

# People of Integrity

## *Leader's Guide*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**M**y mind boggles at the thought of what efforts must go into the production of a large book. In length, this is a small book. Yet it is the result of great effort on the part of many.

My clergy colleagues at Canterbury United Methodist Church gave me the encouragement to refine my rough draft chapters into a coherent book. They wrapped the chapters in study helps and provided a leaders' guide for groups.

Reverend Patsy Carlberg authored the probing spiritual reflection exercises at the end of each chapter.

Reverend Warren Nash did excellent "executive summaries" to focus the reading of each chapter.

Reverend Mikah Hudson chose apt Biblical passages and crafted engaging questions for the chapters.

And Dr. Oliver Clark created a group leaders' guide that will enhance personal or group study.

I can only imagine what Canterbury staff members Laura Dabbs, Brooke Vickers, and Gloria McClendon went through with the word processing, formatting, copying, and citation searches.

Even with all that went before, the actual book in hand is a reality because of the good humor and skill of Discipleship Resources editors George Donigian and Terrie Livaudais.

This book is as good as it is because of the efforts of those named and others unnamed. This book is no better than it is because of me alone.

Bill Morgan  
Christ the King, 2007



# INTRODUCTION

Dear Group Leader,

Thank you for agreeing to lead a small group. Dr. Bill Morgan has written a challenging study entitled *People of Integrity*. Using the Scriptures, Dr. Morgan challenges us as individuals, and as a church, to become a community where integrity is the guide. His one sentence definition of this powerful word is: *Integrity is the God given strength to respond to life in relationship to God instead of reacting to things on our own*. Our hope is that your study group will be a positive step in equipping your congregation to be *People of Integrity*.

## Why Small Groups?

Learning that results in transformed lives is most likely to occur when persons have an opportunity to relate ideas and concepts to their individual lives. The small group provides the ideal venue for this to occur. As the leader of a group your role will not be to *teach* the material, but to enable persons to reflect on what they have read in the study, and to understand what changes they may need to make in their lives to become *people of integrity*.

## What Are My Responsibilities as a Leader of a Group?

- Read the entire study, making notes and writing questions in the margin.
- Decide when and where you would like for your Lenten group to meet. If your church is using this study with a number of groups, it would be good to have them meet at a variety of times and places. Groups might

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meet on Wednesday nights, Sunday afternoons, at noon during the week, weekday mornings, or weekday evenings. Group sessions might be held at the church, in your home, in the home of someone in your group, or in an office or other secular space. If your church is using *People of Integrity* as a Lenten study you could begin the week of Ash Wednesday and continue until Easter—or longer if necessary to complete the material. Each session should be about one and a half hours in length; however, if the group is meeting during the lunch hour, you would probably need to limit the time to an hour or less.

- Invite friends, Sunday school class members, neighbors, or fellow workers to participate in your group. Persons respond most readily to a personal invitation. Experience shows that the ideal number of persons in a group is eight to twelve. A group could function with as few as six and as many as fifteen; however, these would be the limits if the group is to benefit from the dynamic of a small group. There will also be a general invitation to participate in the groups that will go out to the entire congregation. Some of these persons may be assigned to your group.
- It would be helpful for you, or someone in your group, to call each member prior to the first meeting to remind them of the time and place.
- In most cases, it is best not to have refreshments other than coffee, tea, or soft drinks. Make sure that someone in the group provides these each week.

### What Is Expected of Me on a Weekly Basis?

- In preparation each week, read the chapter for the week, doing all the suggested exercises.
- Read the guidelines for leading the session and decide ahead of time how you will handle the session. There are also good questions and activities for each chapter that you might want to use. You may not be able to use all of the suggestions. *Determine what you think will be most effective in*

*your particular group.* Be aware that in a small group, you must be flexible and allow the Spirit to guide you if something occurs that stirs the interests of those participating.

