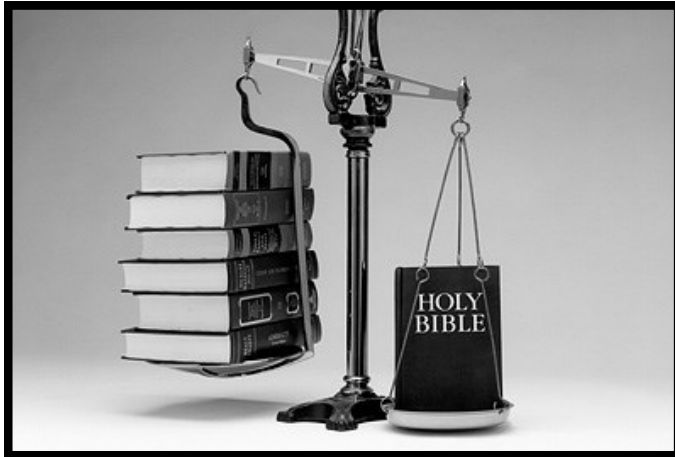


Biblical Ethics



Ethics—that branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions.



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Biblical Ethics

Table of Contents

Week One

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Defining Ethics..... | 1 |
| A Biblical Worldview | 4 |

Week Two

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Old Testament Ethics | 11 |
|----------------------------|----|

Week Three

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Ethics of Jesus | 18 |
|-----------------------|----|

Week Four

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Pauline Ethics | 28 |
|----------------------|----|

Week Five

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Challenge to Kingdom Ethics..... | 35 |
| Sexual Sin | 37 |
| Homosexuality..... | 38 |
| Abortion | 41 |
| Euthanasia | 43 |

Week Six

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Social Involvement | 50 |
| Racism | 53 |
| War | 56 |
| Politics | 59 |
| Stem Cell Research..... | 62 |

Biblical Ethics

Speech Assignments

Small Group Speeches are intended to help the student learn how to communicate with clarity and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The small group should consist of no more than six members. Each member will give two five minute reports on the assigned topic. There will be no speeches on the first or sixth week. The Registrar will assign each student to a small group as well as speech assignments on the first night of class. Each group will appoint a time keeper to monitor the length of speeches.

Week One

Group & Speech Assignments: Small Group Number _____

Week Two

1. Challenge to Kingdom Ethics.....Student _____
2. Sexual Sin..... Student _____
3. Homosexuality.....Student _____

Week Three

4. Euthanasia.....Student _____
5. Abortion.....Student _____
6. Racism.....Student _____

Week Four

7. War.....Student _____
8. Politics.....Student _____
9. Social Involvement.....Student _____

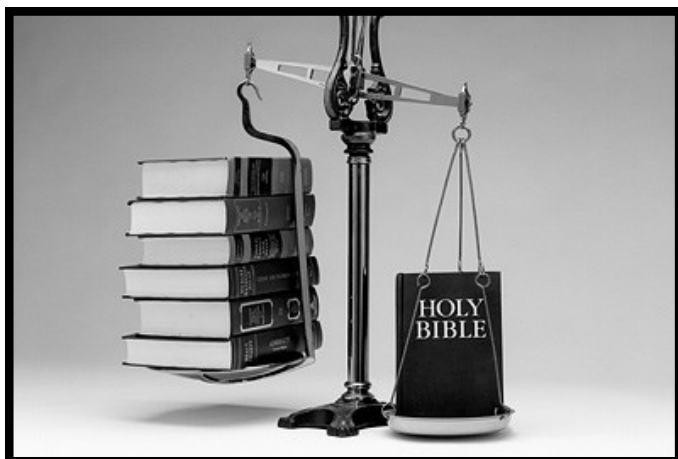
Week Five

10. Stem Cell Research.....Student _____
11. Prayer in SchoolsStudent _____
12. Medical Marijuana.....Student _____

Week Six

Test

Biblical Ethics



Week One

Defining Ethics

The terms ethics and morals are closely related and at times are used interchangeably. The term ethics derives from the Greek word “ethos,” meaning character or custom, while the term morals derives from the Latin word “mos,” also meaning character or custom. However, a deeper understanding shows that these terms do differ.

Ethics are a set of rules or standards dependent on a social system or external source, such as religion or profession. Because of this, they are relative to the individual or group of people. We follow a set of rules because society or a culture say it is the right thing to do. In 1 Corinthians 15:33, the term ethos is translated as “good morals” (R.S.V), departing from the derivative word in 2 Peter 3:11 “manner of living.” In this case, it is holy living.¹

Morals are different than ethics because they are based on an individual’s character and values. They are a set standard of right and wrong behavior. They are typically consistent and transcend cultural norms. An example of the difference between ethics and morals is a defense attorney defending a murder. Murder is morally wrong, and this belief is widely accepted and transcends cultures and generations. However, the defense attorney is ethically obligated by his profession to defend his client, even if he knows they are guilty.

The philosophy of morality is ethics. To make a moral decision, it is necessary to have a set of values. Values are the ideals or standards of behavior an individual places importance on. Values are determined by beliefs or doctrine.

According to Basil Mitchell, philosopher of religion, ethics depend upon worldview and worldview in turn depends on doctrine. Doctrine is defined by Merriam-Webster as a set of beliefs that are taught as truth. They are the foundation of our understanding of the world and our place within it. Christian doctrine, or Scripture, is what sets Christian ethics apart and provides the framework for Christian living.²

The necessary starting point for understanding Biblical ethics is Scripture. However, Scripture does not always give ready-made answers to every moral problem. In fact, there appears to be a number of issues with ethics in Scripture when simply looking at the surface. For instance, a number of New Testament commands seem tied to a specific situation that don’t apply to us today. On the other hand, many contemporary situations are not mentioned specifically in Scripture. How can a timeless revelation deal with changing moral problems?³

One example of this is 1 Corinthians 8. Paul addresses the concern of eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols. We no longer sacrifice meat to idols, so on first glance, this passage can seem like a moot point that is inapplicable to 21st Century Christians. However, the principle behind Paul’s command is to not use our freedom in Christ to cause those around us to stumble into sin. A current example of this very principle is the use of wine during Communion. Many churches choose to serve grape juice, not because of an issue against wine, but to protect recovering alcoholics from being tempted while taking the sacrament.

In order to fully understand God’s revelation in Scripture, we must distinguish between rules and principles. Rules refer to a specific situation. They are relative to time and culture. Princi-

ples are timeless. They are more general and cover a broader range of situations. When we dig below the rule, we find the timeless principle behind it, and can then apply it to 21st century issues. This is a skill that takes critical thinking and revelation from the Holy Spirit.

¹G.C. Bingham. Living Faith Studies Series Three. #29. New Creation Teaching Ministry. P. 179

²David Horton. The Portable Seminary. Christian Ethics. P. 614-616.

³Dr. Ronald Nash. Christian Ethics course. Lesson 14: Biblical Ethics. Biblicaltraining.org

Define in your own words:

1. Ethics: _____

2. Morals _____

3. What is the difference between a rule and a principle? _____

Match the verses:

A. 1 Timothy 6:11 B. 2 Peter 1:5-7 C. 1 Peter 2:11 D. 1 Timothy 4:8 E. 2 Peter 3:11

4. _____ For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

5. _____ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

6. _____ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

7. _____ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

8. _____ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.

For the following Scriptures, write out the verse then define the rule and the timeless principle:

9. John 13:14 _____

Rule: _____

Principle: _____

10. 1 Timothy 2:9-10 _____

Rule: _____

Principle: _____

11. Ephesians 5:18 _____

Rule: _____

Principle: _____

A Biblical Worldview

A worldview is any philosophy, religion, or movement that provides an all-encompassing approach to understanding reality. It is the perspective from which one sees and interprets the world. It determines what we believe and how we live out those beliefs. Without Christ, we have a fallen worldview, which causes our values to become distorted and makes way for sinful actions.

A Biblical worldview is a spiritual reality based on a life led by the Word of God and empowered by the Spirit of God. It is a comprehensive understanding of reality based on the teachings in the Bible. A Biblical worldview hangs on four strategic events that explain the Christian understanding of history and offer a blueprint for living. They are: ¹

1. **Creation** addresses how we got here. A perfect and eternal God created the universe by speaking it into existence without the use of preexisting materials. This God also directly created the human race. This means that the universe is the result of intelligent design; it has meaning and purpose. Creation means people are God's image bearers, and thus have dignity and a special role in mediating God's will over this planet.
2. **The Fall** explains what went wrong. It explains why there are things like evil, death, suffering, and natural disasters. Through Adam and our participation in his sin, the world is experiencing the results of God's curse. Things are not as they should be because the human race has separated itself from its creator. The image of God still remains in us, but it has been marred and all parts of our being have been tainted with sin. Evil is present in this world through the sin of man and the influence of death.
3. **The Incarnation** explains the solution. It is God's Son – Jesus Christ. By becoming a man and paying for the sins of the human race, the Godman, Jesus, removed the barrier between God and humanity and relationship with God is possible.
4. **Restoration** tells us where history is going. It is headed for a New Heavens and New Earth in which righteousness dwells. Sin, death, and evil do not win. The curse will be removed and a perfect world will arise and God will dwell with his people forever. Those redeemed by the blood of Jesus have eternal life now and will remain in Him for eternity.

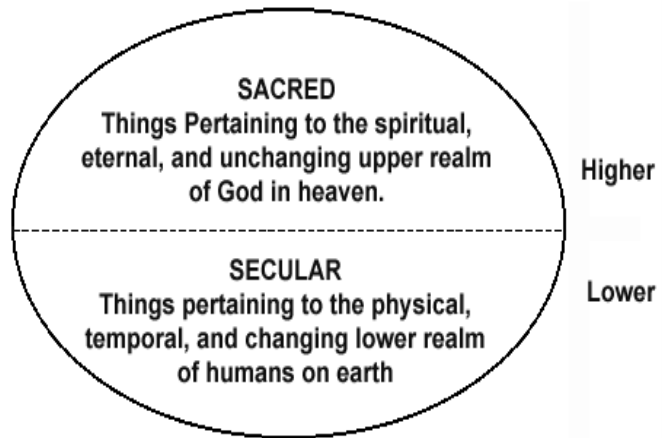
These four events provide the Biblical framework for how Christians should live and view the world. Biblical ethics gives us a hierarchy of moral instruction. The Bible's most general command is to love (Agape). Jesus further defines that command by declaring that the greatest commandment is to love God, followed closely by love your neighbor (Mark 12:29-31). The Ten Commandments give further guidance on how that love should be manifested, with the first four commandments focusing on love for God and the last six focusing on love for others. Finally, the New Testament principles and rules, as laid out in Paul's epistles, provide further explanation of how to live out a life of love.

According to the book "Making the Connections: How to Put Biblical Worldview Integration into Practice," the conscious beliefs or subconscious assumption that shape all worldviews

fall within five components: God, Creation, Mankind, Moral Order, and Purpose. For Christians, the Biblical worldview is to be shaped by what the Bible has to say about each of the five components. Although there may be some differences, most Christians who accept the Bible as God’s authoritative and inerrant Word are able to find considerable common ground when it comes to the basics of a biblical worldview.²

Some Christians have a dualistic worldview, dividing the world into “sacred” and “secular.” They believe that things pertaining to God or the spiritual realm are more sacred, while the things of this physical world are considered secular. However, God calls us to serve Him in all areas of our life. The Bible says that God created everything, and he called it “good.” The Fall did not make earthly things bad, it only means that creation can be directed in a way that is contrary to God. Anything that is contrary to his design is evil, and everything in harmony with his design is good. In a Biblical worldview, we submit every area of our life to God and his design.

Dualistic Worldview



Biblical Worldview



¹ Rev. Timothy Tyler. Christ Community Church New Members Booklet.

² Christian Overman & Don Johnson. Making the Connections: How to Put Biblical Worldview Integration into Practice. The Biblical Worldview Institute. 2003. pg. 21

Match the verse with the event.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. _____ Isaiah 49:8 | |
| 2. _____ Genesis 3:7 | A. Creation |
| 3. _____ Romans 5:12 | B. Fall |
| 4. _____ 2 Peter 3:13 | C. Incarnation |
| 5. _____ Romans 3:23 | D. Restoration |
| 6. _____ Revelation 21:1 | |
| 7. _____ Romans 6:23 | |
| 8. _____ John 3:16 | |
| 9. _____ Psalm 139:13 | |
| 10. _____ Romans 5:8 | |
| 11. _____ Genesis 1:27 | |
| 12. _____ 2 Corinthians 5:1 | |

Answer the following questions based on a Biblical Worldview: (use Scripture for support)

God

13. Who or what is my ultimate authority? _____

14. Is there a supernatural being? _____

Creation

15. Was the cosmos created or self-generated ? _____

16. Why does the material world have value? _____

Mankind

17. Is man a product of time & chance? _____

18. What determines human worth? _____

Purpose

19. Is there a purpose to human existence? _____

20. Does history have direction or meaning? _____

Moral Order

21. Is there an ultimate standard of right and wrong? _____

22. Is there a final judgment? _____

Answer the same questions from a Secular Worldview: *(using our cultures point of view)*

If no God

23. Who or what is my ultimate authority? _____

24. Is there a supernatural being? _____

If Evolution

25. Is the world self-generating or created? _____

26. Does the material world have value? _____

Mankind

27. Is man a product of time & chance? _____

28. What determines human worth? _____

Purpose

29. Is there a purpose to human existence? _____

30. Does history have direction or meaning? _____

Moral Order

31. Is there an ultimate standard of right and wrong? _____

32. Is there a final judgment? _____

Conclusion:

