

What does God love to see in business? (20:10)

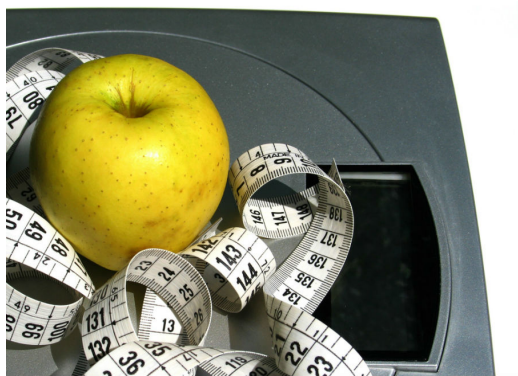
Differing weights and differing measures, (lit. A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah) both of them are abominable to the Lord.

THE TEXT (NASB)

Differing weights and differing measures, (lit. A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah) both of them are abominable to the Lord.

Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD. KJV - Proverbs 20:10

INTRODUCTION



God hates fraud. He loves accuracy and honesty—he invented them.

The use of shifty standards by vendors, trades, or professionals is repugnant to the LORD.

If we look closely at the text, we can learn some surprising things about the LORD.



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COMMENTARY



The LORD hates business fraud. It makes Him ill. What does this tell us about the LORD? It tells us that He's a passionate being, not an impersonal force like gravity or magnetism. It tells us that He watches business transactions carefully—so He's not interested just in church issues.

It tells us that He expects justice 24-seven, and He will not tolerate deceit.

The LORD's visceral reaction to shifty business transactions, is repeatedly emphasized:

- Proverbs 11:1—"A false balance is an abomination to the LORD but a just weight is His delight."
- Proverbs 16:11—"A just balance and scales belong to the LORD. All the weights of the bag are His concern."
- Proverbs 20:23—"Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD and a false scale is not good."

It's unusual to have the same message repeated four times in Proverbs. God wants us to be trustworthy in trading goods and services, with no double standards. God loves business, and He expects it to be done right.

Translation: *Differing*

The Hebrew text omits the word "differing." Instead, it reads reads, "Stone... stone... ephah... ephahs..." An ephah is a volume of 40 litres, used for liquids or granular goods like wheat. The text speaks of both weights and measures, so the LORD wants consistency, whether we're selling liquids, solids, time, bandwidth, dividends, interest, or any other product or service. Prices may fluctuate according to market conditions and the vendor's assessment, but the good or service being sold must be exactly as represented by the vendor.

Abomination

What is an abomination? In Hebrew the word is תועבה (tō'ē•bāh, pronounced "tow-eh-vah"),



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and refers to something that is abhorrent, loathsome, and detestable. *tô•'ē•bāh* is used first in the Bible in Genesis chapters 43 and 46 to describe the Egyptians' view of the Hebrews' dietary customs and occupations—utterly disgusting. It's a visceral or brutish response, yet that's how God reacts to business fraud. From the beginning of His dealings with Israel, God commanded utmost integrity as we see in Leviticus 19:35-36. No cheating!

Why would a vendor use inconsistent standards? Most of the classic commentaries on this text suggest only one motivation: Greed. Greed ruins a business like lust ruins a marriage.

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus warned against every form of greed (Luke 12:15).

He told his followers that an abundance of assets does not increase a person's quality of life. Therefore, those who cheat customers end up cheated themselves of a treasure greater than money. They end up with less life.

The loss of life is much worse than the loss of assets!

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Don't cheat your customers in any way. Read the book, "The History of Greed" by David E. Y. Sarna.
- Be truthful in business with full disclosure.
- Keep your business focus narrow, otherwise you may inadvertently become dishonest simply because of too many distractions.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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KEY WORDS

immorality, dishonesty, fraud, honesty, less assets (quantity), LORD

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Diligent Daniel?



Diligent Daniel is a friend of Steady Eddie. Whereas Steady Eddie is known for his staying power, Diligent Daniel is known for his decisiveness and thoroughness. He is an early riser, a quick starter, and a job finisher. There's no room for procrastination here.

Daniel is tough-minded and sharp. He tells himself each day, “I snooze- I lose.” He pushes himself and calls himself lazy. He is tough on himself—not rough.

He's the one Benjamin Franklin was thinking about two hundred years ago when he came up with the maxim, “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, WEALTHY, and wise.” Daniel's also the one the author Oswald Chambers described with the words, “The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night.”

Daniel is more of a thinker than Steady Eddie, but is known for his enthusiastic work capacity, not his brilliance. He's a mover and a shaker. He's not afraid to get his hands dirty and is in good physical condition. He's a builder. He starts the job right away and gets it DONE. He doesn't flip-flop in this thinking. He is not double-minded. He remains humble while exuding confidence.



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One of his favourite financial tools is the Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

