

Christian Ethics

An Introduction - Principles

Note to Readers

Print this Table:

<http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/christian-ethics-table-of-principles.pdf>

What Are Ethics?

- **The science of morals.**
- **The study of the principles of human duty.**
- **In narrow sense, by qualifying word or phrase: The moral principles or system of a leader or school of thought.**
- **The moral principles by which a person is guided.**
- **The rules of conduct recognized in certain aspects of human life.**

What Are Christian Ethics?

- **The principles of godliness taught in the Bible for human conduct.**
- **It is nearly a synonym for Bible wisdom, discretion, and prudence.**
- **Rules to resolve evident conflict between God's laws (II Chr 19:5-11).**
- **Principles to know what is right in varying circumstances (Pr 16:20).**
- **The difference between judging rightly or by appearance (Jn 7:24).**
- **Learning the mind of God to correctly know His will (I Cor 2:16).**

Verses for Christian Ethics

“And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment” (I Chr 12:32).

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5:15-17).

Verses for Christian Ethics

“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.”

Isaiah 11:2-3

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

The Need for Christian Ethics - 1

- **Is it ever right to lie? If no, what about David? If yes, when?**
- **What would you have done in Nazi Germany with a Jewish maid?**
- **Is capital punishment right? The Bible says, “Thou shalt not kill.”**
- **Should a Christian wife obey her husband when he asks for sin?**
- **Should you pay taxes to a government that subsidizes abortion?**
- **The speed limit is the law! Do you ever drive over it? Why? How?**

The Need for Christian Ethics - 2

- **Could you hire a good worker, if you know he is a sodomite?**
- **Can you kill a thief in your home? At a garage sale next week?**
- **Should you bid an electrical job for a JW's Kingdom Hall?**
- **What should you do if a master asks you to hang Christmas bulbs?**
- **Can you work at a convenience store and sell pornography?**
- **How can a Christian buy insurance, since it shows a lack of faith?**

Get Excited about Ethics and Scripture

- **This study is elementary and limited in scope to get you started.**
- **There is more to learn, which can be learned by Bible reading.**
- **Do not resent Exodus – Deuteronomy, for there is much wisdom.**
- **The Bible is able to make the simple wise (Ps 19:7-11). Believe it!**
- **How are you like Elihu, David, and Ezra regarding the scriptures?**
- **God wants each of you as Bible answer men in public and private.**

Principle of INTENT - 1

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

- **Jesus taught breaking the Sabbath law to keep Sabbath intent.**
- **Purpose (spirit) of a law is more important than the law (letter).**
- **The Sabbath was made for rest, so for rest the law could be broken.**
- **The intent of a service or product must be kept key in judgment.**

Principle of INTENT - 2

- **Evaluate situations by the direct and/or end use of the activity.**
- **Are hotels and wine used for sin? Do they have good end uses?**
- **Does abortion or pornography have a good end use? It is wrong!**
- **Is the employment a direct or indirect involvement with the sin?**
- **If a marriage has been destroyed, why keep the letter of it intact?**
- **If a child well ahead in schoolwork finds a job, may the child work?**

Principle of MERCY - 1

“But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless” (Matt 12:7).

- **Jesus taught that personal mercy trumped the strict Sabbath law.**
- **They were hungry, so they broke the strict Sabbath (Num 15:32-36).**
- **This principle was not new from Jesus (Prov 21:3; Hos 6:6; Isaiah 58:6).**
- **Jesus condemned Pharisees for their wrong priorities (Matt 23:23).**

Principle of MERCY - 2

- **Ceremony or ritual is less God's religion than is love and mercy.**
- **David understood it when asking to eat the shewbread (Lev 10:1-2).**
- **Jesus applied it to Pharisees taking care of oxen (Luke 13:15; 14:5).**
- **We apply it whenever we miss assemblies for mercy (Heb 10:25).**
- **We could apply it if a marriage became a hopeless hell (Matt 19:6).**
- **Solomon applied the mercy principle to a man's own life (Pr 11:17).**

Principle of SUFFERING - 1

“Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” (I Cor 6:7).

