



CHAPTER 6 VERSES 1-19

CHAPTER 7 VERSES 1-2

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FLOURISHING IN THE MIDST OF OPPOSITION

**"If I have integrity,  
people will love me for it."**

**Maybe 2/3 true** 

# Maybe...

1. Integrity usually has holes.
2. They feel threatened.
3. You symbolize what they hate.

"You're going to have to be **shrewd as serpents**, and **innocent as doves**."

– Jesus  
(Matthew 10:16)



A life pursuing integrity that tries to build is going to face numerous slanders and intrigues. Therefore...

**Be Shrewd.**

**Don't be Naive.**

this is not a "minor" teaching 

Or...

**Love beats evil  
with wisdom.**

(Not just force)



# Many intrigues...

1. Co-opting
2. Badgering
3. Rumor milling
4. Wormtongue
5. Infiltration
6. Intimidation

Not an exhaustive list!





# Understand the **GOAL** of intrigues.

**Nehemiah 6:9** "for they all **wanted to frighten us** thinking, "their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done."

**vs: 13, 14, 19**



**Be Shrewd.**

**2 Don'ts**

**2 Do's**



**1. Don't hand yourself  
over to people you  
can't trust**



## Proverbs 2:11-15

"*Discretion* will protect you, and *understanding* will guard you. *Wisdom* will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who *delight* in doing wrong and *rejoice* in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways."



# 3 people in Proverbs

**The Wise** – learn from everything

**The Fool** – learn from nothing

**The Wicked** – want to destroy you



## **John 2:23 - 3:1**

"Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. *But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.*"



## **2. Don't get drawn into defending yourself**

**"You can't answer a sneer."  
- R.J. Neuhaus**



## **Acts 8:32 - 35**

The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and *as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.* Who can speak of his descendants?... Then Philip began *with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.*



**3. Make the fear of God  
your greatest fear.**



# Nehemiah 6:11 - 12

But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!" I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

# **4. Grow in the wisdom of discernment**



## **Nehemiah 7:1 - 2**

After the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers and the singers and the Levites were appointed. I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do.



## **John 10:17 - 18**

**“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”**



# Jesus

Not just more innocent.  
He's shrewder too.





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