and mathematicians that the ark was only half full. Half full – there was room for hundreds, if not thousands of people. Do you know how many people responded to his preaching, to his invitations, to his life – the kind of life you are living? Zero. It was a colossal failure. Noah only had seven converts – his own family members. That is one convert every seventeen years – boy, that is exciting. And yet, God considered him a man of integrity, not because people responded to his voice, but because he had responded to God’s voice.

Integrity is patience in the midst of uncertainty

3. Let me give a third ingredient – integrity is patience in the midst of uncertainty.

Look at chapter 7 of Genesis, the first 10 verses.

Then the Lord said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.

“You will take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female;”

Understand that all of the animals are not going in two by two. The clean animals are going in by sevens; the unclean by twos. The reason for that is there would need to be animals for sacrifices. Continue to verse 3.

“also the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of the earth.

(note the word “seven” in verse 4),

“For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”

Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth.

Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood.

Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground,

there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

(note verse 10),

It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.

That is why I call this patience in the midst of uncertainty. I cannot believe the obedience of Noah; the patience of Noah and his family. They have gotten everyone into the ark, they are in there surrounded by animals, and guess what happens? For seven days, absolutely nothing! The door is shut; they have all

their equipment; they are ready to float – but there is no rain.

I imagine after a day or two, the neighbors lose their uncertainty; they get a little more bold. They had been wondering, “Is judgment coming?” Now two days have passed and nothing is happening. Now they are out at the ark barbecuing. One man said they are playing badminton using the ark as the net. They are out there having a great time and hollering, “Hey, Noah, are you still in there?”

Noah is probably scratching his head, thinking, “Lord, is this some kind of sham? Where’s the rain?”

Yet, there is no record of that. Although Noah was probably confused and uncertain, there is no record that he ever questioned God.

My friends, integrity believes God even when it seems ridiculous. You and I want integrity as long as it makes us look respectable. Noah was willing to follow integrity, even when it made him look ridiculous.

Look at verse 10 again.

It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.

I think this was probably God’s way of saying, “Look, I’m going to give mankind seven more days to repent. Seven more days because, when all of the generations read of My judgment, they’re going to know that I was so patient with man. I gave him every opportunity, and he would not repent.”

Now look at chapter 7, verse 17 through the end of the chapter.

Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.

The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.

The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.

(This is a universal flood, not a local flood.),

The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and

every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind;

of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.

Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.

The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

You need to understand that Noah and his family will float in this thing for over a year. This is not a weekend trip; this is a year plus. And when the ark finally grounds on top of one of the ridges in the mountain ranges of Ararat, God did not tell Noah, "All right, here are all the details of how you begin."

God never told Noah what life would be like after the flood. He never even told Noah how long he would float. Noah is sending out a dove to look for some kind of dry land. Noah is so patient that he sends out a dove and waits seven days. I would have been sending out doves every thirty minutes to look for some kind of dry land. What a patient man. In the midst of uncertainty, Noah was a man of integrity.

Integrity is worship in the midst of difficulty

4. Let me give a fourth ingredient – integrity is worship in the midst of difficulty.

Notice chapter 8, verses 14 through 19.

In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was finally dry.

Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

"Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

"Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."

So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.

Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.

And Noah kind of threw his arms out and said, "Finally, this is over. Lord, *never* put me through that again."

No, we are told in verse 20,

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

The first thing Noah did was lead his family in worship. What a confusing year this had been for him. It was a year of silence from God; a year of uncertainty; a year of tremendous difficulty, and yet, he worships God.

What About Today?

God responds in chapter 9, by establishing the Noahic covenant, a covenant that will change some of the things on planet earth.

One of the covenant changes will be that animals now will be in terror and fear of mankind. Man and beast will now be carnivorous.

The beautiful thing about the Noahic covenant, as we know, is the establishment of the rainbow as the sign of the covenant. By that, God says, "Every time you look up into the heavens, the earth will never be covered again by water." And by the way, you and I see the evidence of the covenant as well.

The unbeliever says, "Well, that's great – Noah is a wonderful man and he lived in a wicked world, but there is no need for a Noah today. God's judgment is not coming today."

Turn with me to II Peter, chapter 3, and look at verses 3 through 7. Sinful man refuses talk of judgment, but note what the scriptures clearly state.

Know this first of all, that in the last days . . .

(that is our generation, our day, our age of grace),

. . . mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,

and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,

through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for . . .

(for what kind of judgment?),

. . . fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Skip to verse 12.

looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Just as certainly as God kept His word and the flood came, and He gave mankind centuries to believe through the preaching of Enoch and Noah, so He has given us a day of grace to believe, but judgment is also coming. How is it coming this time? Fire.

Someone might say, “Ha, ha, ha! How’s that going to happen?”

Who knows? They asked the same thing about the water in Noah’s day, and yet it came. My friends, do you understand that one of the most popular, fastest growing theological errors in our day is the disbelief and rejection of judgment; a literal hell? Yet, God says it will come.

Two parallels between Noah’s ark and Jesus Christ

Let me give two obvious parallels between Noah’s ark and Jesus Christ, which is a sermon in itself. This is a wonderful illustration and picture of salvation.

God, not man, designed the ark simply, yet profoundly, as His plan of salvation to all who would enter in

1. The first parallel is that God, not man, designed the ark simply, yet profoundly – it was His plan of salvation to all who would enter in.

What is the ark of salvation today, for all who are in who? Christ Jesus. As Romans, chapter 8, verse 1, tells us,

. . . there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The ark only had one door

2. The second obvious parallel is that the ark only had one door.

Jesus would say in John, chapter 10, verse 9,

I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved . . .

If you are a believer today, it is possible in this corrupt generation, to be a person of integrity. However, it will take a pursuit of Jesus Christ as Lord. That pursuit will develop in you:

- purity in the midst of immorality;
- obedience in the midst of ridicule;
- patience in the midst of uncertainty;
- worship in the midst of difficulty.

Oh, how we need men, women, and young people of integrity today.

Dudley Tyng was a well known speaker in the 1800’s. In 1858, he spoke to five thousand young men at the Young Men’s Christian Association. We know it today as the YMCA, but it is no longer Christian. Dudley preached to five thousand, and one thousand people responded to Christ. He was a young man.

Later that day, he went back to the farm and decided to go to the barn and watch the men shelling corn. As he was watching, he got a little too close to the machine. His jacket got caught and his arm was pulled into the grinding gears of the machine. It was lacerated beyond repair. In a few hours, he would die. Medicine, at that time, was too primitive and the loss of blood was too great.

As he lay in bed, the people surrounding him suggested that Dudley give a word to those who listened to his message; to those who were following Christ; to those thousands of people that he was influencing. They said, “Dudley, give us a message to take back to the people.”

They say that he strained and then said, “Tell the people to stand up for Jesus.”

That night, the hall was filled as they relayed the story of Dr. Tyng and his death, and gave the message that he had given them.

The poem was written that we sing, with the words,

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross;

Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss.

From victory unto victory His army shall He lead,

Till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.

That is what it takes to have an attitude that pursues integrity. That is the battle of integrity.

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