



# Ethics

VALUES IN ACTION

**2020 ROOTED RETREAT**

*Calvary Baptist Church, Temecula, CA*

*The following booklet is adapted with permission  
from Scott Olsen and Sam Brock at Ironwood camp in  
Newberry Springs, CA. [Ironwood.org](http://Ironwood.org).*

# Welcome!

The spiritual element of this workbook could change your life. The dirty little secret about things that “change your life,” though, is that YOU have to change your life.

Only *you* can make changes to *your* life. At some point, life stops being about what *others* decide for you, and you have to start living by your own set of guidelines.

I think that’s why God calls Christians to be rooted and grounded IN HIM, because our evil hearts are so tricky... when we think we’re doing good, we end up making bad choices. So Bible choices always end up being good, even when we don’t understand them.

This workbook can only be life-changing if it means you start to live more by Bible principles than your own. Sometimes it takes a jolt to your routine to reset and rethink your path. Forcing yourself to write out an ethical code to live by is something that even secular writers like Ben Franklin of old and Tim Ferriss of today talk about. It’s a shame when unbelievers are more principled than we are!

When we’re talking about spiritual things, get real. Dive in deep to the assignments. Make a quiet time to go off and really put effort into your ethics codes. Think and write with depth, and share with others what you think God has for all of us!

*-Pastor Ryan*

# Writing a Personal Code of Ethics

*If your values are not reflected in your actions, are they really values at all?*

## Ethics:

- “The principles of conduct governing an individual.”
- Or, “Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.”
- Or... **what you do.**

**Why do you do what you do?** You were raised with a certain code of ethics, much of which you follow unconsciously. But now that you’re rethinking your ethics (e.g. “*do I REALLY believe...*”) or getting to the root of your ethics (e.g. “*WHY do I...*”), writing down your thoughts helps you organize them.

I read a lot of writing books, most of which talk about writing as an exercise of *uncovering* ideas, not *spreading* ideas. It’s not that we have an idea and want to get it into words; it’s that we don’t have a good idea until we can force it into words.

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*READING MAKES A FULL MAN, CONVERSATION A READY MAN,  
AND WRITING AN EXACT MAN.*

*-FRANCIS BACON*

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Choose a topic (below) and create your own ethical statement to live by. Here’s a process to help you get started:

# 1) Think

- Who am I?
  - How would I describe myself?
  - How would others describe me?
- What do I believe and value?
- How do I think things *ought* to be in specific life situations in the world around you?
  - Which life situation?
  - How should it be?
- Why do I believe what I believe?

# 2) Write

- Focus on a topic of life (e.g. *words*) and write out an ethical value in nugget form. (e.g. “My words should bless others...”)
- Then expand and explain the idea represented by these few words in a paragraph.
  - IDEA: “mind vomit” out 10 different thoughts about your topic. No editing. No thinking. Just write the first things that come to mind. If you can’t come up with 10 things, come up with 20 instead. You’re thinking too hard... just write.
  - Support your ideas with Scripture and/or specific reasons.
- Develop several ethical statements to regulate and inspire your daily behavior. (“I will...” “I can’t...” “I won’t...”)

# 3) Revise

- Write and rewrite the nugget statements until you can remember exactly what you mean.
  - *Example: **Weighty Words:** I will use communication to build and not destroy, to bring solution rather than incite conflict. I will seek to understand before I seek to be understood, and I will not use my speech to belittle or intimidate another. Proverbs 18:21*
- Develop an explanation paragraph.

- Example: **building and not destroying** means that even when I have a statement I think is true, if it's not meant to HELP someone, I'm not going to say it. My friends might be gossiping about someone, but I'm not going to pitch in or laugh. Instead, I'll say one good thing about him/her and change the subject. **Solutions over conflict** means that if I'm mad, I'll cool down and not escalate the tension. My soft answer might be, "I'm sorry," or, "You're right," or, "That's true, and I hear you on that." **Understanding** someone means that I'll ask clarifying questions before jumping to conclusions ("Did you mean..."), and **not belittling or intimidating** others means that I'll never laugh at someone, but every joke or comment will be made with him/her laughing with me at my side.

#### 4) Review and Execute – the Sticky-Note Test

- Keep these ethical statements in a place where you can review them regularly.
  - Write it on a sticky-note and put it on your mirror to review while you're getting ready, or on your dashboard to review on your commute.
  - Work on it for a week
- Act and live by the values and principles you believe.

#### 5) Expand

- Add to these statements as you discover new areas where you would like to direct and define your behavior.

