

Thieme's *Integrity of God*: Confidence Is Sustained by Divine Integrity, Righteousness, Justice, & Love of God, & Produces Love for God, Rom 5:5

41. It is this confidence that enables us to acquire capacity for blessings in our soul due to our understanding of what the integrity of God means. God's integrity may be defined as the harmonious operation of two of His divine attributes—righteousness and justice—together with His divine love.
42. The next verse begins by stating a fact:

Romans 5:5a - And confidence in God never disappoints because love for God has been poured out in our hearts ...
43. For our confidence in God to be sustained then it must be founded on a precise understanding of what makes the veracity and immutability behind His promises dependable.
44. The answer to this is divine integrity combined with divine love. These attributes are the subject of the first chapter of:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Integrity of God*. 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 6-14:

THE NATURE OF INTEGRITY. Perhaps you are wondering why you have never before heard of the "integrity" of God. "Where is that found in the Bible?" you ask. The Authorized or King James Version of the Bible calls the combination of righteousness and justice the "holiness" of God. But the word "holiness" fails to communicate; it is anachronistic and antiquated. The meanings of words in any language change over a period of time and the English language certainly has been no exception. (p. 6)

If someone today were described as "holy," people might picture asceticism, straight-lacedness, self-righteousness, or some other form of pseudospirituality. When the Bible says, "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Isaiah 6:3)... what does it mean? I'll tell you what Isaiah 6:3 means to most believers. Not a thing! And it never will until explained in other terms. We need not tie ourselves to an obscure, emotion-tinged word, especially when an excellent, meaningful, modern term is available. "Integrity, Integrity, Integrity." That begins to communicate.

God has always possessed integrity as part of His eternal, infinite, perfect essence. It is a quality of His unchangeable self so basic to His character that He does not have to sustain it by His will or sovereignty. God does not have to continually decide to perpetuate His integrity; He simply has it. (p. 7)

We can better understand how God's integrity functions when we first understand how the attributes of integrity work individually.

One of His attributes stands guard, as it were, over all the rest. The justice of God is the guardian of God's essence in all that He does toward imperfect creatures. (p. 8)

God evaluates all mankind from His justice, both now and forever. Everything God does toward us from any of His attributes goes through His justice. (pp. 8-9)

God's justice is our point of contact with Him; therefore, when we come to God, His absolute justice is the attribute to which we must adjust.

If God's point of contract with us were His sovereignty, *He* would choose who would go to heaven; *He* would program us to mechanically enact every detail of our lives on earth. We would be automatons. (p. 9)

If, on the other hand, God's point of contact with us were His omnipotence, *He* would be a tyrant. It would be impossible for us to fulfill the will of God because *He* would do everything Himself by divine fiat. *He* would force people to believe in Christ.

If love were the point of contact, His justice and righteousness would not need to be propitiated or satisfied and there would be no necessity for Christ to die on the cross. As perfect as these attributes are, they are not the basic frame of reference in God's relationship with us.

Of all the attributes in the essence box, justice is the only one that protects His entire essence. God's justice is our point of contract with Him.

RIGHTEOUSNESS GUARDS DIVINE ESSENCE. In the exercise of His justice, however, God is never arbitrary or capricious. His justice has a guardian of its own. Divine justice can never be corrupted because it always functions according to the standard of fairness found in God's perfect righteousness.

In the same way that justice is the watchdog over God's entire essence in all divine action related to mankind, righteousness is the watchdog over His justice. Whereas justice is the function of divine integrity, righteousness is the principle of divine integrity. What the righteousness of God demands, the justice of God must perform: What righteousness condemns, justice judges; what righteousness approves, justice blesses. (p. 10)

Absolute righteousness is the key to the character of God; all else depends on this attribute. If He did not have absolute righteousness, God would not be God. But He does have perfect righteousness. Inviolable righteousness is at the very core of His being; God cannot tolerate less than His own perfection. Righteousness protects His impeccable justice when dealing with sinful man. Therefore, righteousness is God's point of responsibility toward all the sins of the human race. (pp. 10-11)

INTEGRITY AND THE LOVE OF GOD. Just as righteousness and justice are vital aspects of God's being, so is His love. Love is the absolute virtue and benevolence of His thinking and actions. Love is what God is as well as what He does. Never is such a definition used of man. We might love someone or something, but we are never said to *be* love. Divine love is infinitely superior to human love and requires no response, no reciprocation, no reassurance, no demonstrations of faithfulness for its preservation. Since God's love is eternal and immutable He cannot, will not, and never does fall in love. He does not maintain love, and His love is not sustained by emotion. God's love exists with or without a created object. (pp. 11-12)

GOD IS ABSOLUTELY INDEPENDENT. He is more than independent; God exists eternally, not created or sustained by any source outside Himself. In fact, He does not even sustain Himself! He exists as an infinite person who needs no sustenance, no maintenance, no help, no support, no fulfillment from anyone or anything.

