

The Ethical Minister

An ethical life is choosing a principled life. It is not so much about the rules we write for life. I need less rules when I live the principled life.

What are the principles by which I choose to live?

Life itself constantly launches assaults at mankind. Whether a believer or not, It is the wise minister who knows the principles by which he will live. It is even a wiser minister who will live by those values.

An ethical man, before being a husband, father, or preacher, must have values by which he lives. It is clear we have two choices:

We may choose values that are human and relative.

We may choose values that are divine and biblical.

One verse we could look at is *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8 KJVS)*

As men of God we are to be men of principle. None would argue in this room the authority of the Word of God in our lives. We accept it as our sole rule of faith and practice. However, our words are better than our actions.

Today, it is nothing for men to backbite, complain, harbor bitterness, to preach one way and live another. Our calling is from above and we should live that way. Our speech, attitude, disciplines, conversation, and perspective must be different.

1 Samuel 9:6 *And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go.*

Samuel's Testimony amongst the people of the land should be our goal. What was Samuel's testimony?

1. His identification was heavenly. “There is a man of God”
2. His integrity was honorable. “He is an honorable man”
3. His instructions were helpful. “All that he saith cometh surely to pass”

Note the matters about his character - they were all intangible. They were reflections of his heart seen by those within his area of ministry.

Ethics are

- The decision I make about my treatment of people based on the value I place on God's Word.
 - How I practice God's Word on others.
 - it is my integrity before God and man
 - it is my working system of moral principles
 - It is the principles that guide me in our treatment of others

It is clear, God's Word is our authority for our lives. We must have it principles to govern us. What does an ethical Christian look like?

I. What are the Biblical principles from which I compile my ethics?

A. There are principles that govern how I Love: **9-10, 13,14, 20**

1. Rom. 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*
 - a) I must love without hypocrisy.
 - b) I must be disgusted by evil; not entertained.
 - c) I must embrace the good and be disgusted by evil.
2. Rom. 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*
 - a) My brother is my brother he **MUST** be loved.
 - b) My brother is to be preferred above me. (a price paid based on its value)
 - (1) not cut throat
 - (2) not advantaging myself be honoring
3. Rom. 12:20 *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*
 - a) If someone chooses not to be at peace with me:
 - (1) I feed him
 - (2) I offer him drink
 - (3) I heap coals of fire
 - b) When I treat my enemies this way:
 - (1) I am obeying God.
 - (2) I am loving others.
 - (3) I am heaping coals of fire.

B. There are principles that govern how I Serve: **11, 13**

1. Rom. 12:11 *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*
 - a) My Service: I am a man of God dispatched to serve Him here - I can not be:
 - (1) Lazy
 - (2) Looking busy but doing nothing.
 - b) My Spirit: I am a man of God (on fire hot boiling)
 - (1) There must be a fire within me - my spirit must be perceived as on fire not just in front of the Pastor and People but before my God.
 - (2) This ministry position is not my job - it's my calling.
 - (3) This ministry position is not my current career move - it's my calling.
 - c) My Sight: I Serve God, not the people I see.
 - (1) The people may wear masks of varied sorts:
 - (a) Grumblers
 - (b) Grouchie
 - (c) Complainers
2. Rom 12:12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*
 - a) My Sentiment: I am controlled from within not without.
 - (1) I rejoice in hope - a calm happiness in knowing the end.
 - (2) I am patient in tribulation - don't lose it when pressure builds.
 - (3) I am a man of prayer - I can reach God in an instant.
3. Rom. 12:13 *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*
 - a) I see needs and I fill them.
 - (1) I have an awareness of others in the household of faith
 - (2) I meet the needs of others.
 - b) I look for ways to be hospitable.
 - (1) Hiding from the people
 - (2) Distance - but not distant.

C. There are principles that govern how I Think: **12, 16**

1. Rom 12:12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*
 - a) My Sentiment: I am controlled from within not without.
 - (1) I rejoice in hope - a calm happiness in knowing the end.
 - (2) I am patient in tribulation - don't lose it when pressure builds.
 - (3) I am a man of prayer - I can reach God in an instant.
2. Rom. 12:16 *Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*
 - a) Think of others
 - b) Think of matters within reach
 - c) Reach people where they are.
 - d) Don't think too highly of yourself.

D. There are principles that govern how I Live: **14-15,17,18, 19,21**

1. Rom. 12:14 *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*
 - a) I am not retaliatory
 - (1) When given the negative I return the positive.
 - (a) I speak well of those who persecute.
 - (b) I praise others who hurt me.
 - b) I am empathetic:
 - (1) When people hurt; I hurt
 - (2) When people rejoice; I rejoice
2. Rom. 12:17 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*
 - a) If dealt evil do not return in kind.
 - b) Take into consideration beforehand - all men must see genuineness.
3. Rom. 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*
 - a) I am to live peaceably with all men
 - b) Whether others are peaceable or not; I am to be peaceable.
4. Rom. 12:19 *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*
 - a) I am not to retaliate.
 - b) I am not to repay
 - c) I am not to give wrath a home.
 - d) I wait for God to avenge.
5. Rom. 12:21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*
 - a) Don't let evil get the victory.
 - b) Choose to let good get the victory.

E. The Psalmist offers a similar list: Psalm 15

1. Has an upright walk.
2. Has a righteous work
3. Has truthful words.
4. He doesn't backbite
5. He doesn't do evil to his neighbor
6. He doesn't speak evil to his neighbor.
7. He sees sin as sin
8. He honors righteousness.
9. **His word is his bond. (even when it hurts)**
10. He is careful with his money.
11. He doesn't profit unjustly.

