

Christian Professional Ethics:

Living Responsively with and to Others¹

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Introduction

A Christian professional makes two major commitments. The first and foremost is to follow Christ wherever He leads. This is the more pervasive of the two commitments and requires a deep belief Jesus is who He said He was and that His teachings are true, right, just and good and should and can be followed. Christianity is a discipleship-based religion in which following is the central role of leading. It is also based on dedication to a Person who claimed to be Divine and called individuals to follow both because of His authority but also out of wise obedience and freedom that authority created. Those who did follow Jesus often experienced horrible treatment by governmental and legal authorities just as Jesus had experienced. Following Jesus and His teachings was for good not evil, but it often meant dire consequences so the call to follow was for better or for worse, in plenty or in poverty, in fame or derision.

The second calling in the life of a Christian professional is to an occupational responsiveness to others. Christian professionals commit to being the best they can be to the relationships dependent on them. It is a commitment to standards of practice, codes of ethics and *raison d'être* that operate in and around a profession. It is a commitment to be well-trained and prepared, to take risks and accept responsibility and to practice well.

These two commitments—to Christ and one's profession—are the two great guides to a Christian professional ethic. Managing and living these two commitments creates the synergy and deep tension that

¹ This is a reworking of Covrig's 2000 article, "Professional relations: Multiple communities for reform and renewal" in *Professional Ethics*, 8 (3&4), 19-56. Here, we take more seriously the call of Christ as the central organizing agent to guide responsiveness in our service to others. Readers wanting more detail discussion of the duty due our relationships may wish to read that work.

avoids the theoretical dryness of much professional ethics discourse and focuses the practitioner on the wisdom and biblical commands that impact practice. Managing commitments challenges the mind and practice. That challenge requires fresh feelings of need that can be satisfied by the work of the Holy Spirit in developing deeper professional knowledge, careful performance and sustained reflection which alone matures the individual in their calling and service to others. It allows them to grow in favor with God and others, just as Christ did (Luke 2:52).

This article and accompanying material reviews several dynamic relationships the Christian professional is called to manage to stay ethical. Responding to these relationships creates a new kind of ethic—a moral guide to living well by being attentive and responsive to the needs of those closest to us. This relational approach to ethics includes but is not limited to abstract moral principles or codes of ethics. While ethical ideas and ideals are crucial, it is in relationships we face moral ideals in the form of concrete choices and vivid responsibilities. Figuring out responsibilities is part of what makes us think for ourselves and activate the unique aspects of what it means to be made in the image of God, empowered to think and to do in ways that help or hurt our relationships. Professional ethics is therefore not purely theoretical or even codified by maxims, but it is a lived experience where action gives feedback to theory and theory helps interpret and inform practice.

With each relationship below we review the responsibilities outlined by scripture and practical experience. We encourage each reader to figure out how they are doing in each relationship and areas they want to improve. We believe such reflective exercises foster a Christian ethic that deepens spiritual understanding, challenges us toward a more wholistic knowledge of professional practice and ethics, and ultimately keeps us on a closer walk with God and others. Relationships engage the head, the heart and the hands of ethics and morality better than all the theories and equations of ethics.

Who should we love more: God or our Profession or others?

As we think about relationships, we need to start with understanding priorities. Many parents have faced a probing question from a son or daughter: "Who do you

love more?" That question typically comes when a child perceives a parent spends more time with a sibling or at work or in front of the TV or working in the kitchen than with them as a child. The child may grow anxious about their parent's inattention and view that as a lack of commitment to them as a person. The child's question is often a desire to refocus the parent on the child's own needs. It is often felt by the parent as a reprimand or at best in interruption. At other times it is a call to shift priorities.

In John 21, Jesus asked Peter a similar question about love priorities and the dialogue frames our understanding of the core ethical engine in the life of a Christian professional. We linger in this story to make this core point:

"So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep." (John 21:15-17, NSAB).

In the three years Peter had walked with Jesus, Peter had been notoriously distracted by many interests. At times it was his family's needs, at other times, his work on a fishing boat. But most of all, he was distracted by himself, by an impulsive thought, by a hurt nursed against the Romans, or by inattention to his Rabbi's teachings. At times, Jesus worked within those distractions to bring good, as when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-16). At other times, Peter's distraction were a chaotic jab brought by Satan through Peter to directly hurt Jesus (Matthew 16:23-25). In reality Peter's commitment was being drawn to Satan as strongly as it was being drawn to Jesus (Luke 22:31-33). As such, Peter was unprepared for that one dark night, when fear of loss, loss of his reputation and his religion and his life, motivated Peter to vividly deny Christ. This occurred not just once or twice, but three times in a row and to hit home the failure, the cock had crowed twice just as Jesus

had predicted. It was the great failure of commitment. Peter had failed miserably.

