

# **Christian Ethics**

**An Introduction – Case Studies**

# Note to Readers

**Print this Table:**

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

# **Second Note to Readers**

**Complete Principles Lesson First:**

<http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/christian-ethics-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).**

# **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.**

# **Case Studies to Apply God's Wisdom**

- **We cannot study each example dilemma in length or depth now.**
- **We want simple answers by the ethical principles we have learned.**
- **We cannot get foolishly distracted with details of each dilemma.**
- **We want to see the general conflict and find a Biblical solution.**
- **Use the cheat sheet of Ethical principles, which has been provided.**
- **You may know what to do, but you must learn to think scripturally.**

# Case Studies to Apply God's Wisdom

- **Otherwise, how will you know what to do with a very hard dilemma?**
- **This level of Bible study and practical application is hardly known.**
- **My desire for you men is to be as Elihu and confound the “wise.”**
- **We want to judge righteous judgment as Solomon and Jesus did.**
- **Given the direction of our nation, predicaments will get worse.**
- **There is no claim to infallibility in the case studies that follow.**

# Case Study #1

Pacifists use “Thou shalt not kill” to avoid war, capital punishment, etc.

- Mennonites, Amish, JW’s, and Bible skeptics use this argument.
- They create a conflict in God’s word that wise men will reconcile.
- What principle of ethics justifies war and capital punishment?
- The Principle of Specificity. Specific laws override general ones.
- There is a longer approach – study of Ex 20:13 by hermeneutics.

## **Case Study #2**

**Is it ever right to lie? If so, when? If so, how?**

- **If a burglar asks for where you hide jewelry, should you tell him?**
- **If you were hiding a Jewish maid, would you lie to the Gestapo?**
- **The Principle of Intent. The spirit, intent of a law exceeds its letter.**
- **The Principle of Life. Human life is precious and is to be protected.**
- **The Principle of Tempting. Do not presume God to do what you can.**
- **There are many Bible examples: midwives, Rahab, David, Jehu, etc.**

## **Case Study #2**

**Is it ever right to lie? If so, when? If so, how?**

- **Think! Bear false witness against a person or for a person's life?**
- **The majority of Bible cases of lying pertain to saving human life.**
- **We would never lie if on trial for the gospel's sake to save our skin.**
- **We would never lie for personal advantage when others need truth.**
- **What about a felon on a job application? Or previous termination?**
- **We may evade at times to cover others, but not if truth is at stake.**

## **Case Study #3**

**Should a Christian wife obey her husband's request to sin with him?**

- **Wives often get into such situations e.g. movies, attendance, etc.**
- **We uphold wifely submission more than others. What about this?**
- **The Principle of Authority. Rulers are only obeyed up to God's laws.**
- **The Principle of Conscience. God gave conscience for internal rule.**
- **The Bible example is Abigail opposing Nabal's evil toward David.**
- **For more detail: <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/when-your-husbands-a-fool-2.pdf>.**

## **Case Study #4**

**Should you pay taxes to a government that subsidizes abortions?**

- **This is a common one, especially in a land of rebellious thinkers.**
- **Covetous greed to avoid taxes causes a search for moral loopholes.**
- **The Principle of Incidental. Indirect contact with sin is allowed.**
- **The Principle of Over Much. Going beyond scripture is misguided.**
- **Bible examples are many e.g. Jesus, Paul, and Peter under Rome.**
- **For more detail: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/living-under-obama-2.pdf>.**

## **Case Study #5**

**The speed limit is the law! Do you ever drive over it? Why? How?**

- **This should be a question every Christian driver asks and answers.**
- **We teach submission to every ordinance of man. What about this?**
- **The Principle of Materiality. Insignificant amounts do not count.**
- **The Principle of Acceptance. Man's laws are known by acceptance.**
- **You should follow the principle of offence, if it could occur. Right?**
- **Are you fair in the sight of God and men measuring materiality?**

## Case Study #6

Could you hire a good worker, if you know he is a sodomite?

- In the world you may have to work for them or even employ them.
- Some would say that you compromise with sin to employ such.
- Principle of Incidental. Indirect contact with sin is allowed.
- Principle of Tempting. Do not presume on God to provide for you.
- Paul said we can so use fornicators of this world (1 Cor 5:9-10).
- What would you do if the sodomite began broadcasting his views?

