

Thinking Christianly: What Is Right?

Embracing a Biblical Worldview¹, Lesson 5—Ethics

Review

Myers and Noebel's definition of Worldview:

“A pattern of ideas, beliefs, convictions, and habits that help us make sense of God, the world, and our relationship to God and the world.”²

Introduction

What is the difference between morality and ethics?³

Ethics defines what _____ and morality describes what _____.

Normative: something that derives from a _____ or a _____.

“Statistical morality”

The Source of the Christian Ethic

“One of the distinctions of the Judeo-Christian God is that not all things are the same to Him. That at first may sound rather trivial, but in reality it is one of the most profound things one can say about the Judeo-Christian God. He exists; He has a character; and not all things are the same to Him. Some things conform to His character, and some are opposed to His character.”⁴—Francis Schaeffer

¹This lesson material is from class lecture notes from “Survey of Christian Ethics” by Dr. Kevin Magnuson, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009. Addition material is taken from *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews* (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Ministries, 2016).

²Myers & Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 5-6.

³Summarized from “The Difference Between Ethics and Morality” by R.C. Sproul (<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/difference-between-ethics-and-morality>, retrieved 22 March, 2017).

⁴Schaeffer quoted in *Understanding the Times*, 244.

“The task of Christian ethics, then, is to determine what conforms to God’s character and what does not.”⁵—Myers & Noebel

_____ : right and wrong are determined by God’s commands.

Defining Christian Ethics

“Christian ethics is the discipline that examines human _____, _____, and the _____ for human life, in conformity to and grounded in the _____, _____, and _____ of God as revealed in _____, embodied in Jesus Christ, and established in the _____, _____, and which is made possible by the _____ of the _____.”— Dr. Kevin Magnuson

Dr. Magnuson breaks that down a little more:

Features of Christian Ethics

- 1) All about God:
- 2) Centered on Jesus:
- 3) Personal:
- 4) A way of life:
- 5) A matter of authority:
- 6) Written in creation:
- 7) Corrupted:
- 8) Call for obedience:
- 9) A supreme goal:
- 10) A supreme motive:

So, What About Absolutes?

Absolutes Do Not and Cannot Conflict

⁵Ibid.

Absolutes Can and Do Conflict

Absolutes Have a Hierarchy

What is clear: If our ethic is based on the character of God, then the moral standards that appear to be in conflict cannot be a real conflict or we have not properly defined them as God is.

Conclusion

Two themes: Matthew 22.35-40 and Micah 6.8

Vertical dimension:

Horizontal dimension: