

Dishonest Scales
Proverbs 11:1
March 6, 2016

Introduction

Suppose you went to the store and bought a gallon of milk for \$3.00. We know that the standard for a gallon is 128 fl oz. Suppose a local grocery store sells a jug of milk as 1 gallon, but in reality, it is 127 fl oz, and they charged \$3.00 for it. The store had made money by using less milk. Over time, they have made money off the missing milk. How would you feel about that situation? How would God view this situation? Solomon tells us how God sees this situation.

Proverbs 11:1 *Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.*

I. Background

- Money in Old Testament
 - Coins did not appear in Israel until about 400 BC
 - Money was based on weight of gold, silver, other metals, and livestock

Genesis 13:2 *Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.*

- People would use scales and weights to determine the value
 - Shekel was a unit of weight

1 Samuel 17:7a *His [Goliath's] spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels.*

- God had set a standard of weight—sanctuary shekel

Exodus 30:12-13 *When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them. 13 Each one who crosses over to those already counted is to give a half shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD.*

- He established it so that the shekel weight would be the same everywhere else

Proverbs 16:11 *Honest weights and scales are the Lord's; all the weights in the bag are His work.*

- 1 shekel approx 12 grams (empty 12 oz soda can is about 14 grams)

- Dishonest scales
 - There were no certification to verify each business' scale(s) and weights
 - Today we have certification by the government to ensure every measurement is accurate
 - Business provide their own scales and weights
 - For dishonest scales—businesses would adjust the scales in their favor
 - Most of the time, they would change the stone weights
 - For selling—they would use stones that had less weight
 - Example: 1 pound of flour = 16 oz; setting the stone to be 15 oz instead of 16 oz—selling less flour than 1 true pound
 - For buying—they would use stones that had more weight
 - Example: Using a stone that was 17 oz as a pound—getting more flour than true 1 pound
 - This was a major problem during the time of the Prophets

Amos 8:5 Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scales by deceit,

Micah 6:10-11 Am I still to forget, O wicked house, your ill-gotten treasures and the short ephah, which is accursed? **11** Shall I acquit a man with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights?

Note: Ephah is a unit of measurement for dry volume. Used for fruit and grain. About 35 Liters.

II. Abomination

- Solomon tells us that the Lord hates it (he tells us 3 times in Proverbs)

Proverbs 20:10 Diverse weights and diverse measures, they are both alike, an abomination to the Lord.

Proverbs 20:23 Diverse weights are an abomination to the Lord, and dishonest scales are not good.

- Abomination = deep disgust (a very strong word)
 - God hates dishonest scales as He hates
 - Idolatry

Deuteronomy 7:25 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God.

- Homosexuality and other sexual perversions

Leviticus 18:22-23 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. **23** Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.

- Human sacrifices

Deuteronomy 12:31 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

- Solomon is expounding the Law

Leviticus 19:35-36 You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. **36** 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.

Note: Hin is a unit of measurement for liquid volume. About 8 quarts.

Deuteronomy 25:13-16 You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. **14** You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. **15** 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. **16** For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God.

- Why does the God hate this practice?
 - It goes against His character

- He is fair and just
 - He is honest and true
 - He does not cheat to gain an advantage
- Cheating is sin
 - Attacks the poor
 - Undermines trust and integrity
 - Equated with stealing and lying
- God will bring judgment on the person who does this

III. Broader Applications

- God is interested in business practices not just church activities!
 - God is concerned about every area of our life and that we do it honestly
- Cheating to gain an advantage to themselves
- At work
 - Company time
 - Being late, leaving early
 - Using personal time on company dime
 - Using company items for personal use
 - Athletes using performance enhancements to gain an advantage
- Life
 - Not tipping or tipping less
 - Avoid paying taxes or lying on taxes
 - Concealing information when selling
 - Hagglng ruthlessly when buying or selling
- Relationships
 - Judging others with different measurement

James 2:1-4 *My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

- Measuring the worth of a person
- By favoring one group by giving them more kindness and ignoring others

Coram Deo

Proverbs 11:1 *Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.*

As Christians, if we have been cheating our employers, friends, and others, then we must make it right. We might even have to pay back for the mistakes we have made. Zacchaeus, after placing his faith in Christ Jesus, showed his changed heart by making things right.

Luke 19:8-9 *But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.*

God delights and is honored when we do this. He will then pour out His blessing.