



"We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

18-Feb-11

A Just Weight Is His Delight

In earlier times, food and other goods were measured out by weight using a balance. A standard weight (typically made of stone) was placed on one side, and the material being measured was put on the other. When the balance was level, both buyer and seller knew that the amount had been measured correctly.

However, human nature being what it is, it did not take long for the unscrupulous to use one stone for a standard when buying and a different one for selling. In this way, they could "tip the balances" in their favor by using weights that were advantageous to them. Using such a "double standard," as it came to be known, might materially benefit the individual, but it was highly destructive to the overall society because it bred distrust and suspicion. This is why God's Word makes it clear that universal and unchanging weights and other measurements are crucial to the smooth functioning of a group of people. Shortly after leaving Egypt, [God](#) emphasized to Israel the necessity of justice and honesty when weighing and measuring:

You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 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. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD. ([Leviticus 19:35-37](#))

God inspired Solomon to make frequent mention of scales and weights in the Proverbs. Their repetition shows the importance of this principle:

- Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight. ([Proverbs 11:1](#))
- Honest weights and scales are the LORD's; all the weights in the bag are His work. ([Proverbs 16:11](#))
- Diverse weights and diverse measures, they are both alike, an abomination to the LORD. ([Proverbs 20:10](#))
- Diverse weights are an abomination to the LORD, and dishonest scales are not good. ([Proverbs 20:23](#))

As with most of God's instructions, though, over time the Israelites paid them little heed. Prior to Israel's fall, these principles were commonly violated, and God links these practices with deceit, violence, wickedness, and oppression ([Amos 8:5-6](#); [Micah 6:10-12](#); [Hosea 12:7](#)). Though not as heinous as outright idolatry, their dishonest dealing was nevertheless part of the same pattern of unfaithfulness wherein the people were more interested in their own well-being than in their covenant responsibilities to God and man. Whether motivated by sheer greed or by fear that they would not have enough if they did not look out for themselves in this way, the overall result was a breakdown in society as the individual exalted himself against God and fellow man.

Actual balances are rare these days (though the local grocery store probably has a scale in the produce department), and Western civilization has seen to it that we have standard weights and measures, so the instructions in Leviticus may seem to have little relevance for us now. However, godly principles are timeless, and though the application may not be the same,

honest weights and scales are still crucial for a smooth and peaceful society. When God re-gave the law to the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land, He broadened His instructions regarding honesty in measurement, taking the principles beyond commerce:

You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. 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. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God. ([Deuteronomy 25:13-16](#))

The fact that one's "bag" (or pocket) and one's "house" are specified here indicates that it is not just the measuring at the shop or depot that is important. Honest and balanced measuring is needed *everywhere*—in the home and anywhere else one goes with a "weight" in one's pocket. Anytime there is something to be weighed, God is showing that the scale or balance we use had better be as accurate as we can make it. He does not use the word "abomination" lightly, yet that is how He consistently describes using varying standards when weighing or measuring. Thus, we must take great care not to use a lenient standard to measure ourselves or those with which we identify and a harsher one for someone else. Having differing standards will contribute to the breakdown of a society through distrust, suspicion, disunity, or even oppression.

Our carnality moves us to weigh things in our own favor or according to our own preferences. We are inclined to cherry-pick evidence that tips things to our advantage and discard or minimize facts that could tilt matters away from us. But with God's Spirit and the new heart and eyes that He has given, we have the wherewithal to overcome the greed, pride, fear, selfishness, or any other motivator that keeps us from using honest weights in relation to others. Paul touches on this spiritual principle when he writes in [Philippians 2:3-4](#):

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem [regard, account, judge] others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Verse 3 indicates not simply seeking parity—which is hard enough—but actually tipping the balance in favor of others! This is contrasted with selfish ambition and conceit, which represent tipping the scales for one's own benefit. The individual may gain, but the cost will be high.

The church of God has been scattered into a multitude of groups, and anytime there is a group, it is natural and easy to "weigh" it—especially in relation to any group that we happen not to be a part of. When such measuring is done, great care must be taken not to use differing standards—a light one for our particular group and a heavy one for another. After all, the "society" that is at risk for disruption is not some human enclave but the spiritual Body of [Christ](#)! The relationships in it must be protected if the Body is to grow, and that begins with not despising. A "just weight" is God's delight, as [Proverbs 11:1](#) says, because it indicates that the individual is working for the good of all and not just the good of one.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Satan, Division, and Humility](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Competition is the root cause of war, business takeovers, and marital discord. Carl Von Clausewitz observed that war is nothing more than politics brought to the battlefield. Evolution has glorified competition, enshrining the survival of the fittest. Historically, the competitive nature has its roots in the mind of Satan, who had the audacity to take on the leadership of Almighty God. Man's rivalry with one another has been described by Solomon as a

striving after wind. Abraham literally "took the high ground," separating himself from strife with his ambitious nephew who wanted to seek gain on the plains of Sodom. The apostle Paul showed willingness to forgo his well-deserved wages, willing to work privately, avoiding conflict and strife. Christianity should be service-oriented rather than profit-oriented, should reward the worker for his labor, and should replace competition with cooperation. Biblical history records the tortured chronicle of people striving against God. The Gentiles cut themselves off from God by rejecting God's teachings through the patriarchs. We must replace the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, willing to yield and submit rather than to strive, quarrel, and compete. Satan has successfully deceived the entire world by mixing a little truth with much error, appealing to our pride and tissue needs. On the Day of Atonement, we (as God's called-out remnant) are commanded to afflict our souls, putting down the striving competitive, pride-filled drives of human nature, with its intense appetites, mortifying our flesh, controlling ourselves by submitting to God in humility, taking the cue from our Elder Brother.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Sin of Partiality](#)

by Dan Elmore

We all have many biases—toward the food we eat, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, and even the detergent we use in our washing machines! However, not all biases are good. Dan Elmore provides biblical examples of partiality that caused no end of troubles. More importantly, we need to avoid partiality for the problems it can cause in the church.

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