- In your leadership, model a style of openness, tolerance, honesty, and warmth. Don't ask anyone to share what you are not willing to share. On most occasions where a personal experience is called for, the leader should be the first to share.
- Do not try to force someone to respond to a question if that person feels uncomfortable.
- Moderate the discussion. Do not give a lecture on the material.
- Be aware of what is happening each session in the group. Encourage reluctant members to participate and try to prevent a few persons from doing all the talking.
- Keep the sharing centered in personal experience rather than academic debate.
- Honor the time schedule agreed on by the group. If it seems necessary to go beyond the one and a half hours, get consensus from the group before continuing for another ten or twenty minutes.
- Be sure that all members know the meeting time and place each week. This is especially important if you decide to meet in different homes.
- Make sure that any materials you might need such as pencils, cards, paper, or newsprint are available and that the meeting room is arranged ahead of time.

**Note:** *I am indebted to Maxie Dunnam for similar guidelines for leaders of small groups found in his books such as: The Workbook of Living Prayer and The Workbook on Living as a Christian.—Oliver W. Clark, Jr.*



## Session One



# Getting Acquainted

The initial meeting is for the purpose of getting acquainted, answering questions, distributing the study material and receiving instructions in how to use it. Here are some suggestions for this initial session.

- Distribute the books. It is important that each person have his or her own book so that they can make notes and do the suggested exercises.
- Have each person in the group give his or her full name and the name by which they would like to be called. If you are aware that most of your group does not know one another, provide nametags for the first few sessions. Encourage participants to write the names of others in the group in his or her book.
- Let each person share one of the happiest, most exciting, or most meaningful experiences she or he has had over the past three or four weeks. Another approach would be to ask each to describe the person in their lives who has best exemplified “integrity” as they understand it.
- Ask each person to share his or her expectations for this study. Why did she or he become a part of it? What does each expect to gain from it? What reservations do they have?
- Review the introduction to the study and ask if there are any questions. You will want to have the participants look through the material for the

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first session and point out that the readings and exercises are to be done on a daily basis. Encourage them to find a quiet place where they will not be disturbed and set aside a minimum of thirty minutes. Persons may want to read the chapter for the week on the first day, then on subsequent days, reflect on the suggested Scripture and discussion questions (found at the end of this guide), and spiritual formation exercises, asking themselves, “What guidance does this give me in becoming a person of integrity?” All readings and exercises should be completed by the next session.

- Encourage the group members to pray for each other. One way to do this would be to have each member write his or her name on a 3” x 5” card and exchange it with someone else. They would then agree to pray for that person until the next session. Then cards could again be exchanged and each member of the group would have the name of a new person to pray for during the following week.
- Ask people to let you know ahead of time if they are not going to be at a session. You will need to give them the telephone numbers and/or email address where you can be reached.
- Remind persons of the time and place of the next meeting and then close with a brief prayer, asking God to help us become people of integrity.

## Session Two



# The Dearth and Rebirth of Integrity

## Executive Summary

This chapter is built around the concept of integrity, and the search for it over time. Dr. Morgan explores the existence of integrity in both scarcity (dearth) and resurrection or renewal (rebirth). Instances of ethical lapses are remembered from the '70s through current day, demonstrating the point that each decade in our existence brings examples of ethical failing on a major governmental and institutional scale, as well as the level of individuals. We live in a time of unethical behavior.

Yet Bill calls attention to the opportunities for the rebirth of integrity on a personal level, and thus to the community level. He calls it wholeness, derived out of living one's whole life in response to God's grace, rather than reacting to the world out of self-interest. He calls for a balancing of ethical concerns at the intersection of self-interest and compassion for others. Finally, living one's life in ethical balance is described as a form of the coming of the kingdom.

## Session Two Suggestions

- If many of the members of the group do not know each other, you may want to begin by asking each person to give his or her name again.

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- You may want to start each session by taking a few moments to have participants relax and silently offer a breath prayer.
- A good way to begin is to ask each person in the group to share her or his most meaningful day with the study. As leader you should begin the sharing. Tell why that particular day was most meaningful.
- Now ask the group to share their most difficult day, telling what they experienced and why it was so difficult.