33. How does a Biblical Worldview differ from other worldviews? _____

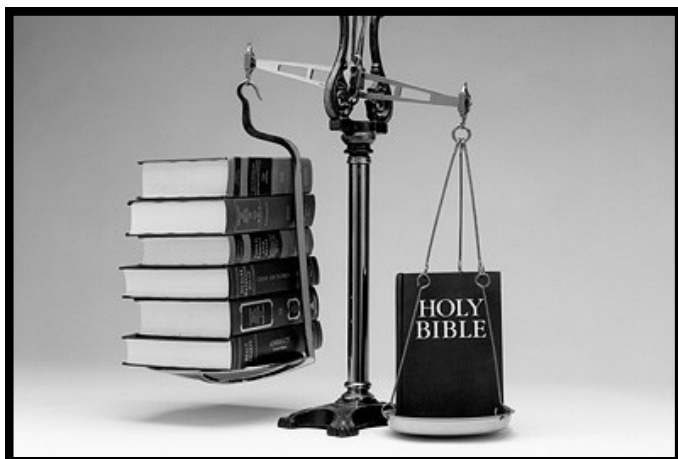
34. Write out 2 Timothy 3:16-17 _____

Ethics Journal

Every day, we are faced with ethical situations and dilemmas. Decisions as simple as what to wear can be regarded as an ethical choice. How we respond to these situations is based on our worldview. Keep a journal of ethical situations you face in your everyday life. Examples can be problems at work, situations in your personal life or with friends, events or topics seen on the news or in the media. How does the world respond to these ethical questions and what is the Biblical worldview?

| Day | Ethical Situation | The World's View | Biblical Worldview |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |

Biblical Ethics



Week Two

Old Testament Ethics—10 Commandments

The Hebrew word for law is “torah.” Torah more literally translates to “instruction.” The first five books of the Bible are known as the Torah, and contain the Law that God gave Moses to instruct the Israelites on how they were to live in accordance to their covenant with God. It is a dual code of religious (Exodus 20:3-12) and social (v. 13-17) duties. The purpose of the Law was to first exalt Israel as a nation. God states in Deuteronomy 14:2 “*You have been set apart as holy to the Lord your God, and he has chosen you from all the nations of the earth to be his own special treasure.*” These social customs and laws were to set God’s people apart and hold Israel to a higher standard than other nations. The words spoken by God in Exodus 19:5-6 reveal Israel’s status and obligation to God. “*Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*” Israel has a unique standing before God as his treasured possession. Their obligation then lies in being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.¹ Secondly, the Law was given to reveal man’s sinfulness and his need for a Savior. In Galatians 3:24, Paul refers to the Law as “*our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith*” (KJV). Lastly, the purpose of the Law is to reveal the holy nature of God. God gives the command in Leviticus 19:2, “*Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.*” God requires his people to reflect his character in both worship and behavior.

The Law can be broken into three sections: The Decalogue or more commonly known as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:22-23:33), the code for holy living (Leviticus 17-26), and the Deuteronomic Law (Deuteronomy 12-26). These three sections of Scripture describe the covenant relationship between God and Israel. God’s covenant with Israel is based on a relationship initiated by God and originating in his choice, promise, and deliverance. God chose Abraham and promised to make his family a great nation, through which all nations would be blessed. The Law was added to this promise to set them apart from other nations, and give them a structure for living in the land God had promised them. It also taught them to depend on God for provision and forgiveness. God brought them out of Egypt, and needed to exchange the Egyptian way of living with His ways.

The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. Deuteronomy 7:7-9

The Law gives religious and ethical standards so that they may live peacefully and in order. The religious standards are represented in the rite of circumcision and the detailed requirements relating to worship and sacrifice. The ethical requirements were given in the Ten Commandments and other laws.²

Regulations in worship contain detailed instruction on the Tabernacle, its priesthood, and special religious occasions. The basic principles of worship are outlined in the first four Comm-

andments. The book of Leviticus gives further instruction on holy living. Just as Yahweh is the one true God, his people are to be set apart from pagan religious practices. Through the system of Old Testament sacrifices, the worshipper learned that through the offering of sacrifice God dealt with sin and granted forgiveness. Through the priesthood, men came to understand that God cannot be approached in a casual way by sinful men but only by a mediator representing both God and man, and God deals with sin through the representative acts of the mediator. The Day of Atonement emphasized the need for the expiation of sin and the atoning nature of the blood sacrifice, which is central to a covenant.³

The pattern of the covenant, as laid out in Deuteronomy, is similar to suzerain-vassal treaties that were common in Ancient Near East (ANE) civilizations, such as those of the Hittites in the time of Moses. God was purposeful in choosing Moses to be the leader of the Israelites. Who better to reveal the Law to, than a man who had grown up in the Egyptian palace, studying the law of one of the greatest nations of its time? God's Law followed similar principles, but was under God's divine directives. In a suzerain-vassal treaty, the king (suzerain) outlines his expectations of the people (vassals) and what he will give them in return. The basic outline of these treaties are as follows:

- I. Preamble: identifies the ruler or covenant mediator (Deuteronomy 1:1-5)
- II. Prologue: describes the history of the relationship between the ruler and servant (Deuteronomy 1:6-3:29)
- III. Rules or Stipulations (Deuteronomy 4-26)
- IV. Curses and Blessings (Deuteronomy 27-30)
- V. Instructions for observing or continuing the covenant (Deuteronomy 31-34)

Other notable similarities are language and ideology. Rhetorical language was often used in treaties to stir the vassal's emotions and impress the importance of obedience. Certain terms used in treaties, such as 'go after,' 'fear,' 'love,' 'hearken to the voice of,' or 'sin' is often used in the Old Testament. Ideology is also similar in that the basis of most treaties are stipulations that come after the vassal has been reminded of what the suzerain has done for them. He is expected to obey these stipulations out of gratitude. Similarly, in the Old Testament covenant, the Israelites were expected to obey God because he saved them from the Egyptians. These stipulations are then followed by blessings if the vassal remains obedient and curses if he rebels.⁴

While the structure or pattern of the covenant is similar to ANE treaties, there are major differences. The first notable difference is that the Israelites' covenant involves values. ANE laws served the reigning king, while Israel's laws stressed the importance of an exclusive relationship to God and the worth of human life. This is particularly evident in their concern for the underprivileged, such as slaves, strangers, women, and orphans. The second difference is that Israel's laws contain motive clauses. They explain who the Lord is and what he has done. This is the basis for the law. The third difference is that morality is a characteristic of God and he expects his people to reflect his character. Morality is not derived from human standard but from God and one's relationship of submission to him.⁵

¹ Dale Patrick. *Old Testament Law*. John Knox Press: 1985. Page 228-230.

² The 'Five Books'. *Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible*. 1993. Page 122-199.

³ Merril C Tenney. *Pictorial Bible Dictionary*. 1966. Page 477-479

⁴ Gordon Wenham. *Covenants and Near Eastern Treaties*. *Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible*. 1993. Page 122-199.

⁵ Roger Cotton. Chapter 7. *They Spoke From God: a Survey of the Old Testament*. William C Williams. 2003

1. What was the purpose of the Law?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
2. What three sections of scripture make up the law?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
3. Why was the Law added to the promise of Abraham? _____

4. What is a suzerain-vassal treaty? _____

5. Why do you think Moses was chosen to as the mediator of the Law? _____

6. What are the major differences between God’s Covenant and an ANE treaty? _____

Read Deuteronomy 5.

7. 5:1 When Moses called all Israel, what did he say unto them? _____

8. 5:2 What did God make with them in Horeb _____
9. 5:6-7 Summarize the first commandment. _____

10. 5:8-10 Summarize the second commandment. _____

11. 5:11 Summarize the third commandment. _____

12. 5: 12-15 Summarize the fourth commandment. _____

13. 5:16 Summarize the fifth commandment. _____

14. 5:17 Give the sixth commandment. _____

15. 5:18 Give the seventh commandment. _____

16. 5:19 Give the eighth commandment. _____

17. 5:20 Give the ninth commandment. _____

18. 5:21 Give the tenth commandment. _____

Read Deuteronomy 6

19. 6:1 What were the people to observe in the land of Promise? _____

20. 6:3 What did God promise to the obedient? _____

21. 6:5 What were they to do in this verse? _____

22. 6:6 What were these words to be? _____

23. 6:7 What was to be done in this verse? _____

24. 6:8 What were they to do in this verse? _____

25. 6:9 What was to be done in this verse? _____

26. 6:11 What did God promise in this verse? _____

27. 6:12 About what were they to beware in this verse? _____

28. 6:14 What were they not to do in this verse? _____

Leviticus 23: What did each of the Festivals celebrate?

29. Passover (23:5; Exodus 12:1-4): _____

30. Unleavened Bread (23:6-8; Exodus 12:15-20) _____

31. First Fruits (23:9-14): _____

32. Weeks/Pentecost (23:15-22): _____

33. Trumpets (23:23-25): _____

34. Day of Atonement (23:26-32): _____

35. Booths/Tabernacles (23:33-43; Nehemiah 8:14-17): _____

36 During which three feasts were all males required to appear before the Lord?
(Deuteronomy 16:16) _____

Deuteronomy, Chapter 27—List the twelve curses.

1. 27:15 Cursed _____

2. 27:16 Cursed _____

3. 27:17 Cursed _____

4. 27:18 Cursed _____

5. 27:19 Cursed _____

6. 27:20 Cursed _____

7. 27:21 Cursed _____

8. 27:22 Cursed _____

9. 27:23 Cursed _____

10. 27:24 Cursed _____

11. 27:25 Cursed _____

12. 27:26 Cursed _____

Deuteronomy 28—*If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.*

1. 28:3 Blessed _____

2. 28:4 Blessed _____

3. 28:5 Blessed _____

4. 28:6 Blessed _____

5. 28:7 The Lord _____

6. 28:8 The Lord _____

7. 28:9 The Lord _____

8. 28:10 And all people _____

9. 28:11 And the Lord _____

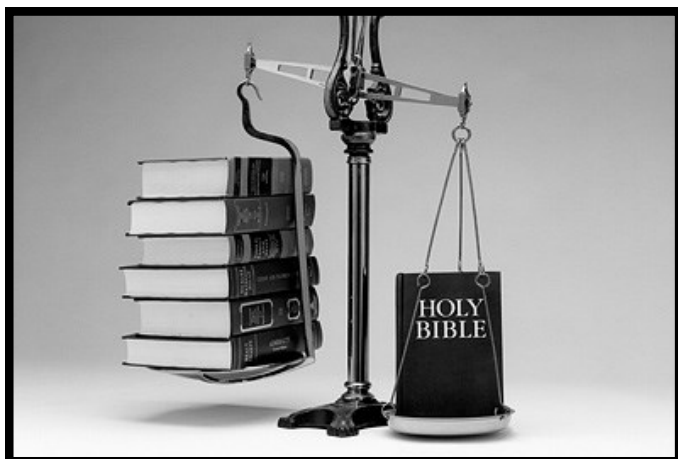
10. 28:12 The Lord shall open _____

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| Day | Ethical Situation | The World's View | Biblical Worldview |
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| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
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| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |

Biblical Ethics



Week Three

Ethics of Jesus—Kingdom

New Testament ethics are based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus came as a new and superior lawgiver than Moses. Jesus never contradicts Moses in the sense that Moses was wrong. Jesus explained “do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). As the new lawmaker, Christ is making new and higher demands of God’s people. These new demands grow out of the New Covenant being rooted in grace, while Moses’ Law was based on a legal covenant relationship. John 1:17 says, “*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*” In his teachings, Jesus is contrasting a way of living under a Covenant of Law and a Covenant of Grace. Both were ordained by God for their own time. He explains that both are just, holy, and good; however, the latter is superior because it is based on better promises. Grace can make higher demands than the Law because of the nature and power of grace. It can empower the fulfillment of the demands.¹

Both covenants have the same goal but function differently. The Old Covenant was given to a physical nation of hard-hearted sinners to preach condemnation. The New Covenant is for a spiritual nation of saints with a new heart that sets the conscience free from condemnation.² Paul explains this difference in 2 Corinthians 3:7-9:

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

In the Old Testament, righteousness referred to a legal relationship, in terms of law and judgment. It is also described as a covenant relationship, as God relates to his people and their expected behavior. In the New Testament, righteousness refers to the covenant relationship. In the kingdom of heaven, people relate rightly by doing right in all relationships: the relationship between God and man, the relationship between man and creation, and relationships among humans.³

Jesus pressed the demand for righteousness beyond the Law into the mind and motive behind behavior (Matthew 5:17-48), back to God’s original purpose (Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 2:27), and gave the sufficient and overriding commandment to love God and neighbor (Matthew 22:25-40).⁴ The Law could not deal with the heart or motives because that is beyond the ability of an objective law. The Law can only measure and punish outward acts of behavior. In the same way, a judge can only make judgments and demands based on the accepted law of the land. He may suggest a gracious act but cannot demand it or use the power of the law to enforce it. Jesus can and does demand a gracious response from his followers because we are living under grace (Matthew 5:39-42). The rules he lays down were impossible to give to those under the Law and in some cases, would have been unlawful under the Old Covenant. The laws of the New Covenant make higher demands because they appeal to the cross (a higher motive) and the Holy Spirit can deal with the heart.²

The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is the core of Jesus' ethical teachings. They are descriptions and instructions for those living in the Kingdom of Heaven. They are not commands one must fulfill to enter God's kingdom; rather, they are the result of the coming of this kingdom. They are part of the Gospel, or good news, that the Messiah has come and God was about to produce people like those being described.³

The term "kingdom" is a reminder of the covenant and that God is King. What Jesus teaches though, is that the king is our Father and the citizens of his kingdom are called sons and daughters. As such, they share a status and life that reflect God's character in a fellowship and forgiveness, a freedom and trust that make obedience glad. Obedience to the will of God constitutes the kingdom and ensures its blessings, which are eternal profit.⁴

The Biblical / Present Age View

The ethical requirements of the Sermon on the Mount are the highest expression of morality and conduct in the Bible. The Sermon on the Mount has application from the time it was given until the second advent. It's the revealed will of God as to how the Christian is to live under grace in a sinful world. The Sermon on the Mount has the same intent for the Christian as the law did to the Jew which is to be obeyed.