- **Wisdom says your loss does not determine godly conduct by itself.**
- **Jesus had taught the same principle by two cheeks (Matt 5:38-48).**
- **Abuse by rightful authority does not relieve your duty (I Pet 2:18-20).**
- **It is the glory of great men to overlook personal offences (Pr 19:11).**

Principle of SUFFERING - 2

- **Rulers violating their own laws does not give you right to rebel.**
- **A wife complaining about a hard husband does not have a case.**
- **A boss abusing you gives you opportunity for godliness (I Pet 2:19).**
- **A financial transaction to your detriment does not prove anything.**
- **Paying market value or more at times is prudent (Pr 20:14; Ps 68:5).**
- **Selling for less than the market will bear can be right (Pr 11:26).**

Principle of IGNORANCE - 1

“Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake” (I Cor 10:25).

“If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake” (I Cor 10:27).

- **Paul argued that you not knowing the nature of a thing can allow it.**
- **Ignorance is bliss in such a thing, but ignorance itself is mere folly.**
- **You are not bound to know every possible consequence in a matter.**

Principle of IGNORANCE - 2

- **You are not bound to know every possible consequence in a matter.**
- **If you run a hotel, you need not ask marriage licenses of guests.**
- **If you run a grocery, you need not ask what they intend with beer.**
- **You are not obligated for general suspicions if you drink in public.**
- **Only when an offended conscience makes an issue is it an issue.**
- **You charitably believe and hope all things in merciful ignorance.**

Principle of MATERIALITY - 1

“When thou comest into thy neighbour’s vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn” (Deut 23:24-25).

- **God’s law to Israel recognized inconsequential actions due to size.**
- **Think of cheeks and coats and disciples’ corn (Matt 5:39-42; 12:1).**
- **We limit contact with evil, yet not totally (II Cor 6:14-17; I Cor 5:9-10).**

Principle of MATERIALITY - 1

- **Accounting includes this principle for reconciliation/reporting.**
- **Do you always drive the speed limit? Is 20 over in a 45 immaterial?**
- **Is the difference between a bookstore and a porn shop material?**
- **If you do not have the records, you may estimate for a tax return.**
- **There are limits – purloining and appearance (Tit 2:10; II Cor 8:21).**
- **Our society typically does not allow such five-finger discounts!**

Principle of SPECIFICITY - 1

“Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13). **“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death”** (Exodus 21:12)

- **The law against killing was overruled by the laws of civil judgment.**
- **Specific laws for specific situations overrule general (II Chr 19:5-11).**
- **Priests and circumcision trumped Sabbath law (Matt 12:5; Jn 7:23).**
- **The command to preach overruled Jewish leaders (Acts 4:19; 5:29).**

Principle of SPECIFICITY - 2

- **Israel borrowed all from the Egyptians, but we do not so “borrow.”**
- **We strongly endorse capital punishment as God’s specific order.**
- **We recognize both absolute and relative statements of scripture.**
- **Think swearing , resisting evil, planning, female attire, etc.**
- **James condemned worldly friends Paul allowed (Jas 4:4; I Cor 10:27).**
- **Unique situations allow unique responses e.g. Joseph, Esther, etc.**

Principle of ACCEPTANCE - 1

“Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? ... Shew me the tribute money ... Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt 22:17-22).

- Existing law is determined by its level of acceptance and practice.
- Jesus argued the *de facto* rule of Rome over the *de jure* of Israel.
- Paul appealed to Roman law to help himself (Ac 22:24-30; 25:9-12).

Principle of ACCEPTANCE - 2

- **The rebuilding Jews appealed to Cyrus's decree (Ezra 5).**
- **Ebed-melech exposed himself wisely to Zedekiah (Jer 38:1-13).**
- **The Constitution is American history; we see *de facto* usurpation.**
- **We are Christians, not constitutional republicans or patriots.**
- **We use Moses only as far as it is legal (Deut 13:12-18; 21:18-21).**
- **We monitor liberties for child discipline, website publishing, etc.**

Principle of OFFENCE - 1

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (I Cor 10:32).

