



# What Does the Bible Teach About Business Ethics?

Luke 12:15-21

Thursday Indepth Bible Class of the  
Trilacoochee church of Christ - 8/20/20

# What Does the Bible Teach About Business Ethics?

- There is a difference between what is moral and what is ethical.
- It is the difference between what is absolutely right and what is generally acceptable.
- Ethics is a system of moral principles specific to a culture; the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular group, culture, individual (subjective).
- Morals are the rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong; founded on the fundamental principles of right conduct rather than on legalities or custom (objective).
- It is the difference between what a man believes is right or wrong and what God says is right and wrong.

# What Does the Bible Teach About Business Ethics?

- Prov. 16:1, 9 - “The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD... 9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.”
- Prov. 20:24 - “A man's steps are of the LORD; How then can a man understand his own way?”
- Jer. 10:23 - “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”
- Psalm 37:23 - “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.”

# What Is Morally Right Or Wrong, Every Case, Every Time?

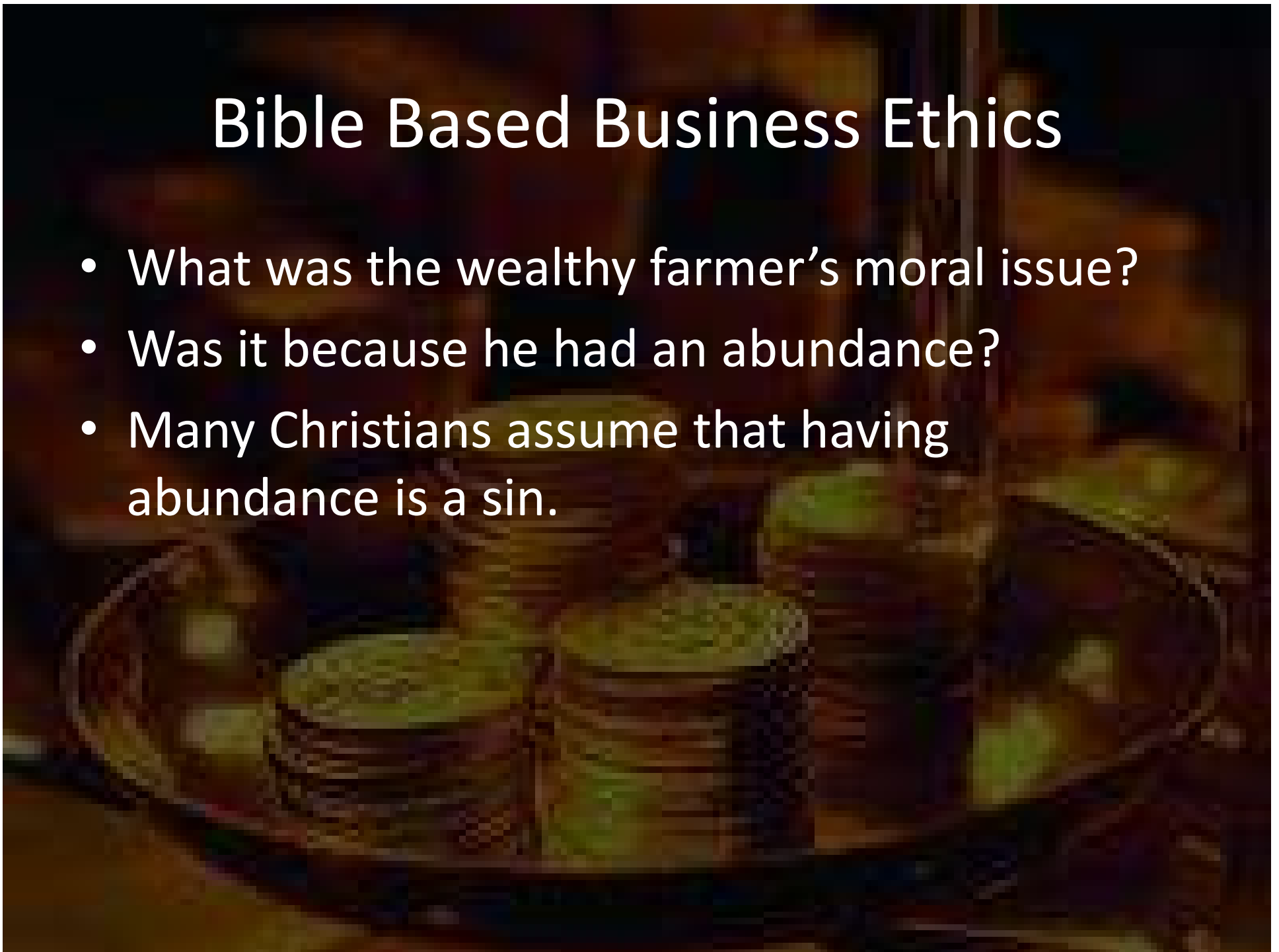
- **The Bottom Line Rule**: God is first in every case and every time - *Matt. 6:33, 22:37-38*
- **The Golden Rule**: Every human being merits the same treatment for you that you want for yourself in every case and every time - *Matt. 7:12; Gal. 5:14*
- **The Honesty Rule**: Tell the truth in every case and every time - *Matt. 5:37; Rom. 12:17; Eph. 4:25*
- **The Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Rule**: Do your best in every case and every time - *Matt. 5:41; Col. 3:23-24*
- **The Time Stewardship Rule**: Be a good steward of your time in every case and every time - *Eph. 5:15-16; Ecc. 9:12*
- **The Consistency Rule**: Do the right thing in every case and every time whether in the presence of others or not - *1Peter 2:12; Matt. 5:16*