Jesus would rise again, three days later. But it would take Peter longer to recover from his failure. Public failures usually work that way. They linger not only in the newspaper and on the internet but also through the gossip of friends and enemies. But they linger the longest in one's own mind as one plays and replays the failure again and again and realizes it is not only a permanent part of one's life record but also a predisposition for one's future actions. And so it was with Peter. Even after Christ's resurrection and Christ's clear invitation to "tell Peter and the disciplines" to meet Him (Mark 16:7), Peter's remorse and doubt were undoubtedly painfully deep.

John 21 starts the story with Peter, the leader of other leaders, taking the initiative to go fishing. His friends follow. Peter, probably trying to shake off his deep failure, or maybe just trying to make ends meet or get some good food for him and his family, decides fishing is the solution. Fishing was a natural choice. It had given Peter his life identity. Fishing was what he knew better than any other thing. It was his area of expertise and success. Much of his memories were probably tied up in fishing, a mix of near death experiences and deep joys and fun. And fishing was also much better than sitting around and fixating on his failure to follow Christ. So He fished all night, with all His friends watching, but did not catch a single fish. So he worked harder and harder and harder, such that by early morning, when most people were putting on layers of clothing, Peter was frantically taking his clothes off. With all his friends watching, Peter was failing...again. This time, occupational failure.

[Into that deep failure—of faith and profession, came a miracle that has much to teach us about the engine that can guide successful Christian professional ethics.]

From the shore, a voice tells those in the boat to cast their nets on the other side. Half lost in the task of taking up the net and half lost in a mind still ruminating on his string of moral and occupational failures, Peter blindly obeys. Peter then hears John, louder and louder break into Peter's remonstrating mind: "It's Jesus." "It's Jesus, Peter. It's Jesus."

Immediately Peter, half confused and half excited, puts back on his clothes, and jumps back into the water and swims to shore to worship and show repentance to Jesus.

After a warm breakfast and in the coolness of the morning and among his friends, Jesus asks his big question, three times. “Do you love me more than these?”

Sometimes people repeat themselves because they mindlessly forgot what was just said. Sometimes people repeat themselves because they weren’t heard. Sometimes people repeat themselves to make a point. Here, it appears Jesus repeated himself so Peter could reclaim and publicly declare his commitments and in public commitment stabilize his own professional commitments.

We believe in this record of sacred scripture, Jesus is asking all his followers to this priority. John—the last book of the bible, and here in the last chapter of that book—a claim for Christian professionals is made very clear. It is as if Christ is saying, “Stay focused starting with me.”

Throwing off both the clinging tentacles of regret and the waffling commitment, Peter states his allegiance, but in the end, acknowledges that only Jesus knows his heart. Leaving it a heart issue that God alone can read, Peter acknowledges his desire to follow Christ.

When a person really blows it: systematically, purposely, and deliberately, there is a natural tendency to believe that one’s failure is the new path they are destined to follow. Their adultery, their thieving, their greed, their anger, their cowardness, all seems to present itself as their new destiny. This encounter with Christ reminds us of the reality of re-birthing a commitment to follow each day regardless of past success or failure. It is the engine of daily conversion, the core mechanism that keeps the Christian professional ever learning, never arriving, but in the process the most capable of living professional ethics.

Like Peter, we all need to recalibrate commitments and there was no better way to do that than to start at the top, and in doing so, work immediately to all other areas and levels of commitment.

This story about Peter’s love priorities is central to an understanding of what guides Christian professional ethics. Love is precisely the Christian ethic. But it is only possible when priorities and expectations are clear about which each relationship we have requires from us. The question of doing right is best understood not merely in accumulating abstract principles or codes of ethics to

guide actions, but in fostering each day a relationship with God that empowers us to stay in relationship to others.

The Greeks have given us creative ways to articulate philosophy and talk of freedom of thought and action, and weave these together with understandings of natural law to create very profound ethical insights. However, Christianity repositioned the human moral journey as first and foremost a whole body—mind, body, soul—encounter with and faithfulness to God and from that primary relationship a full experience of love to others. Christianity does more for ethics by connecting our minds and hearts (even our intuitions) to God than can be accomplished by rationality, memorizing ethical statements or principles, or logic. Morality is a whole brain and whole body experience. Reason is needed but never sufficient.

