

## **The Importance of Integrity**

*Job 23:10*

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What I'd like to take tonight is to take a careful look at one of the most misunderstood verses in the book and show you what God is trying to teach you from it. In 23:10 Job said, "But He knows the way that I take; *when* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." This verse joins the ranks of verses whose familiar words have taken on a life of their own, far from what the Holy Spirit intended them to mean. The verse may be used to teach a truth that is wholesome and biblical, yet its truth is completely foreign to the verse's local and larger context. Context is the only safeguard against misunderstanding and misuse. The instant we drop Job 23:10 back into its context the meaning is unmistakable. [Paragraph adapted from Layton Talbert's book *Beyond Suffering*].

Job 23:10 is about \_\_\_\_\_, not purification.

**Introduction:** We are living in the last days and American culture is in big trouble. Integrity has somehow eluded those in those in leadership of all kinds today. When we talk about integrity, we are not talking about reputation. Your reputation is what others think about you. Integrity goes way beyond that, to what you really are like on the inside. It has to do with your character. The Hebrew word for “Integrity” means to be complete or whole. It means that what you say and what you mean was the same thing. Every day we wake up we are faced with a decision: compromise or integrity. Job 23:10 contains a much needed admonition for the Christian today – integrity. Using the life of Job, I’d like to look at the importance of integrity by directing your attention to two specific areas: it’s basics and its benefits.

## **I. The Basics of Integrity**

A. Set your standards in advance (Job 31:1)

B. Apply God’s word to daily activities

C. Refuse to be persuaded by others

D. Remain faithful in spite of your circumstances

## **II. The Benefits of Integrity**

A. It guides us (Job 1:1)

B. It protects you (Job 1:10)

C. It judges you (Job 31:4-6)

D. It blesses you (Job 27:5)

**Conclusion:** Some of you may be here tonight thinking, “I’ve already compromised.” My wife can’t trust me anymore. My children don’t respect me. My boss knows I’m not dependable at work. It’s just too late for me!” But God says, “No it is not!” As one pastor said, “God can take lemons and make lemonade. Is this not what God did for Job’s friends?”

[For further study of Job 23:10 please read these 6 compelling contextual observations from Layton Talbert's book]:

1. In the context of verses 4-7, Job just declared his certainty of being vindicated when he came before God's courtroom.

2. In verses 8-9, though Job cannot see God, he knows God sees him. He knows that God knows his way of life and will testify for him. Job's star witness is none other than the Lord himself. Job is sure he will pass through God's court like gold.

3. This verse is in rebuttal to Eliphaz's allegations in chapter 22. Job doesn't want to stand before imperfect men like Eliphaz. He wants a perfect judge like God who knows his heart.

4. Job's words after 23:10 explain why he expects to be found innocent when his case comes before God. See verses 11-12.

5. Job never expressed any expectation of surviving his affliction. He did not see his affliction as a test designed to make him better. Job only anticipated one outcome – death. He is not a man waiting to be a better man; he is waiting to die.

6. A parallel passage in Job 31:5-6 settles what Job means in 23:10. *"If I have walked with falsehood or if my foot has hastened to deceit, let me be weighed on honest scales, that God may know my integrity"* (31:5-6).

Job's testimony is the same as it was for the last 8 chapters. He draws a link between God's knowledge of him and vindication of his honor.

What the Lord is trying to drive home in 23:10 is not purification, but integrity!