## Case Study #7

Can you kill a thief in your home? At a garage sale next week?

- Issues of self-defense often bring up ethical dilemmas/questions.
- The Bible condemns killing, so how can you justify killing a thief?
- Principle of Specificity. A specific law overrides general provisions.
- Principle of Passion. Human passion will alter human judgment.
- What if you did not see deadly force? **Ignorance, Mercy, Tempting.**
- This one is actually easy based on Exodus 22:2-4. Thank you, God!

## **Case Study #8**

**Should you bid an electrical job for a JW Kingdom Hall?**

- **A conscientious believer will have questions about such situations.**
- **We hate Russellism, and lovers of Jesus Christ will avoid them.**
- **Principle of Incidental. Indirect contact with sin is allowed.**
- **Principle of Tempting. Do not presume God to do what you can.**
- **Paul said we can so use idolaters of this world (1 Cor 5:9-10).**
- **What would you do if the JW's required their midweek Bible study?**

## **Case Study #9**

**How can a Christian buy insurance, since it shows a lack of faith?**

- **This pitiful dilemma has its followers, claiming great faith.**
- **If you trust the Lord to protect and provide, who needs insurance?**
- **Principle of Tempting. Do not presume God to do what you should.**
- **Jesus did not trust God to jump when Satan offered KJV scripture.**
- **The book of Proverbs is filled with warnings about risk (suretyship).**
- **Be warned. If you are not insured, you do not deserve charity.**

## **Case Study #10**

**Should you accept a Christmas bonus? Hang Christmas bulbs?**

- **These events and situations occur, and sincere souls are pained.**
- **Remember, “*Be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.*”**
- **Principle of Incidental. Indirect contact with sin is allowed.**
- **Principle of Acceptance. Employers accept Christmas rejecters.**
- **Here we can appreciate Jews and JW’s for also being exceptions.**
- **Some turned down Christmas bonuses ... and they were renamed!**

## **Case Study #11**

**Picken County's School Board adopted nonsectarian prayer at meetings.**

- **In a politically-correct country that hates God, such things occur.**
- **Principle of Authority would not allow you to pray such a prayer.**
- **Principle of Incidental would allow you to serve or attend meetings.**
- **Principle of Acceptance would allow you to petition against it.**
- **Principle of Carefulness will minimize such campaigns for saints.**
- **Principle of Prudence allows you silence to gain contract or seat.**

## **Case Study #12**

**Governmental programs subsidize sloth, fraud, and scams. Should we?**

- **In a socialist country like ours, laws subsidize lazy con artists.**
- **Principle of Authority denies our involvement in any such fraud.**
- **Principle of Incidental demands we pay taxes to rulers anyway.**
- **Principle of Breasts cannot violate either scripture or conscience.**
- **Principle of Offence and Appearance further prohibit our use.**
- **The truth is that such a government breeds ungodly, lying leeches.**

## **Case Study #13**

**A couple married 80 years eloped but see the results as confirming.**

- **When her parents sought an arranged marriage, Ann ran away.**
- **After 80 years of marriage, she says she made the right choice.**
- **The Principle of Results proves nothing due to many other factors.**
- **The Principle of Mercy may allow celebration of this couple's 80<sup>th</sup>.**
- **The Principles of Mercy and Passion may help justify foolish Ann.**
- **The Principle of Ignorance may help justify or celebrate their 80<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Case Study #14**

**Should I vote for Bush against Clinton or my favored Ross Perot in 1992?**

- **This ethical dilemma comes up every four years over “principle.”**
- **If not Perot, there is some other conservative without a chance.**
- **There is no “principle” in a two-party system for thinking saints.**
- **Principle of Tempting says that a vote for Perot is a vote for Clinton.**
- **Principle of Ignorance says Bush was generally better than Clinton.**
- **Prudence is better than principle in a two-party runoff as in U.S.**

## Case Study #15

Should I vote in presidential elections since two evils leave little choice?

- This ethical dilemma comes up every four years over “principle.”
- If you do not vote, on what basis can you complain or even pray?
- Principle of Tempting says you should do the little that you can do.
- Principle of Offence and Appearance warn of others’ perception.
- Principle of Carefulness suggests one candidate may be better.
- For the “principled” person, they should write themselves in!