Do you love me more than these? is a question that is not mainly or purely an academic question asking for mental assent but an attitudinal and emotive and behavioral call to action and love.

Notice how, each time Peter responded that he loved Jesus, Jesus would then say, feed my sheep. Jesus does not exclude in the love process. He is the one who connects us to Himself so that He might release us to the web of responsibility awaiting us as individuals, leaders, and professionals. We must discover for ourselves, our values, and our moral commitments as they are in God, and it is here we get morally tested through the love we will tender most to others.

Love Me. Feed them.

Love Me. Tend them.

Love Me. Feed them.

Below we ask readers to reflect on this divine call to relationships: God, family, church, neighbor & friend, enemy, client, co-worker, employer, society, and self. We suggest they describe and look at the unique ethical and moral demands each makes on their lives as a way of doing a professional ethic.

God

The Bible, the authoritative guide to all things relational and ethical, states it succinctly:

“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded... you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you....“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, excerpts, NASB)

Here Moses states the bottom line of all moral being: love God with all you’ve got, your heart as well as your head, and hands, and pass that on to those around you (loving relationships begat other loving relationships): your parents, siblings, spouse, children, students, followers as well as your leaders. Love channeled to God frames all other love.

This call to make God the primary relationship is reaffirmed by Jesus. When Jesus, the One who spoke the original command to Moses speaks directly to man, He repeats himself in the new testament when He states that we “SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” Luke 10:27 (NASB, all caps in the original). Here Jesus preserves the centrality and importance of this command but also shows the additional need for the mind—rationality, cognitive processing—to be involved in this love.

So how do we know if we are all committed to God? “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). We see at least five areas that can help a Christian professional “audit” their relational treasure with God. We call these the five Ts.

Where and with whom do we spend our *Time*?

What do we spend our *Treasures* (money and assets) on?

Who do we devote our *Talents* (skills and gifts) to?

What do we *Talk* most about?

What are we the most *Thankful* for, most of the time?

In looking at your calendar, wallet, skills and talents, speech and thankfulness, how would you describe your relationship with God? How do you think He would describe your relationship with him? How can it be improved?

Time: Do you spend time in prayer, Bible reading and meditation?. Such “early” devotion renews our commitments to God and gives us the source of power that can characterize other relationships. Seeking consultation, advice, restoration and confirmation for our days gives us understanding. It is our starting place, not the ending point.

Treasures:The way we spend our resources—we show our affections, attention, and allegiance by spending time on the projects He reveals to us in the “early” commitments we make.

Talents: We show our love to Him by using our skills and gifts he gave us. We glorify God by thanking him not that we were made like someone else but made like he fashioned us to be (Psalms 139). We show love to Him by developing our skills through action toward those who most need our unique gifts.

Talk and Thankfulness: We show Jesus our love by talking about Him when appropriate, to those around us who need to see in us a relationship that brings life. We show love to Him, through the thankfulness we share in our writing and speaking of words.

Some may see in this list of ways to show devotion to God, a legalism, a check-list. We prefer seeing it as a reminder of what Christ was reminding Peter—focus and priority.

The call to serve God totally can be seen by some as a call to a radical monastic life of hours of prayer, penitence, acts of extreme humility, and exclusion from the world. It may be seen as a view that the only way to love God is to be exclusive to Him. This is not true. While it is crucial to get away from others for a while, into a mountain top, or

groves of trees, our park in the middle of the big city in John 21 the pattern for showing our devotion is to get out and take care of and feed the sheep. Jesus connected the call to prioritize His love with the need of others. “Feed my lambs” is the route to showing love to God.

Micah made that plan plain:

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (NIV)

God has no purpose to call us to an exclusive love. He himself is in a union, God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. And out of that primary relationship comes all others. The exclusive god in a god of false religions, the god that only wants us to serve his interests is not the god of creation and redemption.

But God does require our highest allegiance because from that He can shake us from patterns of relating that are abusive and cruel. But, once again, it is only His relationships that free us to love others.

Jesus came to unmask all exclusionary gods. He promised “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” (John 1:51). Jesus was to be the freeway that trafficked God’s gifts to us and onto other humans. Heaven and earth were to be always and forever connected through the great relator Jesus. Jesus was Jacob’s ladder, and the ladder was not for us to earn a step a day closer to heaven but for heaven to traffic into our lives. And Jesus could not connect us to His father separate from our connections to each other (Ephesians 4:9-16, I Corinthians 5:15-20, John 15).