- **Jesus, though legally exempt, paid a tribute (Mat 17:24-27; Ro 12:17).**
- **Paul ignored lawful things that were not expedient (I Co 6:12; 10:23).**
- **Daniel and Paul had clean records when vetted (Dan 6:4-5; Ac 26:31).**
- **But there are those we do not care about offending (Matt 15:12-14).**

Principle of OFFENCE - 2

- **Paul was made all things to all men to save some (I Cor 9:19-23).**
- **A right to do something, even a scriptural right, does not require it.**
- **We must go out of our way, even if it costs, to avoid foolish offence.**
- **Child discipline in public is an example of “waiting until later.”**
- **Fools utter all their minds – wise men hold it until later (Pr 29:11).**
- **Your audience should dictate what you say and how you say it.**

Principle of PRUDENCE - 1

“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished” (Pr 22:3; 27:12).

- **Discretion is better than valor; open resistance may not work.**
- **Jesus taught counting costs and caution (Luke 14:28-32; Pr 25:8).**
- **Think Abigail, Paul, and Gideon (I Sam 25:19; Act 9:23-25; Judges 6:11).**
- **Righteous men sometimes hide (Pr 28:12,28; I Kgs 17:1-3; Am 5:12-13).**

Principle of PRUDENCE - 2

- **Better safe than sorry, though sometimes trite, is this principle.**
- **It is better to make peace quickly than to take risks (Matt 5:25).**
- **God's 7000 may not be known to others due to their prudence.**
- **There is no virtue in taking on unnecessary fights you cannot win.**
- **Child discipline in public is an example of "waiting until later."**
- **Prudence is not weakness, though the over-righteous think so.**

Principle of TEMPTING - 1

“Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matt 4:7). “Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah” (Deut 6:16).

- **Tempting God is presuming on Him to do what you should do.**
- **Ignoring means to “trust God” is not faith but rather presumption.**
- **Jesus ignored Psalm 91:11-12 when He could get down differently.**
- **The angel of the Lord is true, but note Psalm 34’s superscription!**

Principle of TEMPTING - 2

- **David prayed for God to defeat Ahithophel ... but sent Hushai!**
- **Insurance is an easy way to avoid presuming on God and charity.**
- **Certain activities ... like motorcycles, etc. ... have higher risks.**
- **God has not promised to provide for all children, as some presume.**
- **Daily bread requires prayer ... and wise management (Pr 27:23-24).**
- **We do our reasonable best and trust God for the rest (Ps 127:1-2).**

Principle of PASSION - 1

“Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, **while his heart is hot, and overtake him**, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past” (Deut 19:6).

- God recognizes human passion will alter human judgment, in this case a family member seeking revenge for an accidental death.
- God recognizes the difference between premeditated murder and involuntary manslaughter based on the absence of intent.
- Crime of passion, temporary insanity, voluntary manslaughter, etc.

Principle of PASSION - 2

- **Maximum force against a thief in your house was allowed, but finding and killing that thief later was not allowed (Ex 22:2-3).**
- **Ruling passion is to avoid sinful action (Pr 16:32; 25:28; 14:29; 19:11).**
- **Thus, anger is to be settled immediately (Ep 4:26; Pr 22:24-25; 29:22).**
- **Ahasuerus sought counsel before punishing Vashti (Esther 1:12-15).**
- **Jealousy without evidence was allowed for husbands (Num 5:11-31).**
- **Beating a servant was allowed, but not to death then (Ex 21:20-21).**

Principle of AUTHORITY - 1

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: **the powers that be are ordained of God**. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Rom 13:1-2).

- Hypocrisy or incompetence does not nullify authority (Matt 23:1-3).
- Jesus distinguished *de facto* and *de jure* authority (Matt 22:15-22).
- Matters of liberty, even worship, are under authority (Num 30:1-16).
- Authority in five spheres is obeyed up to clear laws of God (Ac 5:29).

