

Character Matters

Proverbs 11:3

The key message from Dr. Val Gonzales' sermon is that character, our character, matters and it matters more so than our reputation. Why? Because of what we read in Proverbs 11:3: a character marked by integrity and uprightness – obedience and commitment to the Lord – will lead to a divinely guided and fruitful life, whereas a character marked by duplicity and unfaithfulness will lead ultimately to destruction. We should therefore tend (look after) our character.

Let us start this study by looking at key words from Proverbs 11:3: integrity, uprightness and duplicity, and also reputation. Read, but do not dwell upon, the following Bible verses* (share them out amongst the group or select just those in *italics*). What do we learn about these words from the verses?

- **Reputation:** 1 Timothy 3:7; *Revelation 3:1*
- **Integrity:** *1 Kings 9:4-5; 1 Chronicles 29:17; Proverbs 10:9; Proverbs 11:3; Matthew 22:16; Nehemiah 7:2; Psalm 25:21; Psalm 41:12; Proverbs 13:6; 2 Corinthians 1:12;*
- **Upright(ness):** *Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 2:3; Psalm 25:8; Psalm 119:7; Proverbs 11:3; Isaiah 26:7; Titus 2:12; Psalm 25:21; Psalm 36:10; Psalm 92:15; Psalm 97:11; Psalm 140:13; Proverbs 8:9; Proverbs 11:6; Proverbs 14:2; Malachi 2:6;*
- **Duplicity:** *Proverbs 11:3; Luke 20:23; [Religion**] James 1:26-27; [Hypocrisy**] Psalm 26:4; Matthew 15:6b-9; Matthew 23:1-4; Galatians 2:13; 1 Peter 2:1; Matthew 6:2; Matthew 6:5; Matthew 23:28; Matthew 24:51; Luke 12:1;*

Having looked at reputation, integrity, uprightness and duplicity, and keeping the message of the sermon in mind, let us look some practical aspects via the following questions:

1. In what sense are the little things, our daily actions, important for building our character? What are the implications for us, our daily actions, our faithfulness?
2. Based on our own experience, name some good examples of others acting with integrity and uprightness that have encouraged you. Why are such examples so important, especially during childhood?
3. Again, based on our own experience, name some *everyday* examples of duplicity – examples that we are all vulnerable to!
 - a) Why are they so dangerous? (Proverbs 11:3)
 - b) Why are accountability and encouragement important? (Hebrews 3:13)
4. Although it is an important topic, we will not address being trapped by our past, including past shame leading us to search for reputation, as part of this study.***
5. Why (see Proverbs 11:3) is integrity and uprightness good for:
 - a) Your healthy sleep (peace of mind)?
 - b) A fruitful life?
6. What is the key point or action for you from this sermon / study?

* You can copy and paste the reference lists above into the search function of www.biblegateway.com to display all of the verses in one go. The NIV translation was used to prepare the verse lists.

** Words identified as being related to duplicity during the sermon.

*** A starting point to explore this topic could be: The Past Need Not Determine the Future: <https://www.ibc-hamburg.de/sermons/2021/the-past-need-not-determine-the-future---josiah>