To love God, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your time, with all your resources and your mouth and passions, actually makes you free, totally free, to be more human. Paul experienced that reality:

“Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant [slave in some translations] to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I

entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!”(NASB, 1 Corinthian 9: 19-23).

And starting with God not only allows us to say yes to most of the other relationships in our network, it also allows us to say no to set parameters, to even the strongest pull of relationships: especially the pull of self to become selfish (the relationship we will talk last about in this paper).

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

This is why Jesus asks for it all. He is the only one of our relationships that will end up taking what you

give him and multiplying it back into more relationships to others.

Or to put it differently, relating to God helps you relate to others, including yourself, in a more heavenly way and the only way to get that is to experience it first in God's relationship to us.

He is the most demanding but at the same time the most unselfish, giving of all He has back to us. This is the great dichotomy of Jesus' call to Peter and it can be the greatest liberating call to Christian professionals to be ethical.

Christian professionals keep ethical best when they start their focus on God who through the Holy Spirit's teaching guides into all other necessary truth (John 15:26, 27). Just as Jesus needed to check in with His Father, so we check into the Father, Son and Holy Ghost each day.

The manager of an esteemed financial institution was said to be leaving his office when he saw a lady walking up the countless steps of his palatial building. He just stood there holding the door open for her. "You don't have to hold the door open for me because I am a lady" said the proud lady as she walked up to him, preening and fanning herself, and puffing from her recent exercise. "Excuse me. I didn't keep the door open for you because you are a lady, but because I am a gentleman", the manager replied. It is in Christ, we are new creatures and new professionals by which we can grow our commitment to others.

Family

Next to God, the second important relationship stressed in the Bible and in most Eastern cultures and important in the professional's life is family. Exodus 20:1, the fifth commandment says, "Honor thy Father and thy Mother."

However, the social conformity that exists in the family created a dynamic that needed itself to be guarded against. Matthew 10: 37-39 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

This tension to love family and deny duty to God, was also contrasted to the tension to use God as an excuse to get out of serving family. Mark 7: 11,12 " But ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother , it is a *Cor-ban*,

he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do aught to his father or his mother."

This vortex of allegiance is exactly what we should feel all our lives as Christian professionals. This is what keeps us attentive to both God and the needs of those around us. If we neglect either we fail God. That seems like a failed position to be in but it is also the position that keeps us teachable.

Paul framed the Christian walk within the dynamics of family: Ephesians 5:21-33 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Some have used God as pretense to slight their family and some have used their family to slight their relationship with God, when in reality God is calling us to both commitments and to use the image of God in us to judge what we should do in each situation. In reflecting on how God's relationship to you has been manifested, how do you compare your relationship with him to your relationship to parents, siblings, children, and spouse?

In the accompany article by Covrig (2000) we discuss the dynamics of family. While some professionals forgo the development of their "own" families or marriage in order to develop professionally, many do well to experience family and the growth intense family dynamics bring. We have seen families provide incentives that lead individuals to go back to school in order to a develop professionally.

And often, skills and ideas learned in professional training and practice improve parenting and spousal relationships. Like the Christ relationship, a synergy can exist.

However, most often it is more of a tension between the demands of work and home. Professionals work longer hours not only because they want to at times but because they have to do their job well. This potentially robs the family of the professionals time and the professional of the nurturing atmosphere of home. Women professionals often have to shoulder this burden the most as they have to deal with domestic duties and child rearing.

Look up one, some or all of the following

scriptures to guide you in reflecting on this crucial human relational area in your professional life and think of ways you can generate more synergy from this relationship for work and more ideas and skills from work to help in the home.

Parents: Ps 128:3, Matt 15:26; Matt 19:14; Eph 6:1; Col 3:20

Children: I Cor 12:14; I Tim 3:14

Husband Deut 24: 1-5; 25:5; Prov 5:18; Eccl 9:9, Eph 5

Wife: Deut 22: 5; Deut 22: 13-30; Deut 27: 10-17; Prov 19:14; Prov 31

Use the following table to help you think practically about your commitments to family.

	Parents	Siblings	Spouse	Children	Other
What each needs					
Time					
Treasur es (\$, assets)					
Talent					
Talk					
Thank-fulness					

Reflection: In auditing your relationships to family, how are you doing and how can you improve?