Principle of AUTHORITY - 2

- **Moses, Joseph, Daniel, and Esther excelled in pagan governments.**
- **Jesus and apostles paid taxes to civil government that killed them.**
- **For conscience toward God, Christians will suffer (1 Pet 2:18-20).**
- **For using civil authority for advantage, see principle of breasts.**
- **For fear without amazement, see “When Your Husband’s a Fool.”**
- **See also “Ordinance of Authority,” “God bless the IRS,” “Christian and Taxes.”**

Principle of CONSCIENCE - 1

“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23).

- **Your conscience is God’s candle for internal guidance (Pr 20:27).**
- **Your conscience can accuse or excuse behavior (Rom 2:14-15).**
- **Your conscience can indicate when a decision is wrong (Jn 8:1-11).**
- **Older, mature men’s consciences should be more sensitive (Jn 8:9).**

Principle of CONSCIENCE - 2

- **Ethics considers all honest consciences involved (I Cor 10:23-33).**
- **Consciences cannot override God's word by altering His precepts.**
- **Consciences may be altered by instruction in knowledge (I Cor 8:7).**
- **Things at hand might be lawful, but are they expedient (I Cor 6:12)?**
- **You might have mercy in a thing, but not have faith. Do not do it.**
- **In any issue short of God's word, a firm conscience must prevail.**

Principle of LIBERTY - 1

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal 5:13).

- **If God did not command or condemn it, you may do as you wish.**
- **Yet, you cannot impose your liberty on any others but your sphere.**
- **Yet, there are limitations and parameters for your use of liberty.**
- **An important limitation is keeping your liberty private (Rom 14:22).**

Principle of LIBERTY - 2

- **Liberty depends on conscience, or good can be sin (Rom 14:23).**
- **Most have strong opinions about liberty that must be crushed.**
- **Without great temperance, your liberties will become your agenda.**
- **Liberty only goes so far, then acceptability and offence (I Cor 6:12).**
- **Liberty may be enforced on those under it (Num 30:1-16; Heb 13:7).**
- **For a complete study of liberty ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/christian-liberty/sermon.php>.**

Principle of JUBILEE - 1

“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you” (Lev 25:9-10).

- **Every 7th year, God required debt forgiveness and slaves freed.**
- **Every 50th year, God required all slates to be wiped clean again.**
- **Slaves went home; foreclosures were reversed; year vacation; etc.**
- **The God of hope allowed the poor to start over each 7 and 50 years.**

Principle of JUBILEE - 2

- **But what about the rich and property rights – God would bless.**
- **Forgiving and forgetting at times is God’s will, and it works for all.**
- **You will encounter situations without a clear answer; go Jubilee!**
- **You will have controversies with “she said”/ “he said”; go Jubilee!**
- **God hates hopelessness and confusion; clear the deck; go Jubilee!**
- **For a complete study of Jubilee ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/jubilee.pdf>.**

Principle of CAREFULNESS - 1

“But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife” (1 Cor 7:32-33).

- **A rule for life is to choose among options the one reducing care.**
- **Even something as great as marriage can be a burden/hindrance.**
- **The context includes several other aspects of your life (1 Co 7:29-31).**
- **Whenever you can simplify your life, you should choose that option.**

Principle of CAREFULNESS - 2

- **Some men became eunuchs for the kingdom's sake (Matt 19:10-12).**
- **Yet, when righteousness is at stake, ignore carefulness (Dan 3:16).**
- **A present distress by circumstances changes things (I Cor 7:26).**
- **Evaluate society and carefulness even for marriage (I Cor 7:7-9).**
- **Here is where birth control meets scripture – society and care.**
- **From job/business to acreage to investments, etc., seek carefree.**

Principle of PRECEDENCE - 1

“But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death” (Ex 21:29).

- **God separates accidental death and involuntary manslaughter.**
- **He punished involuntary manslaughter just as He did murder.**
- **Such laws would promote carefulness with deadly things.**
- **Such manslaughter includes precedence, as in “wont to push.”**

Principle of PRECEDENCE - 2

- **Vehicular homicide should be treated like murder. Stone speeders!**
- **An automobile at speed is much like an ox that is “wont to push.”**
- **Indirectly, this law says you better know tendencies in all things.**
- **This rule helps gun safety, stable decks, child-proof sockets, etc.**
- **Guilt for faults or crimes in the past demand extra precaution.**
- **This principle should affect various rules for courtship or dating.**

Principle of BREASTS - 1

“And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me” (Is 49:23).

