

Group 1

Exodus 20:15-17

<sup>15</sup>“You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Deuteronomy 16:19-20

<sup>19</sup>You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. <sup>20</sup>You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Proverbs 18:5

It is not good to show partiality to the wicked,  
Or to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

Proverbs 28:21

To show partiality is not good,  
Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

~~~~~Discuss~~~~~

1. How do the commands against theft, lying, and coveting affirm property rights? How do property rights foster, not only economic freedom, but personal freedom as well?
2. Describe some of the ways people and institutions, including government, might show partiality.
3. How does partiality tend to distort, and actually distort, the truth?
4. What does Deuteronomy 16:19 say about a bribe?

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Group 2

Exodus 23:1-9—<sup>23</sup>1 “You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. <sup>2</sup>You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.<sup>3</sup>You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

<sup>4</sup>“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. <sup>5</sup>If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

<sup>6</sup>“You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. <sup>7</sup>Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. <sup>8</sup>And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.

<sup>9</sup>“Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 19:14—You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

Proverbs 20:10—Diverse weights and diverse measures,  
They are both alike, an abomination to the LORD.

Jeremiah 22:3—Thus says the LORD: “Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.”

~~~~~Discuss~~~~~

1. Exodus 23:2 says, “You shall not follow a crowd to do evil.” What is it about a crowd that tends to lead a person away from doing the right thing? See 1 Corinthians 15:33. How can we be proactive to make sure we don’t allow crowds to influence us to do wrong?
2. Why is it wrong to show partiality to the poor?
3. What are some examples of an “ancient landmark”? Why are landmarks important? What purpose or purposes do they serve? How is removing such marker tantamount to lying?
4. Why is it important to God that strangers, or foreigners, not be oppressed?

Group 3

Leviticus 19:15

You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 25:13-16

25<sup>13</sup> “You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. <sup>14</sup> You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God.

Proverbs 22:28

Do not remove the ancient landmark  
Which your fathers have set.

Ezekiel 45:10

You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath.

Here is Ezekiel 45:10 in the New International Version, with footnotes:

<sup>10</sup> You are to use accurate scales, an accurate ephah<sup>[a]</sup> and an accurate bath.<sup>[b]</sup> (Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.)

- a. Ezekiel 45:10 An ephah was a dry measure having the capacity of about 3/5 bushel or about 22 liters.
- b. Ezekiel 45:10 A bath was a liquid measure equaling about 6 gallons or about 22 liters.

~~~~~Discuss~~~~~

1. Why might an individual be tempted to show partiality to the poor, or to “the person of the mighty”? In what ways is it possible to do so?
2. What might a social justice advocate say in response to the charge that the social justice movement treats people with partiality?
3. Do you agree that dispensing justice sometimes seems unfair? If so, how is it that something just can seem unfair? Why is justice desirable and even necessary, even when it “feels” unfair?
4. What are some ways to avoid partiality in our dealings with others, including but not limited to economic transactions?
5. Why are accurate weights so important to God?

Group 4

Leviticus 19:35-37 — 19<sup>35</sup> You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. <sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> “Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them; I am the LORD.

According to a footnote in the New International Version, “A hin was a liquid measure having the capacity of about 1 gallon or about 3.8 liters.” (Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.)

Proverbs 11:1 — Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD,  
But a just weight is His delight.

Proverbs 23:10 — Do not remove the ancient landmark,  
Nor enter the fields of the fatherless;

Micah 6:8-12 <sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justly,  
To love mercy,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

The LORD’s voice cries to the city—  
Wisdom shall see Your name:

“Hear the rod!  
Who has appointed it?

<sup>10</sup> Are there yet the treasures of wickedness

In the house of the wicked,  
And the short measure that is an abomination?

<sup>11</sup> Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales,

And with the bag of deceitful weights?

<sup>12</sup> For her rich men are full of violence,  
Her inhabitants have spoken lies,  
And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

~~~~~Discuss~~~~~

1. What is an abomination? According to Noah Webster’s Dictionary published in 1828, it is “1. Extreme hatred; detestation. 2. The object of detestation, a common signification in scripture.” In other words, Proverbs 11:1 is saying that God intensely hates dishonest scales but takes delight in a just or accurate weight. Describe the danger of treating casually something that God hates.
2. According to Micah 6:8-12, what does God require of people? What will this look like in practical terms? How can a person be just and merciful at the same time?

Group 5

Leviticus 25:14

And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another.

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD,  
But those who deal truthfully are His delight.

Proverbs 24:23

These things also belong to the wise:  
It is not good to show partiality in judgment.

Titus 2:6-8

<sup>6</sup>Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, <sup>7</sup>in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, <sup>8</sup>sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

~~~~~Discuss~~~~~

1. How might an individual oppress his neighbor either when buying from or selling to him or her?
2. When have you been honest in a transaction or potential transaction, even though it cost you? When have you been dishonest?
3. What harm might come from "showing partiality in judgment"?
4. Would you hesitate to loan money or make a deal with a man like the one Paul described in Titus 2:6-8? Do you think such a man would be easy or difficult to take advantage of? Why or why not? Of course, women need to have and exercise integrity, too. How can the church, and individual Christians as well, cultivate integrity in younger believers?

Group 6

Deuteronomy 1:17

You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.

Proverbs 16:11

Honest weights and scales are the LORD's;  
All the weights in the bag are His work.

Proverbs 26:18-19

26<sup>18</sup> Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death,  
<sup>19</sup> Is the man who deceives his neighbor,  
And says, "I was only joking!"

1 Peter 2:12

having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

~~~~~Discuss~~~~~

1. See Deuteronomy 1:17. Explain how a proper fear of God can overshadow and overcome any fear of man. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
2. See Proverbs 16:11. Think of the implications of an agreed-upon weight or measure. If the weight or measure is off, someone is getting cheated and deceived — either the buyer or the seller. Describe how periodic checks of weights and measures (especially those a merchant requests and welcomes) can help the merchant and the business he runs. George Washington said, "Uniformity in the currency, weights and measures of the United States is an object of great importance, and will, I am persuaded, be duly attended to" (<https://bit.ly/3djsxSVC>).
3. See Proverbs 26:18-19. Describe the wrath that the man described in these verses can incite.
4. See 1 Peter 2:12. What does honorable conduct look like in business deals and financial transactions?