INTEGRITY BEYOND SUNDAY



Author Kurt Jackson

BUSINESS ETHICS AND OUR WITNESS AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Our witness does not end when Sunday's service closes. It continues in the quotations we send, the wages we pay, the promises we keep, and the decisions we make when nobody is watching.

For us at 3C South Coast, business ethics is not simply about avoiding scandal or staying on the right side of the law. It is about reflecting the character of Jesus in everyday life. Whether we own a business, manage a team, work for someone else, or seek employment, our conduct can make the gospel visible.

God's Character Is Our Standard

The supplied Biblical Ethics: An Overview makes an important point: biblical ethics flows from God's holy character. God is truthful, just, faithful, and loving. His people are called to reflect those qualities.

That changes our starting question. Instead of asking, "Can I get away with this?" we ask, "Does this honour God and serve my neighbour?"

Proverbs 11:1 condemns dishonest scales and commends honest weights. Today, those "scales" might be an invoice, a timesheet, a tax return, a product description, or a financial report. The principle remains unchanged: God cares about honest dealings.

Integrity means our faith and our conduct tell the same story.

The Pressures We Face

As the body of Christ, we are not immune to the pressures around us. Financial strain, competition, fear of losing work, and the desire for success can tempt us to compromise.

Those pressures may sound familiar:

- "Everyone pays something extra to secure the contract."
- "The customer doesn't need to know about that defect."
- "We can adjust the figures just this once."
- "They need the job, so they'll accept whatever we offer."
- "What I do at work has nothing to do with church."

These are not accusations against our congregation. They are pressures Christians must be prepared to face honestly.

One danger is separating Sunday worship from Monday business. Another is excusing misconduct because the person involved is successful, generous, or influential. James 2:1-9 warns believers against favouritism. Neither wealth nor position places anyone above accountability.

We must also resist the idea that a good outcome makes dishonest methods acceptable. Supporting our families, growing a business, and giving to the church are good aims. But a good purpose does not justify bribery, deception, or exploitation. As the ethics material explains, our goals, motives, and methods all matter.

Scripture Must Shape Our Decisions

Romans 12:2 calls us to renewed minds rather than conformity to the world. That renewal happens as we allow God's Word to challenge not only our behaviour, but also our excuses.

Scripture gives practical direction:

Tell the truth. Ephesians 4:25 calls us to put away falsehood. Our advertising, qualifications, reports, and promises should be trustworthy. We can protect confidential information without misleading people.

Treat people justly. James 5:4 condemns withholding workers' wages through fraud. Employees are not merely costs on a spreadsheet. They are people made in God's image. Employers should pay fairly and honour agreements; employees should work honestly and responsibly.

Work as service to Christ. Colossians 3:23 teaches us to work wholeheartedly for the Lord. Faithfulness includes how we use working hours, handle company property, and fulfil our responsibilities.

Practise stewardship, not greed. Psalm 24:1 reminds us that the earth belongs to the Lord. Skills, money, opportunities, and influence are entrusted to us. Profit can support families, create jobs, and bless communities, but it must never become our master. Jesus makes that clear in Matthew 6:24.

We Need the Holy Spirit, Not Just Strong Willpower

Knowing what is right does not always make doing it easy. We need more than a code of conduct. We need hearts continually surrendered to God.

Galatians 5:16 calls believers to walk by the Spirit. The fruit described in Galatians 5:22-23 has direct relevance to business: patience in conflict, kindness toward staff, faithfulness to commitments, and self-control when greed or anger rises.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to obey Christ, convicts us when we compromise, and strengthens us to choose faithfulness even when it costs us.

His leading does not contradict the Word He inspired. "I felt peace about it" is not a defence for dishonesty. We should test our impressions against Scripture, seek wise counsel, and remain willing to be corrected.

We are saved by grace through faith, not by flawless business performance. Yet Ephesians 2:8-10 holds grace and good works together: obedience is the fruit of salvation, not its purchase price.

A Practical Pause Before We Decide

Drawing on the decision-making framework in the ethics material, we can pause and ask:

- **Pray:** Have I asked God for wisdom rather than merely asking Him to approve my plan?
- **Search Scripture:** What biblical commands and principles apply?
- **Establish the facts:** Do I understand the situation, or am I acting on assumptions?
- **Consider people:** Who could be harmed, overlooked, or unfairly treated?
- **Examine the whole decision:** Are my purpose, motives, and methods honouring God?

Then take the next faithful step. That may mean correcting an invoice, refusing a bribe, disclosing a conflict of interest, apologising to an employee, or seeking professional advice.

Where we have failed, repentance should become practical. Zacchaeus's response to Jesus included restitution to those he had cheated (Luke 19:8). Forgiveness is not permission to leave preventable harm unaddressed.

Let Our Integrity Speak

As a church, we can help one another through prayer, honest conversations, mentoring, and responsible accountability. We should be a community where people can admit ethical pressure before it becomes hidden compromise.

We cannot control every dishonest practice around us. We can take responsibility for our own choices and encourage faithfulness in one another.

At 3C South Coast, may our word be dependable, our dealings fair, and our treatment of people marked by Christ's love. Let us measure success not only by what we gain, but by whether our lives honour the One we represent.

Our workplace is part of our witness. Let our integrity point people to Jesus.

Prayer: *Father, renew our minds through Your Word. Holy Spirit, expose our compromises and give us courage to obey. Help us to work honestly, lead justly, and steward faithfully all You have entrusted to us. May our conduct bring honour to Jesus. Amen.*

Adapted from the supplied "Biblical Ethics: An Overview," particularly its sections on ethical decision-making, truthfulness, and stewardship. Scripture references are paraphrased unless otherwise indicated.