*Note: You might want to follow the above pattern in each session.*

- A graphic way to start your discussion of integrity would be to show a brief portion of the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, using Atticus' response to Scout's question as to why her father is doing something that makes people mad. Then raise the question, "What are some ways that your actions at home, church, work or in the community might 'make people mad' but be necessary to express integrity?" If you don't use the film, you could describe the above scene prior to discussion.
- If you did not do it in the first session, this would be a good time to ask participants to identify persons in society whom they feel express integrity through their words and actions. Then ask, "Who are people in your own experience that are models of integrity?"
- Ask, "Which Scripture passages (those suggested this week or others) best define integrity for you and why?"
- Think of some current situation in the news about which many people would have an opinion. Discuss, "How would a person of integrity respond to a conversation about this situation in Sunday school or at the office?"
- Discuss the answers to, "How are Dr. Morgan's definitions of *integrity* and *grace* related?"
- Ask for any questions or comments before you close. You might ask, "What excited you about the week's reading? What seemed new? How did you sense God's grace in your life this week?"

- Go over the assignment for next week. If you decided to use the prayer cards, exchange them at this time. Ask for prayer concerns.
- One way for you to close would be to stand, join hands, and invite anyone who would like to, to offer a brief sentence prayer. Make it clear that silence is an acceptable prayer. Close with a brief sentence prayer yourself.



## Session Three



# THE INTEGRITY RESPONSE

## Executive Summary

Bill's second chapter revolves around discernment, the process by which we understand God's will for our lives. At its most basic level, discernment can be thought of as a way of understanding how Jesus would approach the specific decisions and situations in our lives.

Dr. Morgan breaks this process down into two parts: (1) the understanding of what one must do to follow Jesus' direction, and (2) the courage and power to follow through with that action. The combination of these two factors is the heart of human ethics, by which we control our natural reactive impulses, and replace them with a responsiveness that reflects our underlying relationship to God. This process of "responding to life in relationship to God, instead of reacting to things on our own" implies both a willingness and an ability to surrender one's own personal will or agenda, and be open to God's direction in each of our lives. A tall order indeed.

## Session Three Suggestions

- Taking a minute or so to have participants use the breath prayer suggested for the week will help them begin to focus on the task at hand.

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- A discussion of the most helpful ideas and least helpful ideas will give you a glimpse at how thoroughly participants are digging into the study.
- If you are familiar with the movie *Signs* you might use portions of the video to prompt discussion of how different people respond to complex or tense situations.
- Discuss ways mentioned in the Scripture this week that Jesus responded to specific situations.
- Describe a specific, real-life situation that participants might face and have them discuss how Jesus would have them respond. Some examples are:
  - Your teenager comes to you and says that he (she) has decided not to go to college but wants to try and make a living with the rock band he (she) and his (her) friends have started.
  - A longstanding client asks you to do something that will help them financially, which isn't against the law; however, you have questions about whether or not it is the Christian thing to do.
  - You learn that someone in your at work is saying untrue and hurtful things about you.
- Have the group pray together the Serenity Prayer on page 38 of the book. Then discuss how we can distinguish between things we *can* change and things we *cannot*.
- Ask for any special concerns. Exchange prayer cards if you have chosen to make this a part of your group's weekly practice. Close with a circle and sentence prayers by those who choose to do so.

## Session Four



# Grace-Fueled Integrity

## Executive Summary

This chapter revolves around the concept of grace, both from a practical and an academic/historical perspective. In it, Dr. Morgan affirms his belief that God’s grace in our lives is an act of God (a “get to” gift) rather than something we earn from our own actions (a “got to” task).

Along the way, John Wesley’s three-fold understanding of grace (prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying) is explored, along with a practical explanation of the United Methodist quadrilateral. Wesleyan understanding of the means of grace is dealt with, as well as the early history of the structure of the Methodist movement.

At the core of this chapter’s message is the understanding that we, as humans, are not self-sufficient and do not have the internal wherewithal to live our lives fully in this world. It is only by God’s grace that we have the strength and power to live a whole life of Christian integrity.

## Session Four Suggestions

- Begin with the breath prayer if this is the pattern you have chosen.
- Share responses to the chapter as done in previous weeks.

