

## Life integrity

Dan Nelson – pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

Since God is timeless and his truths are relevant to every generation, our real lives often illuminate the accuracy of his word. Jesus' teachings were practical and often illustrated through regular daily events and activities. Multiple times per week I find myself confronted with a situation regarding choices and consequences that cause me to reflect on the fact that, once again, the Bible is right and following Jesus' instruction would have the best action of all. To stray from his directives in how to live is to run to folly like a pig that strides toward the mud. And yet for many there is an internal conflict between the lifestyle that people want to have and the actual choices that they make.

At Calvary, we are in the middle of a building project. The old chapel that we had purchased a few years ago was in desperate need of a face-lift and we are doing our best to bring it out of yester-year to our current generation from the inside out. But sometimes when we open up a wall, we find that there is more to be done than merely superficial beautification. One spot in particular caused the architect to redraw, the engineer to recalculate, the builders to reconstruct, and the inspectors to recheck to ensure the structural soundness of the wall itself to weather storms and earthquakes. Hanging out with individuals like these who know how to design and construct buildings that last has been enlightening to me to connect some of God's messages that he communicates using structural metaphors.

One of Jesus' most well known parables involves a comparison between two building projects; one that constructs on a sandy, unstable foundation, and the other that builds upon solid rock. Clearly, both would look similar on the outside and the differences are only revealed when the storms come and the "structural integrity" is tested. It is this concept of "integrity" that I am reflecting on today.

Most people when asked describe this term "integrity" as being synonymous with honesty, but that isn't exactly what it means. It actually speaks to the "connectedness" of a strong foundation to all of the support beams and related components that make up a structure; that they are all securely fastened together. An "integrated" life is one where the outside presentation that others are shown reflects what is on the inside: an authentic connection between the internal and the external. In our lives, this speaks of us dealing with the reality of who we are and confessing the truths of ourselves, refusing avoidance or denial in our life story.

There are many people today that claim to be Christians and, I believe, misrepresent themselves and misrepresent what it means to be Christian. If the word still

means "follower of Christ," and many who claim to be Christian are by no means even making a casual attempt to do so, it is no wonder why so many non-Christians have a misunderstanding of what Christianity is really all about. There seems to be a lack of "integrity" in what is presented in many circles as Christianity, because the outside does not reflect what is true about the inside. And yet this is the simple way that the Bible presents God's means of salvation; "If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ as been risen from the dead, you will be saved" — a simple integrity of heart and speech that transforms a person from death to life. What a beautiful picture of a life that does not fall when the storms come.

To read other articles by Pastor Dan visit [Ojai Valley News Articles](#)

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
(805) 640-9498  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

### **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:45am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

### **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View