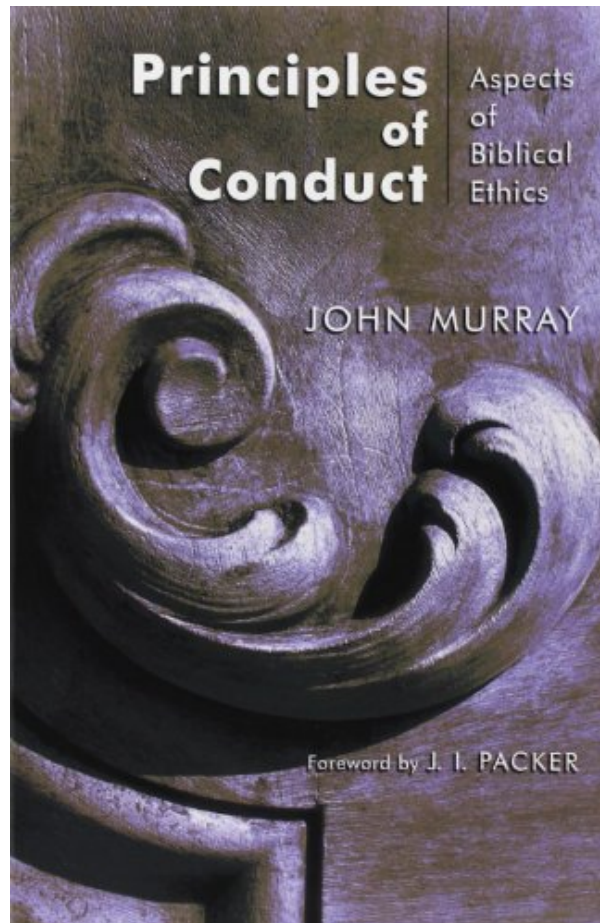
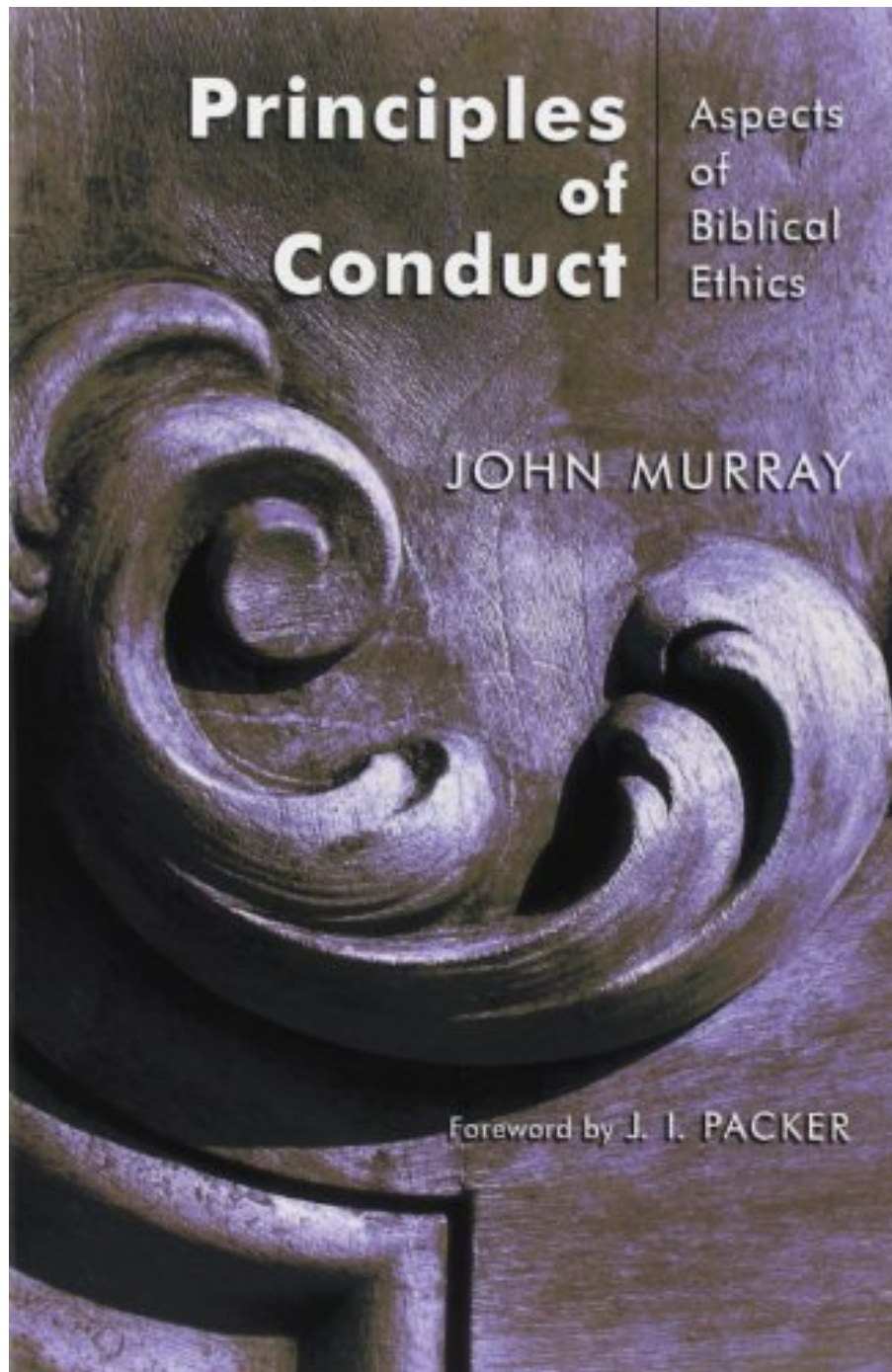


# PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT: ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL ETHICS BY JOHN MURRAY



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From the Back Cover

Now back in print with a new foreword, this classic study clearly shows the organic unity and continuity of the biblical ethic.

About the Author

John Murray (1898-1975) was born in Scotland and educated in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Princeton. He spent most of his distinguished career teaching systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

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# **PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT: ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL ETHICS**

## **BY JOHN MURRAY PDF**

This classic study by theologian John Murray clearly shows the organic unity and continuity of the biblical ethic. Murray addresses ethical questions relating to such topics as marriage, labor, capital punishment, truthfulness, Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, law and grace, and the fear of God. Though the Ten Commandments furnish the core of the biblical ethic, Murray points the reader again and again to all of Scripture as the basic authority in matters of Christian conduct.

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Most helpful customer reviews

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Principles of Conduct: Reformed Biblical Ethics

By Mike Robinson

Scottish born John Murray (1898-1975) was a professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, rightly esteemed as one of the most exceptional Reformed theologians of the 20th century. He studied under J. Gresham Machen at Princeton Theological Seminary. In "Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics" Murray discusses ethical issues such as:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Capital punishment
- Lying and deception
- The Sermon on the Mount
- Law and Grace.

Professor Murray guides the reader to the Bible and the Decalogue as the indispensable foundation to discern

proper Christian conduct and morals.

The author insists on a clear distinction between the law of God and grace provided by the Gospel of Christ. Hence a Christian is saved and perseveres by grace alone as he obeys God's word because he IS saved and desires to please the Lord. The "truth is that if law is conceived of as contributing in the least degree towards our acceptance with God and our justification by him, then the gospel is" nullified (p. 182).

I would personally assert: Our epistemological means of discerning what is good and right is found in the Bible. That is our authority and our guide. Man is not the standard. Reason is not the standard. Pragmatism is not the standard. And utilitarianism is not the standard. Why? Because only the Bible can provide a standard based on an all-knowing and unchanging being, God. The standard must be based on an immutable and omniscient source or ethics could change. Only an all-knowing being could make laws that should be universally applied to all men at all times. If moral laws were based on finite humanity: lying and murder could be good. This is impossible and collapses the shelf that it sits on. If lying could be good, there can be no truth, which is a truth claim. This is self-impaling.

We are ruled by a sovereign God who gives us laws and proscriptions that do not change because He cannot change. There is no place for autonomy. Nietzsche and Hitler proclaimed an ethic based on autonomy and survival of the fittest. Their values led to the deaths of millions. If a philosopher, judge, or politicians try to dismiss God from ethics, they end up with mass graves; it's self-stultifying Liberty is not autonomy. Liberty is freedom to be who you are and what you want to be within the values of God's word. Without Biblical restrictions from an immutable God, injustice would flourish. To have upstanding people, a nation must have a moral code from an unchanging and all-knowing God. Only He can provide an unchanging standard of good since He alone is unchanging.

The Christian is to be taught that obedience is to be motivated by love. The believer is to follow God's law because he loves God and his fellow man. God is good and loving. This truth infuses obedient love into the believer's heart, by the power and person of the Holy Spirit, through faith. If you love Jesus, you are called to follow His moral law. If a church loves Jesus, it is going to instruct and admonish its members to follow God's law.

For most modern Christians, Murray is not a smooth read, yet this work is profound and unambiguous. Yes for the theological novice it may be difficult to comprehend, but it is well worth the effort. I urge all theologians, ethicists, ministers, and apologists to read this superb treatise.

