Growing Character Together: Insights for Parents

Week 14 | Integrity

Jesus Preaches with Authority

BIG QUESTION

How does Jesus’ integrity make us people of integrity?

VIRTUE

INTEGRITY: God’s power for you to be true to Him and yourself

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Mark 1:21-28

Israel only had one temple, but in Jesus’ time each community had a synagogue. No sacrifices were made there, but the community gathered on the Sabbath to hear the Scriptures read and explained. Usually this was done by one of the local scribes or “teachers of the law.”

Scribes were the keepers and guardians of the law of Moses. They were highly respected as the spiritual leaders of the community. In their efforts to explain the law, they also added many traditions. These traditions came to be considered as important as God’s commands, even though they weren’t. When the scribes taught, they were careful to name all the experts and authorities who agreed with them to prove what they were saying.

The small town of Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee was known for three things: fishermen, stone-cutters...and Bible scholars. Many of the great Jewish thinkers came from this area. So, the synagogue there would have been the site of high-quality teaching. A visiting rabbi (or teacher) was often invited to speak if he attended a synagogue on the Sabbath. This was the reason Jesus was teaching in Capernaum on this day. He, however, did not need to cite any sources. He spoke on His own authority because He was the Source--the Word of God made flesh. The people could tell the difference when He spoke, and they were amazed.

Jesus often encountered people who were possessed or controlled by an evil spirit. Sometimes the person also had a terrible disease. Jesus did not need to fear them, to say complicated magical spells, or ask a higher authority for help. He simply told the demons to leave, and they did. Again, the people were amazed.

Scripture: <https://live.bible.is/bible/ENGNIV/MRK/1?audio_type=audio>

Experience It.

Imagine that you are in the synagogue just like every other Sabbath. A new teacher in town reads the scroll and begins to speak. What is it about this man Jesus that so captures your attention?

*Hint: He talks as though He wrote the scripture Himself. He is confident but not arrogant. He makes God and God’s Word seem so clear and real. He’s not adding more rules; He’s talking about things that cut to the heart. If God talked to us, this is what it would sound like.*

Internalize It.

How can your words and actions reflect who God says you are?

*Hint: A child of God loves the things the Father loves and reflects the Father’s heart. He speaks truth, so we speak truth. He is kind, so we are kind. He is just, so we treat others fairly. We are forgiven, so we forgive. This is integrity--when our actions match our identity in Him.*

Activate It.

How did Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross restore integrity to us?

*Hint: Our relationship with God is made whole. Our relationships with others can be genuine and based on the love and forgiveness we have received. Anything broken in the past can be healed.*

CHRIST CONNECTION

The people in Capernaum were not strangers to good teaching, but they recognized that Jesus’ teaching was in a category all by itself. Jesus could teach with authority and interpret God’s Word like no one else because He was the Word. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Whether they realized why or not, the people were amazed that day because they were encountering God Himself.

They may have been surprised to experience an evil spirit in the middle of their worship service. Across the Sea of Galilee were the towns which contained so much evil--not here! Jesus, however, had come to rescue both the religious and demon-possessed--all of us. He has the authority to do just that because He is the Son of God. He is the Redeemer who rescues us from sin and Satan. He has the power to put everything right because “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17).

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:17)

PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us what true integrity is. Thank You for staying true to God and to Yourself. You took the punishment for our sin, and now we can live lives of integrity. We praise You for that. In Your name, Amen.*