Internal Proof that the Sermon on the Mount is for the Present not a Future Age⁵

Only the saved will go into the millennial kingdom. The principles taught in the Sermon on the Mount reveal many things that will no longer be present during the millennial kingdom. Such as, "Love your enemies." The Christian will have no enemies during the millennial kingdom! They are present, however, in this present day and time. We therefore conclude that the Sermon on the Mount is for today.

Following is a list of conditions, which will not be found in the millennial kingdom:

1. Strife and war

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. [Mat. 5:9]

2. Persecution

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. [Mat. 5:11]

3. Unrighteousness

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. [Mat. 5:6]

4. Moral decay

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden....In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. [Mat. 5:14 & 17]

5. Adultery and divorce

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." [Mat.5:28]

6. Religious hypocrisy (Scripture reference: Matthew 6:1-18)

7. Satan and his temptations

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: [Mat. 6:13]

8. Seeking first the kingdom. How can one do this if he is already in the kingdom?

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. [Mat. 6:33]

9. Praying for the kingdom to come. Why pray for something if it has already arrived?

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [Mat. 6:10]

It is obvious that the Sermon on the Mount applies to the present age and to every believer until the time of the second advent.

The Beatitudes—Matthew 5 ⁵

The term beatitude comes from the Latin word *beatus*, which means blessed or happy. Four of the beatitudes concern one's inward life, while four pertain to one's relations toward others. Notice the setting in which Jesus sets forth this teaching.

And seeing the multitudes, he [Jesus] went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. [Mat. 5:1]

The disciples are with Jesus as He teaches and the Sermon is addressed to His disciples, not to the world. Many may want to say, "I'm not ready for the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. I'm not far enough advanced spiritually, etc." If one is saved, he is ready for the Sermon on the Mount because it is for every believer.

In the passages found in Matthew, chapter 5, verses 3 through 12, Jesus uses the word *blessed* nine times. What does "blessed" mean? Simply it means happy or full of joy. Jesus makes promises to those who possess the attributes of character mentioned in those verses. The believer is not to possess just one or two of the qualities mentioned, but every disciple is to possess these qualities.

Fill in the blank:

1. *Blessed are the* _____ [Mat. 5:3]

Jesus is not talking about poverty here. Some have misunderstood this to mean poverty and have taken vows of poverty accordingly. Rather Jesus is talking about those who are humbly dependent upon God; those who realize their own spiritual inadequacy and their dependence on His mercy and grace. They have the attitude of "God, forgive me; be merciful and gracious to me." They are humble, honest, broken and repentant before God.

What is the promise? _____

2. *Blessed are they* _____. [Mat. 5:4]

Some have said, "Mourn? I thought Jesus came to make us happy." No, Jesus came to bring holiness and true holiness brings true happiness. To mourn in the sense that Jesus uses it here is to

be grieved over one's shallowness; one's shortcomings. It's the sorrow of repentance, mourning for a lost and sinful world. The Christian is surrounded by sin and it should be grievous to him. What is the promise? _____

3. *Blessed are* _____. [Mat. 5:5]

Meekness is the quality that should characterize every Christian. Meekness does not mean weakness. Meekness means being teachable. The meek person is able to be molded. He is considerate, self-controlled, considering others better than himself. Being meek is just the opposite of the man who is proud, arrogant, critical, boastful, rude, selfish, a power seeker, etc. To be meek is to be teachable, to be humble, honest, and broken.

What is the promise? _____

4. *Blessed are they* _____. [Mat. 5:6]

The promise to those who are meek is they shall be filled. Filling speaks of being blessed. True happiness is to be hungry for God, hungry for holiness and Christ-likeness. It is the only thing that fulfills us. No amount of possessions can fill an empty soul. Only Jesus can fill the void in man's life. The idea is to have an intense craving for righteousness.

What is the promise? _____

5. *Blessed are* _____. [Mat. 5:7]

The promise to the merciful is for they shall obtain mercy. The merciful will receive mercy in return. For one to show mercy is totally opposite of the world's concept which is to exercise revenge, retaliation, to get even. The Christian is to show mercy to others just as God has shown mercy to him. Just as God has been patient and longsuffering with us, so are we to be with others. Also, the merciful Christian will be a forgiving Christian, just as God has forgiven him.

What is the promise? _____

6. *Blessed are* _____. [Mat. 5:8]

We are not blessed just when we have the outward veneer of religion, not "Sunday religion" and then business as usual the remainder of the week. It is those who are pure in heart, those whose character and conduct reflect true holiness, those who are clean in their attitudes and motives toward others, who will be blessed.

What is the promise? _____

7. *Blessed are* _____. [Mat. 5:9]

The idea of being a peacemaker is just the opposite of being contentious and argumentative. The Christian is to be one who makes peace in the local assembly, even with his enemies.

There are two aspects of peacemaking:

a. The active side

This is the side presented when you go to your brother or sister and seek to be reconciled. You take the initiative. Don't stir up trouble and strife. A peacemaker refuses to quarrel, argue or debate. You can't argue anyone into the faith.

b. The passive side

This is the message of non-resistance, bridling the tongue, and turning the other cheek. Being a peacemaker is not keeping peace at any price.

What is the promise? _____

8. *Blessed are they* _____ . [Mat. 5:10]

Are you attacked by others and hated for the sake of righteousness? Then Jesus says that you are blessed. Some say they are being persecuted for righteousness sake when actually they are being persecuted for their self-righteousness. They are obnoxious and arrogant and contentious. However, if you're being persecuted for genuine righteousness, then praise God! You are tasting a portion of what the prophets and even Jesus experienced.

What is the promise? _____

Blessings and Woes³

In Luke's account of the Beatitudes (6:17-26), Jesus not only lists blessings but four woes. This listing is parallel to that of Deuteronomy 28:1-19. These woes are the natural consequences to ignoring God's will. As Jesus states in verse 46, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

24: But woe _____
for you _____

25: Woe to you _____
for you _____

Woe to you _____
for you _____

26: Woe to you _____
for that _____

Salt & Light ⁵

Write out Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus says that the Christian has a two-fold influence, i.e., that of salt and light.

1. **Salt** has three basic qualities or characteristics

a. Salt is a preservative.

As salt, the Christian has a preserving influence on the world. Moses was salt in that he interceded for the Israelites when God was ready to destroy them. He acted as salt and preserved the people, for God spared them because of Moses. It was the same with Paul. The Roman heathen on the ship were preserved because of Paul's presence (scripture reference Acts 27). Also, the city of Sodom was destroyed because God found no salt, i.e., righteous men, there. God is preserving the world for the sake of the believer(s).

b. Salt is a purifier.

It has antiseptic (cleansing, purifying) qualities. As Christians, we are to have a cleansing and purifying effect upon the world.

c. Salt is a seasoning.

Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? [Job 6:6]

Salt in one's food can literally transform the taste. If we as Christians, i.e., salt, live our lives as we should, then the Christian message becomes more appetizing to others and causes them to want what we have. Seeing the saltiness in our lives will give them zest and purpose for living.

Salt also has a "bite" to it and will burn a wound or one's eyes. It can cause pain. You will cause pain to some people, and they will not be pleased with your influence because it is convicting. You will rub some the wrong way. However, Jesus did not say that we are the "sugar" or the "honey" of the earth. He called us "salt."

2. **Light**—Jesus also says that as believers we are the light of the world.

In the eighth chapter of John, Jesus said that He was the light of the world. Now He says that believers are the light, so we're to SHINE! There are several important things that are pointed out about light in those passages:

a. The position of the light

It is to be in a place where it can be seen, a place where it can do some good. Believers are not to be hidden or kept under cover. Christians are to be visible, not secluded or hidden away. There are no "secret agent" Christians.

b. The nature of the light

It is to banish or expose darkness. Believers are to testify and expose spiritual darkness in the world.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. [Phil. 2:15]

c. The purpose of the light

Our light is to be seen so that God will be glorified.

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. [Eph. 5:8]

Jesus' Example⁶

It is in Jesus that the Word of God is most clearly and fully revealed. The social teaching of Jesus is given in his "platform" statement (Luke 4:18-21), in the temptations (Matthew 4), in his parables and discourses, in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7), in his farewell discourse (John 13-17), and in the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. The great commands to love God and love one's neighbor, the call to unqualified servanthood and sacrifice, the Golden Rule, the call to simplicity and away from worship of material things, and so on give the essential dimensions of Jesus' social ethics.

Love is Jesus' most characteristic contribution to ethical thought. His death is the ultimate example and most powerful contribution to ethical achievement. It is the love for Jesus the Savior and the desire to be like Christ that becomes a moral incentive with intense emotional power. Such love delights to keep Christ's commands.

¹ John Reisinger. *But I Say Unto You*. Crowne Publications:1989. Page 77

² John Reisinger. *But I Say Unto You*. Crowne Publications:1989. Chapter Four.

³ *Rose Bible Basics: Jesus*. Rose Publishing: 2009. Chapter Four: The Beatitudes

⁴ David Horton. *The Portable Seminary*. Bethany House:2006. Page 624

⁵ Dr. Russell K. Tardo, *Studies in Christian Ethics* by Faithful Word Publications, Kenner La 70065

⁶ David Horton. *The Portable Seminary*. Bethany House:2006. Page 631

Fill in the chart.

Much of what Jesus taught in the Beatitudes is in direct tension with what the world teaches. Look at each of the types of people that are blessed according the Beatitudes. What does the world say on this topic, and what does Jesus teach or require?

Beatitudes

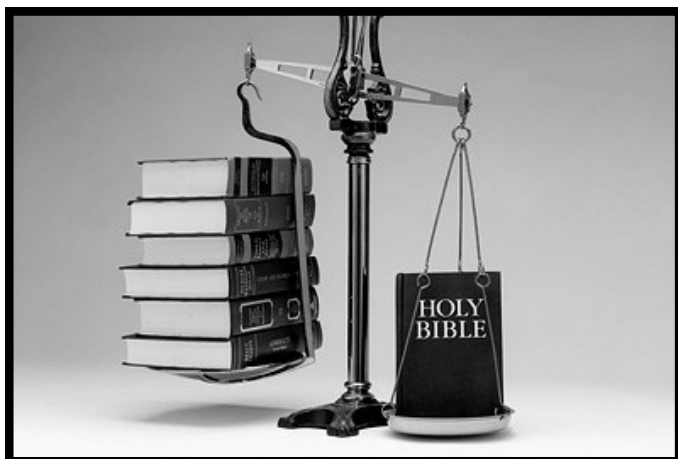
| What Jesus Said | Secular Cultures Response | Explain in your own words |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p>Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers</p> | | |
| <p>Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are per- secuted because of righteousness</p> | | |

Ethics Journal

Every day, we are faced with ethical situations and dilemmas. Decisions as simple as what to wear can be regarded as an ethical choice. How we respond to these situations is based on our worldview. Keep a journal of ethical situations you face in your everyday life. Examples can be problems at work, situations in your personal life or with friends, events or topics seen on the news or in the media. How does the world respond to these ethical questions and what is the Biblical worldview?

| Day | Ethical Situation | The World's View | Biblical Worldview |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |

Biblical Ethics



Week Four

Pauline Ethics

Paul, the apostle, wrote 13 epistles (letters) that give practical application of New Testament ethics. Paul was born “of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law; faultless” (Philippians 3:5-6). Because of his background, Paul’s ethical concern was to counter the legalism that had failed in his own life. Justification by faith is the center of Paul’s theology and transformation of the believer is the ultimate goal of his work.

While passing on the common tradition of ethical teaching, Paul explains the ethical significance of faith and the nature of life in the Spirit. The Old Testament Law cannot do what “the law of the Spirit” can do because of human weakness. The Law was fulfilled in us (Romans 8:1-4). Therefore, we are to be transformed by the inner dynamic of the Spirit. This is one of the central ethical themes of Christianity.¹

Paul makes imitating Christ the goal of worship (2 Corinthians 3:18), ministry (Ephesians 4:11-18), exhortation (1 Corinthians 11:1), and God’s providence (Romans 8:28-29), defining its inmost meaning as having “the Mind of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5), “The Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 7:40). As Christ’s disciples, our actions must always reflect what and in whom we believe. To continue to sin while exercising faith in Christ is inconsistent, unnecessary, and impossible (Romans 6; Galatians 2:20).¹ Much of what Paul did was to create and support Christian communities that were dedicated to Jesus Christ. Paul’s concern was not only to evoke faith but to strengthen the community’s existence. He envisions a day when believers are changed (1 Corinthians 15:22), sanctified (1 Thessalonians 5:23), and blameless (3:13). In “Interchange in Christ and Ethics,” Morna Hooker describes this transformation as an “interchange” in which “Christ became what we are that we might become what he is.” Paul summarizes this theme in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*”²

Write out Philippians 1:27 _____

Explain in your own words what it means to “live a life worthy of the gospel”:

¹ David Horton. *The Portable Seminary*. Bethany House:2006. Page 625-626

² James Thompson. *Moral Formations According to Paul*. Baker Academic: 2011. Chapter 1

Each of Paul’s letters fall into one of four practical and ethical divisions.

Match the group with the following ethical divisions:

Personal Ethics, Spiritual Ethics, Church Gathering Ethics, Leadership Ethics

First Group _____

I Thessalonians 5:12-28

II Thessalonians 3:1-18

Second Group _____

Galatians 5:6-10

I Corinthians 5:1-14:40

II Corinthians 10:1-13:10

Third Group _____

Colossians 3:5-4:6

Philemon 1:8-21

Ephesians 4:1-6:17

Philippians 2:13-4:23

Fourth Group _____

I Timothy 3:1-6:19

Titus 2:1-3:11

II Timothy 1:6-2:14

Write out Colossians 3:1-2 _____

In Colossians 3:1-2, Paul commands Christians to set their minds on things above. He is not teaching a dualistic view of heavenly things being sacred, while the things of this earth are secular. Instead, it is a spiritual integration of the visible and invisible worlds. We need to set our minds on things above, where Christ is seated on the throne, in order to “mind” Christ’s reign on earth. Paul is explaining how to have a kingdom mindset, as Jesus taught at the Sermon on the Mount.