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- Look at Dr. Morgan’s distinction between the “indicative” and the “imperative.” Discuss questions such as:
  - What is the *indicative* that motivates you to work on a Habitat House or serve a meal at the Church of the Reconciler?
  - What is the *indicative* that prompts you to worship on a regular basis?
  - What is the *indicative* that encourages you to forgive the person that has wronged you in some way?
- In what areas of your life do you feel you have “got to”? What emotions do these actions evoke in you?
- In what areas do you feel you “get to”? How do these emotions differ from the “got to” situations?
- How do you recall God’s *prevenient* grace at work in your life? Were you aware at the time that what was happening was God’s grace?
- John Wesley describes *justifying* grace as “God’s grace acting for us.” *Justifying* grace is the *door* in the process of becoming what God created us to be. What did that door look like for you? (A big door that it took a long time to open? A door that opened easily and then closed behind you? A revolving door? A door that is still open and through which you seem to go in and out? Other?)
- In his reference to the novel *What’s Bred in the Bone*, Dr. Morgan shares a character’s explanation of stoves in an old castle that had no obvious place to be fed with fuel. She tells how there were narrow passages between the walls and servants moved along the corridors and would poke firewood in the back of the stoves. Who are the persons who have kept the fire going in your life?
- How is *sanctifying* grace a “get to” instead of a “got to”?
- Close in the usual way of your group.

## Session Five



# Born Again Integrity

## Executive Summary

In his fourth chapter, Bill uses a metaphor from the motion picture *The Legend of Bagger Vance* to illustrate the nature of God's image at the core of our lives. The term "true authentic swing" relating to golf is used as a metaphor to demonstrate the true nature of God's intention for who we are intended to be.

The difficult part of the message of this chapter is that changing from who we are to who we are meant to be is not something that we alone can accomplish with goals and "to do" lists. Through an exegesis of the story of Nicodemus, Bill shows us that the power to change, to re-invent ourselves to the point where we are born again, comes through the gift of God's grace.

## Session Five Suggestions

- If your group has seemed responsive to using the breath prayers, begin this way again.
- Ask the group to share any new insights, as well as any difficulties they had in understanding the material.
- If you have time to preview the film, a viewing of a short excerpt from

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*The Legend of Bagger Vance* would be a good launching pad for this session. This could lead to a discussion of what participants think the “true authentic swing” (the image of what God created us to be) would look like in their lives.

- Ask, “What would it mean for you to be ‘born again’ or ‘reinvented’ in your work, your relationship with others, or your relationship with God?”
- Discuss, “What is the most memorable gift you have ever received? How did you respond?”
- Think of God’s love and creative power as a mighty river, with tributaries flowing into the lives of those whom God has created. What gifts from God flow into your life? Have you allowed these gifts to flow freely, determining how you use your time and talents, or have you on occasion dammed the flow?
- Read together Dr. Morgan’s paraphrase of Psalm 1 found on page 68 of the book.
- Close in the usual way.

## Session Six



# Integrity in a Passionate World

## Executive Summary

This chapter deals with the expression of integrity through the passions of our lives. The culture within which we live tempts us toward the expression of the romantic or the illicit when we think of passion. But Bill urges us to think more broadly, to view passion as a way of experiencing life and the world that surrounds us more fully, as a way of understanding that “our passions are related and connected finally to God...who alone can finally complete us.”

In its expression of God-given sexuality, our passion has the power to be used either positively or destructively. This form of passion that connects only to self and self-gratification has the potential for destruction. Passion that connects ultimately to God and to the self-less love of others is a powerful positive force. He notes, “We acknowledge the transforming potency of a God whose origin is love and whose desire is that we live more in accord with that love.”

## Session Six Suggestions

- Have everyone close their eyes, take a deep breath and repeat silently for at least a minute (you may want to time it), “Our passion for love and life is not a curse but a gift.”

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- Begin in the usual way with comments about the “a-ha” ideas, as well as the confusing ones in the week’s chapter.
- Explain to the group that you are going to take the role of Data (the character on Star Trek) or, if you don’t think the group is familiar with Data, you are going to become a creature from another planet who has mysteriously shown up at this group and heard the word “passion” which is not in “its” English/Omicron Dictionary. “It” wants an explanation of this word in terms “it” can understand. The group will then be asked to try and explain “passion” to you.
- Have someone read the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37. Then look at the three characters. What do their actions say about their passions?
- Ask the group to think of how they spend an average week. List five activities that occur fairly regularly. Rank each activity (sex life excluded!) on a scale of 1-10 (one being very low passion and ten very high passion). Then ask the group to discuss:
  - Which of these activities make use of your God-given gifts?
  - Do any of them build up those around you? Diminish those around you?
  - Do any of these passions enhance or energize your passion for God?
- Read in unison Psalm 139:13-18 (found on page 82 of the book).
- Close in the usual way.

