

What am I supposed to do?

PRACTICAL, PERSONAL, BIBLICAL ETHICS

1

“I’m sick . . . what am I supposed to do?”

“I am so depressed that I don’t even want to live anymore . . . what am I supposed to do?”

“My loved one is near death and suffering terribly . . . what am I supposed to do?”

“We’re not ready to have children . . . what are we supposed to do?”

“We’re unable to have children . . . what are we supposed to do?”

“I have a genetic disease. Genetic screening for my children has been advised . . . what am I supposed to do?”

“I have a disease that can be controlled or maybe cured by gene therapy. But I don’t want to ‘play God’ . . . what am I supposed to do?”

TR: While there are graduate classes in bio-ethics, today I just want to help us simply consider . . .

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

2

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: These are pretty basic, but isn't that what most of us find ourselves losing sight of?

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

**Humans were created, we are not God
...**

3

The first foundation is . . . READ SLIDE

TR: The first chapter of the Bible makes that clear.

Genesis 1:27

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.**

ESV

4

READ SLIDE

TR: That foundation has a corollary that follows from it.

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

**Humans were created, we are not God
... *our lives are not our own.***

5

READ SLIDE

- Ethics is not about our best thinking.**
- Ethics is about applying the revelation we have been given by the God Who created us.**

TR: A related second foundation is . . .

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

**Humans were created, we are not God
... *our lives are not our own.***

**We were created in God's image
...**

6

READ SLIDE

TR: Still in Genesis, after Noah's flood, we read ...

Genesis 9:6

So God created man "Whoever sheds
the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.
his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

ESV

7

READ SLIDE

TR: This not only paves the way for capital punishment, though elsewhere it has a bunch of evidentiary requirements that would make it quite rare. It also leads to . . .

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

Humans were created, we are not God
. . . our lives are not our own.

We were created in God's image
. . . we all have value and dignity.

8

. . . the inalienable fact that all humans . . . **READ SLIDE**
-- Our value doesn't come because we are smart, fast, productive, powerful, etc.
-- Our value rests in the fact that we have been created in God's image.

TR: A third foundation is the biblical fact, very substantiated by daily reality, that . . .

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

We sinned and tarnished God's image

...

9

READ SLIDE

TR: The theology book of the NT, the letter to the Romans, tells us .

..

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the
glory of God,

ESV

10

READ SLIDE

TR: It is because of Adam's sin and the fact that we've all lived out our fallen natures that we . . .

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

**We sinned and tarnished God's image
... *we face sickness, dysfunction, and
death.***

11

READ SLIDE

- When people ask, "Why?" The answer is because of sin.**
- Whether a person's individual sin that led to God's discipline OR the impact of sin on this world . . . sin is what causes us a multitude of pains.**
- When we have a hard, frustrating day . . . we should come home and say, "I hate sin!" . . . yes, use the word "hate."**

TR: The fourth foundation is that . . .

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

**We sinned and tarnished God's image
... *we face sickness, dysfunction, and
death.***

**God provided the Christ, Jesus, as our
substitutionary sacrifice**

...

12

READ SLIDE

**TR: The same passage we just looked at in Romans pours the rest
of the foundation for us.**

Romans 3:23-25

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,** ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

ESV

13

READ SLIDE

TR: While God would have been just to leave us in our sin or to wipe us out immediately, He graciously provided Jesus.

Foundations for Bio-ethics:

We sinned and tarnished God's image
... *we face sickness, dysfunction, and death.*

God provided the Christ, Jesus, as our substitutionary sacrifice
... *we can be redeemed from the Fall.*

14

And the good news is that . . . READ SLIDE

-- These four foundational truths sound a lot like Gospel Fluency.

-- As we seek to Make the Most of Every Opportunity IN our communities, we seek to be a salt and light INfluence by being Gospel Fluent.

TR: These four foundation lay the foundation for the corollaries . . .

We, As God's Redeemed . . .

15

. . . for those redeemed from the Fall.

TR: For those who have trusted Jesus, the ethics entrusted to us by God are pretty focused.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own,** ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

ESV

16

READ SLIDE

TR: Our lives belong to God . . . all human lives do . . . because we were created by Him.

We, As God's Redeemed . . .

we doubly belong to Him, as Creator and Redeemer . . . our bodies are not our own.

17

But . . . READ SLIDE

-- This corollary will come back next week as we talk about the biblical ethics of sexuality.

-- But it also is important to remember when it comes to the issues of health, the beginning and end of life.

TR: A second corollary is addressed a few chapters later in . . .

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³²Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

ESV

18

READ SLIDE

-- We see the tension of trying to give no offense . . . and at the same time doing all we do to the glory of God.

TR: For the Christ-follower, as one of the Redeemed . . .

We, As God's Redeemed . . .

we doubly belong to Him, as Creator and Redeemer . . . our bodies are not our own.

we should submit to God's Word and in all things only act out of humble faith.

19

READ SLIDE

TR: The nature of the redeeming work of Christ leads to an important third corollary . . .

Isaiah 53:4-5

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that
brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

ESV

20

READ SLIDE

- Verse 5 makes clear that there is healing in the atonement.
- It is through Christ's work that we often receive His healing touch.

TR: And yet we remember that we are awaiting the return of Christ for the fulness of that healing . . . otherwise no believer would die.

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

ESV

21

At almost the very end of the Bible we read . . . READ SLIDE

TR: We, as God's redeemed, must remember that . . .

We, As God's Redeemed . . .

the blessings of the atonement are ours, including wellness and healing, yet the fulness of those blessings awaits the return of Christ Jesus.

22

READ SLIDE

TR: The final corollary I would like to share forces us to remember that ethics are not just about my personal life choices. In Amos we read . . .

Amos 5:14-15

Seek good, and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will
be with you,
as you have said.

¹⁵Hate evil, and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;

ESV

23

READ SLIDE

TR: And a few verses later, a passage that some didn't understand as a Bible quote when Martin Luther King spoke them . . .

Amos 5:24

**But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness
like an ever-flowing stream.**

ESV

24

READ SLIDE

TR: For those of us who have by faith repented of our sin, turning away to faith in Jesus, the Messiah . . .

We, As God's Redeemed . . .

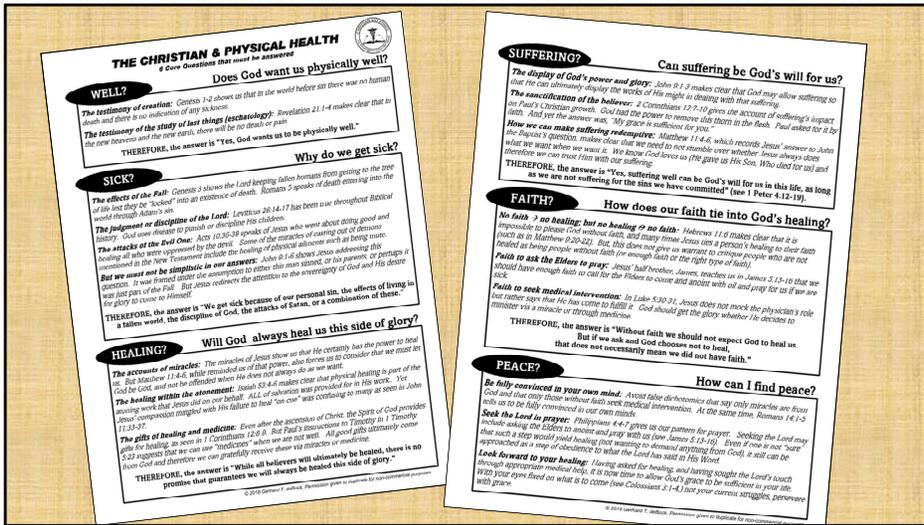
the blessings of the atonement are ours, including wellness and healing, yet the fulness of those blessings awaits the return of Christ Jesus.

we should seek justice for and the well-being of others, especially the weak and vulnerable.

25

READ SLIDE

TR: Let's use that fourfold foundation and then four corollaries to think about the questions people actually ask.



The handout made available last week and still available on the tables by the two main exit doors have a lot more detail that I hope you will find helpful.
-- The one section is about The Christian and Physical Health.

TR: The question usually asked is simply this.

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

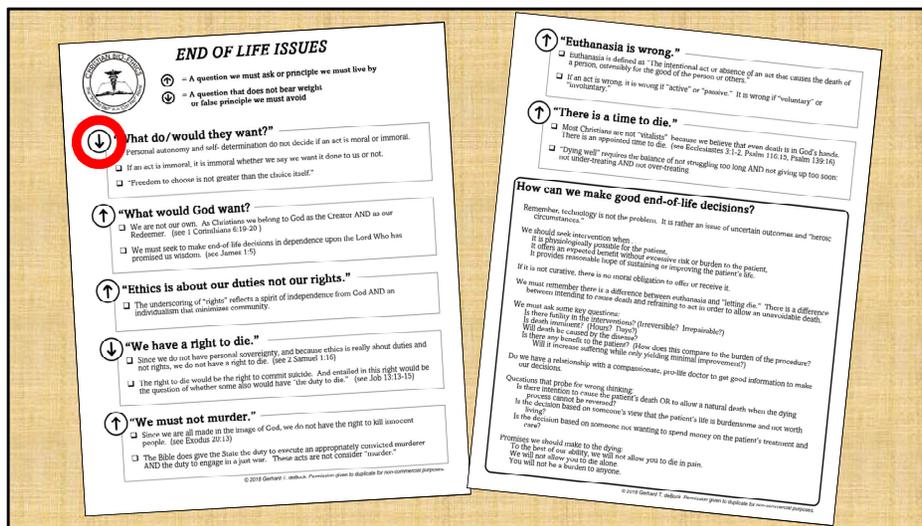
*“I’m sick . . .
what am I supposed to do?”*

27

READ SLIDE

- Ask the Holy Spirit if you are being disciplined – cf. those who were sick and died for partaking of communion without examining themselves.
- If no sin is revealed, ask in faith for God’s healing touch.
- If the ailment continues, ask the elders to anoint and pray for you. They may invite some other individuals known to be gifted in healing prayer to join them.
- If God doesn’t heal, trust that His grace will be sufficient and that His strength will be made known through your weakness.