### Ethics is not what you *think*; it's what you *do*.

The following are several topics that you might *believe* something about, but if your beliefs are not also *actions*, you might be lying to yourself. See steps 1–5 above, and then **pick one topic to 1) think about, 2) write about, and 3) revise:** (*hint: your **weakest** area is a good sign of where to start, but your **strongest** area might give you a quick win. WHAT TOPIC you choose, and HOW you deal with it reveal a LOT about you even before you start!*)

# I. Words

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:

### a) *Encouraging*

- (1) How have I been encouraged?
- (2) Who have I encouraged?
- (3) How can I encourage \_\_\_\_\_?
- (4) What are encouraging things to say to \_\_\_\_\_?

### b) *Crude*

- (1) Have I...
- (2) How can I not...
- (3) What is...

### c) *Cursing*

- (1) Have I...
- (2) What are my habits?
- (3) How much do I...
- (4) How can I stop?

### d) *Gracious*

- (1) What percentage is gracious?
- (2) What should I say?
- (3) How do I respond when...

### e) *Social media*

- (1) Scrolling through my past 10 posts, I see that my speech is \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) How can I...
- (3) What should I...
- (4) Who can I...
- (5) When should I...

### f) *Other*

B. **WRITE** (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)



## II. Thoughts

### A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:

#### a) *Pure*

- (1) Am I...
- (2) What should I...
- (3) When do I...
- (4) What hits me hardest?
- (5) What trips me up?

#### b) *Wandering / capture*

- (1) Do I have control of my thoughts?
- (2) Do I ever capture them?
- (3) How do I...
- (4) When do I...
- (5) What should I...

#### c) *Truth*

- (1) Are my thoughts true?
- (2) Do I *know* it as a fact?
- (3) Is there room for error in my thoughts?
- (4) Are these good thoughts?
- (5) Are they helping me?
- (6) Which ones are false?

#### d) *Input / meditation – what's coming into my mind?*

- (1) How much time do I spend thinking about \_\_\_\_\_ (hobby, work, politics, love interest, entertainment, social media...)
- (2) What percentage of my input it on each of these areas: reading, entertainment, listening to friends, social media, talking to parents, reading Bible, other...
- (3) Which ONE do I spend *most* of my input time?

#### e) *Other*

B. **WRITE** (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# III. Dating

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

### 1. Values

- a) *What do I value?*
- b) *Who am I?*
- c) *Who is he/she?*
- d) *Do my values line up with my actions?*

### 2. Life situation

- a) *In my situation, I would NEVER...*
- b) *In my situation, I would ALWAYS...*
- c) *A line I said I'd never cross, but now I'm wavering on is...*
- d) *The reason I'm rethinking my values is...*
- e) *My values are based on...*

### 3. Seed ideas:

- a) *See "Life situation" seed thoughts*
- b) *What is dating's purpose?*
- c) *Why am I...*
- d) *Who should I...*
- e) *When will I...*
- f) *How can I...*
- g) *What is...*
- h) *What's wrong with...*
- i) *What's right about...*
- j) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# IV. Politics

A. **THINK** (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *My politics are based on...*
  - b) *I'm outspoken/reserved about politics because...*
  - c) *I think Christians should...*
  - d) *I think Christians should not...*
  - e) *Other*

B. **WRITE** (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# V. Generosity / Giving / Finances

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *I am financially disciplined: \_\_\_\_\_ (scale of 1–10)*
  - b) *I spend...*
  - c) *I save...*
  - d) *I give...*
  - e) *I never...*
  - f) *I want...*
  - g) *My money is...*
  - h) *Generosity*
    - (1) Am I generous?
    - (2) How much do I give?
    - (3) What percentage of my income is that?
    - (4) What do I give to?
    - (5) Does it hurt (is it ever sacrificial)?
  - i) *Am I investing?*
  - j) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)



# VI. Spiritual Development

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:

### a) *Reading*

- (1) The last book I completed was:
- (2) Do I read?

### b) *Intentional growth*

- (1) The way I'm purposely growing is...
- (2) The last change I made in life was...
- (3) I'm getting better at...
- (4) I'm getting worse at...
- (5) I'm learning...
- (6) If I were getting a test grade on intentional spiritual growth, I would receive \_\_\_\_\_

### c) *Bible study*

- (1) My Bible study intensity is \_\_\_\_\_ (scale of 1–10)
- (2) My Bible study frequency is \_\_\_\_\_ (scale of 1–10)
- (3) My Bible study consistency is \_\_\_\_\_ (scale of 1–10)

### d) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# VII. Church Life

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:

### a) *Spiritual gifts*

- (1) My spiritual gifts are...
- (2) I use my gifts by...
- (3) The last time I used my gift on purpose was to...
- (4) My ministry to others is...
- (5) I contribute to church by...
- (6) My church family is...