This passage in Colossians 3 includes three codes of Christian conduct, each concluding with a summary statement of Pauline ethics. Each passage recalls the central importance of Christ’s lordship for the community’s obedient response to God’s will.

- IVP New Testament Commentary: The Foundation of Pauline Ethics. Biblegateway.com

For each section, write out the code of conduct and Paul’s ethical conclusion.

Colossians 3:5-10

Code of Conduct: _____

3:11—Ethical conclusion: _____

Colossians 3:12-16

Code of Conduct: _____

3:17—Ethical conclusion: _____

Colossians 3:18-4:1

Code of Conduct: _____

4:1—Ethical conclusion: _____

In Galatians, Paul demonstrate the superiority of the New Covenant and argues that if we are justified by faith at the start, we should continue by faith rather than by the law. Abraham was justified by faith long before the law was given, so even in the Old Testament righteousness came by faith, not the law. The law did have a purpose, but only a temporary one as a tutor to lead people to Christ, making them aware of their inability to make themselves righteous.

- Robert H Gundry. A Survey of the New Testament. Zondervan: 2003. Page 358

Complete the Chart: The Gospel VS. Judaism & the Law [Galatians]

Read the Galatians verse for each line and fill in the counter point from Judaism and the Law.

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| The Spirit | (3:3) |
| Faith | (3:11) |
| Being Justified | (3:11) |
| Being Blessed | (3:9-10) |
| Promises through Abraham | (3:12-14) |
| Mature Responsibility | (3:25-26) |
| Sonship | (3:26; 4:6) |
| Liberty | (4:8, 21-31) |

- Bill Scheidler. New Testament Survey. Teacher’s Manual. Page 76

A Warning: Balancing Our Obedience
The Errors of Legalism and Antinomianism

1. Legalism

Legalism is adding any effort of our own to the finished work of Christ. In other words trusting in anything other than Christ and His finished work—for one’s standing before God. Legalists measure personal merit and demerit by law observance, especially in others.

2. Antinomianism

Antinomianism comes from two Greek words, anti, meaning "against"; and nomos, meaning "law." Antinomianism means “against the law.” Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. The biblical teaching is that Christians are not required to observe the Old Testament Law as a means of salvation. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament Law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:15). The unbiblical conclusion is that there is no moral law God expects Christians to obey.

J.H. Thornwell put it this way...

“The Gospel, like its blessed Master, is always crucified between two thieves—legalists of all sorts on the one hand and Antinomians on the other; the former robbing the Savior of the glory of his work for us, and the other robbing him of the glory of his work within us.”

- J.H. Thornwell, “Antinomianism” in *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1871) p. 386

Galatians 5:13-25

In this section, Paul warns against *antinomianism*, the attitude that freedom from the law means license to sin. Christians must conduct themselves according to the Holy Spirit rather than according the flesh (the sinful urge).

What are the acts of the flesh? _____

Paul writes that these acts are “obvious.” Can you think of a time or situation when one of these acts wasn’t obvious? _____

What are the fruit of the Spirit? _____

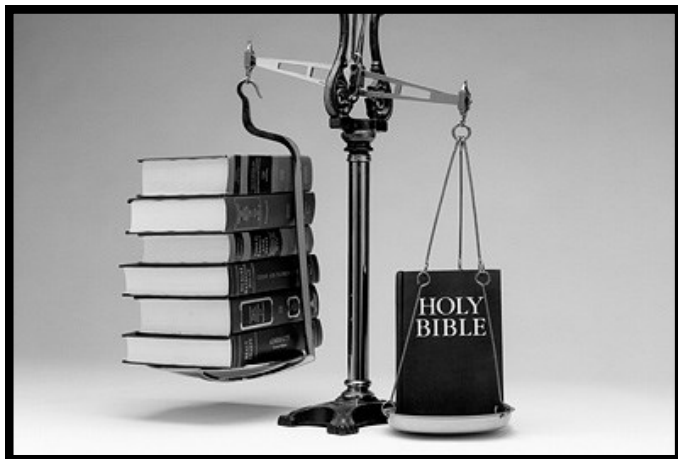
Contrast the Christian ethic of love with the secular ethic of love _____

Ethics Journal

Every day, we are faced with ethical situations and dilemmas. Decisions as simple as what to wear can be regarded as an ethical choice. How we respond to these situations is based on our worldview. Keep a journal of ethical situations you face in your everyday life. Examples can be problems at work, situations in your personal life or with friends, events or topics seen on the news or in the media. How does the world respond to these ethical questions and what is the Biblical worldview?

| Day | Ethical Situation | The World's View | Biblical Worldview |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |

Biblical Ethics



Week Five

Challenges to Kingdom Ethics

The law of Christ is also described as the law of the Kingdom., the law of love, the perfect law of liberty, the royal law, and the 'law of the heart.'

Match the Scriptures:

A. Jeremiah 31:33 B. Romans 13:8&10 C. James 1:22-25 D. James 2:8 E. Matt. 28:19-20

- ___ 1. "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right."
- ___ 2. "But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does."
- ___ 3. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts."
- ___ 4. "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law....Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."
- ___ 5. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Paul speaks of being under the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21) and this must surely mean that the law of the Spirit, which is the law of the new heart, the law of love, which is more than a mere externalizing and legalizing of duties. (Jer. 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Romans 8:15, Gal. 5:16, 18, 25.)

We may conclude then that the law of Christ is objective in that it is the love of God working out of us towards others. It is subjective in that each person has to know and experience and practice this law as a son of the Father, a subject of Christ, and as led by the Holy Spirit. In this sense the ethic outworked can be said to be situational. Yet the question asked in the situation is not, 'Will this hurt my neighbor, or will this benefit my neighbor?' but 'Is this according to the nature (and so the will) of God?' Any situational decision which is self-centered will appeal to the flesh, but any decision that is God-centered will be valid because it is based on that which is revealed by God. This, of course, is not to say that knowing 'what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God' is always an easy or simple matter.

Abridged from G. C. Bingham, 'Christian Ethics And Their Practice' Living faith Studies, Series 3, #30, New Creation Teaching Ministry, p.200-203

If a person does not live in faith, or is not led by the Spirit, and is not constantly renewing their mind, then they will gravitate towards a fleshly ethic, and miss the ethic of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

All of this means that the person in Christ must seek to know the Scriptures and at the same time listen to the voice of the Spirit. Normally all of this will happen within the context of the church, the people of God, since the ethic is never merely individualistic. It is personal, but personal within the context of the corporate people of God. In this context of life, the experience of love, the gifts, ministries and graces the ethic is best known.

The Issues Which Confront The Believer

There are certain issues which seem obviously wrong, such as murder, rape, theft, lying, and so on. Other issues do not seem so clear such as war, politics, abortion, euthanasia, and the like. Even those which seem clear such as murder and theft can be questioned. For example, is taking life in war not under prohibition by God? Is it not murder? Are there no extenuating circumstances in which theft might be acting according to the law of love? Might not adultery under some circumstances be an act of love? These are questions which are not only being posed, but answers are also being given, and not all Christians agree on the answers.

Where the Scripture is clear on an issue and understood in the light of the nature of God, man, and creation, and also in the light of forgiveness, grace, and new life, then the conscience is enlightened, and the will of God is known for that person. Only then may one proceed in the light of the revealed ethic. If it is not clear then we must come to learn and discover God's heart on the situation.

Principles of Discovering the Ethic

How does one discover the ethic? We have seen, elsewhere, that the law is implanted in the heart. This is the truth of the new covenant. Paul states that the pagan also has it written upon his heart (Rom. 2:15). Love has been placed in the heart (Rom. 5:5) by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5, Acts 2: 38). Therefore, enlightenment from the Scripture must influence the discernment and judgement of the believer.

Although the Scripture and the Spirit are giving direction, we are not always at that point where we perceive and understand fully. So then if anyone lacks wisdom he is to ask God. This can (and will) be given at any point no matter what the degree of maturity or the capacity to discern from what one knows. Therefore we must be well-versed in the ethics of Scriptures as a whole not just verse memorization.

Abridged from G. C. Bingham, 'Christian Ethics And Their Practice' Living faith Studies, Series 3, #30, New Creation Teaching Ministry, p.200-203

We must remember that we are not seeking to define an ethic for the world. We see that as already defined for all mankind in the nature of God, man and creation. Man has not been released from such, even though he is fallen. The ethic we are concerned with is the ethic of the Kingdom which applies only to the one who has entered the kingdom by repentance, forgiveness of sins and the grace of God. This ethic is one which takes into consideration the truth of God on the one hand and the fact of a sinful world on the other. It will therefore be an ethic of both grace and law. On these bases then we may proceed to examine some of the ethical issues which confront us today.

Sexual Sin

The problem with the word sex is its immediate association only with the biological act of coition, whether heterosexual or homosexual. If we mean by sex maleness and femaleness, then sex has to do with various categories such as son, brother, father, uncle, grandfather, etc., as also its female counterparts. In other words, the biological aspect of coition would refer only to the husband-wife relationship.

If by sex we mean maleness and femaleness in the context of marriage then the connotation of sex is wide. In the Scriptures marriage is the only accepted connotation for this way of sex. Within marriage, however, sex is not limited to sexual intercourse. It is in the true sense the whole of marriage, this including relationships, interests, enterprises, carried out in the way of true functionality. An archetype for husband-wife relationships is found in the relationship of Christ and his Bride (the church). Here the husband is head and the wife subject to him. It has been argued that the subjection of the wife is a result of the fall (Genesis 3:16), but whilst the mode and degree suggested there may have something to do with the fall it is scarcely likely that this is the case with Christ and his Bride. This must be of the normal functional order of marriage, and Paul says it is from this that we should derive our understanding and practice of marriage (Ephes. 5:32, 33).

Sex then will include the procreation of children, where fertility is possible. It will include the life of the family, for the family's relationships stem again from the parents, and in their functional order. The father-son order has been well demonstrated and taught by God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The whole fact and meaning of sex, then can be derived from the Biblical archetypes of Father (God) Son and Elder Brother (Jesus Christ), Husband and Wife (Christ and the Church), Mother (Jerusalem above, the Church, the People of God). Each of these relationship correlates with functionality.

No doubt utilitarian anthropocentric ethics can make out a good case for accepting what seems to be aberrant behavior. However in the context of the Kingdom of God these are not acceptable. Those who do such things will not enter the Kingdom.

In Romans 1:20ff the rejection of God brings idolatry and in the wake of this comes (a) Sexual immorality and (b) Sexual perversion. If we take the relationship of male and female in its widest context then we can see the deficiencies and aberrations of immorality and homosexuality. It is also interesting that idolatry is often referred to as adultery or fornication, as though the reprehensible nature is not so much in biological acts as in the damage done to basic (functional) relationships. In Genesis 4:1 Adam is said to know his wife doubtless in the act of intercourse. Knowing in the deepest sense belongs to the intimate experience of becoming 'one flesh'. Whilst the act is physical (and in a good sense) it is at the one and same time spiritual. That is it is the union of two as one, with all that connotes for life, relationships, sharing and achievement.

Attitudes to fornicators, adulterers and homosexuals differ from the fact that they are what they are. Jesus was gracious to sinful people and sought to lead them from their slaveries. He did this by accepting sinners (Luke 15: 1f) and bringing them (where they would respond) to forgiveness. The Epistles are speaking of another situation, that is one where people have already been delivered from their sinful habits and aberrations (cf. I Cor. 6:9-11). Thus Paul forbids Christians to eat with adulterers (I Cor. 5:9-13) who were Christians. There is no permissiveness amongst those of the N.T church, or should it appear it is condemned as incongruous with the faith and holiness. Hence such commands as 'Shun immorality' (I Cor. 6:18) and "Shun youthful passions' (11 Tim. 2:22).

As for sex within marriage the Scriptures have only commendation. It is clear that such relationships are not only for procreation (I Cor. 7:2-7, but at the same time marriage is for procreation, and this is highly commended (Psalm 127:3f). Passages such as Proverbs 31:10ff, 5:15ff, and the Song of Solomon all speak of the delights of true ethical living in the realm of authentic sex.

The sex ethic takes note of the fact that God is holy, and that purity carries with it a powerful grace. This is essential to true marriage or fornication would not be considered so evil. Paul's statements in I Cor. 6:12-20 show that to have a physical relationship with another, outside of marriage is to have a union with that one which is mimicking the 'one flesh' union of true marriage. Paul infers that it causes a relationship which is contrary to the creational intention. A glance at the purity of Christ and his church should indicate that the ethic which is Christ's should be that of each of his people.

Homosexuality:

Q. What is homosexuality?

Homosexuality is the manifestation of sexual desire to-ward a member of one's own sex or the erotic activity with a member of the same sex. (The Greek word homos means *the same*). A lesbian is a female homosexual. More recently the term "gay" has come into popular use to refer to both sexes who are homosexuals.

Q. How does one determine if the practice of homosexuality is right or wrong?

That depends upon who is answering the question. The Christian point of view is based solely upon the Bible, the divinely inspired Word of God. A truly Christian standard of ethics is the conduct of divine revelation, not of statistical research nor of public opinion. For the Christian, the Bible is the final authority for both belief and behaviour.

Q. What explicitly does the Bible teach about homosexuality?

This question I consider to be basic because, if we accept God's Word on the subject of homosexuality, we benefit from His adequate answer to this problem. I am concerned only with the Christian or biblical view of homosexuality. The Bible has much to say about sex sins in general.