# How Does This Apply To Business Ethics?

- Luke 12:15-21 - “And He said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? 18 So he said, I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said to him, Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided? 21 So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

# Bible Based Business Ethics

- What was the wealthy farmer's moral issue?
- Was it because he had an abundance?
- Many Christians assume that having abundance is a sin.



# Bible Based Business Ethics

- They believe such things as:
  - Corporations are “bad” because they are large and successful.
  - Prosperity only comes from exploiting workers and giving unfair competition to other businesses.
  - Christians who are wealthy are sinners, because they should have given away all of their abundance.

# Bible Based Business Ethics

- The wealthy farmer's moral issue wasn't that he had abundance; it was how he viewed his abundance, and how his viewpoint affected what he did with his abundance
  - Ecc. 5:13 - "There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt."
- He wouldn't have abundance if God hadn't given it to him
  - Ecc. 5:18 - "Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage."



# Bible Based Business Ethics

- In business and labor, Christians never justify doing wrong with the reasoning that others have done wrong to them.
  - “I can withhold information or even cheat the car dealer, IRS, utilities, etc. because I have been cheated by them so often in the past.”
  - “My boss does not pay me well, works me so hard, and doesn’t care about me, so I don’t care to do my best work in return.”
  - My employees are lazy, demanding, and steal from the workplace; I don’t think they deserve better wages and benefits.”

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- Products for sale are not to be misrepresented
  - Lev. 19:35-36 - “You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36 You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”
  - Prov. 16:11 - “Honest weights and scales are the LORD'S; All the weights in the bag are His work.”

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- False weights are an indicator of flawed character
  - Hosea 12:7 - “A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress.”
- Honesty is to be treasured above profit
  - Prov. 19:1 - “Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.”

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- Dishonest wealth does not last
  - Prov. 21:6 - “Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.”
- Buyers must not dismiss the value of the product for sale
  - Prov. 20:14 - “It is good for nothing, cries the buyer; But when he has gone his way, then he boasts.”

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- Christians are not to defraud others
  - 1Thes. 4:6 - “That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.”

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- Don't misrepresent your competition
  - Prov. 24:24-26 - "He who says to the wicked, You are righteous, Him the people will curse; Nations will abhor him. 25 But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, And a good blessing will come upon them. 26 He who gives a right answer kisses the lips."
  - Prov. 26:24-26 - "He who hates, disguises it with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself; 25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart; 26 Though his hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly."

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- Don't use flattery or exaggeration; enthusiasm, politeness, and kind words are good, but they must be sincere as well
  - Prov. 26:28 - "A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin"
  - Prov. 29:5 - "A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet."
  - Psalm 12:2 - "They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; With flattering lips and a double heart they speak."

# Bible Rules For Business Transactions

- Honesty must govern all of our conduct
  - 2Cor. 8:21 - “Providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”





# Bible Rules For Employers

- Workers have the right to be paid well for their efforts
  - Deut. 25:4 - “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.”
  - Matt. 10:10 - “For a worker is worthy of his food.”

