

## Christian Ethics and Legal Responsibility

Christian Courier Publications - Editor: Wayne Jackson

In the commission of a crime, there is first a responsibility to God, which involves genuine repentance, embracing heartfelt sorrow, honest confession, and a reformation of conduct.

There is also a duty to victims, to society, and to the civil authorities providentially used by God for the maintenance of moral order (Romans 13:1ff). A truly penitent person will render an account for the crime he has committed in all applicable venues.

When the Roman authorities' interrogated Paul regarding his activities pertaining to the Christian faith, the apostle declared: *"If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die"* (Acts 25:11).

He did not argue: "If I have done anything worthy of death, I will use every legal maneuver and loophole possible to save my life and if necessary, shift the blame to others."

There is a principle here that demands attention. When one has committed a crime that is "worthy of" punishment, he or she cannot ethically deny it, shift the blame to others, or go "undercover," waiting for the "statute of limitations" to expire.

There is no such statute with God! And for some crimes, there is none under civil law, either.