

LESSON #1 INTRODUCTION: CASE STUDY: GIFT OR THEFT? 8-19-15

The task of this class

1. To see and interact with competing worldviews.
2. To establish the basis for understanding the superiority of biblical ethics.
3. To establish a basis for interacting with particular ethical issues.

Terms

1. Worldview

A. Definitions

- *A conceptual framework that contains our fundamental beliefs.
- *The means by which we interpret and judge reality.
- *Our beliefs and assumptions about how the world fits together.

B. Metaphors

- *Glasses
- *A puzzle box

C. Examples

First, as it pertains to God:

Theism - an infinite God is beyond and in the universe and powerfully involved

Atheism - there is no God

Deism - There is an infinite God but He is not involved in His creation

Pantheism - God is the universe. All is one. Animals, humans, everything else. All is god. Each of us is god. We go through cycles of birth, death, reincarnation in order to work off "bad karma." Nothing is black and white. All is gray.

*Two conflicting statements can both be true?

Examples: Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, New Age, The Force

Finite Godism - Finite God created the world but can't handle everything that happens. God is limited. He can't do anything about natural disasters, etc.

Polytheism - (also called spiritism) - there are many gods in the world

Examples: New age - Confucianism - thousands of religions

- *Moral values are taboos that irritate the spirits
- *Just as important not to irritate the evil spirits

Other specific worldviews:

Naturalism - secular humanism (atheism)

*God is irrelevant - man is autonomous and will save himself - education is the guide to life and through intelligence people reach their full potential.

*Science is the ultimate provider for knowledge and morals

Postmodernism - (Relativism) - truth is relevant to one's culture. There are no absolute truths.

Tolerance - refusal to have the answers

D. Components

1. Metaphysics - What is the nature of the universe?
2. Epistemology - How do you know that you know what you know?
3. Anthropology - Human nature
4. God - Does God exist? What is His nature?
5. Ethics - Your theory of right and wrong

2. Ethics

A. Definition

*Ethics - (Ethos) - a manner of living

*Morals - is more focused on conduct (What should I do?)

*Ethics - is a belief system that shapes one's actions and behaviors (Why should I do?)

*Morals - are the specific actions and behaviors

*Ethics - provides the foundation for good moral behavior.

Isaiah 28:9-13

"Whom will he teach knowledge?

And whom will he make to understand the message?

Those just weaned from milk?

Those just drawn from the breasts?

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept,

Line upon line, line upon line,

Here a little, there a little."

For with stammering lips and another tongue

He will speak to this people,

*To whom He said, "This is the rest with which
You may cause the weary to rest,"
And, "This is the refreshing";
Yet they would not hear.*

*But the word of the Lord was to them,
"Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little,"
That they might go and fall backward, and be broken
And snared and caught.*

Micah 6:8
*He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

B. Types (Bumper Stickers Ethics) Steve Wilkens

1. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
 - a. This is cultural relativism
 - b. There is no absolute truth or standard
 - c. Truth is relative
 - d. What's right for you is right for you and what's right for me is right for me.
 - e. Main 2 principles are:
 1. There is no absolute truth
 2. Intolerance is wrong
2. Look out for #1: Egosim
3. I couldn't help myself
Behaviorism
Determinism - nothing random or by choice
4. The greatest happiness for the greatest number
Utilitarianism –
*The good that people should seek is happiness or pleasure
*Some people will have to concede their interests for the sake of the greatest number
*The only thing that matters in judging something ethically is the result
5. Virtue Ethics
Aristotle and Plato

Character ethics - not what should I do, but who should I be? However, good character should manifest itself in good behavior

6. All you need is love - do the loving thing

Situational ethics - decisions are made situationally

*Doing good is a matter of acting in love

*Every moral choice is spontaneous

*Ends justifies the means (love is the end we seek)

7. Do what comes naturally

*When something functions as it was designed to function, it is functioning naturally

*Feelings of disgust or guilt tell us it's not natural and must be wrong

8. God said it, I believe it, that settles it.

Divine command theory

*Moral commands come straight from God, all we have to do is obey

C. Sources

Scripture

Tradition

Reason

Experience

D. Christian Ethics

1. Christian Ethics is not Anthropocentric (man-centered)



2. Christian Ethics is Theocentric (God-centered)

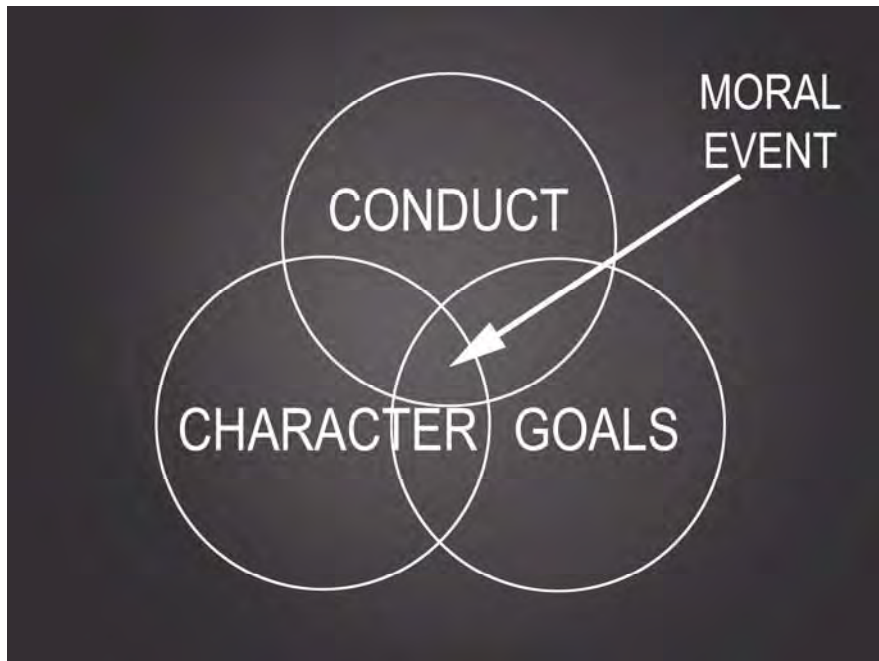
*Christian ethics is God-centered application of truth and grace toward self and others in order to establish worship of God in all aspects of life and action.

*In other words, ethics is worship.



E. Biblical Ethics

*Definition - an attempt to understand what it means both to live and to think biblically (Jones)



*How do we often miss this?

*We focus on conduct alone! Can lead to legalism, license.

*Can the same act be moral and at other times be immoral?

The source for biblical ethics:

Scripture

Tradition

Reason

Experience

Why Scripture?

"Scripture is the standard by which we must test all other truth-claims." - John MacArthur

"When we begin with a right view of Scripture, the Bible itself ought to shape what we believe from start to finish." John MacArthur

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."
1 Peter 1:3.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."
2 Cor. 9:8

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." John 17:17

*"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."* Psalm 19:7-9

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
2 Timothy 3:14-17