There Are Moral Absolutes: How to Be Absolutely Sure That Christianity Alone Supplies

23 of 23 people found the following review helpful.

Sound Biblical Theology

By Sean J. Whitenack

The biggest problem with books like Principles of Conduct is that they are so good, so full, and so rich, that the each principle written about is so easily forgotten when the next principle is elucidated. I realized that this had happened to me as, when I was almost finished with the book, I skimmed over the pages I had read just days previously and discovered that I wished I had time to read it again. The book is completely biblical. One look at the scripture index will quickly show that Murray's use of scripture is pervasive. This is not a book where Murray expresses his opinion about various topics, but is a book where the issues of biblical ethics are soundly dealt with from the primary source - the Bible itself. In this light I found that (of all the strong aspects of this book) the strongest characteristic to be the sound exegesis of often-mistranslated passages of scripture such as Matthew 5, 1 Corinthians 7 and 9, and Romans 6.

The description on the back of the book mentions, "Though the Ten Commandments furnish the core of the

biblical ethic, Murray points the reader again and again to all of Scripture as the basic authority in matters of Christian conduct." The Ten Commandments are not explicitly dealt with in this book, but the ethical considerations that begin in creation and continue through the time of Christ and His church are explained. The methodology of discovering God's continuing revelation to mankind is known as biblical theology and Murray is a model for Christian theologians in this method. Murray is showing that the Ten Commandments were not a new thing God decided to mention at Sinai, but are rooted in the nature of God's creation. The Ten Commandments were neither new at creation, nor did they cease to be valid after the coming of Jesus Christ. Through this understanding of the biblical ethic, we come into a deeper understanding of how we may obey God and how we can love His law (Psalm 119:97) as the ethic that God has given man to live by. I have always heard that Murray is a difficult read. Even Packer says in his Forward that Murray is considered by many to be "tough sledding." Personally, I did not think this book was that difficult to read. Though the implications are deep, Murray writes in a way that is so logical that it is very easy to understand. More than just logical, Murray is thoroughly biblical. I have found that his exegesis and use of biblical theology is rock solid. He thoroughly explains difficult passages in a way that is in solid agreement with the text itself.

I also found this book to be encouraging and helpful in my walk with God. My mind was just not filled with general facts, but was genuinely spurred on to greater devotion to Christ. It is a motivating book for the Christian who needs to be reminded time and again that he or she has been set free from the bondage of sin and has been resurrected to obedience to Christ. It is helpful for the Christian who is struggling to formulate a biblical ethic on the issues of marriage, capital punishment, and labor. It is helpful for any Christian who wants to know how they can serve God better in their day-to-day life.

9 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Good book on ethics from a conservative Reformed perspective

By theologicalresearcher

Any book by John Murray is a reliable source for sound biblical Reformed theology. In this book, Murray expounds ethics from a conservative evangelical Reformed perspective. Though many postmodern, neo-orthodox, postliberal, or moderate Christians will find Murray's positions outdated he admirably does a good job sticking to Scripture even if the view he expounds is distasteful to modern sensibilities (for instance, Murray's take on slavery). The great thing about this book is that it is not only theological but also practical. He deals with ethical issues that are very pertinent to how Christians are to live in this sinful world. The topics he treats include such things as marriage, work, preservation of life, and speaking the truth. He also give us an explanation of the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount (chap. 7) and how law and grace are related (chap. 8). Many lay Christians will find these chapters very relevant to their Christian existence on earth.

Having said that, Murray's understanding of the relationship between the law and gospel is questionable. It appears that Murray knocks down the wall that divides the law and gospel (a position that has been held by Protestants for the last 500 years). In fact, in one place Murray espouses the traditional Reformed view of the law and gospel: "The simple truth is that if law is conceived of as contributing in the least degree towards our acceptance with God and our justification by him, then the gospel of grace is a nullity" (p. 182). And then he later writes in the same chapter what seems to nullify his previous statement: "In all of this the demand of obedience in the Mosaic covenant is principally identical with the same demand in the new covenant of the gospel economy" (p. 199). For Murray, the new covenant is really no different from the Mosaic covenant because both have a real (not hypothetical) promise-demand structure. Only those who persevere in obedience to the law in both dispensations will inherit the future blessing of eternal life, according to Murray. Another problem is that even though this book was written in the 1950s, Murray writes as if he was writing this book in the 1850s! The language and style of the book will make some people re-read the same paragraph over and over. Murray uses archaic words and phrases that will make it tough to digest in the first

reading. Overall, I would recommend this book. Though there are some issues I take with Murray it is much better than a lot of the postmodern, postliberal, and neo-orthodox ethics books that are being published in recent years.

See all 9 customer reviews...



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