- **God promised that earthly kings would nurse His spiritual children.**
- **We exalt God - without compromise - by taking their offers of help.**
- **Ignorant fools say taking government help puts Caesar over God.**
- **Wise men of Issachar know it is God opening Caesar's purse for us!**

Principle of BREASTS - 2

- **Anything the government offers us without sin, we gladly receive it.**
- **This includes help for the church or individual e.g. unemployment.**
- **The Bible has many Old and New examples of taking Caesar's help.**
- **Consider Abraham and Joseph to Esther and Nehemiah to Paul.**
- **We are not a 501(c)(3) church, but we would be if it would help us.**
- **See documents ... "God Bless the IRS" and "Living Under Obama."**

Principle of INCIDENTAL - 1

“In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand ... when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant ... And he said unto him, Go in peace” (II Kgs 5:18-19).

- **Naaman feared the LORD, wanting dirt for an altar (II Kgs 5:15-17)!**
- **His job as captain of the host of the king of Syria involved the king’s worship of Rimmon, in which Naaman had to bow with him.**
- **Elisha heard Naaman’s plea for pardon and said, “Go in peace.”**

Principle of INCIDENTAL - 2

- **This KJV text, as-is, is precious for incidental contacts with evil.**
- **Only Matthew Henry reasoned about this text; others were bitter at England's religious controversies and/or righteous over much.**
- **We confirm our interpretation thus: Ec 7:16-17; Matt 12:7; Jn 7:24; I Cor 5:9-10; 8:10; 10:27; Gen 41:45; 47:22,26; Esth 2:15-18; Dan 1:17-20; 6:1-3; I Sam 21:10; 27:1-12; 28:1-2; 29:1-11.**
- **We allow incidental contact with sin that is not the intent or end.**
- **Can a Christian cut a mosque's grass? chauffeur an imam?**

Principle of APPEARANCE - 1

“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (I Thess 5:22).

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom 12:17).

“Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (II Cor 8:21).

- **Choice of action must also include how it might be perceived.**
- **Our conduct should avoid even the suspicion of evil when possible.**
- **Moses taught to keep FAR from a false matter (Exodus 23:7).**
- **Solomon taught to not pass near the path of evil men (Pr 4:14-15).**

Principle of APPEARANCE - 2

- **Financial matters must especially be handled with extra caution.**
- **How is adultery proved? – *motive* (flirting) and *opportunity* (alone).**
- **Going above and beyond bare duty in such things is wise prudence.**
- **Jesus paid a tribute He did not owe to avoid offence (Matt 17:24-27).**
- **Our goal is for our good works to be seen by the world (Matt 5:16).**
- **By avoiding the appearance of evil, we will likely be far from it.**

Principle of WIDOWS - 1

“Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless” (Ex 22:22-24).

- **Never afflict ... frighten ... short ... stress ... or neglect the needy.**
- **Who? Widows, fatherless children, the truly poor, the truly weak.**
- **Recall God’s rules for *gleaning* and ordinance for *manna* amounts.**
- **Make sure you always overpay or undercharge these special ones.**

Principle of WIDOWS - 2

- **The Bible has many warnings about taking care of the truly poor.**
- **Day laborers, the truly poor, get paid daily (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15).**
- **If pure religion is visiting the afflicted, afflicting any will curse you!**
- **How do you tip? Do you read the Proverbs? Maid service? Others?**
- **Hate extortion – excess pressure – against any, but surely the poor.**

Principle of MARKET - 1

“He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it” (Pr 11:26).

“It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth” (Pr 20:14).