First, there is adultery. Adultery in the natural sense is sexual intercourse of a married person with someone other than his -or her own spouse. It is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments (Exodus 20:14; I Cor. 6:9, 10). Christ forbids dwelling upon the thoughts, the free play of one's imagination that leads to adultery (Matthew 5:28).

Second, there is fornication, the illicit sex acts of unmarried persons which is likewise forbidden (I Corinthians 5:1; 6:13, 18; Ephesians 5:3).

Then there is homosexuality which likewise is condemned in Scripture. The Apostle Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares that homosexuality "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9; 10). Now Paul does not single out the homosexual as a special offender. He includes fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous persons, drunkards, revilers and extortioners. And then he adds the comment that some of the Christians at Corinth had been delivered from these very practices: "And such were some of you: But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). All of the sins mentioned in this passage are condemned by God, but just as there was hope in Christ for the Corinthians, so is there hope for all of us.

Homosexuality is an illicit lust forbidden by God. He said to His people Israel, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:13). In these passages homosexuality is condemned as a prime example of sin, a sexual perversion. The Christian can neither alter God's viewpoint nor depart from it.

In the Bible sodomy is a synonym for homosexuality. God spoke plainly on the matter when He said, "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel" (Deuteronomy 23:17). The whore and the sodomite are in the same category. A sodomite was not an inhabitant of Sodom nor a descendant of an inhabitant of Sodom, but a man who had given himself to homosexuality, the perverted and unnatural vice for which Sodom was known. Let us look at the passages in question:

But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house around, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. (Genesis 19:4-8)

The Hebrew word for "know" in verse 5 is *ya,da`*, a sexual term. It is used frequently to denote sexual intercourse (Genesis 4:1, 17, 25; Matthew 1:24, 25). The message in the context of Genesis 19 is clear. Lot pled with the men to "do not so wickedly."

Q. Are there other Scriptures in the New Testament which deal with homosexuality?

Yes. Romans 1:24-27; I Timothy 1:10 and Jude 7. If one takes these Scriptures seriously, homosexuality will be recognized as an evil. The Romans passage is unmistakably clear. Paul attributes the moral depravity of men and women to their rejection of "the truth of God" (1:25). They refused "to retain God in their knowledge" (1:28), thereby dethroning God and deifying themselves. The Old Testament had clearly condemned homosexuality but in Paul's day there were those persons who rejected its teaching. Because of their rejection of God's commands He punished their sin by delivering them over to it.

The philosophy of substituting God's Word with one's own reasoning commenced with Satan. He introduced it at the outset of the human race by suggesting to Eve that she ignore God's orders, assuring her that in so doing she would become like God with the power to discern good and evil (Genesis 3:1-5). That was Satan's big lie. Paul said that when any person rejects God's truth, his mind becomes "reprobate," meaning perverted, void of sound judgment. The perverted mind, having rejected God's truth, is not capable of discerning good and evil.

In Romans 1:26-31 twenty-three punishable sins are listed with homosexuality leading the list. Paul wrote, "For this cause God gave them up into vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26, 27). These verses are telling us that homosexuals suffer in their body and personality the inevitable consequences of their wrong doing.

Notice that the behavior of the homosexual is described as a "vile affection" (1:26). The Greek word translated "vile" (*atimia*) means filthy, dirty, evil, dishonorable. The word "affection" in Greek is *pathos*, used by the Greeks of either a good or bad desire. Here in the context of Romans it is used in a bad sense. The "vile affection" is a degrading passion, a shameful lust. Both the desire (lusting after) and the act of homosexuality are condemned in the Bible as sin.

Abortion

(a) What Abortion is

‘Abortion is the expulsion from the womb of the mother of a living foetus which cannot survive outside it. Natural abortions occur not infrequently and are normally termed ‘miscarriages’. Artificial abortion is abortion induced by artificial means of any kind, whether by external interference or by taking medicines or drugs internally.’ (‘Dictionary of Christian Ethics’, p.1.)

(b) Biblical Views on the Fetus

No direct view of the value of the fetus can be adequate unless the Biblical view of man is understood, i.e. that man is made in the image of God, and has honor, dignity and authority as his norm. Even the fall of man has not obliterated this. See Gen. 1:26-28, Psalm 8, and then I Cor. 11:7, Gen. 9: 6, James 3:9. Man's situation, because of his sin (as with nature) will be subject to frustration, pain and even vanity (see Gen. 3:17-19, Heb 2:5-8, Rom. 8: 18-23). That is, all things will not be perfect - hence plagues, wars, sorrow, suffering, over-population and famine, as well as the tragedies of childbirth with difficulty and death to mothers. We simply say that we must not over-simplify the problem of abortion since it does happen ‘naturally’, and many things which happen ‘naturally’ are also reproduced ‘artificially’, e.g. birth-control through contraceptives, etc.

It is difficult to legislate about the matter of the fetus. Passages like Jer. 1:5, Gal. 1:15, Luke 1:41-44, as also the account of Jacob and Esau (in the womb - Gen. 25:22), as also the fact that the Lord is said to open or close the womb, show that the action of God begins at least in the womb. When the fetus becomes significant is difficult to say. At the very least it is human life - at any stage - and is therefore sacred. Psalm 139:13-16 (R.S.V.) makes it clear that God is at work in the womb. To expel the fetus, then, is something which demands the most careful consideration.

Abortion has been advocated for the following reasons: to remove the unborn fetus in order to save the life of the mother - this is called therapeutic abortion. When the mother has her mental or psychological health endangered by the pregnancy - this is called psychiatric abortion. Some suggest social abortion is necessary when there is too much economic pressure upon the family, or simply because a mother does not want a child. Rape or incest have been cited as reasons for abortion although there is a vast difference between these two. Again eugenic reasons for abortion are advanced where there is a possibility of the child being born deformed or mentally retarded.

(c) The Case for Abortion

The case for abortion - related of course to the above paragraph - is as follows: -

- i. **Horror stories.** A woman who will have an abortion should do this legitimately as the guilt -pressures and the danger of unclean and inexpert surgery by ‘back street’ operators is quite considerable.
- ii. **The Hard Case** argument suggests that rape, incest or deformity is putting a pressure that is intolerable.

- iii. **The ‘Woman’s Rights’** case is simply that one should have liberty of will.
- iv. **The ‘Bad Law’** argument is that when a law is flouted by general pressure it should not be continued. This is related to the
- v. **Statistical argument** which cites enormous numbers of women aborted. It is suggested that the number of illegal abortions will be lessened by accepting the principle of abortion.

(d) The Case Against Abortion

The various points above also have answers. With ‘(i)’ the point is that the anti-abortion laws have been framed to protect the child (at this point the fetus) and the mother cannot complain if she suffers because of her illegal acts. ‘(ii)’ It is rarely that the ‘hard case’ situation arises and it is certainly no argument for a wide legalizing of abortion. ‘(iii)’ which relates to the woman’s ‘rights’ may ignore the rights of the fetus or as yet unborn child. It is said that the fetus is only 1-3 inches long after six weeks when most abortions take place and cannot realistically be called a human being. It is doubtful, however, whether size is the determinant as to the fetus being human or not. Life is the basic consideration. In fact the debate as to the nature of the fetus is an historic one and still being pursued. The Ethics Section of the Harvard Divinity School - Kennedy Foundation’s International Conference on Abortion (1967) declared: ‘From the present available data, we can only conclude that human life begins at conception or no later than ‘blastocyst’ (8 days after conception). The fetus therefore, at least from blastocyst, deserves respect as human fetal life.’ H. Thielicke says,

‘The fetus has its own autonomous life, which, despite all its reciprocal relationship to the maternal organism, is more than a mere part of this organism and possesses a certain independence.’

The Bad Law argument - ‘(iv)’ is scarcely valid in that there are numerous murders, tax-evasions, etc. yet the penalty for these wrong things is not thereby invalidated. The Statistical argument - ‘(v)’ - is based on shaky grounds since such figures are speculative and cannot really be gauged. In any case the vast majority of abortions are on the grounds simply of woman not wanting children. 80% of abortions in Australia, say Professor Henry Mayer, are on married women who would have normal children. The further argument that many an unwelcome child (at birth) has become wanted and beloved is perhaps beside the point, but what is questionable is whether the unwanting parent has the right to terminate the life-growth of the fetus.

(e) General Comments

Church history has shown a steady rejection of abortion. It was frankly called murder. Didache 2 forbids killing the unborn or the newly born child or exposing it. The same rule is in Barnabas 19:5. The Apologists confirm this and Tertullian calls abortion homicidium (‘Apol.’ 9), and Minucius Felix (‘Octavius’ 30) even parricidium the worst murder, the murder of a blood relative. Athenagoras explains that the embryo is already a human being and object of divine love and providence (‘Supplicatio’ 35).

Thielicke ('The Ethics of Sex', p.245) says 'We should not think only of the life of the nascent child, but also the status of the already existent parenthood. This status means that the 'office' of fatherhood and motherhood has been entrusted to the parents and that they are now enclosed in that circle of duties which obligates them to preserve that which has been committed to them, but also endowed with a blessing which is to be received in gratitude and trust - even though it be a gratitude expressed with trembling and a trust that is won through struggle.'

The positive way of looking at the problem is to recognize that we do not live in a Christian society and so the basic absolutes which we believe are found in the Scriptures are not those of the community. On the one hand we are practically faced with the vast number of abortions (as Australian society has faced the issue of gambling by introducing betting shops), and on the other hand is the clear Christian thinking that looks upon abortion as virtual destruction of human life, however unformed. The deeper questions of 'ensoulment' and when the fetus is truly a human being and whether a viable fetus (one able to live out of the womb) only constitutes true human life, are probably difficult to state. The 'soft' and permissive society conditions the attitudes of modern legislation and alters the nature of what might otherwise be moral argument.

Euthanasia

What Euthanasia Is

From the Greek word its meaning is 'easy' or 'gentle' death. Its most primitive forms have been in the exposure of the very young, and in the abandonment of the aged. Today it takes two forms:-

- (i) Compulsory, i.e. the giving of euthanasia in some way (privately or officially) without the consent of the person. This was seen in its most terrible forms during World War II. Where it relates to the seriously deformed or mentally defective children it has been called 'mercy killing'. and is often extended to adults who are thought to be incurably ill, or who are in intense pain which defies sedation.
- (ii) Voluntary. This refers to the request or desire of an incurably sick person for an easy and painless death. This is not viewed as suicide as such, but obviating the needless extension of a suffering that seems to be pointless.

The practical facts are that in no country is either form of euthanasia legal. Indeed its practice would be considered as murder. Whilst not an easy position to resolve it is evident that human sympathy in some cases would demand the cessation of life, and when the request comes from one who seems conclusively to be in pointless suffering the problem is intensified. Thomas Wood ('Dictionary of Christian Ethics', p335) says that to take one's own life (actual suicide) is -

- (i) 'to sin against God, one's own Creator and Redeemer, a rejection of His love and a denial of His sovereignty.
- (ii) An offence against the proper love of one's own person, made in God's image to share His glory, a violation of the 6th Commandment, an act of despair which precludes repentance.

(iii) An offence against mankind in that it deprives one's family and society of a member prematurely, and also denies them any opportunity of ministering to one's need.'

While voluntary euthanasia is not perhaps all that pertains to suicide it carries most of these implications and perhaps the most basic is that the giving and taking of life (in an absolute sense) belongs primarily to God and not man.

Human life is held dear by most, if not all states. Euthanasia - if legalized - would begin to cheapen, as indeed to a great degree legalized abortion has lessened reverence for life that is not viable. At the same time there are deep problems. For example, if a doctor continues to supply drugs which will maintain life and suffering intolerable to the patient, and without which drugs the patient would 'naturally' die, would the withholding of these drugs be legitimate, or would giving a drug to a patient who asked for painless cessation of life constitute murder on the one hand or suicide on the other? This is not a simple matter. It is perhaps best to say that it is not possible for us to evaluate totally the purpose, need and value of suffering in any of its forms. It is not safe to conclude dogmatically that it is of no value. Many of these mysteries are hidden from us. We might have to put the terrible (i.e. suffering) over against the more (morally) terrible, i.e. virtual murder, virtual suicide, or a decision which may not be that of God or His law.

It has been recorded that some cases where euthanasia has been administered, but from which there has been recovery, has shown the decision to be entirely wrong, e.g. in the case of seemingly incurable diseases. Perhaps this should not be a factor greatly conditioning thought about euthanasia, but it cannot be totally ignored.

Using the answers developed for the Biblical Worldview in Week One (page 6), how would this belief system affect the following?

1. Sexual Sin

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

2. Same Sex Marriage

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

3. Abortion

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

4. Euthanasia

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

Using the answers developed for America’s Cultural Worldview in Week One (page 7), how would this belief system affect the following?

1. Sexual Sin

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

2. Same Sex Marriage

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

3. Abortion

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

4. Euthanasia

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

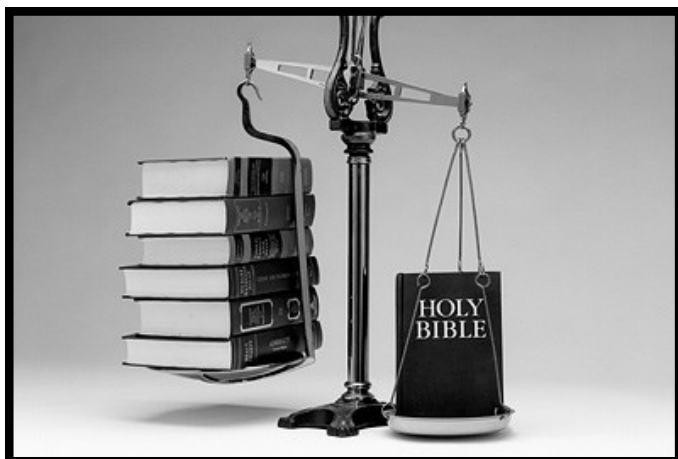
How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

Ethics Journal

Every day, we are faced with ethical situations and dilemmas. Decisions as simple as what to wear can be regarded as an ethical choice. How we respond to these situations is based on our worldview. Keep a journal of ethical situations you face in your everyday life. Examples can be problems at work, situations in your personal life or with friends, events or topics seen on the news or in the media. How does the world respond to these ethical questions and what is the Biblical worldview?

| Day | Ethical Situation | The World's View | Biblical Worldview |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |

Biblical Ethics



Week Six

The Christian and Social Involvement

The principles we have stated above apply in social involvement. A Christian ought to be involved in all that is not evil, especially as he sees its being as a part of God's created world. We have seen in our previous paper, and partly also in this study that the world operates functionally on its basic inherent laws or principles. Christians then should seek to uphold that. They must remember of course that the sovereignty of being that God gives to every creature is not to be violated by wrong intrusion.