## **Case Study #16**

**May I practice birth control for the number and timing of children?**

- **This is an emotional issue that elicits strong feelings on both sides.**
- **Full quiver types think mandates to Adam and Noah apply to them.**
- **But John, Jesus, Paul, and Anna totally disregarded the mandate.**
- **Principle of Carefulness, Prudence, Tempting, and Liberty all work.**
- **Principle of Mercy could help if you cannot grasp the argument.**
- **Principle of Intent should help you figure out creation/flood order.**

## **Case Study #17**

**May I use birth control pills though some call them abortive?**

- **This is an emotional issue with high feelings due to loud zealots.**
- **Other “risky” or “deadly” things with “evidence” raise questions.**
- **Does ... *red meat, sugar, tobacco, alcohol, pork, junk food* ... kill?**
- **Principle of Ignorance and Faith does not require perfect research.**
- **Principle of Intent and Incidental allows general, indirect issues.**
- **Principle of Mercy and Materiality look for the easiest, general fix.**

## **Case Study #18**

**My marriage has deteriorated to war, but no fornication or desertion.**

- **Marriage complications confuse pastors as much as any subject.**
- **Christians must try to make every marriage work, even to a pagan.**
- **Principle of Mercy is perfect for allowing divorce for destroyed one.**
- **Principle of Intent is perfect for allowing divorce for destroyed one.**
- **We cannot do so lightly any more than pick up sticks on a Sabbath!**
- **No one in this church or room tonight is allowed to even consider it.**

## **Case Study #19**

**My boss does not deserve my respect, so I will join a union against him.**

- **Employment situations are a common place for good principles.**
- **A boss can affect many hours of your life and even your livelihood.**
- **Principle of Suffering teaches that your pain is not enough cause.**
- **Principle of Authority teaches submission up to God's own laws.**
- **Principle of Acceptance allows you only recourse the job accepts.**
- **The Bible in I Pet 2:18-20 and your own authority teach loudly here.**

## Case Study #20

I am not going to pay income taxes, because they are unconstitutional.

- This is another example of patriot drivel that we have heard before.
- Did a weekend skimming websites give you this exceptional view?
- Principle of Acceptance teaches *de facto* law of the IRS.
- Principle of Suffering teaches that the pain of taxes is not enough.
- Principle of Offence is what Jesus applied to Peter about tribute.
- Will U.S. courts agree? Use Howard Jarvis approach from 1978.

## **Case Study #21**

**Should I spank my children in public to help them make the connection?**

- **Parents zealous for child training in a permissive nation need help.**
- **It is true young children may not remember their fault hours later.**
- **Principle of Prudence suggests a quieter, more subtle approach.**
- **Principle of Acceptance means that magistrates will not approve.**
- **Principle of Carefulness means you do not want to deal with DSS.**
- **Are you asking for them on the floor and 40 stripes with a rod?**

## **Case Study #22**

**The Bible does not condemn gambling, so may I visit a casino?**

- **Here we go with simpletons that need or desire specific verses.**
- **Regulated online gambling was approved in New Jersey yesterday.**
- **Principle of Precedence shows that it is guaranteed confiscation.**
- **Principle of Tempting requires you to work and save, never waste.**
- **Principle of Temptation means you should avoid ungodly situation.**
- **Principle of Offence and Appearance keep you from such a place.**

## **Case Study #23**

**Our country caters to lazy leeches, how can I accept unemployment?**

- **Our strong feelings about a welfare state can raise questions.**
- **Do not forget you have paid into the system that you now can use.**
- **Principle of Breasts is to remember God supplies needs by rulers.**
- **Principle of Tempting reminds you to do what you can for yourself.**
- **Principle of Mercy allows you to take advantage of needed help.**
- **Of course, if your conscience will not allow it, there is more for us!**

## **Case Study #24**

**Our family has a feud of many years that I cannot end by any means.**

- **There are situations with long-term bitterness difficult to resolve.**
- **There are situations with unprovable assertions on both sides.**
- **Principle of Jubilee is wise for clearing the deck and starting over.**
- **Principle of Mercy and Ignorance and Prudence are for a Jubilee.**
- **With limited knowledge to resolve disputes, an infinite God helps!**
- **Church judgment may come down to a Jubilee in certain situations.**

