

“Kingdom Ethics” Matthew 12:1-14

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The Take-Home Truth: Desiring the good of others is at the core of all ethical choices.

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ²But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.” ³He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: ⁴how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? ⁶I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.” Matthew 12:1-8 (English Standard Version)

Observation #1: **JESUS IS THE BOTTOM LINE FOR EVERY ETHICS CALL.**

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13-14 (New International Version)

“Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:64 (NIV)

Observation #2: **JESUS PROVIDES TWO CONCRETE GUIDELINES FOR BELIEVERS AS THEY CONSIDER ETHICAL CHOICES.**

- **Desire good for others.**
 - Mercy = compassion for one in need
 - Two things to do to impact compassion in your life:
 - Become aware of what's going on in your heart and how it is impacting your ethical decision.
 - When you become aware of a hard heart, open yourself to God, inviting Him to transform your heart.

- **Do good for others.**

He went on from there and entered their synagogue. ¹⁰And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him. Matthew 12:9-14 (ESV)

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10 (ESV)

APPLICATION TIP: When you are confronted with an ethical decision . . .

- Be silent with the Lord and invite Him to guide you.
- Consider with Him . . .
 - What emotions or heart attitudes am I aware of toward those who might be affected by this decision?
 - Are these emotions and attitudes consistent with Jesus' example?
- Invite Jesus to . . .
 - Help you "desire good" for people who are affected by your choice.
 - Help you make a decision to "do good" for those people.