

Christian Ethics (CL3)

*Thursdays, 10 AM-Noon, October 1-November 19, 2015

*Required Texts:

The Moral Quest, Stanley J. Grenz - \$323 pesos

Kingdom Ethics, Glen H. Stassen - \$408 pesos

Ross Arnold, Fall 2015
Lakeside institute of Theology

Policies and Requirements

1. Classes are free, but all students seeking a certificate or degree must purchase books (paper, not electronic), which will be made available by the Institute.
2. Students in certificate or degree tracks may miss no more than one class per course, without arrangements made in advance with the teacher to make up missed work (at the discretion of the teacher).
3. Students in certificate or degree tracks will be required to take a pass/fail final exam in each course, based on study guidelines provided by the teacher.
4. Students in certificate or degree tracks must make a passing grade (based on "pass/fail") in each course in order to receive credit towards a certificate or degree.
5. Candidates for degrees (Master of Theology and Master of Theology & Ministry) must be approved by the Institute Director before final admission into a degree program.

Policies and Requirements for making up classes, or taking classes online (as of April 3, 2014):

- I. All make-up classes must be completed before the beginning of the following term, unless you make special arrangements with the professor.
- II. All classes made up online must be reported via email to rda@rossarnold.net, as follows:
 - A. Each class must be reported in a separate email as soon after watching as possible.
 - B. Each email must contain the following information:
 1. Course title and/or code (NT4, OT3, TH2, etc.).
 2. The date of the original lecture you missed.
 3. The title of the lecture.
 4. A clear statement that you watched all of the lecture video, reviewed the materials and completed the required readings.
- III. Courses taken entirely online require prior approval, and apply only to audit or Certificate (not degree) requirements.

What is Ethics?

- **Ethics, or moral philosophy**, is the branch of philosophy that deals with determining the proper course of action for humanity, involving systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior.
- Ethics investigates the questions ***“What is the best way for people to live?”*** and ***“What actions are right or wrong in particular circumstances?”***
- In practice, ethics tries to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, crime and justice.

Philosophy of Ethics – What is right?

- **The problem is that it's sometime difficult to discern what course of action is best.**
 - How do we discern moral truth?
 - What principles are there to guide us in moral decision-making?
 - Or is there even such a thing as moral truth?
 - Is morality just a matter of opinion and emotions?
 - And what role does religious belief properly play in ethics?
- **The philosophy of ethics seeks to confront the need to find a connection between ethical theory and ethical practice, especially since some ethical situations are not morally clear.**


Philosophy of Ethics – What is right?

- “If you knew you could get away with a very profitable crime & no one else would be hurt, would you do it?”
- This raises the question, “What is ‘right?’”
 - The thing that brings the most benefit to me?
 - The thing that brings the most benefit to others?
 - The thing that brings benefit to the *most* people?
 - What does it mean to act “morally,” and what are our motives for doing so?
 - How far should we (or will we) go to act morally and do what is right, even if the results are unpleasant?
 - If all our knowledge and understanding (of life, God, philosophy, etc.) doesn't translate into a better life, what good is it?


Three Major Areas of Study Within Ethics

- **Meta-ethics**, concerning the theoretical meaning and reference of moral propositions, and how their truth values (if any) can be determined. (*“Where do our ethical values come from, and what do they mean?”*)
- **Normative Ethics**, deals with the practical means of determining a moral course of action. (*“On what do we base our ethical decisions?”* – three models: *Deontological/ Duty Ethics, Teleological/ Consequentialism, or Areteological/ Virtue Ethics*)
- **Applied Ethics**, concerning what a person is obligated (or permitted) to do in a *specific situation*.

Philosophy of Ethics – What is right?

- **One of the most basic ethical questions:**
 - **Is there absolute moral truth?** That is, are there moral values that are true for everyone, regardless of culture or personal preference?
 - **Moral or Ethical Objectivists** are those who believe there are universal moral standards.
 - **Moral or Ethical Relativists** are those who deny there are universal moral standards.
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Philosophy of Ethics – Ethical Relativism

- **Ethical Relativism – The view that there are no universally true moral values.**
 - If ethical relativism is correct, what is the meaning of moral judgments, such as “Honesty is good” or “Adultery is wrong”?
 - The answer, according to the relativist, is that such statements merely reflect peoples’ inherent survival instincts, their preferences, or the preferences of a culture or group.
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What is Christian Ethics?

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.”


Colossians 3:1-6

What is Christian Ethics?

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Luke 6:32-37

On What Do We Base our Christian Ethics?

- Scripture, directly and indirectly (*interpreted*)
 - Christian historical statements (Creeds, Early Church, writings of the Church Fathers, etc.)
 - The example of Jesus (*WWJD*)
 - The examples of the Apostles, Prophets and saints
 - The Holy Spirit
 - Christian Theology (Reformation, etc.)
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Ethical Questions

- If a person is found beyond any doubt to be involved in a terrorist plot against innocent people, is it morally acceptable to use torture to gain information that might lead to preventing the terrorist act from being carried out?

Ethical Questions

- Under what circumstances might abortion be acceptable?
 - In cases where it would negatively affect the mother's quality of life?
 - In cases of rape?
 - When the mother's life is at risk?
 - If the child will be born severely disabled?
 - How disabled must the unborn child be to justify abortion?

Ethical Questions

- *The Fat Man Conundrum*: If you knew with certainty that pushing an extremely obese and clearly unhealthy man to his death in front of a train would prevent the train from running over five small children, should you do it?

Ethical Questions

- If you had to choose between saving a 72-year-old atheistic scientist who had no family or friends, but was on the verge of discovering a cure for cancer; or saving a widowed soccer mom who is a committed Christian with four small children who depended on her, which would you choose?

Ethical Questions

- If you had to choose between saving a 72-year-old *Christian* scientist who had no family or friends, but was on the verge of discovering a cure for cancer; or saving a widowed soccer mom *who is an atheist* with four small children who depended on her, which would you choose?

Ethical Questions

- If you had to choose between providing food to a hungry family with four children, or letting them remain hungry in order to try to force the father of the family to take responsibility and do menial labor to help feed his family, what would you do?
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