- **Godliness includes selling or buying at market price w/o coercion.**
- **We may be capitalists, but we are capitalists limited by scripture.**
- **We do not believe we should charge whatever the market can bear.**
- **We do not believe it is financial wisdom to haggle a seller down.**

Principle of MARKET - 2

- **We are financial libertarians to a degree, but godliness trumps.**
- **You better pay market or more if a widow or fatherless is involved.**
- **If you use a brother or neighbor for much, pay him (Jer 22:13-14).**
- **We would not corner a market to maximize profits. See Pr 11:26.**
- **We would not detail every problem with a used item. See Pr 20:14.**
- **Here is a prime principle to scatter for increase. See Pr 11:24-25.**

Principle of OVER MUCH - 1

“Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time” (Eccl 7:16-17)?

- **Being more conservative than scripture is as bad as more liberal.**
- **The opposite of liberality and mercy is churlness and Pharisaism.**
- **The greatest enemies of Jesus were Pharisees – the conservatives!**
- **Stressing black-and-white above everything makes you profane.**

Principle of OVER MUCH - 2

- **The Pharisees I condemn here cannot see ... mercy or principles.**
- **They cannot grasp David and shewbread nor know how to apply it.**
- **They are Pharisees with attendance, wine, divorce, modesty, etc.**
- **Denial of pleasure not forbidden is masochistic heresy (Co 2:16-23).**
- **These people will vote for “principle,” thus electing their enemy!**
- **Stubbornness with this point is as iniquity and idolatry (I Sa 15:23).**

Principle of FAITH-REST - 1

“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. **It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep**” (Ps 127:1-2).

- God only expects your reasonable best, and He will do the rest.
- If you assume too much yourself, He will let you flounder in fear.
- Nearly the principle of sleep, He desires you to sleep on projects.
- If you cheat the Lord's role, even by conscience, you sin (Ro 14:23).

Principle of FAITH-REST - 2

- **How was David numbering Israel sin? A lack of faith (II Sa 24:1-10).**
- **The faith of Jonathan leads men to exploits (I Sam 14:6; Dan 11:32).**
- **Asa was outnumbered 2 to 1, but he trusted God (II Chron 14:8-12).**
- **If you want to stay in trouble, seek natural remedies (II Chr 16:1-13).**
- **Pleasing God is pressing forward on two things (He 11:6; Ro 4:17-21).**
- **Losing your life for God is the only way to find it (Matt 10:39; 16:25).**

Principle of WITNESSES - 1

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

Deuteronomy 19:15

- **One witness is inadequate in God’s rules for true justice (Deut 17:6).**
- **It is a shame that even capital crimes may turn on just one witness.**
- **Small and large matters in N.T. require it (Matt 18:16; I Tim 5:19).**
- **If you have the luxury to obtain three, even if it costs, get them.**

Principle of WITNESSES - 2

- Paul even used this strong rule to warn difficult Corinth (II Co 13:1).
- This is a minor rule of Bible study to avoid private interpretations.
- It is good to cross-examine one, but two are much better (Jn 8:17).
- Be careful with *she-said-he-said* of only one side of a relationship.
- Consider how many lone persons accuse of ancient sexual abuse.
- False witnesses were to get whatever was at stake (Deut 19:16-21).

Principle of DISCRIMINATION - 1

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Galatians 6:10

- **We are more liberal and merciful to our blood brothers in Christ.**
- **Laws for slaves distinguished Jews and pagans (Lev 25:39-46).**
- **The definition of brotherly love is for fellow saints (I John 3:13-19).**
- **Care for the least of Christ's brethren marks sheep (Matt 25:40).**

Principle of **DISCRIMINATION** - 2

- **We are part of another family (of God), nation (holy), kingdom, etc.**
- **The Bible rules for charity clearly emphasize poor saints (Ro 15:26).**
- **There is basically no charity in either testament to pagans.**
- **As we emphasize widows and fatherless, we emphasize believers.**
- **We also discriminate among fools, scorners, and sons of Belial.**
- **We must be fair and just with all men, but more so to those of faith.**

Principle of GOLDEN RULE - 1

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 7:12

- **Golden rule – do to others as you want them to do to you (Lu 6:31).**
- **It is the second commandment – love thy neighbor as thyself.**
- **This rule will fulfill the spirit of the law and prophets (Rom 13:8-10).**
- **You know well what you desire and appreciate – give it to others.**

