

# WALKING WITH INTEGRITY IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

## STUDY ONE

### The Essential Ingredient for a Godly Life

*Daniel 6:1–10*

*The essential quality, the one ingredient that must be part of any life that aims to be godly is integrity.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**A**DVERSITY can sweep over our lives like the howling winds of a winter cyclone. We may experience a financial setback, loss of employment, serious family conflicts. The storm can intensify with the betrayal of a close friend or persecution from an enemy. It can seem as if our whole world is falling apart!

What stabilizes you when the winds of adversity blow? Some people rely on their cunning to navigate the storm. They will do whatever it takes to survive—covering up the truth, manipulating people with lies, or shifting blame to others.

One biblical figure encountered the fiercest storms, but his eighty-plus years of walking with God taught him that upholding an unshakable integrity is the best way to get through adversity.

His name is Daniel.

The integrity of our faith and character is what truly keeps us standing amid life's storms, just as it did for Daniel—the first Bible character in our series on heroes of the faith who model how to walk with integrity in times of adversity.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Take a few moments to quiet your spirit and invite the Lord to minister to you through His Word. You may wish to pray as Pastor Chuck prays before he studies the Word: “I often pray, ‘Lord, speak to me. Help me understand what this passage is saying. I am listening. I am sensitive to Your truth. Lead me into it.’”<sup>1</sup> Write your prayer here if you wish.



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In *Searching the Scriptures*, we study the Bible using a method featuring four vital steps:

1. **Observation:** *what does this biblical passage say?*
2. **Interpretation:** *what does this biblical passage mean?*
3. **Correlation:** *how does this biblical passage relate to other similar biblical passages?*
4. **Application:** *how should I respond to the truth of this biblical passage?*

For helpful instruction from Pastor Chuck Swindoll on this method, consult the Insight for Living Ministries online instructional web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).” There, you can also follow the [link to purchase a copy](#) of Pastor Chuck’s book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*.



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### Observation: A Biblical Model of Integrity

We start by observing the passage, looking for answers to the questions *who*, *when*, *where*, and *what*. *Who* are the characters introduced in *Daniel 1:1–3* and how does the text describe Daniel?



### *Searching the Scriptures* Study Tool: Historical Setting

Using resources such as *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, we can determine the *when* and *where*. Darius ruled after the Babylonian Empire fell in 539 BC. Some Bible scholars identify him as “King Cyrus of Persia” (Daniel 10:1) or as Cyrus’ appointed ruler, named, Gubaru. The Persian Empire ultimately encompassed “provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia” (Esther 1:1). No wonder Darius needed 120 governors to help him oversee this growing kingdom!

According to *Daniel 6:4–5*, *what* do the jealous “administrators and high officials” first do to bring down Daniel and stop him from becoming Darius’ top official?



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When that strategy failed, what scheme did Daniel’s enemies try next, according to *Daniel 6:6–9*? Observe their words carefully. What half-truths and manipulations do you see?

What ungodly character qualities did these men display?

What godly character qualities do you see in Daniel, according to *Daniel 6:10*? Don’t miss key lines that give hints to Daniel’s integrity, such as, “as usual” and “just as he had always done.”

*We read not one word of panic in Daniel. When we have integrity, we have nothing to hide. There’s no dirt for anyone to find, no scandal to uncover. Integrity is like a warm blanket on a cold night. It gives us comfort and security. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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### Interpretation: What Integrity Is and Isn't

In the interpretation phase, we seek to understand the meaning of Daniel's example of integrity. How does the English dictionary define *integrity*? Look up the definition online or in your own dictionary and write your finding below.

The Hebrew counterpart, *tom*, includes a similar meaning, conveying “the fundamental idea of completeness.”<sup>2</sup> A person of integrity lives a life of complete truthfulness because there are no gaps of sin to hide. Their character is solid and whole.

No hairline cracks of compromise lined Daniel's motives or actions; they were sound and complete. Does living a life of integrity imply perfection? No. Daniel certainly wasn't sinless. However, people with integrity don't try to smooth things over when they sin. Instead, how do people of integrity handle their failures, particularly when their failures hurt someone else?

Summarize the main idea of integrity as modeled by Daniel in the form of a principle. A *principle* is a statement of truth that applies to all people in all times. When writing a principle, it helps to include a “should” statement—to express the *what*; and a “by” statement—to illustrate the *how*. For example, “When adversity strikes, we should . . . by . . . .”



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Carefully review what you observed in Daniel 6:1–10 and use this “we should . . . by . . .” formula to write one principle based on the qualities you see in Daniel’s life.

Put yourself in Daniel’s sandals for a while. Consider the unfairness of his situation. From what other parts of his example can you draw a principle? Consider these starters:

“When we don’t get what we deserve, we should . . . by . . . .”

“When others spread lies about us, we should . . . by . . . .”

“When we are tempted to defend ourselves or retaliate, we should . . . by . . . .”

*God never gives us a standard we’re not able to achieve. He empowers us. He enables us. He smiles on our actions and He finds great delight when His people walk in integrity.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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### Correlation: Supporting Passages on Integrity

Correlation includes exploring other passages in Scripture that clarify or expand upon the teaching in our main passage. Look up the following verses and write down what they say about integrity.

Bible Verses	Teaching on Integrity
<i>Psalm 78:70–72</i>	
<i>Proverbs 10:9</i>	
<i>Proverbs 11:3</i>	
<i>Proverbs 20:6–7</i>	

Daniel’s stability through adversity reminds us of Jesus’ words in *Matthew 7:24–25*. How does Daniel represent the kind of person Jesus had in mind?



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Unlike Daniel, we can stand on the solid rock of Jesus Christ and His words to stabilize us in the fiercest storm. With Christ as our Lord, we follow His way of truth and light, which is the ultimate expression of integrity.

How did the winds of opposition surge to gale force and how did Daniel stand strong, according to *Daniel 6:11–23*? Who was with Daniel in the lion's den? Who promised to be with you through any storm, according to *Matthew 28:18–20*?

*It's always amazing to me that Daniel didn't wind up in the lion's den because he did something wrong. He was there because he did things right. He wasn't worried about those envious men. He answered to his God. We're not called to please people; we're called to live our lives before an audience of One. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### Application: Integrity through Adversity in Our Day

The final step of *Searching the Scriptures* is to incorporate into our lives the truths we've learned. Following Daniel's example, what does walking with integrity in times of adversity look like today?

Twenty-first-century Daniels . . .

- Speak the truth
- Don't live a double life
- Model personal purity
- Stay faithful at work and have an excellent attitude
- Don't blame others for their mistakes
- Refuse to participate in corruption
- Don't take unfair advantage of others
- Have a consistent walk with God





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As you reflect on the spheres of your life—your personal life, family life, work life, community life, church life—in what ways might you need to confess and turn from a sin in which you acted without integrity?

We have many principles before us! Look back at the principles you wrote down during interpretation and those just above. Jot down a few specific ways you can put into action one or two of those principles.

Daniel didn't spend time worrying about what his enemies might do. Instead, he focused on walking with God. He stayed true to the path God set for him, despite the fierce winds that could have easily blown him off course. As you close this study, pray for God to empower you to walk through your storms with a Daniel-like resolve.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for the inspiring example of Daniel. In this world of fallen heroes, I need a strong model to follow—a person who anchored himself to the rock of Your Word and stayed true despite the adversity. Give me the strength to walk in integrity and live only for You. In the name of Jesus, amen.*

### ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 128.
2. J. Barton Payne, "2252 (*tāmam*) Be Complete," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 973.