II. How do I implement these principles as a man of God?

A. In my marriage.

1. Wife:
 - a) No stranger or servant should receive kinder tones, words, or actions from me than my wife.
 - b) No stranger or servant should receive my best than she does.
 - c) She is to be loved, honored and cherished. My duty. She is my completer; I am her companion. I give her protection and passion.
 - d) Commitment:
 - (1) She should never doubt my integrity or honesty.
 - (2) She, who knows me best, should find consistency in my public words and my private words.
2. My wife is not my colleague or co-worker.
3. She should find strength in my leadership and walk with the Lord.

B. In my manhood.

1. My walk with the Lord
 - a) There is no upright walk without worship.
 - b) There are no righteous words without personal worship.
2. My thought life:
 - a) I am bound by honor to be chaste in my thoughts, words, and actions.
 - b) Temptations arise and assault: what's your plan? Potiphar's wife cast her eyes. Joseph had a plan
 - (1) I refuse to consider it: 39:7-9
 - (a) My Master's trust in me.
 - (b) My Master's commitment to you. "you are his wife."
 - (c) My commitment to God Word.
 - (d) My commitment to God's righteousness.
 - (2) I refuse to listen to it. 39:10
 - (3) I refuse to be near it. 39:11
 - (4) I refuse to surrender to its grasp. 39:12
3. Ethics as a father.
 - a) Nurture and admonition
 - (1) My children deserve a father who is faithful maritally.
 - (2) My children deserve a father who is consistent
 - b) My model must be God, the Father
 - (1) God hears
 - (2) God loves
 - (3) God forgives
 - (4) God is merciful

C. In my ministry

1. Colleagues:

- a) I prefer others above me
- b) I am not in competition
- c) I do not judge another man's servant
- d) I extend to others the same liberty I reserve for myself.
- e) I do not receive an accusation against an elder without witnesses.
- f) Prov. 18:19 *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*
- g) The person with the knowledge of the offense goes to the other
 - (1) Matt. 18:15 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*
 - (2) Matt. 18:16 *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*
 - (3) Matt. 18:17 *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*
 - (4) Matt. 5:23 *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;*
 - (5) Matt. 5:24 *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

2. People whom I serve:

- a) They are people God has placed in my sphere of ministry.
- b) Be the example to them
 - (1) 1Tim. 4:12 *... but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

3. Gossip:

- a) Proverbs 26:20 *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*
- b) Psa. 50:20 *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*
- c) Prov. 11:13 *A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*
- d) Prov. 20:19 *¶ He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.*
- e) Eph. 4:29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. I guard what I listen*

- f) Phil. 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*
4. Churches in town
- a) Are they an enemy of the cross of Christ? Let's recognize the autonomy of their church as we reserve for ourselves.
 - b) They visit we call the church - whether the church ever call us.
 - (1) We seek to resolve issues before they come here.
 - (2) We encourage return to church.
 - (3) We call the Pastor to inform.
 - c) If someone leaves your church, they are not bad for leaving
 - (1) Be honest - don't shove your problems on others.
 - (2) Leaving: Geographical, Moral, Biblical/Doctrinal, philosophical direction

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)

• INSTANCES OF

- Pharaoh, when he learned that Sarah was Abraham's wife (Genesis 12:18)
- Abimelech, when warned by God that the woman he had taken into his household was actually Abraham's wife (Genesis 26:9-11)
- Jacob, in the care of Laban's property (Genesis 31:39)
- Joseph, in resisting Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:8-12)
- Joseph, innocent of the charge which caused him to be cast into the dungeon (Genesis 40:15)
- Jacob's sons, when accused by Joseph of robbery (Genesis 43:15-22; 44:7-16)
- The Egyptian midwives when commanded to destroy the newborn babies of the Israelites (Exodus 1:17-21)
- Moses, in taking nothing from the Israelites in consideration of his services (Numbers 16:15)
- Samuel, in exacting nothing from the people on account of his services (1 Samuel 12:4)
- David, in self-reproach for the cutting of Saul's robe (1 Samuel 24:5)
- David, in preventing foraging by his insurgent forces (1 Samuel 25:15)
- David, in his conduct while in refuge with the Philistines (1 Samuel 29:6, 9; with 29:1-11)
- Workmen, who repaired the temple (2 Kings 12:15; 22:7)
- Joab, when ordered by David to count the military forces of Israel (1 Chronicles 21:6)
- Priests, who received the offerings of gold and other gifts for the renewing of the temple under Ezra (Ezra 8:24-30)
- Nehemiah, reforming the civil service, and receiving no compensation for his own services (Nehemiah 5:14-19)
- The Rechabites, in keeping the Nazarite vows (Jeremiah 35:12-17)
- Daniel, in his abstemiousness (i. e. abstinent) (Daniel 1:8-20)
- Daniel, in maintaining uprightness of character and consistent devoutness (Daniel 6:4)
- Joseph, the husband of Mary, in not jealously accusing her of immorality (Matthew 1:19)
- Zacchaeus, in the administration of his wealth (Luke 19:8)
- Nathanael, in whom was no guile (John 1:47)
- Joseph, a counselor (Luke 23:50, 51)
- Peter, when offered money by Simon Magus (Acts 8:18-23)
- Paul and Barnabas, when the people of Lystra desired to deify them (Acts 14:12-15)