

# What should the auditors always inspect? (11:1)

**A false balance is an abomination to the LORD but a just weight is His delight.**

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## THE TEXT (NASB)

**A false balance is an abomination to the LORD but a just weight is His delight.**

*A false balance is abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight. Classic KJV - Proverbs 11:1*

## INTRODUCTION



Accuracy: God loves honest, accurate commercial transactions. He is interested in weights and measures, ensuring that commerce is fair and just. He is not opposed to trade or the market place.

The prices of goods and services is not discussed in the text. This might imply that prices can vary from customer to customer, but the quantity and quality must be exactly and precisely as offered.



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## COMMENTARY

Weights and measures are of vital concern to the LORD. He's not only the God of the spiritual world, but also the God of human commerce. He expects accuracy. The balance or scale is a measuring device to weigh a commodity. The principle in this text applies to any measure: a time clock, speedometer, or gasoline pump.

### Weighing Polish Sausage



My father, Erwin Lipp, once told me that a store owner has the right to set prices as he likes, but he does not have the right to tamper with the weights and measures. In Poland, just before World War Two, he was working in a delicatessen and saw butchers weigh what appeared a pound of sausage. The butcher would smile and hand the goods to the customer, all the while knowing that it was slightly less than a pound. God hates such petty theft. It's a contemptable abomination.

### Despising Dishonesty

God does not despise business or commerce. He despises dishonesty. He wants a vendor to offer the straight goods, whether they're expensive or inexpensive—they must be the straight goods. God delights in honest business transactions, because he delights in his children living well together and helping each other. So it's acceptable to request a lower price or discount in negotiating a transaction. Driving a hard bargain is not wrong; it's wrong to drive a dishonest bargain. An owner always has the right to do what he will with his own (Matthew 20:15). He does not have the right to treat his neighbours with contempt.



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## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

The Gospels give two accounts of Jesus clearing the Jerusalem temple of merchants. In one account, Jesus rebuked this commercial activity because of its habitual, arrogant dishonesty (Matthew 21:13). In the second account, Jesus seemed to rebuke the commerce itself (John 2:16), but here the trade is turning the House of Prayer into a market. The term “holy” originally meant “set apart,” something kept aside for God apart from our daily use. We shouldn’t strike a deal in the middle of a worship service. The Lord opposed what kept His Father’s house from being a holy House of Prayer.

Was Jesus opposed to commerce itself? If Jesus were anti-commerce per se, then He would not have praised the servants who engaged in the enterprise of trading and investing. The idle servant received the Master’s rebuke (Matthew 25:14-30).

Jesus was not anti-commerce, but justice and prayer are much more important than money.

## APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- What standards of measure or evaluation are used in your business? Learn them well. Follow them. You may vary prices but don’t bend the standards.
- Do you apply different standards with different customers and clients? Does the customer understand what he is getting for the price being paid?
- Are standards clear or fuzzy? Confusion is often a smokescreen for dishonesty. Remember the power of the KISS principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid!

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



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## KEY WORDS

immorality, advertising, capitalism, business, deceit, ethics, integrity, LORD, measurement, fraud, standards, truth, worse life (quality)

## ILLUSTRATION

### Who is Tax-Driven Ted?



Death and taxes: The only things we can be sure of! Certainly that's the way Tax-Driven Ted sees it. Whereas others pay some or little attention to taxes, he is consumed by tax minimization. Ted is tax obsessed. Why? For many Canadians, if left unmanaged, taxes eliminate over 50% of income. In Canada tax freedom day falls in July.

Tax freedom day is the day of the year when you have paid all your taxes and can now keep the rest of the money you earn. Tax-Driven Ted will spend money just to get a write-off. He fails to seriously evaluate the underlying economics behind the decision and chooses to focus on the tax consequences. He loves to borrow money to invest simply because he can write off the interest costs of amount borrowed. This investment technique is called leveraging and is commonplace.

Ted doesn't believe he should pay any taxes. After all, the government wastes money. It's extremely inefficient. He uses every angle to reduce taxes. He's always looking for loopholes, credits, or write-offs. *His focus is not on customer satisfaction but on tax reduction.*



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He goes on trips and conferences so that he can take the tax write-offs. He loves limited partnerships investments and other tax shelters. For some investors tax considerations are secondary, but for Tax-Driven Ted, they come first.