# Bible Rules For Employers

- Taking advantage of unpaid labor is condemned
  - Jer. 22:13 - “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness And his chambers by injustice, Who uses his neighbor's service without wages And gives him nothing for his work”
  - Mal. 3:5 - “And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien-Because they do not fear Me, Says the LORD of hosts.”

# Bible Rules For Employers

- Some will take advantage those with limited choices
  - Prov. 22:22 - “Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate”
- A worker can decide to accept a lower wage, and must take responsibility for his choice
  - Matt. 20:1-2 - “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.”

# Bible Rules For Employers

- Employers may not take advantage, but pay in a timely manner
  - James 5:4 - “Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”
  - Deut. 24:14-15 - “You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. 15 Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.”
  - Lev. 19:13 - “You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.”

# Bible Rules For Employers

- Employers must offer periods of rest to employees
- God rested from His labors on the seventh day, and later instituted Sabbath law requiring Israel to set aside a day of reverence for Him and rest for them
- Jesus provided His disciples with opportunities to rest
  - Mark 6:31-32 - “And He said to them, Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.”

# Bible Rules For Employers

- Work to provide work for your employees; see yourself as responsible to provide for them as human beings, not as disposable resources
- Do not use threats as a motivation for productivity
  - Eph. 6:8-9 - “Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”

# Bible Rules For Employers

- Treat them as you want to be treated, fairly and impartially
  - Matt. 7:12 - “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”
- Give them justice and fairness
  - Col. 4:1 - “Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven”

# Bible Rules For Employees

- If possible, be paid for doing something you enjoy
  - Ecc. 2:22-24 - “For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? 23 For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity. 24 Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.”



# Bible Rules For Employees

- But don't sit around refusing to work because you don't like the job you have
  - 2Thes. 3:10 - "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat."
- A good job is a gift from God
  - Ecc. 3:13 - "And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor-it is the gift of God."

# Bible Rules For Employees

- Respect your employer
  - 1Tim. 6:1-2 - “Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. 2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.”
  - Titus 2:9 - “Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back”
  - 1Peter 2:18 - “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.”

# Bible Rules For Employees

- Be honest in your conduct
  - Titus 2:10 - “Not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”
- Give sincere obedience
  - Eph. 6:5-8 - “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.”

# Bible Rules For Employees

- Work heartily, enthusiastically
  - Col. 3:22-24 - “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”
  - Ecc. 9:10 - “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”
  - Prov. 18:9 - “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.”

# Bible Rules For Employees

- “What about unions? Can a Christian be involved in a union?”
- It is an organization that in theory works together for the benefit of laborers.
- As with ANY organization of men that does good using honorable means, Christians are permitted to share in it.

# Bible Rules For Employees

- However, when ANY organization uses dishonorable means and unscriptural methods, We may not be partakers with them.
- When ANY organization requires its members to participate in activities that violate GOD'S rules for Christians as workers, they must choose God's rules over the organizations rules. That includes unions.

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- Natural result of labor is profit; God designed it that way
  - Prov. 14:23 - “In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter leads only to poverty.”
  - Prov. 13:11 - “Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase.”
- The Bible speaks of righteous, wealthy men: Abraham, Job

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- God's instructions for wealthy Christians implies that He accepts wealthy Christians
  - 1Tim. 6:17-19 - "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."



# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- Be certain not to trust in wealth or expect riches to remain
  - Prov. 23:5 - “Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.”
- Pursuing wealth is fraught with danger
  - 1Tim. 6:9-10 - “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- But being wealthy does not imply that we have ill-gotten gains or that we are greedy and selfish, or that we don't care about the poor
- Sometimes wealth happens by chance
  - Ecc. 9:11 - "I returned and saw under the sun that- The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all."

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- Rejoice when others are blessed in this manner; do not be judgmental or envious
  - Rom. 12:15 - “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”
  - 1Cor. 12:26 - “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it”

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- A Christian's focus should not be on this world, on wealth, on fame, or the like. These things are incidental to life under the sun; they are merely a means to an end
- This world is passing
  - 1Cor. 7:29-31 - "But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, 31 and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away."

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- Worldly desires will not survive
  - 1John 2:15-17 - “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”
- Abundance comes and goes; it doesn't matter.

# Is Success And Wealth Sinful?

- Remember the rich farmer. Where is your treasure?
- Then, that's where your heart will be, and that's what your destination will become.