## Session Seven



# INTEGRITY VISION

## Executive Summary

In this chapter, Dr. Morgan deals with the way we see one another. Coining a new phrase—Integrity Vision—he sees it as having to do with being able to see the good in others, and not only those things with which we might disagree. His definition of Integrity Vision is *the capacity to see God connected with the people and situations of our lives*.

This type of vision also applies to how others might see us, and living in such a way that God might be seen in our lives.

## Session Seven Suggestions

- Take a minute or so for participants, with eyes closed, to pray silently a breath prayer of their choosing.
- Have them share any new insights, as well as ideas presented by Dr. Morgan they found it difficult to understand.
- Ask the group to think of situations that they have experienced or about which they have read that might be understood as either a tragedy or a blessing. Discuss these.

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- Get two sets of identical children’s blocks (the kind with triangles, cubes rectangular blocks, circular blocks, etc.). Ask for two volunteers to sit in chairs, back to back. One is the “sender” and the other is the “receiver.” The sender takes the blocks and begins to stack them or align them in some way, describing to the receiver what he or she is doing. The receiver tries to arrange the blocks in the same pattern as the sender’s; however the receiver cannot speak. If the receiver understands a direction, he or she taps with a block once on the floor. If he or she does not understand the direction, he or she taps twice and the sender repeats the directions or gives them in a different way. The participants take note of what helps the communication process and what hinders it. After the construction is completed, give the receiver and sender a chance to share what they experienced. Then ask the others to share what they saw happening. How can this experience help us to see how we can more effectively relate in a positive way to others with understanding and empathy? If you have time, you may want to repeat the exercise with two more persons.
- Dr. Morgan lists three ways in which you can practice “Integrity Vision”:
  - WWJD (What would Jesus do?)
  - Mother Teresa Eyes
  - See Jesus at your side
- Which one or ones seem to be most helpful to you in relating to others with integrity vision? Why?
- Pray in unison the prayer attributed to St. Patrick found on page 93 of the book.
- Close in the usual way.

## Session Eight



# Integrity in Our Life and Work

## Executive Summary

In his final chapter, Dr. Morgan explores the relationship between vocation and integrity. It is easy to equate vocational calling with a specific call to ordained ministry, but he broadens the definition of minister and ministry to include us all, ordained through our baptism into Christ's body.

Dr. Morgan examines ways in which we can discern our individual calling for our lives. By connecting whatever it is that we have been given the gifts to do with an opportunity to be in ministry to others, he de-mystifies the nature of ministry, bringing it down to everyday living level. He walks winsomely through the ministries of competence, showing up, encouragement, and of seeing Jesus' face.

In each example, Dr. Morgan underlines the recurring theme that living our lives with integrity in relationship to God is not something that we have "got to" do, but rather a God-given opportunity to "get to" live more fully. May it be so for each one of us.

## Session Eight Suggestions

- Ask the group to close their eyes and in silence reflect on what they hear. As you read aloud 1 Peter 2:9-10. Pause a few moments and read it again.

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Discuss images, actions, attitudes that come to mind when they think about being part of a “royal priesthood.”