## **Case Study #25**

**What if the government demands our guns and microchip implants?**

- **There are rumblings for these two possibilities and more will come.**
- **What if Google sends their truck by to video your house? So what?**
- **Principle of Authority means we obey government up to scripture.**
- **Principle of Suffering means that a little pain or pride is nothing.**
- **Principle of Carefulness means we have bigger issues to fight for.**
- **Can you serve God without guns and with a chip? Do others?**

## Case Study #26

A brother wants to borrow for a bigger house, should I charge usury?

- If you read the Bible, then you read about not charging usury.
- Remember the warning is for poor brothers and their necessities.
- Principle of Intent suggests you see this is merely a business deal.
- Principle of Discrimination suggests you give him a very fair rate.
- Principle of Widows suggests that you give her an even better rate.
- Principle of Suffering and Materiality should affect your decision.

## **Case Study #27**

**World Acceptance robs the poor, but we have members working there?**

- **This is a real situation, just like ordination to be withheld for FRS.**
- **W.A. provides small loans for goodies for the poor at high rates.**
- **Principle of Incidental means that there are legitimate jobs there.**
- **Principle of Acceptance means the business is legally acceptable.**
- **Principle of Ignorance means you do not have to research all loans.**
- **No one forces such poor to be poor or crave goodies at high rates.**

## **Case Study #28**

**Hobby Lobby is making a national scene about ObamaCare.**

- **ObamaCare requires employers provide insurance for abortives.**
- **Hobby Lobby, a Christian company, planned to sue the government.**
- **Principle of Incidental puts sin with employees and government.**
- **Principle of Acceptance allows Hobby Lobby to use legal means.**
- **Principle of Carefulness would seek bigger battles for such a war.**
- **H/L already supports abortion with personal and corporate taxes.**

## **Case Study #28**

**Hobby Lobby is making a national scene about ObamaCare.**

- **H/L is already supporting many other sins by health insurance.**
- **Principle of Over Much shows H/L making much ado about little.**
- **The government is not requiring H/L or anyone else to abort.**
- **Hotel owners “participate” in fornication daily; grocers in gluttony.**
- **Joseph married a pagan priest’s daughter and subsidized priests.**
- **Principle of Mercy would let H/L management do their real work.**

## **Case Study #28**

**Hobby Lobby is making a national scene about ObamaCare.**

- **Principle of Ignorance allows H/L to ignore what they do not know.**
- **H/L owners could inform employees of convictions for conscience.**
- **Joseph, Daniel, Esther were involved in many such indirect cases.**
- **Jesus paid taxes for His crucifixion, much more direct than H/L.**
- **H/L is stirring a pot foolishly and causing confusion nationwide.**
- **Our situation will likely get much worse than ObamaCare. Be ready.**

## Case Study #29

If marijuana is legalized, may I try it?

- It is presently illegal, which precludes use, but this could change.
- It is just like alcohol or tobacco, a thing of personal preference.
- Principle of Liberty says you may privately use it by liberty's rules.
- Principle of Offence assumes you'll guard others' knowledge of it.
- Principle of Conscience requires your faith in it (Rom 14:22-23).
- I Cor 6:19-20 regards fornication, not alcohol, tobacco, or pot.

## Case Study #30

Management two levels above you is misusing company funds.

- Is the misuse of funds an illegal misuse, or an unethical misuse?
- If illegal, it should be reported like any thief; if unethical, proceed.
- Principle of Materiality suggests it should be a meaningful misuse.
- Principle of Acceptance requires you to consider recourse options.
- Principle of Prudence means you should proceed carefully/wisely.
- Principle of Authority grasps loyalty all the way up to stockholders.

## **Case Study #30**

**Management two levels above you is misusing company funds.**

- **Principle of Precedence** asks you to consider previous such events.
- **Principle of Witnesses** requires you to have certain proof of matter.
- **The ultimate owners are stockholders, so measure effect on them.**
- **Since difficult to tell stockholders, is there an anonymous tip line?**
- **Does industry have regulatory body to deal with such information?**
- **Go over management to honor ultimate owners the best you can.**

# 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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