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Use Only One Measure

Examine yourself for this form of hypocrisy.

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- 07-06-2019

I suggest you get rid of something in your life. It's something most of us carry unwittingly. Even if we recognize it, we justify it. We think it's harmless. But it's not harmless. It wreaks *terrible* damage in our lives.

Getting rid of it is not easy—but doing so will make your life happier, simpler and freer of stress. It will invite more of God's blessings in your life.

What is it? It is your second set of measuring tools.

Here is God's law: "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small" (Deuteronomy 25:13-14).

In ancient markets, transactions were placed on a scale a measured against standard weights. When a duplicitous merchant bought from suppliers, he might use a heavy weight to make it appear he was receiving less than he actually was. When he then turned around to sell, he could get out his lighter weight to give less than his customer had paid for.

You're not an open-market vendor, but it is easier to possess two different scales of measurement than you may think.

You wouldn't steal a television from a retail store, but you might steal time from your employer by slacking off when nobody is looking. You wouldn't rob a bank, but you might justify not reporting certain income on your taxes. You wouldn't have an affair, but you might look at a salacious website.

Still, you consider yourself a person of integrity. You do the right thing in the big areas, where it really matters. But then you give yourself a pass for fudging occasionally in little areas. Where the policy "doesn't apply to you." It's "too small to matter." "This won't hurt anyone." "Nobody will know."

Two different measures.

Is stealing wrong? Then why would a little bit be OK? Is hatred wrong? Then what makes it acceptable to simply keep it to yourself and *pretend* you have nothing but love? (Proverbs 10:18). Why try to justify "virtual" lust when God says harboring it in the heart *is adultery* and will burn you just as surely as holding fire near your chest? (Matthew 5:28; Proverbs 6:25-28).

God says if you are faithful in that which is least, He can entrust you with greater things (Luke 16:10). But if you are dishonest in the small areas, your integrity is compromised. He is looking at your *character*. Your conduct in the little matters tells Him all He needs to know about the person you really are.

You might have two different scales, one to judge your friends and allies, and another to judge your enemies; or one to weigh your own actions and another to weigh other people's. You might use one measure for when you're alone and another for when others are watching.

A merchant using falsified measures is being deliberately dishonest. The double standards we tend to hold are subtler, but they are dishonest just the same. Every day, many opportunities arise to exercise such deceit, even in small areas. Track yourself and see if you hold a double standard in certain details, giving yourself permission to think or do things you wouldn't want other people to know about.

The basic reason we possess two measures in these subtler forms is that our human nature likes to think of itself as good. We can be astonishingly adept at justifying dishonesty. *It would only hurt that person to know the truth. God understands—He knows I mean well.*

But if you find two measures, honestly assess *why* you have them. God wants us to be *totally* honest. "But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure …" (Deuteronomy 25:15; also Leviticus 19:35-36). God knows diverse weights and measures when He sees them, and He calls breaking this law an *abomination* (Deuteronomy 25:16; also Proverbs 11:1; Amos 8:5).

In 1 Corinthians 5:8, the Apostle Paul summarized God's way of life with two words *sincerity* and *truth. Sincerity* means purity; the Greek literally means "found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun's light." That is what God wants for your life: for you to live so your innermost heart can be unfolded in broad sunlight, scrutinized and found pure. *Truth* means that which is true and free from error, but it also means truth as a personal virtue—a mind free from pretense, falsehood, deceit. It is thus closely linked with sincerity.

The gap between two measures is a form of hypocrisy: proclaiming one standard and living by another. In reality, it is virtually impossible *not* to have some hypocrisy if you are trying to uphold godly standards; we all fall short of the ideals we profess. The question is how wholeheartedly we are working to close the gap between profession and action. We should always strive to match what we know to be right with what we do.

Don't weigh your goodness by other people's opinions. Don't calculate your righteousness by comparing it with sinners worse than yourself. Don't evaluate your thoughts by a lighter standard than your deeds. Get rid of all of your weights and measures, and keep the one and only perfect and just measure: God's. ▪