



Deut. 25:13-16
The Godly Businessman

13 " You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light.

14 "You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small.

15 "You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

16 "For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God.

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Lawyers are legendary, but what of Business? Enron, Madoff, Political class, all of these Czars and politicians who can't pay their taxes, involved in shady business, My own experiences working in NYC

Think about it, honesty has become so uncommon in the business world that we talk about it as though it were a novelty – you should go to so and so's repair shop that man is honest!

What? A man who doesn't pad his bill and do the shoddiest work he can get away with?

Now we may be tempted to think this is something new, but dishonest dealing has been around ever since Adam's children first said, *"I'll trade you this for that"* Certainly dishonest dealing was depressingly common in Old Testament Israel.

"Weights were anciently made of stone and are frequently used still by Eastern shopkeepers and traders, who take them out of the bag and put them in the balance. The man who is not cheated by the trader and his bag of divers weights must be blessed with more acuteness than most of his fellows" - Brown

This was particularly problematic when it came to buying and selling grain. If you are selling to me, I take out one weight which is too heavy and you have to keep pouring on the grain past the right point in order to make the scales match, when I am selling, I take out another weight that is too light, and you don't get as much as you are entitled to.

Similarly false measures could be used for selling and buying things like Olive Oil. I could create a pot which held less than a hin of oil and make out that it was the full measure.

Lev. 19:35 ' 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.

God said this was such an evil practice, that not only must they not use these weights, they must not even own them or have them in the house.

Interestingly enough, there are still businesses where cheating with false measures occasionally goes on:

July 2008 - "Texas drivers who recently bought gas at hundreds of Sunmart stations probably were shortchanged, according to results of a state investigation released Tuesday.

A weekend investigation found 990 pumps were rigged to favor Petroleum Wholesale, which operates gas stations under the name Sunmart, by as much as one-tenth of a gallon for every five gallons sold. Pumps found to be in violation were immediately shut down by state inspectors.

...

I believe the facts would have been even more incriminating had the company not dispatched a band of technicians scurrying to get ahead of my team of inspectors in order to recalibrate faulty fuel pumps," Staples said."

We think very little of dishonesty in our business dealings. But God calls it an ABOMINATION. We see that in verse 16 and in other verses like Proverbs 20:10 *Diverse weights and diverse measures, They are both alike, an abomination to the LORD.*

Keep in mind that ABOMINATION is the strongest word of condemnation in the entire Old Testament. It is the word God used to describe IDOLATRY and PERVERSITY. God was just as concerned that his people deal fairly in business as he was that they not worship idols. And part of the reason for that is not only that cheating people out of money is covetousness and theft, it is also IDOLATRY. You have made money your idol and you will do anything to have it.

So hear for instance, the way that this greed is described as affecting their religious devotions:

*Amos 8:4 Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail,
5 Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit,
6 That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals -- Even sell the bad wheat?"*

Consequently God told His people that honesty in their business dealings would cause them to live long in the land, while dishonesty would have precisely the opposite effect. It would be a reason for a revoking of the covenant and being driven out of the promised land

Yet they would not listen to His voice and they went into exile. You would think wouldn't you that after that experience, they would be extra zealous to avoid the abominations that caused the Lord to send their fathers into exile. Yet even after they returned, while they were not as prone to worship the false God's of the surrounding nations, they were just as prone to allow greed to captivate their hearts and turn them aside:

Neh. 13:15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions.

16 Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?"

18 "Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day.

20 Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.

21 Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath.

22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

1) We see therefore that the way to have our days lengthened, and to prosper, is to be just and fair in all our dealings "Honesty is the best policy." We are also warned that fraud and injustice will expose us to the curse of God. As Calvin put it: "We perceive from the conclusion, that, not in this respect only, but in all our affairs, those trickeries are condemned, by which our neighbors are defrauded. For, after God has said that He abominates "all that do such things," He adds immediately by way of explanation, "all that do unrighteously." We see, then, that He sets Himself against all evil and illicit arts of gain."

Our course rather is to follow the admonition of Christ in Matthew 7:12 in this and all of our dealings: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

2) Now as we hear of false dealings we may be tempted to say how awful! We would never do that to our fellow man!

Kids how many times have you been absolutely scrupulous to make sure that you got your own fair time playing a game or on a ride, or your own fair share of candy or some other treat, but when it came to your brothers and sisters the weights and measures changed dramatically. Suddenly their fair portion of the treat shrank dramatically, the amount of time they got on the ride or playing the game was always less. Have you ever knowingly doled out less of something to them in order to keep back more for yourself, or simply taken what you knew or suspected to be theirs whether it was a drink, or candy, or a magazine. Or how about when you play favorites? You give one friend you really like a lot, and another friend you don't like as much a little. When you do that, you have a bag up here in your mind with differing weights and you take them out according to the occasion. Get rid of them live by one weight, one standard.

Adults, how often have we done this ourselves? Tedd Tripp speaks of how when he went downstairs to get icecream for himself and his wife, he would come back up with the bowls in his hand measuring them to determine which one was heavier. More seriously how often have we shortchanged our employer by giving him less of time than he has paid for?

3) How often have we done it to God, giving Him far less of our times, our resources, and our lives than he deserves. He always gets the dregs. "If I have anything left over, God can have that." I hear *Pastors* squabbling over HOW LITTLE of the Lord's Day they can get away with giving God. Seldom do I hear arguments about how we can work to make sure he gets the Lion's share either of the day or our lives. The Spirit of Eric Lidell who didn't want to shortchange God EVEN WHEN IT CAME to the OLYMPICS is seldom seen in our community.

4) We tend to measure our salvation by unjust weights and measures as well. What standard of righteousness will GOD use to measure us on the last day? Well to listen to many people, God will put Hitler in one scale or perhaps the worst neighbor we can think of in one scale and if we are more righteous than He is, we'll get in!

Actually, the standard God will use is the LAW, and the standard is perfection.

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NKJ Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

Heb. 7:26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

2 Cor. 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.