### b) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# VIII. Personal Entertainment

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *Based on my life values, my entertainment aligns by...*
  - b) *My favorite show is...*
  - c) *My favorite movie is...*
  - d) *My favorite game is...*
  - e) *My favorite song is...*
  - f) *My favorite \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ curse words in it.*
  - g) *I could watch/listen to/play my favorite \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus and he'd be fine.*
  - h) *I could watch/listen to/play my favorite \_\_\_\_\_ with Pastor Ryan and he'd be edified.*
  - i) *I could watch/listen to/play my favorite \_\_\_\_\_ with a new Christian or an unbeliever and they'd get closer to God by...*
  - j) *I apply 1 Cor. 10:31 to my entertainment by...*
  - k) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# IX. Diet / Exercise / Body / Health

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:

### a) *Steward*

- (1) What is a steward?
- (2) How am I stewarding my life?

### b) *Glorify God*

- (1) Does my diet glorify God?
- (2) Does my body glorify God?
- (3) Can I bring glory to God through my health?
- (4) Does this activity glorify God?

### c) *Tattoos*

- (1) Why do I have/want them?
- (2) Would Jesus have...
- (3) Do tattoos make me more worldly or less?
- (4) Do I love...

### d) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)



# X. Work / Lazy / Gaming / Time

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:

### a) Rest

- (1) Why rest?
- (2) How much rest?
- (3) What good is rest?
- (4) How do I balance rest?

### b) Work

- (1) Is God happy with my work?
- (2) Do I make him shine through how hard I work?
- (3) Is my boss happy with me?
- (4) Are my employees happy with their job?
- (5) Am I making my company money?
- (6) Do I watch the clock?
- (7) Am I cutting corners?
- (8) Do I work the whole time I'm at work?
- (9) How can I get better?
- (10) Am I honest about time off?
- (11) Do I lie about missing?

### c) Vacation

- (1) My thoughts about vacation...
- (2) Vacations are good for...
- (3) Vacations are abused if...

### d) Other

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# XI. Alcohol

A. **THINK** (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *My five closest friends are:*
  - b) *My five closest friends drink \_\_\_\_\_ times per month.*
  - c) *Drinking makes someone...*
  - d) *Drinking is godly because...*
  - e) *I would never...*
  - f) *I will not...*
  - g) *Every time \_\_\_\_\_ happens, I...*
  - h) *The Bible says about alcohol...*
  - i) *Other*

B. **WRITE** (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# XII. Witnessing

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *My five closest friends are:*
  - b) *Three people I am praying for are:*
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_ *will go to hell if he/she dies.*
  - d) *My plan for witnessing is...*
  - e) *I share my faith \_\_\_\_\_ times per year.*
  - f) *I intentionally talk about Jesus when...*
  - g) *I intentionally talked about Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ times last month.*
  - h) *I think about how my testimony will influence others toward Christ (scale of 1-10)*
  - i) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# XIII. Friendship

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *I HAVE these godly friends:*
  - b) *I AM a godly friend to:*
  - c) *The five people I'm closest to are:*
  - d) *Friendship is...*
  - e) *My friends...*
  - f) *Good friends would never...*
  - g) *Great friends always...*
  - h) *Godly friends will...*
  - i) *A bad friend is someone who...*
  - j) *I thought I had a friend until...*
  - k) *My best example of friendship was when...*
  - l) *My friends don't...*
  - m) *I respect friends of the opposite sex by...*
  - n) *I expect from my friends of the opposite sex...*
  - o) *Other*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)



# XIV. Being Rebuked / Criticized

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *When I'm rebuked, I...*
  - b) *I take criticism...*
  - c) *I'm open to...*
  - d) *I close off when...*
  - e) *No one rebukes me. I wonder why?*
  - f) *The last person who rebuked me was...*
  - g) *I was criticized falsely when...*
    - (1) I responded by...
  - h) *I was criticized accurately when...*
    - (1) I responded by...
  - i) *The most hurtful criticism I received was when...*
    - (1) The thing I learned from it was...
    - (2) The truth of it was...
  - j) *The biggest change I've ever made was when...*
  - k) *I wish people would...*
  - l) *If I need to correct someone, I...*
  - m) *When my friend is not doing great, I...*
  - n) *I know how \_\_\_\_\_ would respond if I talked to him/her about \_\_\_\_\_.*
  - o) *I think I'm open to criticism (scale of 1-10)*
  - p) *I get mad when...*
  - q) *No one can talk to me about...*

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)

# XV. Respect

## A. THINK (see p. 4)

1. Values
2. Life situation
3. Seed ideas:
  - a) *I earn respect by...*
  - b) *I show respect by...*
  - c) *I built respect one time when I...*
  - d) *I've found that respect is...*
  - e) *The person I respect the most is...*
    - (1) The one thing he/she did was...
    - (2) The thing she/he does consistently is...
    - (3) The one trait I'd like to copy is...

## B. WRITE (10 - 20 rapid thoughts... no editing)

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C. **REVISE** (Scriptures, reasons, fix the wording, etc. See p. 4)