Church

The third area of relationships after God and family is that those who share our faith commitment to God. As Christians we participate intimately in a new family called the Body of Christ or the church. Hopefully, and by God’s grace, our family is with us in the church for a double

relational fulfillment. In Acts 20:28 Paul admonishes us to “feed the church of God” and in

“The church does not choose its own future. Rather it is formed in the creative tension between the actuality of the human situation and the intentions of God.” Gunderson, Deeply Woven Roots, p. 1

Hebrews 10:25 “let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Interestingly, the church is often the first authoritative community outside the home that children experience. A healthy church—where people are committed to each other’s following of Christ—has can play a role to help homes that have not always given the best corrective guidance to the moral development of children.

Reflection: How is your relationship to Christ’s other disciples? Do you meet with them regularly and gain from that encouragement? How are you growing together with them?

Neighbors & Friends/ Enemies

The fourth general area of relationships after God, family and church is that love to those closest to us as friends, neighbors and even enemies. We combine these relationships for a reason. Jesus did. In telling of the story of who is my neighbor is described a story of the Jewish listeners hated Samaritans. He also said in Matthew 10:36, “a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.” This suggestd we may have to practice love to enemies even in our own close community spheres.

Matthew 5:23-26 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there

before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent."

Readings: Deut 18:7-11; Deut 24: 6,7; Deut 24: 10-13;
Deut 25: 1-3; Prov 3:28; ECCL 4:4; Hab 2:15; Luke
10:19

Reflection: How would you describe your relations with your neighbors, friends, and enemies? How do we practice necessary differences between friends, neighbors and enemies. How do we treat them the same?

Friends:

Neighbors:

Enemies:

Professional Relationships:

In Covrig (2000) article (also on this web resource), the three primary groups in the professionals work environment are detailed. These are the needs of the Clients, Coworker, and Employer.

Clients: Romans 13:8; 2 Cor 9; Romans 12

Coworkers: Deut 20: 6-7; Deut 25:11; Philemon

Employer: Deut 15: 12-18; Deut 18 7-11; Deut 24:14 &15; Deut 25: 15&16; Eph 6:5; Col 3 :22; I Peter 2:18; Philemon; James 5:1-4

Reflection: How are you fostering relationships with clients, co-workers, and your employer that show responsiveness, responsibility and deep commitment? How do these three relationships compete for loyalty and need to have their own boundaries maintained?

Society- Governments, Economies, Civic Associations

Romans 13; Revelation 13

Reflection: What should your country expect from you as a person, Christian and professional? What should you expect from your country?

Self

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 10: 37-39 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

Matthew 16:24 "Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Reflection: How do you love yourself and at the same time deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Christ? How do you love yourself to better love others?

Conclusion

Christian professionals often seek more authentic and ethical lives in their work and home. They often want to prioritize their relationship to Christ and use that to analyze and realize responsiveness to other relationships. This essay approached ethics in professional work from a relational perspective because it moves past the rationalized approach that often neglects lived experience to create a greater synergy of learning through theory and practice. Relationships frame work and give us a philosophy for practice.

In this article, we gave the reader opportunity to examine their God and human relationships and to examine how they are doing in those relationships. While following Christ is the main relationship in a Christian's life, it

motivates responsiveness to others. A God relationship is no excuse to become unresponsive to other relationships. 1 John 4:20 reminds us, "If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." Again, John notes: There is no responsibility to God that denies our responsibility to our family. The call to love him with all your heart is a call to feed and nurture others.

However, the only way to stay in love with others is paradoxically to give God the priority of one's self. It is a call to become a slave, servant and friend of Christ and let that loving relationship guide in our relationship with others. As Gunderson (Gunderson, 1997) argued: "The church does not choose its own future. Rather it is formed in the creative tension between the actuality of the human situation and the intentions of God." So it is with the Christian professional. We follow God into a world of need and that frames our professional practice.

"He has shown you, oh Christian professional, what the Lord requires: love mercy, do justice and walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8, paraphrased) It is walking humbly with God and others that will help us stay ethical.

References:

Gunderson, G. (1997). *Deeply woven roots: Improving the quality of life in your community*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

A frame to guide group discussion about professional ethics

Relationship	What they Want/Need	What I need to give Them	What boundary defines and limits the relationship
God			
Family			
Friends/Neighbors			
Enemies			
Clients			
Coworkers			
Employers			
Society			
Self			