- In what ways did Dr. Morgan’s three ways of discerning one’s “calling” (listed on page 99) help you identify how you can best be a “priest” (mediator of God’s grace) to others?
- Ask the group to look at the four “ministries” Dr. Morgan describes on pages 102-106 and share the ones with which they can most identify.
- Ask members of the group to share in what ways this Lenten study on “integrity” has been a means of grace in their Christian journeys.
- Discuss how your church might provide more small groups all during the year. Would those in this group be interested in continuing next fall?
- Have a basket or bowl available somewhere in the room and invite those who would like to make a contribution to cover the cost of the Lenten materials to place it in the container before they leave.
- You might close with celebration of Holy Communion if you can arrange for one of the pastors to join you for this final session.
- An alternative would be to have a “Love Feast” using bread and water. An excellent description of the Love Feast, with suggestions for preparation and order, is found in the *United Methodist Book of Worship* on page 581-584. The Love Feast, or Agape Meal, is a Christian fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with his disciples during his ministry and expressing the *koinonia* (community, sharing, fellowship) enjoyed by the family of Christ. If you have a Love Feast, an important element is personal testimonies as to experiences of God’s grace. This would be the appropriate place, rather than earlier in the session, to invite persons to share how God had blessed them during the Lenten season.
- If your group chooses not to celebrate Holy Communion or have a Love Feast, you will want to close with a circle and sentence prayers.

# Questions for Reflection and Discussion





## Chapter 1



# The Dearth and Rebirth of Integrity

### Scripture Lessons

Deuteronomy 5:1-21

Matthew 5:1-11

Matthew 22:34-40

### Discussion Questions

1. How would you define/describe the word “integrity”? Give an example of what integrity is and what it is not.

2. What integrity/value statements do you remember from your childhood and youth? Who taught them to you?

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3. Name and describe a person or persons whom you believe embody the meaning of the word integrity.
  
4. In what ways do you understand the meaning of the word integrity in light of the weekly Scripture lessons?

## Chapter 2



# The Integrity Response

### Scripture Lessons

John 2:13-22

Matthew 25:31-46

Ephesians 4

### Discussion Questions

1. When is “reacting” an issue of integrity? Give some examples. When is it not? Give some examples.
  
2. How would you define the word “discernment”? How does God respond to you? How do you respond to God?



## Chapter 3



# Grace-Fueled Integrity

## Scripture Lessons

Genesis 3

John 1:1-18

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

## Discussion Questions

1. Dr. Morgan writes, “Consider the difference between living life as a ‘got to’ and a ‘get to.’” What is the difference? How do you see these different understandings fitting in your life? How can a “get to” approach help you deal/live with the “got to”s? How can the “get to”s change the “got to”s?
  
2. John Wesley is one example of someone who moved from a “got to” to a “get to” relationship with God. In what ways has your understanding of



## Chapter 4



# Born Again Integrity

### Scripture Lessons

Genesis 1

John 3:1-18

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

### Discussion Questions

1. Name and describe the happiest moment of your life. Was it about something you earned or was it a gift?
  
2. Define/Describe the word “unfulfilled.” Give personal examples as you feel comfortable. How does the concept of being born again/anew/from above change your point of view from unfulfilled to the process of fulfillment?

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3. Describe what the phrase, “created in the image of God” means to you.  
How does your understanding of grace affect that description?

4. How can being born again/anew/from above invite you to respond to  
God and God’s grace? Give examples.

## Chapter 5



# Integrity in a Passionate World

### Scripture Lessons

John 4:4-42

Luke 10:25-37

1 Corinthians 13

### Discussion Questions

1. What is your definition of the word “passion”? How would you describe it to Data? (Data is a human robot on Star Trek The Next Generation. He can do everything a human being can do except experience emotion.)
  
2. What are some of your passions in life? How do they connect with your family, church, and most important, your relationship with God?



## Chapter 6



# Integrity Vision

### Scripture Lessons

John 9:1-41

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Matthew 25:31-45

### Discussion Questions

1. What is your definition of “Integrity Vision”? Describe seeing “the God-connection between us and the people and situations of our lives.” How does this go beyond or deeper than just having a positive attitude?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Where do you see the work of God and God’s love in your life, family, and the world around you?



## Chapter 7



# Integrity in Our Life and Work

### Scripture Lessons

Mark 1:14-20

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

1 Peter 2:9-10

### Discussion Questions

1. Using the Scripture lessons and Dr. Morgan's chapter on "Integrity in Our Life and Work," what new understanding do you have of one who is called to be a minister? How can baptism be seen as a daily remembrance of our calling rather than a one time event?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Have you discerned your calling? What is it? How do Dr. Morgan's three questions help/hinder your discernment? How does God help/hinder your discernment?