Principle of GOLDEN RULE - 2

- **In confusing situations, this is a simple but godly and wise rule.**
- **Men differ in liberties, but little in matters of life and morality.**
- **Your effort to help others should be the effort you wish from them.**
- **Responses to others' predicaments should reflect your desires.**
- **The mercy you show others should be the level you wish from them.**
- **Be cautious in matters of preference to think outside yourself.**

Principle of TEMPTATION - 1

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Romans 13:14

- **If possible, you are to avoid any situation with temptations to sin.**
- **Weight and sin that easily besets us are to be laid aside (Heb 12:1).**
- **God had the Canaanites annihilated partially to avoid temptations.**
- **Evil communications corrupt good manners; stay away (I Cor 15:33).**

Principle of TEMPTATION - 2

- **Ethical decisions must ordinarily seek a reduction in temptation.**
- **Agur wisely prayed against both wealth and poverty (Pr 30:7-9).**
- **Avoid unprincipled persons lest you learn their ways (Pr 22:24-25).**
- **Sacrifice even precious or practical things (Mat 5:27-30; Pr 5:8-13).**
- **Like Joseph, rather than David, flee temptations (II Tim 2:22).**
- **This can alter friends, housing, jobs, hobbies, entertainment, etc.**

Principle of SAVING LIFE - 1

“And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.”

Mark 3:4

- **Life is very precious, and its preservation trumps most other laws.**
- **In Mark 3:4, Jesus ranked only improving life above the Sabbath.**
- **Most examples of justified lying in the Bible were to preserve life.**
- **God blessed the Hebrew midwives for saving lives (Ex 1:15-21).**

Principle of SAVING LIFE - 2

- **God justified avengers killing after accidental death (Nu 35:26-28).**
- **An accidental miscarriage carried a death sentence (Ex 21:22-25).**
- **Abraham and Isaac lied three times about their wives to save lives.**
- **Moses' parents ignored their fear of Pharaoh to save Moses alive.**
- **Jonathan and Michal lied to their father to save David's life.**
- **Satan knew men will give anything for life, or a good life (Job 2:4-5).**

Principle of RESULTS - 1

“For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”

Proverbs 1:32

- **Results past, present, or expected cannot be trusted for wisdom.**
- **God ordains results to confound and mislead fools, as text above.**
- **Lottery tickets – a publicized winner will seduce a million poor.**
- **Remember that Moses got water for striking the rock (Nu 20:7-12).**

Principle of RESULTS - 2

- **Asaph looked too much at results and nearly gave up (Psalm 73).**
- **God may hold back to deceive men, but judgment will come (Ps 50).**
- **False prophets do miracles, and Israel got quail; both died for it.**
- **A successful child by permissive parents proves nothing. Ignore it!**
- **A successful businessman exalting debt proves nothing. Ignore it!**
- **God has an infinite number of factors in play in any results you see.**

Disclaimers / Reminders

- **More could be said, has been said (1985/2008), and will be said.**
- **The potential abuse of a principle does not invalidate the principle.**
- **Wisdom is the proper use of principles, learned by use (Heb 5:14).**
- **The Bible is not black and white, which requires no wisdom at all.**
- **Wisdom is subjective and situational depending on circumstances.**
- **Acquiring wisdom requires diligent, separated effort (Pr 18:1).**

For Further Study

- **Who Is as the Wise Man? ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/who-is-as-the-wise-man.pdf>.
- **Proverbs commentaries ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/proverbs-intro.php>.
- **The Ordinance of Authority ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/authority-ordinance-of.pdf>.
- **Bible Priorities ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/priorities2.pdf>.
- **When Your Husband's a Fool ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/when-your-husbands-a-fool-2.pdf>.
- **Why Bad Things Happen ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf>.
- **Jubilee! ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/jubilee.pdf>.
- **Absolute or Relative ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/absolute-or-relative.pdf>.
- **Living Under Obama ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/living-under-obama.pdf>.
- **Ecclesiastes ...** not available in e-format at this time.
- **Sermon on the Mount ...** not available in e-format at this time.

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