

Any striving, any effort toward a higher, more ideal state of affairs, with a corresponding diminution of factors that tend toward the sordid, the seamy, and the sinful, is an instance of moving beyond satisfaction with a mere description of "the way things are," toward prescriptive ethics.

#### J. Public Policy and Private Purity

Public office seems to carry its unique burden of ethical dilemmas, especially for Christians seeking righteousness at various levels of government.

If politics is "the art of the possible," and compromise is a useful and necessary tool in the legislator's bag, then Christians at local, state, and national levels of government need to learn how to use these arts and tools for the glory of God. Of course, this will oftentimes mean that such persons will have to be willing to attain, not what they would like, in an ideal sense, but what they can get, in a real world. This means that some achievements will fall below their ethical ideals, perhaps even below their ethical standards. They may even feel it necessary as public servants to take positions on certain issues that they would not (and do not) take as private citizens. Sometimes these dilemmas can tear them up inside! But they must be willing to operate on the principle that half a loaf is better than none; and that, although it is never right to travel any distance on the wrong road, it is right to go as far as they can on the right road!