TR: Some of the real questions people ask are related to the end of life.



Several pages of those handouts focus there.

-- These pages make out the principle or the question we should ask and then give it an up arrow or a down one.

-- It is not a foundation of ethics to ask, “What do or would they want?”

-- Yet, that is often what we hear after hard end of life choices were made . . . “That’s what they would have wanted.”

-- I’ll encourage you to pick up that booklet and work through the other 6 principles or questions.

TR: In our real lives, if we listen well to hurting folks, we will hear something like . . .

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

**“I am so depressed that I don’t even
want to live anymore . . .
what am I supposed to do?””**

29

READ SLIDE

- Being depressed and despairing of life is not a sin. Job faced it. As did the Apostle Paul.**
- But our feelings don’t give us the moral right to hurt ourselves.**
- Our bodies are not our own, and doubly so for the believer, so we ought not to commit suicide or hurt ourselves.**
- If we are harming ourselves or thinking of suicide, we must humble ourselves and seek help.**
- With God’s help, this dark night of the soul will pass in time.**
- “The mourning may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning.”**

TR: Related to this question, but focused on someone else being in perhaps physical pain . . .

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

**“My loved one is near death and
suffering terribly . . .
what am I supposed to do?””**

30

READ SLIDE

- Should we assist in someone's suicide?**
- Should we kill someone out of mercy?**
- We put animals out of their misery . . . should we put people out of theirs?**
- No. Animals are not made in the image of God.**
- Killing an animal is not murder.**

**TR: -- For us, this is hard but not as much as it used to be.
Palliative care helps us fulfill the three promises we should make
to someone who appears to be terminally ill.**

**To the best of our ability,
we will not allow you to die in pain.**

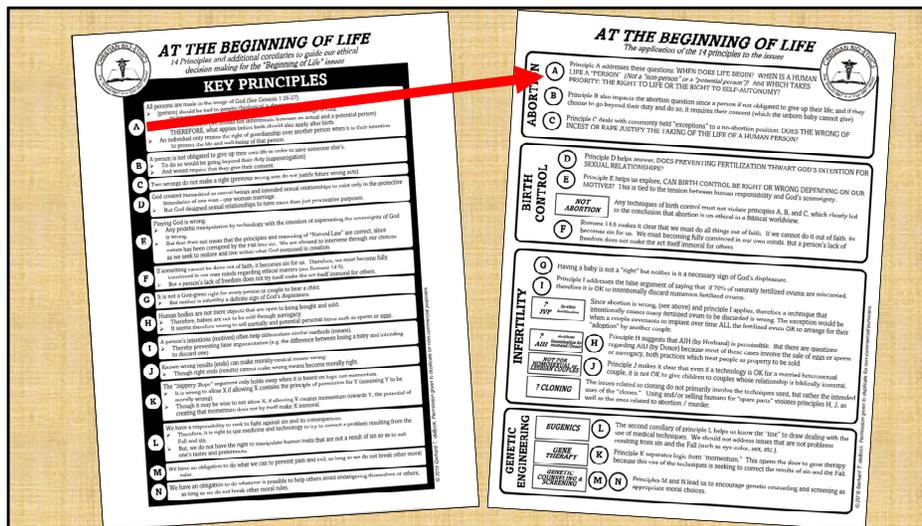
We will not allow you to die alone.

You will not be a burden to anyone.

31

READ SLIDE

TR: The final section of the summary sheet handout covers . . .



... the beginning of life issues.
 -- The two sheets face each other so that you can see which of the key principles apply to the specific beginning of life issue.
 TR: Young couples face a real question when they ask ...

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

*“We’re not ready to have children . . .
what are we supposed to do?”*

33

READ SLIDE

- **Commit to not having an abortion. The fertilized ovum is a person. To define a person by other than their genetics is to open the door to defining other people as less than human, even outside of the womb.**
- **The question of birth control falls into the pattern of other related ethical questions for Christians, namely, “When am I playing God?”**
- **Some will say, if you trust God then don’t go to the doctor or don’t take your medicine.**
- **One older believer said to me as I put on my seatbelt, “Don’t you trust God?”**
- **These simplistic dichotomies sound spiritual but are terribly inconsistent.**

-- I believe we can use birth control, if our motives are right and if we can do it out of faith. Assuming we are not using something that would cause an early abortion.

TR: Others of us have faced the real question . . .

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

**“We’re unable to have children . . .
what are we supposed to do?””**

34

READ SLIDE

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

**“I have a genetic disease. Genetic screening for my children has been advised . . .
*what am I supposed to do?”***

35

FACING REAL QUESTIONS

**“I have a disease that can be controlled or maybe cured by gene therapy. But I don’t want to ‘play God’ . . . ;
*what am I supposed to do?”***

36

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD
require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly
with your God?

ESV