After Adam's fall, God's love is extended toward man in two ways. God loves an imperfect, sinful object—unregenerate mankind—with *impersonal* love. Since God can have no association with sin, His justice and righteousness must be satisfied before He can have a relationship with sinful mankind.

But God commendeth [demonstrates] his [impersonal] love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died [as a substitute] for us. (Romans. 5:8, KJV)
(p. 12)

Such love emphasizes the perfect and absolute qualities of God rather than the failings of man. Therefore, impersonal love does not require compatibility, intimacy, friendliness, or attraction between the subject and object of love. God's impersonal love depends solely on the integrity of God. In demonstrating His impersonal love for us, the Father's righteousness demanded that His justice pour out all the sins of the human race upon Jesus Christ and judge Him in our place. His integrity was demonstrated on the cross by Jesus Christ who was our substitute. Jesus Christ's substitutionary death on the cross reconciled us to God, redeemed us from the slave market of sin, and satisfied the righteousness and justice of God by atoning for our sins (1 Pet. 2:24). (pp. 12-13)

God's *personal* love is conditional; He personally loves only what His righteousness approves. God's personal love is reserved only for those who through faith alone in Christ alone become members of His family possessing the imputed righteousness of God. Since God loves His righteousness wherever it is found, He is free to personally love members of His family forever without compromise of His justice. God demonstrates His personal love toward us in His provisions for sustenance through the grace pipeline (Matt. 6:25-26), as a point of reference for our unique spiritual life (1 John 4:12, 16-17; cf. Eph. 3:19), and even in discipline (Heb. 12:6). (p. 13)

The love of God must never be equated with human love (Isa. 55:8). His love is absolute perfection, completely constant, and contains none of the foibles and failings of the inferior human brand. God demonstrates His love in relation to human beings by revealing Himself and directing His absolute integrity toward unbelievers through the redemption solution and toward believers through Bible doctrine. God's love is His eternal giving and sharing of Himself. (pp. 13-14)

45. Confidence is found in what we believe and what we believe must orient to the integrity of God which is the foundation of His plan for the human race in general and the believer in particular.
46. The mature believer is never disappointed by anything because his confidence is based in a complete knowledge of the will of God and the plan of God.
47. The reciprocal response that occurs from this is love *for* God which is found in verse 5 in the objective genitive with the noun of action: ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, *hē agapē tou Theou*.
48. This is introduced by the causal conjunction **ὅτι, *hoti***: “because love *for* God.” This reciprocal love is said to be “poured out,” the perfect passive indicative of the verb:

ἐκχέω, *ekcheō* - “has been poured out”

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| perfect: | Dramatic; since the perfect tense represents an existing state, the dramatic perfect may be used for the purpose of describing a fact in an unusually vivid and realistic way with emphasis on the results of the action. |
| passive: | Our “love <i>for</i> God” receives the action through consistent study and inculcation of the Word of God which reveals to us the “love <i>of</i> God.” |
| indicative: | Declarative: a statement of fact. |

49. Therefore, the development of our “love *for* God” comes through spiritual growth: we develop respect for God and His Word. From this we acquire confidence in God and His Word. This generates within our stream of consciousness “love *for* God.” The latter is stated next with the prepositional phrase:

ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις, *en tais kardia* - This is where *epignōsis* retention of biblical truth is stored in the soul. Awareness of the integrity of God is a gradual process that ascends from respect, to confidence, to personal love.

50. The source of this inculcation is through the mentorship of the Holy Spirit, the ablative of agency, **διὰ, *dia*** plus the noun **πνεῦμα, *pneuma***: “through the agency of the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”
51. The passage reads this way in corrected translation:

Romans 5:3b - Let us demonstrate esprit de corps [**καυχάομαι, *kauchaomai***] in adversity [**persecutions, trials, distressing circumstances**], knowing that such adversity brings about courage [**ὑπομονή, *hupomonē***: **courage, honor, & integrity in time of disaster**];

Romans 5:4 - and courage under pressure brings about proven character [**δοκιμή, *dokimē***: **demonstrated integrity**]; and proven character, brings about confident expectation [**ἐλπίς, *elpis***: **in blessings from divine integrity**];

v. 5 - and confidence in God never disappoints because love *for* God has been poured out into our streams of consciousness [**inculcation of biblical truth**] through the agency of the Holy Spirit Who was given to us [**indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation**].