



**S**incerity is letting God shine through our blemishes rather than trying to cover them up.

“A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

—Psalm 51:17



**S**incerity is acknowledging obvious faults in order to gain the healing prayers of others.

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

—James 5:16

# Sincerity

## vs. Hypocrisy

**Sincerity is being as genuine on the inside as we appear to be on the outside.**

### Definition

The word *sincere* comes from the Latin *sincerus*, which means “whole, pure, genuine.” It is most likely derived from the root *sem-*, meaning “one,” and *-cerus*, from a verb meaning “to create.” To be sincere is to be without duplicity, which is planned deception. The ultimate expression of duplicity is Satan and his messengers, who appear as angels of light but in reality are darkness and death. (See II Corinthians 11:13–15.)

Scripture warns about the person who is generous with kisses but inwardly is a deadly enemy. (See Proverbs 27:6.) Joab illustrated this warning when he approached a rival general named Amasa with a smile and gave him a kiss, but as he did, he slid a knife between his ribs and murdered him. (See II Samuel 20:9–10.)

The Hebrew word for *sincerity* is *tamiym*. It means “complete, whole, entire, sound; having integrity; to be complete or entirely in accord with truth and fact.” The Greek word *heilikrines* is translated *sincere*. Paul wrote, “This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be **sincere** [*heilikrines*] and without offense till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ,

unto the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:9–11).

*Heilikrines* is made up of two Greek words: *heile*, which means “the sun’s ray,” and *krino*, meaning to “judge.” The literal meaning of *sincere* could be rendered “to have our lives and actions found pure when judged by sunlight.” Jesus explained, “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (John 3:20).

The offering Paul collected for the needy saints in Jerusalem shined light on the believers’ sincere love and commended their wholehearted devotion. (See II Corinthians 8:1–8.)

A close synonym of *sincerity* is the word *integrity*. “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide” (Psalm 26:1).

### How Sincerity Begins

The first two times *tamiym* is used in the Old Testament, it is translated *perfect*. “These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect [*tamiym*] in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect [*tamiym*]” (Genesis 17:1).

In Deuteronomy 18:13, God instructs all of His people to be perfect: “Thou shalt be perfect [*tamiym*] with the LORD thy God.” In Psalm 15:2, *tamiym* is translated *uprightly*. “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly [*tamiym*], and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart” (Psalm 15:1–2).

## The Heart of Sincerity

The Hebrew word *shalem*—frequently translated *perfect*—describes sincerity and means “complete, perfect, whole, finished” and comes from a root word meaning “to make peace with.” When Solomon dedicated the Temple, he prayed, “Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day” (I Kings 8:61). However, Solomon failed to maintain sincerity and integrity. “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father” (I Kings 11:4).

Like Asa, one who fails to make wise decisions can still have a perfect heart, “The high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa’s heart was perfect with the LORD all his days” (I Kings 15:14). On the other hand, a person can make right decisions but not have a perfect heart. “Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. . . . And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart” (II Chronicles 25:1–2).

We can discern whether our hearts are perfect by determining whether we worship other gods, either secretly or openly. “Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them” (II Chronicles 25:14). When we expect from things or people what only God can give, we make idols and forfeit the sincerity of our hearts.

## The Reward of Sincerity

God looks for sincere and perfect hearts through which to demonstrate His wisdom and power. “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (II Chronicles 16:9). This statement was spoken to King Asa, who won a great victory when he relied upon the Lord but suffered a great defeat when he relied upon a military ally.

Paul discovered that when he relied upon the Lord with all of his heart, even though he was weak, he experienced God’s strength. The Lord said to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:9).

## The Key to Sincerity

Another New Testament word translated *perfect* is *katartizo*, meaning “to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair, adjust; to put in order.”



**S**incerity is using imperfections as reminders not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

One of the most respected men in history is Abraham Lincoln. According to tradition, when his portrait was being painted, the artist asked, “Should I paint your cheek with or without the wart?” “With the wart,” he answered.

**Honey bees demonstrate unusual skill in communication.**

Using body language and uniquely formulated scents called pheromones, bees convey reliable messages describing danger, work assignments, and food sources.





**Our walk talks and our talk talks, but our walk talks louder than our talk talks.**

*“I therefore . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”*

—Ephesians 4:1

**“Are all the parts of our character and of our ways which no one can see as right as those which all can see? Are we true right through?”**

—Amy Carmichael

**Remove the mask of religious acts and let your true heart be seen.**

**Our sincerity will be quickly revealed as we undergo fiery trials.**

*“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”*

—I Peter 4:12

Peter wrote, “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect [*katartizo*], stablish, strengthen, settle you” (I Peter 5:10).

God takes all believers through fiery trials that expose hidden defects and imperfections. When believers thank God for these trials and rejoice in the purposes for which they are given, God grants a corresponding measure of the power of the Holy Spirit and a perfection of the fruit of the Spirit in believers’ lives. (See I Peter 4:12–13.)

## The Tragedy of Hypocrisy

Many people turn from the Lord because they observe hypocrisy in believers. Perhaps this is why Jesus was so harsh with hypocrites during His earthly ministry. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13).

*Hypokrites*, the Greek word translated *hypocrite*, means “an actor, stage player, pretender.” The hypocrites of Jesus’ day performed outward religious acts in order to get the praise of men, but were full of inward moral corruption. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27).

A hypocrite’s root problem is that his whole heart is not devoted

to the Lord. “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:7–8).

A hypocrite focuses on details of righteousness while violating important issues. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Matthew 23:23).

## Personal Evaluation

### How sincere are you?

- Are you the same on the outside as you are on the inside?
- Do you hide secret sins from the light of Christ?
- Do you judge others for things that you are guilty of?
- Do you obey outwardly, yet inwardly resist instruction?
- Do you seek the Lord with your whole heart?
- Do you do good deeds for the praise of men or the glory of God?
- Do you allow the strength of God to shine through your weaknesses?
- Do people see the light of Christ through your strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you try to copy the achievements of others without adopting their character?