Israel, of course, had its own internal social situation. It was a people, a covenant people, and a people of a theocracy. The Pentateuch is filled with injunctions which work out the practical ways in which a man may (must) love his neighbor (as himself). Israel undoubtedly had a mind to the poor, the stranger, and social injustice was always against the known law of God. While the Pentateuch systematizes this social justice and calls for practical concern the prophets inveigh against any departure from it. Thus prophet after prophet denounces rituals where there is no corresponding social justice and righteousness. For example, see Amos 3:12, 15, 4:1, 6:1, 3-6 in regard to luxury, pride, indulgence by the wealthy and compare with Exodus 22: 26f. See also Amos 5:11-12, 8:4-6. Micah (3:1-4, 9-11, 2:1-2, 6:12) makes what has been called 'the most comprehensive statement of the ethical teaching of the prophets' in 6-8 (cf. Jer. 26:16-19). We may conclude then that the system of Israel was one which made for justice and social concern.

When, then we come to the Gospels, and particularly in the sermon on the mount we see that Jesus emphasizes love for all, and personal concern. He himself tells many stories which speak against oppression of the poor (e.g. Dives and Lazarus) whilst he was concerned to rehabilitate men and women from their various afflictions. He warned against riches and avarice as he did against moral evils.

In the Book of the Acts we see the early church. No sooner has it commenced than there is an arrangement for the indigent widows, and this is found as late as the Pastoral Epistles. The oneness of believers in their concern for one another is seen clearly in the first chapters of Acts, and continues. See Acts 6:1f, 11:29, Gal. 2:10. In fact in all history there is probably no example as rich as seen in Acts 2:44-46, and 4:32 where it was seen that no one remained in need whilst the church was able to share its goods to meet that need. This principle is clearly stated in I John 3:17 so that love becomes the determining factor in helping the needy. This principle would be involved wherever the fact of love obtained. For example hospitality amongst Christians was not mere socializing, but helping in such needs as intense poverty, flight from justice, refugee states, and so on. The one giving hospitality would be in great danger. Giving is therefore part of the essential life for the church. Very little of this would be for church organization and buildings since the churches were in homes, and a church-building was not even a concept in the mind of the ecclesia. 'Do good unto all men' covered a wide scope. Matt. 25:31ff is a parable told not to tell the Christians they should help the poor, the hungry, the naked and the imprisoned, but that they would help, and be scarcely aware of their having given! This principle is stated in Matt. 6:3 and Luke 6:38.

We should also be aware of the fact that by the time of the Pastoral Epistles a

proficient system has grown into being whereby elders and deacons look after the personal needs, and the physical needs of all the church. The system for widows still remains.

The Epistle of James warns against showing favoritism to the rich and insists on giving care and love to the poor. There is more than a hint of this in I Cor. 11:20-22, 33-34. We can conclude then that social conscience of the Christian was very sensitive.

It is patently obvious that the Christian's involvement in the social needs and patterns of his world must be required on three grounds:- (a) Creation, (b) Redemption, and (c) The Eschaton Creation places equal responsibility upon all persons for other persons. It also demands the collective security and well-being of the human race shared by all. Hence the social responsibility does not belong to any particular group either 'secular' or 'spiritual'. Redemption renews or regenerates sinful man, so that he is aware of the creational mandate (Gen. 1:28ff) afresh. Also he has discovered the truth of God as love, and this must work out in his world of operations (e.g. I John 3: 17). If anyone cares for the created world and its needs then it should be the redeemed man. The Eschaton or the coming end-age, or the climax of things is prophesied as the perfect and the complete. The principle of hope demands that what the redeemed will be makes demands upon them now to be becoming that. Whilst their becoming perfect is the sovereign act of God and cannot be achieved by them, yet they are expected to begin acting in a manner consonant with what they will be, and with what they are in the process of becoming. It has been said, 'The Christian must concern himself with the next to last things even if (or, because) he is concerned with the last things'.

This paper is too limited to be in any sense prescriptive. It must remain principal. Nevertheless, in the following paragraphs we may at least examine the need for social involvement on a broad canvas.

(a) The 'How' of Social Involvement

It is patently foolish to speak of the church becoming involved in the social needs of man. This has been going on for centuries. Church agencies have long sought to do this, and are deeply involved to the present time. Individual persons who are Christians are doing acts of mercy and compassion whether in their vocations or out of them. The debate, however, is whether Christians ought to be involved in social action, i.e. in bringing in social justice and services, as well as bringing down establishments which seem to dominate human freedoms, and replace them with governments and groups which will establish conditions commensurate with man's needs. Whilst Christians may be generally agreeable to a gradual reaching of this point, it is contended that they are to be more active, even, if necessary, to the point of using violence. What has to be kept clearly in mind is the fallenness of man. With this we must remember that it requires conversion before a man is a new creation. To believe we can legislate and take social action which will change a society without first changing men's hearts is going in the face of the theological facts. H. O. J. Brown ('Christianity Today' - 10.4.70, p.5) says 'It is worth observing that as soon as we begin to ignore the fallenness of man, we no longer feel any need for radical 'cure' of resurrection and a new creation. Present-day evils must be understood as shadows on the bright landscape of evolutionary advancement, the result of environmental disadvantages, educational handicaps and so on.

They require understanding and treatment, not judgment'. At least that is the view of social activists.

No Christian ought to oppose anything which will help to alleviate man's unfortunate condition, and for this reason he ought to accept his responsibility to be both light and salt in the community. He ought not to s-o accept the fact of predicted wars, international evils, etc. that he accepts them fatalistically and so feels he has no moral responsibility in regard to them. However what must be determined by the Word, the Spirit and conscience is how he goes about fulfilling his moral responsibility. This should never lead him to neglect his primary responsibility to evangelize, to make the saving proclamation, and to live that life of holiness demanded by God. It is not even that he gives the 'leftovers' to social involvement, but that they must be authentic only in the entire stream of his life and witness. He must never love the world (I John 2:15) nor depart from his Biblical understanding of it, its judgment and destiny, any more than he may opt out of its needs. He has been sent into it. He must be involved in it in the light of the missionary mandate of our Lord, and the present leading of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can substitute for a personal walking in the Spirit in regard to his practical social involvement at any particular point. He must stand or fall to the matter of conscience.

(b) The 'What' of Social Involvement

The 'five giants on the road of social reconstruction' have been nominated as disease, ignorance, squalor, idleness and want. The services governments relate to meet these problems are health, education, housing, employment and income maintenance. Social problems relate to those handicapped physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Such need treatment, education and care. All need love. Many attempt to meet needs out of inadequate motives, and whilst we must not demand (in practice) an ideal motive, yet the personal ambitions and motives must to some degree determine the end result.

Areas which are immediate and practical in social concern are crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, delinquency, marital problems, trends in society that make for a breaking down of morals, i.e. permissive trends, abortions, censorship, and so on. All of these have their origins in the 'five giants' nominated above, but often problems arise where affluence is present; indeed are more vicious in its presence. It must then be said that man's frustration that arises from meaninglessness (existential despair and emptiness), futility and fear of the future are causes of many evils. Some Christians use the disciplines of escape (asceticism, withdrawal from society, etc.) whereas they should use the disciplines of conflict - i.e. not use their theology as an escape from the world, but as a power to meet it in its need, whilst not being fooled into wrong goals, and wrong modes of action. The Gospel will meet individual needs where there is a response. Nor should the Christian be baffled and defeated by the immensity of the task. He must continue to believe in the sovereignty of God, and also the doctrine of God's wrath and judgments in history. Berdyaev's statement here is apposite:- 'The sinfulness of human nature does not mean that social reforms and improvements are impossible. It only means that there can be no perfect and absolute order before the transfiguration of the world'.

As Shirwood Wirt says, 'The evangelical believes that the fashion of this world is passing

away. He looks upon this world as a proving ground for a better one. He involves himself in the socio-political order, shorn of perfectionist illusions, but hoping to achieve some positive goals and a measure of peace for mankind. He links the struggle for social justice to man's emancipation from his own nature. He finds no evidence in Scripture that man can be transformed by altering his environment. Here he nails down the great fallacy of Marxism; for the dialectical materialists have never understood the truth about human nature.'

The Christian and Racism

(a) Introduction

Racism is simply the attitude that there are races which are inferior to one's own. This superiority has its roots generally in color, caste and culture with the related factors of languages and religions. Racism may manifest itself in segregation, an overt attitude of superiority and a patronizing of the (so-called) inferior race. The negative 'backlash' is the resentment by the race deemed inferior and the upward struggle to assert its own basic rights. This may result in a compensating racism in the depressed race and consequent violence in the struggle to achieve equality. It may even develop into a compensating superiority.

(b) The Roots of Racism

John Stott is quoted as saying ('Christian Graduate', Sept. 1969, p.6), 'I dare to say that no man is altogether free from some taint of racial pride, because no man is free from sin.. . a sense of racial superiority is natural to us all, even if it is secret and undiscovered.' At the same time the author of this article says, 'Try as I may, I cannot unearth, so as to put my finger on, any racial prejudice or distinction in myself.' It would seem that all evil attitudes spring from man's inherent sin, but that he need have no sense of superiority. The question is whether in fact color, caste, and culture are the occasions of his superiority (expressing itself) rather than the causes. If this is seen clearly there may be hope for its correction.

Does man have any real reason for superiority of any kind? From the Biblical point of view - no! The question of equality as such is not even raised in the Bible, but the question of God being Creator, men being creatures; God being Father, men and women being anthropologically brothers and sisters is raised. Man is the image and glory of God (I Cor. 11:7) and must not be denigrated or despised. The Pentateuch legislates for right relationships both within the economy of Israel and to those outside it. Man's personal dignity must be recognized and maintained. This is the very essence of the moral law.

1. **Color.** Old and New Testaments have no emphasis on color distinctions or superiority and inferiority. It has been supposed by some from Genesis 9: 20-27 that the Hamites were to be slaves and this was related to the fact that they were black. In fact it is not all Hamites who are cursed but Canaan the son of Ham (see vs.22, 25), and whilst Cush (i.e. the Ethiopian, black man) in 10:6 is mentioned as the son of Ham (likewise the Egyptian), Cush is not identified with the curse as is Canaan. There is no indication that the Canaanites were of different color to the Israelites. It has been observed that this is the curse of Noah,

not God, and may even have been uttered in a post-drunken stupor (9:24, etc.). In Jeremiah 13:23 the color of the Ethiopian's skin is mentioned but without prejudice. Ethiopians are clearly highly regarded as in Jeremiah 38-39, and Acts 8, the latter being a worshipper of God with whom clearly Philip did not despise to sit in the chariot. The exegesis that Ham means 'dark' cannot be substantiated. Those who press it say that it comes from the Egyptian word khem ('dark') but in any case this seems to refer to the dark soil of Egypt in contrast to the light-colored earth of Palestine ('Christian Graduate' quoted, p.7). Commonsense indicates that pigmentation as such cannot be a cause either of human superiority or inferiority.

2. **Caste.** This is the doctrine of a superior breed of humanity, a section which is inherently or divinely equipped and endowed for privilege and lordship. Without doubt such castes and 'superior' races have been known continually in the world's history. Whether divinely appointed or not they have taken the ascendancy and sought to maintain it. This is particularly so in the Indian caste system of the Hindus. It would seem that Israel is such a divinely appointed race-caste, but many Scriptures show clearly that this was never intended by God. The Covenant of Abraham is basically for all the nations of the earth, and the covenant with Israel as shown by Exodus 19:5-6, Deut. 7:7, Ezek. 36:32, Isa. 42:6, cf. I Pet. 2:9-10 (etc.) is shown to be with a view to the eventual salvation and blessing of all nations, Israel being a servant and witness but not innately superior. Paul is anxious to show this in passages like Gal. 2:2-16, Rom. 3:23, 28-30, 4:9ff, Gal 3:26-29 and it should be seen that the Jew was not superior to the Gentile. The physical facts must be noted that in certain times in history certain factors combine to put a nation in the ascendancy, but certainly no race (whatever) has remained in such a place, permanently.

3. **Culture.** Without doubt the history, religion, racial and social acts and characteristics of a people are enshrined in their culture. Culture is not then, of itself, wrong. It is true, however, that it is almost a reflexive action in a person to react against another's culture without pondering the matter. Even where a non-indigene capitulates to the (foreign) culture he generally reacts against his own. Culture shock means the initial reaction to a culture other than one's own, involving rejection of it and (possibly) an attempt to understand and accept it. The flight for culture is the attempt to defend and preserve one's exclusive way of life. Culture conflicts are seen in the Scriptures in the Jewish and Samaritan differences, in the difficulty with Gentiles who became Christians in dropping their previously accepted standards for the new and higher Christian morals. Paul certainly battled for these Gentiles that they should not have to take on the entire Jewish culture. He was discerning and astute enough to see what elements were essential and non-essential.

(c) The Doctrine of Creation

Without doubt our common ancestry makes foolish the claims of any race or people to innate superiority because of color, caste, or culture. The doctrine of man being in the image of God gives a general level to all human beings. It may well be that any race may descend below the levels of human attainment - the norm (e.g. the Cretans, see Titus 1:12-13) - but

this does not mean they are innately inferior. The mandate to love and to care means racism in any form is abhorrent to Biblical thought. Men should be concerned for the dignity of the entire race. 'Do good to all men' embraces all social acts and attitudes. The regeneration and 're-creation' of man is in order that the original and normal relationships of man to God and man to man might be restored and resumed. Thus Colossians 3:9-11 and Gal. 3:26-29 are both significant passages. The 'old man' is primarily and corporately Adam and then each man's personal participation in him. This 'nature' or 'humanity' involves man in strife that relates to color, caste and culture (racism) but the 'new man' is Christ and the believer's participation in him. In this realm there can be no room for any 'racist' elements such as are expressed in Jew versus Gentile, slave versus free, male versus female.

(d) The Doctrine of the Church

Directly related to the doctrine of the (anthropological) brotherhood of man is the doctrine of the church. The Scriptures above, plus the general theme of Ephesians of the family and the summing up of all things in Christ, as also the teaching of the church, makes it clear that members of Christ's Body are essentially one. On two grounds then - the creational and the redemptive - there is no room for racism of any kind or degree. However Gal. 3:28 does not dissolve the facts of race, condition, culture and sex. These remain, but they are not valid grounds for division. The essential oneness of the Body and its members is the esse of the church.

(e) The Present Pact of Racism

Without doubt there are many factors which combine to make racism. Such liberating movements that represent the young being freed from the domination of the old, women from the domination of men, Roman Catholics from the Protestants (and vice versa) are all expressions of the desire to be free of these dominating factors. We must see, nevertheless, that in some cases these things are the occasions rather than the cause of revolutionary action. This thought should not eclipse the fact that often there is domination. The American Black-White situation is a real one. Whilst certain elements may have been 'blown up', nevertheless, no one can count the depth of human evil and hurt done in denigrating the dignity of man. Ford Foundation's Roger Wilkins says, 'Racism is in every nook and cranny in this country and each of us blacks has to deal with it every day of our lives. Any overview of black life in this country that does not include the word 'pain' is hopelessly deficient.' ('Time', April 6, 1970). We who feel the problem is only in America should remember the fact of caste in some countries, the fierce and bloody actions of communalism in many countries, the differentiations concerning color in many lands and the sense of superiority races possess concerning themselves. The aboriginal problem is a live issue in Australia.

Professor W. E. H. Stanner (the Boyer lectures for 1968) expresses his view concerning the aborigines. He says, 'I expressed the opinion that in more recent years two forces have been at work concurrently. One is a real and growing appreciation of the distinctive qualities of aboriginal culture, thought and problems of life. The other is the surfacing of old and new tensions between us. Over the last 30 years, we have been trying to attract them into some sort

of union with us. We call it 'assimilation' and think of integration as an intermediate stage and perhaps as a less complete union. But it is easy for us to overlook that a long humiliation can dull the vision, narrow the spirit, and contract the heart towards new things. Some of the aborigines do not understand our offer; some think it is not genuine; some, that its terms are not very attractive; some prefer to cling to their old identity until they are more sure what identity they could have within our new proposals for them. There are deeper difficulties still. We are asking them to become a new people, but this means in human terms that we are asking them to un-be what they now are. But many of them are now seeking to re-discover who and what their people were before the long humiliation. It is a search for identity, a way of restoring self-esteem, of finding a new direction for the will to survive, and of making a better bargain of life on a more responsive market at a more understanding time.'

The Christian then, will have to accept the tensions inherent in contemporary society because of past and present attitudes to the race question. An excellent article in 'His', March issue 1970 shows that 'Black Power' is primarily a movement designed to restore the dignity of the black people, to excise the inferiorities wrought by white treatment, and to place the black people on the basis of equality with other colors. It may necessarily involve excesses of bitterness being worked out, even in violence, and ought to be seen in this light. It is suggested that these things being worked through the emphasis on color should eventually fade, especially where society has accepted color, or better still has become unconscious of it. This present paper, of course, cannot deal exhaustively with the subject, but the main point is clear - racism is wrong and unchristian. The positive answer is divine love worked in and through the experience of God's people. It must involve a strong rejection of all elements of racism and a practical insistence (and not a paternal or patronizing one) on the measures which will destroy this evil, and build true amity between peoples. At no point must it be naive enough to ignore the continued presence of human depravity and its accompanying egotisms.

The Christian and War

(a) Introduction

It should be noted in this study that the question is not 'Is war right or wrong?', but 'How shall a Christian relate to the matter of war and peace?' It is too simplistic to give the answer that war is wrong, or the answer that it is right. The matter is too complex for either of these generalisations. The other consideration is that we have to trace the origins of the opinions that war is right, or war is wrong, and to see whether these origins are Biblical or not.

(b) The Bible and War

1. **The Old Testament.** In this the writers clearly applaud the victories of Israel over their enemies. Abraham's triumph in early patriarchal history, as Israel's defeat of the Canaanites is seen to be a triumph of God's people. Later Saul is told to exterminate the Amalekites. Without doubt God is with Israel in these battles - He Who is 'the Lord of Hosts'. See Numbers 21:14, II Chron. 13:12, 6:34, 20:22, I Chron. 5:22, Psa 144:1, Deut. 20:13,

Judges 5: 4-5. The battle cry for war can be 'the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon' (Judges 7:18, 20). Again war is used against Israel by God using its enemies - Hab. 1:6, Isa. 10:5f, Jer. 25:1-9, Ezek. 21:8-23. It has been said that the God of the N.T. differs to that of the O.T and it is only the writers of the O.T who rationalize war as right. This, however, is an over-simplification.

The rationale of war given is a clear one. War is used against the enemies of Israel but only where there is opposition to God's plan for her. The iniquity of the Ammonites was set for judgment anyway. Israel is to be punished for idolatry as they of Israel are God's special people. David is not allowed to build the temple because his hands are blood-stained (I Kings 5:3) and the consummation of history is to be destruction of weapons on their transformation into uses of peace (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3). Isaiah 11:9 'Neither shall they learn war any more'. However, Messiah will do some warring - Daniel 7:10, Zechariah ch.14, Psalms 2, 1107. The O.T seems to see no contradiction in war existing and God still being known as the God of love, mercy, truth, righteousness, holiness, and peace.

2. The New Testament. The materials here are used by those who oppose war and those who do not. The question is whether either side really has a total Biblical rationale of the matter. Scriptures such as Matt. 5:39, 43ff, 8:10, Luke 14:31ff, 22:36, 19:41, are Scriptures which can be taken to mean non-resistance, as a principle (i.e. pacificism) and love of enemies will not allow one to fight them. At the same time the use of military illustrations is not repugnant and a case may be made out for the use of the short sword of defense (Luke 22:36). However, all of these points are too flimsy to base a total doctrine of war or peace. The fact of the existence of war is accepted realistically - John the Baptist addressing the soldiers, Peter preaching to Cornelius, and Jesus predicting the destruction of Jerusalem as well as saying 'There will be wars and rumors of wars - see that you be not troubled'. Battles are described in the Book of the Revelation and the Son of God himself goes forth to war (e.g. Rev. 17:14, 19:15f) and conquers. The language of this book is apocalyptic as also is Daniel 7 and so the thought of physical bloody wars is not -clearly indicated. Without doubt Jesus did not espouse fighting in his particular cause - 'Put up the sword, for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword.' The statement may be taken two ways:- (i) Sheer realism without commending or criticizing the use of the sword, but warning in this particular case (cf. Gen. 9:6, Rev. 13:10); (ii) A clear warning that war is destructive and wrong. At the same time Christ uses a whip to scourge evil-doers from the house of God, and this would seem to indicate a type of justified punishment, always remembering, of course, his particular office of Messiah (cf. Micah 3:1f).

(c) Church History and War

Whilst the N.T abounds in the figurative use of war to illustrate battle with Satan and his hosts, Jesus wars against the strongman (see also II Tim. 2:3, I Tim. 1:18, I Peter 2:11, II Cor. 10:3-4, Ephes. 6:10-20, yet very early on Christians rejected soldiering. Whilst tradition speaks of at least a Christian cohort yet Lactantius writes c. 300 A.D. 'It is not lawful for a just man to engage in warfare,' and Basil (c. 350) says that soldiers were excluded from

communion for three years after discharge. When Christianity was legalized as a religion in 312 A.D. the Church generally took the view that the State may resist an unprovoked attack, and Christians assist in such a defensive war.

(d) The Principle of Killing

The command 'Thou shalt not kill' is taken by some to cover all life. Not killing is based by some on 'reverence for life itself'. The primary gift to man is not however (biological) life, but the image of God in which he is made. For this there must be reverence, i.e. basically for God Himself. Gen. 9:2f makes it clear that animal life may be killed for man's use, and nature makes it clear that without this pattern the animal kingdom (i.e. the carnivores) would die. Sacrifices and meat eating are enjoined in the Old Testament. The killing of man is forbidden not so much because man of himself is to be respected but rather because his killing is a sin against God, i.e. he is made in the image of God. Whilst Gen. 9:5-6 stands there must be killing but killing cannot here be nominated as murder. The doctrine of punishment places law in the hands of those authorized by God to punish - e.g. Rom. 13:1f, Titus 3:1, I Peter 2:13-14, John 19:11, Prov. 8:15, Dan. 2:21, 4:17. The question is not 'Is killing right or wrong?' but 'What expedients must be used in a world that is sinful and fallen?' Niebuhr ('An Interpretation of Christian Ethics') says that pacificism is a cleavage between the ideal and the actual. An absolute Christian ethic cannot be maintained in the world. 'Love absolutism' cannot always prevail. Such idealism is incompatible with 'a responsible relationship to the political order.' That it is wrong to murder is clear; that it is wrong to kill in some situations is difficult to maintain, e.g. when a demented person is senselessly killing others, or when defense is justifiable. To allow another to kill senselessly might be taken as participation in killing. This simply illustrates the difficulty of maintaining a simplistic non-killing ethic.

(e) Wars - Just and Unjust

If within a people or a nation policing of offenders is accepted, because of man's sinfulness, then policing on an international level may also be envisaged. The ticklish matter of 'just' and 'unjust' wars is difficult to resolve, since citizens of a country are emotionally involved in patriotic loyalty and cannot be sufficiently objective. A 'just' war might be said to be one which resists oppression and defends righteousness and freedom. Whilst killing in war is evil it is pleaded that the evil of tyranny, especially that which results from such forces as Nazism are worse evils and a choice between two is necessary. A realistic recognition of man as he is will determine a person's view, e.g. whether a view of depravity is taken, or a humanistic view of man's innate potential of good. The problem that complicates the decision about 'just' or 'unjust' wars is that it is rarely, if ever, that the evil is on one side. So many elements complicate the matter entirely. Such elements could be aggrandizement by one country against another, armaments interests, sub-Christian views of retaliation (for wrongs done or imagined), racial hatred, and personal lust for power by leaders or nations.

(f) The Pacifist Position

There are Christians who are pacifists. The question of whether Christianity is pacifist is a

wider question. Some reconciliation of the use of war in the Old Testament and the forecast of war to the end-time in the Scriptures has to be worked out by one who would be a pacifist or a non-pacifist. The whole question of righteousness, as of love, must be sorted out, with an understanding of penal elements within the context of nations and international relationships. Realistic views of man's sin and depravity must be taken and then decisions made. In this regard it is to be considered whether pacifism springs from a Christian or a humanistic source, and if from the latter whether it is, nevertheless consistent with general Christian teaching where the Bible does not give a specific direction. A further consideration is that wars spring out of the evil of man and simply to accept them as a necessary evil in passive fatalism is a contradiction of the moral powers the believer possesses and may even become moral (immoral?) acquiescence.

The pacifist believes in non-resistance, non violence, non-killing. He claims that man being evil does not excuse wars. Positive pacifism alerts others to war's evil and seeks to out-mode war. Retaliation is sub-Christian as also selfish aggrandizement and all national and racial hatreds. Whilst wars may be predicted as continuing this is no reason for acquiescence in any. Christ took the way of non-resistance and accomplished his goal. Because pacifism has not worked, nor may not work is no reason why it should not be espoused and followed. Evils such as slavery have been diminished by teaching. If all refused to fight wars would cease and governments would wish to gain the support of their people by not fighting. It is not a utilitarian question but a (totally) moral one.

(g) Pacifist or Not Pacifist?

Each person must abide by his own convictions whilst he is sure they are right. He does not go against his own conscience for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. He is responsible, however, to make sure - as far as possible - that his convictions are correct. That honest believers see two views in the Bible is patently clear, i.e. war is right (in some circumstances) and war is wrong (in all circumstances). These conclusions ought to be reached only when the total Biblical portrayal is considered. No conclusion is valid which omits the fact of man's depravity, of constituted authorities and of the working of penal elements of God's wrath in history. The question may not seem, finally, to be an 'either-or' but a concession that whilst war and killing are evil of themselves it may be simplistic to work from this basis alone. The whole matter of morality and judgment is also involved.

The Christian, the State, and Politics

(a) Introduction

The doctrine of creation and the story of the first family make it clear that mankind was commanded to spread across the face of the earth in order to subdue it and exercise stewardship over it. It was sin which destroyed relationships, otherwise, we assume, the normal order would have been a loose confederation of families sharing the resources of the earth in an even manner. Genesis 10:9-10 shows Nimrod hunting men to build a kingdom.

Genesis 11:1-9 shows man trying to build his kingdom against the order for the world which God had given to Adam.

