

Ethics: The Old Testament, The New Testament, and Contemporary Application

Bruce E. Winston PhD

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The purpose of this collection of case studies is to show the connection between a person's values, the choice of behavior, and how God reacted toward the person. The insights gained from these cases can help us understand what behaviors, thus what values, God rewards positively and negatively. The book can help in classroom discussions about ethics, in small group discussions about the connection between values and behaviors, and in self-study and reflection. Each chapter has four discussion questions that can be used to guide discussion or reflection. The authors of the chapters are both committed Christians and committed scholars. The stories and illustrations that we hear of leaders who have gone before us, become our examples that lay the path for us to follow, or perhaps not to follow. These become our guideposts or our deterrents, as we can learn, grow and develop our own patterns and convictions. This book takes a journey into the Biblical men and women who were both considered ethical and unethical. The hope is that we can begin to sense the scope of ethics in the context of leadership and from a Biblical perspective. So, why ethics? Ethics denotes thoughts of incidents, reports, offenses and multiple other connotations that are typically negative images; and yes there are also the connotations that are positive images as well, such as steadfast, virtue, restoration, strength, etc. Ethics can be highlighted like no other phenomena and in any conversation on ethics, the mind will conjure up, even invite, all types of ideas. What is ethics, why be ethical, who is ethical, etc. And for the Christian, there is an even deeper thought process as we look to Biblical leaders to 'see' the ethics that work, the ethics that do not work—and ultimately how leaders were guided in their own ethics. This guidance can either be well-guided or even misguided, and yet we can learn a great deal from either perspective. The larger question becomes is this action wrong and unethical---and when does it become immoral, illegal, or even sinful? Knowing where the boundaries lie is complex, even murky. So why are we headed into this conversation one might wonder and there is a rather simple answer, we must. We must seek to know the right from the wrong, the good from the bad, and yes, the ethical from the unethical.

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