



# Challenged

*Christian Ethics in  
Life and Business*

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*Challenged: Christian Ethics in Life and Business*  
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IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE STORY. One of the nation's most respected journalists was traveling in a convoy of helicopters in Iraq when the convoy came under enemy attack. A rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) struck a Chinook helicopter and pierced its outer skin. That it failed to detonate undoubtedly saved the lives of multiple U.S. servicemen. He reported that "on the ground, we learned the Chinook ahead of us was almost blown out of the sky."

But as time went by, details of that 2003 attack—as recounted by the news anchor—began to change. The news anchor eventually claimed that the helicopter in which *he* was traveling had been struck by an RPG. "Two of our four helicopters were hit by ground fire, including the one I was in. RPG and AK-47."

As this modified account of the original story began making the rounds, soldiers who were present during the attack openly questioned the veracity of the later reports. One posted on Facebook, "Sorry dude, I don't remember you being on my aircraft. I do remember you walking up about an hour after we had landed to ask me what had happened."

The Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics states that journalists have a duty to "take responsibility for the accuracy of their work," and "never deliberately distort facts or context." As a consequence of what he described as "a mistake in recalling the events of twelve years go," the anchor of the nation's

number one nightly news broadcast—who had shortly before signed a reported five-year, \$50 million dollar contract to continue in his role—was suspended without pay for six months.

Professional golfer Cameron Tringale's commitment to ethics cost him \$53,000 and his best-ever finish in a major golf championship during the 2014 PGA Championship in Louisville, KY. Despite being uncertain as to whether he had actually done so, Tringale contacted tournament officials to report that he missed a stroke while attempting to tap in a ball. That Tringale had failed to report a stroke meant he had therefore signed an incorrect scorecard, the punishment for which is disqualification. It is doubtful that every golfer would have been as committed to such ethical behavior.

It isn't possible to avoid ethical conundra, especially if you claim to be a follower of God. The Ten Commandments expressly forbid bearing false witness, meaning fudging the truth is a matter of no small consequence. The biblical prohibition against stealing precludes obtaining a dishonest advantage. Therefore, keeping what is not rightfully yours, claiming tax deductions to which you are not entitled, or clocking in for hours not worked fall outside the boundaries of acceptable behavior in the sight of God.

While God's principles are clear cut, life has a knack of presenting situations that may appear to

be neither black nor white. There may frequently be times when we are tempted to see an issue as gray. The human heart is well practiced at rationalizing behavior and justifying actions. As Jesus said in Matthew 11:19, “Wisdom is justified of her children.”

## **Biblical Examples for Guidance**

Thankfully, people seeking the best way forward can learn from the example of Bible figures who have either experimented with ethical misconduct or bounced back from ethical failures. The Bible frequently presents situations in which there may appear to be less a choice between right and wrong as a choice between the lesser of two evils.

In Judges 4 we are introduced to a man named Sisera, the captain of the armies of a Canaanite king named Jabin. After his forces were routed by the armies of Barak, Sisera fled on foot to the home of one of Jabin’s allies. Jael, the lady of the house, offered Sisera refuge and something to drink, assuring him she would go so far as to lie to ensure his safety. “Do not fear,” she soothed (Judges 4:18). But when Sisera fell asleep, Jael “took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died” (Judges 4:21).

What should one make of Jael? Deborah, a prophetess and the judge of Israel at the time, considered