The covenant people of God, Israel, had God as its leader. This theocracy was not intended to be less a theocracy when Saul, first of its kings, was appointed. Even when this position deteriorated, Israel, ideally speaking was a nation in which there was no division between the state and the church.

In the New Testament we find that Jesus and his disciples did not seek to overthrow the existing order by force or politics. Jesus did not attempt to evade the judgment of the State, even though it proved an unjust one. He made the pronouncement, render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's - whatever we may make of that statement. He paid taxes (Matt. 17:24-27).

In the Acts and the Epistles we find the followers of Jesus accepting the rule of the State. Whilst in Acts (3:19-20) Peter says to the Sanhedrin 'We ought to obey God rather than men' he is not seeking directly to change the order of that time. He simply means that since the Sanhedrin are the leaders of God's people their leadership should concur with that of their true Messiah, Jesus. The Book of Acts has been described as apologia regarding the obedience of the Christian people. The State is nowhere defied, as such. The apostles submit themselves to imprisonment (cf. 16:19ff). Their conduct everywhere is exemplary.

The Christian attitude to authority is set out in such passages as Romans 13:1ff, Titus 3:1-2, I Peter 2:10-13, cf. Jude 8f. It is simply this, that the powers that be are ordained of God. No matter what their personal lives may be, they are God's servants for good, to punish the evil. Daniel 2:21 says that God 'changes times and seasons: he removes kings and sets up kings'. That prerogative does not belong to man, although, obviously God may use the rebellion of man to accomplish His purposes.

(b) The Dimension of Evil

A study of the Kingdom of God shows (as in Daniel 2:21) that God is King over all His creation, albeit rebels remain within it. Many treatments of the Christian, the State, and politics, pay little or no reference to the positive fact of evil in the world, and evil which seeks to demean man, and divide the order of authority and government. Whilst God is sovereign over these elements nevertheless the government of people does not take place in a moral vacuum. Hence the Christian has to decide whether or not he should share in what is sometimes called 'secular government'. The non-participating Christian still has the problems which arise from government such as the political ideologies (socialism, capitalism, etc.) and moral problems such as abortion, euthanasia, drink, drugs, and so on.

One view is that Christians should use every means, both peaceful and violent to rid a nation of abuses, and institute the best way of life. Some would concur with this principle excepting the use of violence. Other Christians believe the State is ordained of God and so espouse a conservative approach, leaving things to work out under the sovereignty of God. Yet others take a separatist approach, seeing government as an evil which is here in a fallen world, and obeying where the Scripture demands obedience, but expecting nothing from the State.

It is expected that in any view the presence of evil must be kept in mind. That is, if certain expedients are used they will partake of the imperfect nature in the world, and will be complicated by the planning forces of Satan and his powers.

(c) The Principle of Participation

I Tim. 2:1-2 says 'First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.' This must mean that we are to have regard for all men. In Gal. 6:10 Paul says 'Do good unto all men', and this accords with Matt. 5: 43-48. Whilst Paul adds 'and especially to those who are of the household of faith' this is because the Church was a persecuted minority needing every bit of support it could get.

Christ's prayer for his own that they should not be taken out of the world but kept whilst in it, and that he had sent them into it as the Father had sent him into it reveals that Christians cannot opt out of the problems of life. They are in this world by creation, and they are even more committed by redemption. The figures of 'light' and 'salt' are penetrative elements designed to have a dynamic effect upon the community. The fact of 'light' is dealt with in such passages as Luke 8:16-18 (cf. Matt. 5:16) and Ephesians 5:8.

Some Christians believe that believers should penetrate every strata of society and take as much participatory and administrative power as possible. It is also argued that Christians should use their gifts to excel and even lead in the realms of art, music, literature and, generally, all culture. This would include national and local government, agriculture, industry, medicine and education, including research areas. No one could really argue against this. Some see such a venture as too much of a participation in a world that opposes God. This is really over-simplifying the case. Much is given over to secular and materialistic powers by default.

Church history shows, undoubtedly that when the Christian faith was made a legitimate religion by Constantine, the church then became secularized to a great degree, since it was virtually an agency of the State. This, however, is vastly different to Christian men and women penetrating society, and living their lives before other human beings, and bringing their gifts and skills to contribute towards the whole of life and the whole of humanity. The 'hold the fort' mentality does not seem to have a very worthwhile place here. Whilst Christians should keep themselves from the worldliness of the world they should remember that it is God's world (by creation, providence, and redemption) and therefore they should not abandon it to the ungodly.

Stem Cell Research

Introduction

The topic of embryonic stem cell research has dominated society over the past several years. Claims have been made that these cells, harvested from days-old embryos, show much curative promise for those suffering with chronic, debilitating illness.¹

Scientists are not in agreement about such claims. Further, concern has been raised over whether or not the implantation of stem cells into another body could actually be harmful to the recipient.

While it is not our purpose to discuss or evaluate scientific claims in this monograph, it is important that one understand that the issue is far more complex than what is often presented in the media and in political argumentation.

As in any issue, the Church's primary concern is to weigh the issue against the Holy Scriptures and the Faith of the Church as it has been passed on by the Ancient Fathers. Admittedly, the Scriptures and Sacred Tradition do not specifically reference issues of modern technology. However, the principles that they lay down can be generally, and often specifically applied. This, in turn, can assist the Church in making decisions about the validity of current issues and whether or not acceptance or participation in them is sinful in the eyes of God.

A Brief Explanation of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

The concept of *embryonic* stem cell research is telling; for it refers to not only the type of stem cell being discussed, but also the locus from which the stem cell is obtained. These cells come from extra embryos that are fertilized during *in-vitro* procedures. According to one source, not all of the fertilized ova produced in a laboratory during the *in-vitro* process are implanted into the womb of a woman. More than the needed number of fertilized ova are produced to improve the probability of pregnancy.

Embryonic stem cells are obtained from these leftover fertilized eggs. In attempting to justify such usage one writer states:

The surplus embryos will almost all eventually be destroyed, even if it happens accidentally, decades later, due to equipment malfunction²

While stem cells can be obtained from a variety of sources (such as from umbilical cords of infants after birth and adult bone marrow), stem cells from embryos are preferred as they are "totipotent"—that is, theoretically able to become any of the 220 types of cells in the human body.³

The Heart of the Matter

One point that cannot be overlooked is that harvesting stem cells from an embryo necessarily causes that embryo to die. It raises the moral, legal, ethical and Scriptural question of whether or not the embryo is a human being. This is the very heart of the issue that we will attempt to address.

Indeed, this argument came to the fore in the 20th Century with the regrettable decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*. This landmark ruling caused the immediate polarization of “pro-life” and “pro-choice” camps, with the former answering question in the affirmative, the latter in the negative.

It is not our intention to enter into this debate, but to seek the input and guidance of Holy Scripture. For the Church, the Scriptures are the *norma normans*, the authoritative Word of God. Sacred Tradition is closely coupled to this process, as it shows how the Church has historically understood matters of the Faith.

We also acknowledge that for those who reject Scriptural authority and the two millennia of Church History, no successful appeal can be made. Such a position will necessarily lead to a different conclusion from those who submit to the magisterium of Scripture. Embryonic stem cell research leading to the death of an embryo will pose no moral or ethical dilemma. It becomes a classic case of the ends justifying the means. Acceptance of Scriptural authority presupposes that faith in Christ is present. Apart from such faith, Scriptures and Holy Tradition matter little in any issue of life.⁴ This hermeneutical principle is lost to many Christians seeking to confirm their points with Scripture while debating those who do not accept its authority.

What Do the Scriptures Say?

The Holy Scriptures, written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are all about life. Viewing the unity of Holy Scripture, it is clear that they begin and end with life. Everything contained in between is about life.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1). The creation account clearly shows that all life is a creation and a gift from God. When God had finished creating He “saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.”

In the Book of the Revelation the Apostle John gives glimpses of the hope of eternal life. “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” (The Revelation 22:1-5).

Indeed, the Christian Church has always seen the purpose of the Scriptures to point to Jesus Christ, whom we confess to be the Son of God; indeed God Himself Incarnate. It is He who died on a cross that we might have life. It is He who said, “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will” (John 5:16) and “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

It is important to start from this point when discussing matters of life. It provides the context and depth for our theology, preventing it from becoming mere proof-texting when debating issues.

It is also important to understand that the Fathers of the Church have always held to this theology of life. The *Didache*, a Second Century writing of the teaching of the Twelve Apostles affirms life and speaks out against abortion and infanticide—practices that have been around a lot longer than the present issues: “you shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is born.”⁵ The message of the Church has always been a message of life as can be seen in the liturgies and sermons of Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrose and the rest of the corpus of early and medieval Church writing. It is an affront to the Scriptures, to Church History and to the Lord Himself, who is the Head of the Church, that some fellowships today have abandoned this catholic and apostolic stance in favor of a culture of death and “choice.” Such was never the case, nor the Confession of the One, Holy catholic and Apostolic Church throughout history. This is novel theology which actually is liberal sociology, and not theology at all. Having stated this, we now go to the Scriptures to see what witness they bear.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament has multitudes of references to life, both physical and spiritual. For instance, besides the Creation there is the Call of Abraham who would be made into a great nation (Genesis 12:1-3). There is the Deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egypt and the Crossing of the Red Sea, where God slew the pursuing Egyptians, typifying Baptism as we hear at the Great Vigil of Easter (Exodus 14:22-15:21). The Prophets declare both God’s judgment and favor and ultimately point to the coming of Messiah.

The Old Testament both affirms life and condemns its antithesis. God tells the Children of Israel in Deuteronomy 30: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

The Old Testament condemns the antithesis of life, that is, death in the judgment against Cain (Genesis 4:9-15); in the Commandment, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) as well as in the Levitical laws.

It is also important to understand that the Old Testament places a high regard for life in the womb. Psalm 139 declares, “For You formed my inward parts: You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.” (Psalm 139:13-16).

Likewise, the great penitential psalm of David shows that the depths of sinfulness go all the way back to the womb: “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5). A non-life could not be a sinner.

Such examples from the Old Testament show the value of all life to the Lord and are simply highlights of a message contained throughout the Old Testament.

The New Testament

The New Testament, likewise, connotes life throughout the Gospels and the Writings, centered in the Work and Person of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John announces, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Saint Paul summarizes life in Christ: “We were buried with [Christ] through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4). Also, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20). A view of life is expressed here that the world cannot know apart from the Gospel.

Indeed the entire Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Promise of Parousia of Jesus Christ are all so that His Church might have life here and in Eternity.

The New Testament also has a reference to life in the womb at the Visitation: “Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.” (Luke 1:39-44). Not only is life affirmed in the womb, but the Church has always confessed that by the leaping of Saint John the Baptist in Elizabeth’s womb, so is the *faith* of the unborn.

The New Testament is an unfolding of Life in Christ. Its message cannot be missed or mistaken if one reads it seriously. It provides no other alternative.

Conclusion

In this monologue we have attempted to briefly show that, as a matter of faith, the Church of Jesus Christ has always held to a Culture of Life: Celebrating it, defending it and living it. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, clearly show that life is God’s creation, His gift, and ultimately our hope. Church History and Sacred Tradition have affirmed that this has always been the stance of the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and that modern deviations from it, like ancient heresies, are not a part of the True Faith and are to be rejected.⁶

We have also explained that for those outside of the Church, who do not accept Scriptural or Ecclesial authority, nor the evidence supporting the culture of life by the Church over the past two millennia, no appeal of the faith can be made as it cannot be comprehended without the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptural view of life necessarily demands that members of the Body of Christ reject any technology that requires the death of another human being including seeking the good of the chronically ill, the injured or the mother. In Christian theology the ends may never justify

the means. Rather, life in the womb – or, tragically in the Petri dish⁷— is always viewed as *human* life. To deny this denies the witness of the Scriptures and the Faith of the Church.

In the lens of the Scriptures, embryonic stem cell research is death masquerading as life. No matter what claims of healing and wholeness embryonic stem cell research brings; no matter how appealing the argumentation, one cannot get around the fact that the life of an embryo—a *human* life—must be willfully taken.

In issues such as this, Saint Paul exhorts: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

There are different ways of harvesting stem cells apart from extracting them from an embryo. Whether or not this is a good thing is another topic for another paper and presenter. The Biblical witness is clear however, that *embryonic* stem cell research is never to be embraced, explored or practiced by those who have been “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13).

¹ *Human Stem Cells: Background Information*. http://www.religioustolerance.org/res_stem1.htm

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

⁵ *The Didache: The Lord's Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*. Chapter 2.

⁶ Coincidentally, this week I received an invitation to another seminar entitled, *Stem Cell Research: Hope for the Future?* Sponsored by “Save our Services on Long Island). Their mission statement in the invitation reads as follows: *The mission of SOS-LI, a community based coalition, is to preserve and promote essential health care on Long Island **jeopardized by the imposition of restrictive, religious-based health care policies*** (Emphasis mine).

⁷ The issue of *in-vitro* fertilization is another issue that bears re-visitation in light of the Scriptures and Tradition.

Using the answers developed for the Biblical Worldview in Week One (page 6), how would this belief system affect the following?

1. Social Involvement

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

2. Racism

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

3. War

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

4. Politics

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

5. Stem Cell Research

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

Using the answers developed for America's Cultural Worldview in Week One (page 7), how would this belief system affect the following?

1. Social Involvement

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

2. Racism

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

3. War

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

4. Politics

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

5. Stem Cell Research

General Belief

How the belief would affect society

How the belief would affect the long-term moral state of the society

Ethics Journal

Every day, we are faced with ethical situations and dilemmas. Decisions as simple as what to wear can be regarded as an ethical choice. How we respond to these situations is based on our worldview. Keep a journal of ethical situations you face in your everyday life. Examples can be problems at work, situations in your personal life or with friends, events or topics seen on the news or in the media. How does the world respond to these ethical questions and what is the Biblical worldview?

| Day | Ethical Situation | The World's View | Biblical Worldview |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |

