

The 20th Annual Mid-West Lectures
1st Century Ethics
In A 21st Century World
September 15-19, 2002

Schedule of Lessons

Sunday, September 15th

Are Ethics Situational?	Ron Cosby - Disney, Oklahoma
Why Study Ethics?	Jack Williams - Independence, Missouri
Smoking and Tobacco Use	Charles Coats - Webberville, Michigan
Abortion	Paul Meacham - Memphis, Tennessee

Monday, September 16th

Birth Control	Randy Watson - Albany, Missouri
Fertilization Methods	Bill Goring - Lee's Summit, Missouri
Euthanasia and Suicide	Eugene Jenkins - Oak Grove, Missouri
Living Wills and Life Support	Steve Harbison - Ottawa, Kansas
The Christian and His Money	Fred Rhodes - Jamesport, Missouri
The Ethics of Jesus In His Earthly Ministry	Robert R. Taylor, Jr. - Ripley, Tennessee
Can We Determine Right and Wrong?	Perry B. Cotham - Grand Prairie, Texas

Tuesday, September 17th

Honesty	John Shafer - Kearney, Nebraska
Are There Bible Examples of Situation Ethics?	Robert R. Taylor, Jr. - Ripley, Tennessee
Organ Transplants and Blood Transfusions	Toney Smith - Dresden, Tennessee
Ethical Concerns of Godly Preachers	George Jensen - Guthrie Center, Iowa
Sex and Ethics	Michael Wyatt - Handley, Texas
Ethical Concerns of Godly Elders	Tom Bright, Sr. - Dyersburg, Tennessee
Drugs and Alcohol	Terry Mabery - Collinsville, Illinois

Wednesday, September 18th

Race Relations	Jack Williams - Independence, Missouri
The Church and Politics	Jay Yeager - Springfield, Ohio
Gambling	Perry B. Cotham - Grand Prairie, Texas
Biblical Love and Ethics	Wayne Brewer - Sheridan, Arkansas
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Dating and Ethics	Larry Yarber - Fordland, Missouri

Thursday, September 19th

Various Ethical Models	Michael Hughes - Blue Springs, Missouri
Stem Cell Research and Use	Ted Thrasher - Olathe, Kansas
Evangelism and Ethics	Jim O'Connor - Oak Grove, Missouri
Ethics in the Workplace	Don Underwood - Chula Vista, California
Capital Punishment	Chuck Northrop - Conway, Arkansas
Ethics and Marriage	Toney Smith - Dresden, Tennessee
The Christian and Warfare	Michael Wyatt - Handley, Texas

Are Ethics Situational?

Ron Cosby

Ron has been preaching the gospel since 1970. He is an instructor in the Online Academy of Biblical Studies and also co-moderator of the Let Us Reason internet discussion group. He and his wife own a catfish restaurant on Grand Lake, located 5 miles east of Disney, Oklahoma. They have three children and four grandchildren and one great grandson.

Introduction

The world practices a variety of ethical systems. Here are a few:

- The Calvinist says, *whatever* you do, you didn't do it, God did.
- The Atheist says, *whatever* you do, it doesn't matter; everything is permitted.
- Judas Iscariot says, *whatever* you do, don't turn your back
- The Social Anarchism says, *whatever* you do, don't get caught.
- The Pharisee says, *whatever* you do, do it to be seen of men (Matthew 6:1).
- The liberal says, *whatever* you do, do it as long as your heart is right.
- The Change Agent says, *whatever* you do, surrender the Truth.
- The fence sitting Middle of the Roader says, *whatever* you do, hug *everybody*, don't disagree.
- The Playboy says, *whatever* you do, have fun.
- The Politician says, *whatever* you do, be able to blame another.
- The husband says, *whatever* you do, wait until halftime.
- The wife says, *whatever* you do, don't do it.
- Joseph Fletcher (promulgator of Situation Ethics) says, *whatever* you do, what you do isn't important, as long as you love.
- Paul taught, *whatever* you do, "do all in the name of the Lord" and "do all to the glory of God" (Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

My assignment is to take a closer look at Situation Ethics in the light of the One Truth (which, to those who hold the Situation Ethic's view, is a waste of energy since there is no prescriptive principles with which to compare).

Basic Understanding of Situation Ethics

Without going into the variety of meanings and usages of the word "ethics," here is our working definition: Morality, morals, what people ought to do, with what people should do. They ought to do what is right! They ought to shun what is wrong!

In 1966 Joseph Fletcher (1905-92), a professor at the Episcopal Theological School, published his *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*. In it, he advocates a so-called "Christian" ethic based on

existential situations rather than prescriptive principles. More specifically, in his book, Mr. Fletcher says, "Whether any form of sex is good or evil depends on whether love is fully served" (139). Mr. Fletcher's "any form of sex" includes hetero, homo, auto, bi or whatever. He also says, "There are times when a man has to push his principles aside and do the right thing" (13). When should we push our principles aside? Mr. Fletcher answers, "The ruling norm of Christian decision is love, nothing else" (69). He believes love is the only thing that matters, saying, "Only one thing is intrinsically good; namely, love: nothing else at all" (56). Concerning the ten commandments, Fletcher said, "...situation ethics has good reason to hold it as a duty in some situations to break them, any or all of them" (74). These thoughts give you a good view of the philosophy.

In agreeing with Mr. Fletcher, Richard Longenecker has captured Mr. Fletcher's harmful view, saying,

Christians can determine what should be done in any particular case simply by getting the facts of the situation clearly in view, and then asking themselves, "What is the loving thing to do in this case?" Such an approach, of course, does not rule out the prescriptive, for it accepts love as the one great principle for life. (2)

In defense of Mr. Fletcher's ethic standard, Dale Turner, a columnist for The Seattle Times, erroneously narrows our choices of ethics to either doing what the majority prescribes or doing what love alone dictates. He sarcastically jabs his critics, saying, "It is better, the critics say, to abide by laws, prescribed by many and surviving the test of time, than to think we are wise enough to know the most loving thing to do in any given situation" (2). Laws which have been prescribed by the many are no better than Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics. Mr. Turner, your options are too narrow. We have more choices than the law of the major and the law of only love. Laws and precepts prescribed by a benevolent Creator who knows His creation is the only option that makes good sense. This standard can be found in the Bible.

Situation Ethics Is Not Unique to Joseph Fletcher or to the 20th Century

Within the last 2 decades, others have taught this error. Mother Teresa (1910-97, Albanian-born Indian nun and missionary) practiced the idea that the kind of work you do isn't important; whatever you do, do it with love. On his web site, Dallas Burdette teaches Situations Ethics, but he calls it "Graded Absolutism" (3). We will have more to say about Mr. Burdette in a moment. Humanism also advocates situation ethics. *The Humanist Manifesto II* declares, "Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest" (17). In October, 1984, Cecil Hook wrote a book entitled, *Free In Christ*. In the fifth chapter, he writes, "Even the most rigid of God's laws were not always inflexible. There are examples showing that in certain circumstances there was elasticity in the most absolute laws. In this lesson we shall look for the principles which take precedence over law" (1). What are Mr. Hook's imagined principles that must "take precedence over law"? In the same chapter, he answers, "if we understand a law to conflict with mercy and love, we have misinterpreted the law. The fundamental principles should prevail, for they are the purpose of the law" (1). As you can see, Mr. Fletcher is not alone in his false doctrine.

A few centuries back, a doctrine called "Casuistry" flourished. It is the application of ethical principles in terms of specific cases. In Theological ethics the practice developed in the 8th century. It became quite prevalent centuries later. Kant (Immanuel 1724-1804 German philosopher) and Pascal (Blaise 1623-1662 French mathematician & philosopher) condemned the system, and in the 17th century it fell into neglect, though it has continued until today, under the name of Situation Ethics, "Graded Absolutism" and "Values Clarification."

Before that, the Jews in Jesus' day practiced a form of situational ethics (Mark 7:9-13). In order to get around the clear command of God to "honor thy father and thy mother," the self-righteous Jews were excusing themselves of this responsibility by using their imagined "it is Corban" escape clause, an escape clause they developed for their own use. They claimed that they had dedicated all of their money and possessions to God; therefore, they had nothing left with which to support their parents. Though the "it is Corban" philosophy gives all to God because of one's love and devotion to God, it is a false philosophy based on a false concept of love. It fails to love one's parents as God has commanded. But, of course, those who hold love as their only guiding principle can void God's commands when the law of God gets in the way of their imagined love.

Situation Ethics or Graded Absolutism Is Faulty

The following examples show the dire consequences of Situation Ethics (Graded Absolutism). In 2001, Andrea Yates murdered her five children. What was her motive? Love. She loved her children so much that she did not want to see them burn in hell. According to the proper application of Situation Ethics (Graded Absolutism), Mother Yates did no sin. Keep in mind that she had/has no idea whether or not her children would have been lost. They could have become Christians. After all, she is reported to have been a member of the Lord's Church.

Let us suppose that we know some things that Mother Yates does not know. Let us suppose that one of the boys that she murdered had lived and had grown up to be a gospel preacher. Let us also suppose, in Boy Yate's preaching lifetime, he converts hundreds, even thousands. Now, which is the loving thing to do? Folks, the answer is immaterial as far as ascertaining whether what she ought to have or what she ought not to have done. She ought not have murdered her children. We give this scenario to emphasize that Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics is faulty. It will not work. The philosophy demands that its disciples gain an unobtainable knowledge and exercise a greater-than-Solomon wisdom. It cannot be done!

On his web site, Mr. Dallas Burdette, advocate of Situation Ethics under the new term of "Graded Absolutism," presents his readers with two cases that illustrate the loving thing to do. He says [following is an edited version of one of the examples],

To set the stage for the principle of "mercy" over "law," this author presents two stories about murder and wife abuse. These two stories illustrate the "person-in-the-situation"....

CASE NUMBER ONE. According to a police report, two men (Grady Gibson and Eddie Hart) conspired to kill the wife of Eddie to collect insurance money. This young woman was

taken out into the woods, tied to a tree, and almost decapitated by Grady Gibson. He did not have sex with her, he simply cut off her head.... He [Grady] is in for life! Now, the question: Is Mrs. Gibson bound to her husband, Grady Gibson, for the rest of her life simply because he did not have sex with the woman he murdered—he just cut her head off? Does she have scriptural grounds to divorce him and remarry, even though adultery was not committed? Some say yes, others say no.

Since Mrs. Gibson's husband is incarcerated in prison for life, without a chance for parole.... What is the status of the wife since the husband did not commit adultery, but murder? Since she divorced her husband, is she free to marry again? Is she bound to this man for the rest of his life? Are there any principles set forth in the Scriptures whereupon one can make a rational decision concerning her predicament? Can she remarry without sinning?.... (11)

Mr. Burdette advocates that the loving thing to do is to allow the wife to remarry.

Perhaps the most bizarre example of this kind of relativistic and subjective thinking occurred in connection with the infamous Charles Manson family. Susan Atkins was one of the participants in the 1969 scene of unparalleled modern carnage. Actress Sharon Tate, eight months pregnant, was cruelly savaged. When Atkins was asked by police deputies about the rationale behind the killing, she smiled and cooed, "You have to have a real love in your heart to do this for people." The deputies said that Atkins seemed grotesquely sincere. Charles Manson's philosophy is the same as Joseph Fletcher's. This can be seen in the following proclamation from Manson himself. I have seen several reports that Manson has said, "I haven't got any guilt about anything because I have never been able to see any wrong.... I have always said: Do what your love tells you, and I do what my love tells me." Thus, both Susan and Charles said the motive behind the carnage of Sharon Tate was love. Keep in mind that this philosophy was in the midst of the "Jesus Freak" movement which advocated group love.

The disciple of Situation Ethics might respond and say, "This is not love." Whether it is or it isn't is not the issue. The very fact that one can see that humans call bizarre actions love demonstrates that the philosophy of love only is the wrong standard to follow. Man must have a sure guide, a guide that can be found in the Bible.

Situation ethics ignores the sanctity of life. By so doing, it makes one an ally with the ungodly belief of Humanist. According to their own words, Humanists and Mr. Fletcher, "drop the...sanctity-of-life ethic and embrace a quality-of-life ethic." In 1974, Humanists awarded Joseph Fletcher the Humanist of the Year for his contributions in ethics, saying,

Dr. Fletcher's contribution was in the field of ethics. He came from a Protestant base but thoroughly studies all aspects of theology, philosophy, and Humanist thought. He developed a clear statement of ethical principles that set aside the old ideas of dependence on absolute religious rules. Dr. Fletcher's research continued in hospitals and medical schools where he learned firsthand the ethical dilemmas met daily by doctors as lifesaving technologies improved. Dr. Fletcher's scholarship is reflected in writings which include *Situation Ethics* (1966) and *Humanhood: Essays in Biomedical Ethics* (1979)...In *The Humanist*, July/August 1974, he wrote, "...we should drop the...sanctity-of-life ethic and embrace a quality-of-life ethic." --M.M. (1)

These are not policies of "quality-of-life" but of "imposed death." Speaking out of both sides of their mouths, Humanists, with their situation ethics and so-called "lifesaving technologies," advocate the taking of the life of a three day old baby and the 80 year old grandmother who has outlived her usefulness.

The most menacing problem of all, however, is, it makes us all creators of truth. Or, as another has said, "each of us decides what is true for me." Such arrogance effects grisly consequences. Compare the book of Judges.

Proper Love Recognizes the Need for Mankind To Adhere to God's Commandments in All Situations

We must adhere to God's statutes. Life demands that we make judgments (John 7:24; Mat 7:1). Without a proper standard, man's lack of total insight hinders him from making proper decisions (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12). God, who knows mankind and his needs, calls upon mankind to use the divine rule book (Isaiah 34:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 8:30-34). By learning what God has said and what God meant, we can live a productive life that will benefit those around us.

Try this exercise as you read the following Bible passages that refute situation ethics. Read the verse, then immediately read Mr. Fletcher's viewpoint which says, what you do isn't important, as long as you love.

- John 14:15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.
- 1 John 2:3-5 And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him:
- 1 John 5:2-3 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.
- Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.
- Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The two do not agree, do they? They are as far apart as the North Pole is from the South Pole. As far as I can see, Mr. Fletcher's viewpoint is just as cold as both. If a standard disagrees with the Bible, as does the philosophy of Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Burdette and Mr Hook, it is to be discarded. Discard it because for one's happiness.

Conclusion

Man is not born with an innate ethical or moral goodness, nor is man born with innate unethical and immoral inclination. He learns both good and evil. If he does not learn good, he will learn evil. He may learn good and choose evil. When he chooses good, he must have the proper standard of good from which to choose.

Where will his standard arise? This lesson has presented two basic standards from which to choose. One may decide to abide by God's prescribed manner of living. Or, one may choose to follow Mr. Fletcher's ethical guidance, which means he is deciding his ethics as the situation dictates, without any standard. The results of following Mr. Fletcher's standard is deadly to its disciples and a menace to mankind. This philosophy, in the name of so-called mercy and love, allows murder, butchery and adultery. It is to be rejected—soundly rejected.

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Why Study Ethics?

Jack H. Williams

A simple answer would be “inquiring minds want to know.” Just look at the topics we will be studying in this series (and confronting in life)... who doesn’t want to be able to give a proper answer to the dilemmas which confront us and others as we walk upon this earth?! Of course the problem is that everyone has their own ideas about what the answer is in each of these situations. Actually the world would have us to believe that all of these matters are simply relegated to personal choice and that there is no absolute answer to any of them. That in itself necessitates a study of ethics for any who desire to be true children of God, for we have been given the obligation to “prove all things; hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 4:21).

In the book of Ecclesiastes we have the record of the efforts of King Solomon to “see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life” (2:3). As we go through this inspired record we find that Solomon did indeed examine much of what man deems “good” for life, all of which really fall into the three categories revealed in 1 John 2:16, “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” After this examination and experimentation Solomon concluded,

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

In this text we find the basis of our study as to why we should study ethics. Here we find:

- A definition of ethics
- The reality of the free will of man in making choices
- The imperative nature of having the proper character to make the proper choices
- The singular basis for making ethical decisions

When we examine these we will hopefully understand the question in the title of the lesson - “Why should we study ethics?” and of course the answer.

A Definition of Ethics

For a definition of ethics, one would look to philosophy and find that we are dealing with what would be called “normative ethics” which is “the development of theories that systematically denominate right and wrong actions” as well as “applied ethics, the use of these theories to form judgments regarding practical cases” (*Philosophical Dictionary*).

Of course God gives us a clear and concise definition in His Word if we will but look. According to our text, all actions in which we involve ourselves are either “good” or “evil.” The immense realm of choices before each of us is staggering! Consider for example the various studies which are being considered in this lectureship. And of course it seems our technology is going forth as such a swift pace that we will confront in the future other previously unheard of (and many times

unimaginable) decisions! Then of course we go to other realms – business (who is not familiar with Enron, Worldcomm...); politics (what of lying?; what of immorality? – again questions we are all too familiar with).

Our duty is to decide which we should do. A study of ethics deals with two basic facets:

- (1) determining these matters of right (“good”) and wrong (“evil”)
- (2) obligation of man to respond to this knowledge in a proper fashion. It is not enough just to know the answers, we must be willing to take responsibility to apply the answers to our life.

Of course this concept of determining and acting upon the results is nothing new. “Ethics” has been defined throughout God’s Word.

- In the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:9-13)
- In the days of Noah (Genesis 6:5-9)
- As the Israelites were about to enter the promised land (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)
- As Joshua spoke to the people who had obtained the promised land (Joshua 24:15)

We need to study ethics so that we will understand that we must determine the matters of right or wrong and explore the obligation we have to respond to and apply this knowledge to our life.

The Reality of the Free Will of Man in Making Choices

Note that the Wise man in Ecclesiastes did not search for what man “will do.” Calvinism has so permeated the denominational world and even the church that multitudes are deceived into thinking that man has no volition regarding decisions of right or wrong. Calvinism states that

"natural man is never able to do any good... and, in fact, does evil all the time... From conception and birth man is polluted with sin because of the fall of Adam... [Man] is not even able to understand the good... It is impossible for him to do good and please God" (Palmer 13).

Of course the problem is compounded when so-called science steps in with foolish assertions that a man’s genetic makeup determines such things as homosexuality.

Sadly it is not just denominations that are falling prey to the idea that man cannot make the proper choices God calls upon us to make, the church too must be ever aware to this foolish concept.

Of course Solomon made the truth clear when he said he sought for “what they should do” (2:3). Here he shows that mankind is clearly faced with a *choice* in what he does in his life. Again this is clearly in accord with God’s teaching throughout His word:

- Genesis 3:9 – “where art thou?”
- Genesis 3:13 – “What is this that thou hast done?”
- Joshua 24:15 – “choose you this day whom ye will serve”

- Matthew 23:37 – “...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”
- Acts 17:30 – “God ... commandeth all men every where to repent”

We need to study ethics so that we will recognize our free will in deciding the matters before us.

The Imperative Nature of Having the Proper Character to Make the Proper Choices

The necessity of these proper choices are indicated by three phrases in our text:

1. “this is the whole duty of man.”

Literally this would read “this is the whole man,” denoting what God’s desire is for the full ideal of man. We gain a better understanding of this “whole of man” concept if we look to the derivation of the word “ethics.” It is from ἦθος, which is the,

Greek word for custom or habit, the characteristic conduct of an individual human life. Hence, beginning with Aristotle, ethics is the study of human conduct, and the Stoics held that all behavior—for good or evil—arises from the ἦθος of the individual. (*Philosophical Dictionary*).

In Luke 4:16 we read of Jesus, “as his custom [ἦθος - verb form of ἠθω - jhw] was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day...”. In Hebrews 10:25 we read that we are not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner [ἦθος] of some is...”. In these passages what is being described is the very character – what they are. When we are faced with choices, our true character comes forth. Jesus chose to go to the synagogue on the sabbath day because of who He was – His character. Those who forsake the assembling of the saints show their true character. Solomon expressed the same thought in Proverbs when he said “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (4:23). Our decisions are a product of who we are.

2. “whether it be good, or whether it be evil”

Here we find that all choices before us are an “either / or” situation... good or evil. How far this is from the concept of immense “gray areas” in which many seek to justify their evil deeds! In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus did not speak of a broad way that leads to destruction, a narrow way to eternal life and a gray path between! He simply said there is a wide gate and a narrow gate ... two ways, evil or good (Matthew 7:13-14). In speaking of the resurrection to judgement He said “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). Two ways, evil or good. There is not a vast area of “gray” unknowable situations which we face. The fact is we *can know* by a study of ethics whether and act is either good or evil.

3. “God shall bring every work into judgment”

Here we confront the stark reality that *our choices will be of eternal significance*. Paul stated in the Hebrew letter, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). And at that judgment “he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:33). The sheep (those who chose good) will receive eternal life, the goats (those who chose evil) will be sent to eternal damnation (verse 46).

We need to study ethics so that we can understand the imperative nature of having (developing) the proper character to make the proper choices.

The Singular Basis for These Ethical Decisions

“Fear God, and keep His commandments”

Oddly enough, for centuries (actually for the whole history of the world) mankind has struggled with the question of whether ethics can in fact be taught as objective and knowable. “The issue is an old one. Almost 2500 years ago, the philosopher Socrates debated the question with his fellow Athenians. Socrates' position was clear: Ethics consists of knowing what we ought to do, and such knowledge can be taught” (*Can Ethics Be Taught*)

Oddly enough the debate still rages:

In a recent editorial, the Wall Street Journal announced that ethics courses are useless because ethics can't be taught. Although few people would turn to the Wall Street Journal as a learned expert on the teaching of ethics, the issue raised by the newspaper is a serious one: Can ethics be taught? (ibid)

Today we face not only the idea of whether ethics can be taught but whether there is an objective and knowable standard for such decisions. Given what we have already learned from our text we surely realize that if we do not have a singular basis for ethical decisions we are doomed!

While there will be other lessons which address this in a more complete fashion our text gives a clear and decisive answer – “Fear God and keep His commandments.” Such refers not only to the character we have already discussed (“fear God”) but makes plain that “His commandments” are the singular source of our ethical decisions. When Solomon saw the futility of following, “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16) he saw the value and necessity of that divine standard for life - the Word of God.

Again this is set forth time and again as the singular standard for the ethical decisions with which we are faced. In the beginning Satan realized this and sought to pervert it with the addition of a single word – “Ye shall *not* surely die” (Genesis 3:4). Jesus likewise made it clear in the parable of the sower that the devil's goal is to keep this Word from being found on “good ground” and thus bringing salvation (Luke 8:4-15).

We need to study ethics so that we can be assured that there is a singular standard by which we make ethical decisions and this standard – the Word of God – is inspired, all sufficient and knowable.

Conclusion

Why study ethics? *We need to study ethics*

- *so that we will understand that we must determine the matters of right or wrong and explore the obligation we have to respond to and apply this knowledge to our life.*
- *so that we will recognize our free will in deciding the matters before us.*
- *so that we can understand the imperative nature of having (developing) the proper character to make the proper choices.*
- *so that we can be assured that there is a singular standard by which we make ethical decisions and this standard – the Word of God – is inspired, all sufficient and knowable.*

King Solomon determined to “see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life” (Ecclesiastes 2:3). His conclusion was “fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

What is YOUR conclusion?

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Smoking And Tobacco Use

Charles Coats

Charles is a native of Arkansas, born in Gurdon, Arkansas August 22, 1953. He has been married to Leanna (Darling) since June 27, 1975. They have 2 children - Brandon who preaches in Chelsea, Michigan and Ben, married to Tami, who is a student at University of Michigan Law School. Charles graduated Brown Trail School of Preaching in 1982. He has done local work in Murfreesboro, Arkansas, Mountain Grove, Missouri, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, Dierks, Arkansas, Fouke, Arkansas, Howell, Michigan and helped establish a congregation in Webberville, Michigan on 1991 where he still labors. He has conducted meetings in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. He directed a lectureship while in Dierks, Arkansas. He also maintains a full-time work with Dunnage Engineering in Brighton, Michigan as the Plant Administrator.

The consumption of cigarettes in the United States has tapered off in the last several years. After peaking at 634 billion cigarettes in 1982, it was down to about 430 billion in 1999 (Trends in cigarette smoking, "Table 1: Cigarette consumption, United States, 1900-1999). This 430 billion would be approximately 1720 cigarettes per every man, woman, and child in the United States. The dangers of cigarette smoking and the use of tobacco have long since been documented. The people in the world that use tobacco will all readily admit that it is bad for them to use tobacco, especially to smoke. They will continue to do it because it gives them, at the very least, momentary pleasure or it "relaxes them". Although many use tobacco, many have quit because of the health hazards of using tobacco. There is no "safe" tobacco. Philip Morris U.S.A., the nation's largest cigarette producer, makes this statement at the beginning of its list of tobacco ingredients: *"There is no such thing as a "safe" cigarette and we are not pointing out that the ingredients are used in or occur in food in order to imply "safety" with respect to any brand of cigarettes"* (Philip Morris, U.S.A., "Tobacco ingredients ...", p. 1).

To help us understand the dangers of using tobacco, let us note some of the results of several studies that have been done in this area:

1. "Chronic exposure to smoke may curb the development of a child's lung function ... Parental smoking repeatedly has been linked to an increase in middle ear fluid, a sign of chronic ear disease ... Seventy-five percent of all young people who smoke come from homes where one or both parents smoke." (Patient Newsletter, Little Rock Allergy Clinic, p. 2)
2. Ulcer surgery patients live an average of 9.1 years less than the average person. This was not related to the surgery, but to their smoking. (Arkansas Democrat, "Ulcer surgery patients ...", p. 5A)
3. Adults who smoke are 53% more likely to have been divorced than those who do not smoke. (USA Today, "Smoke and marriage ...", p. 1D).
4. Over 9000 people die each year due to oral cancer. The risk is not reduced by switching from cigarettes to other forms of tobacco. (American Dental Association, p. 1).
5. Children of parents who smoke have an increased rate of breathing infections (Springfield Daily News, "Parents who smoke ...")

6. Cigarette smoking can reduce your night vision, reduces the size of your visual field, and causes irritation of the eyes (American Optometric Association, p. 2).
7. Smoking causes cardiomyopathy, a condition that leads to heart failure and could kill a person (Springfield Daily News, "Study links smoking ...").
8. Smoking has long been known to increase the risk of lung cancer. It is the number one cause of lung cancer. (American Lung Association,, pp. 2-7).
9. "Approximately 46 percent of fatal coronary disease and 54 percent of non-fatal heart attacks in women can be attributed to cigarette use (Arkansas Democrat, "Study shows increase in risks ...").
10. Among the Amish, traditionally non-smokers, there is almost no lung cancer or lung disease (Arkansas Gazette, "'Passive smoking,' ...").
11. Dixie Youth Baseball has rules that forbid the use of tobacco by anyone within the playing field, and forbid sponsors who promote tobacco products (Dixie Youth Baseball, pp. 45,46).

The use of tobacco products causes or attributes to emphysema, lung disease, and cancers of just about every portion of the body – mouth, larynx, throat, stomach, lungs, etc. Smoking causes over 500,000 deaths a year in the United States. This is more than are killed in automobile accidents or by that dreaded illness, AIDS. In all the years of fighting in Vietnam, the United States lost around 55,000 soldiers and support troops. It would take 10 Vietnams to equal what cigarettes do to the United States in one year.

While extremely dangerous to mankind, people still use tobacco. Tobacco is addictive and very difficult to quit. Because of its dangers, many have switched to other tobacco choices. Their hope is to reduce the health risks caused by the use of tobacco. Does this really work?

The addictive agent in all tobacco is nicotine. Pure nicotine is highly dangerous. If all the nicotine in a single pack of cigarettes were extracted and injected directly into a person, it would kill him. Nicotine gives the tobacco user the same high as those who use morphine or cocaine (Springfield Daily News, "Nicotine can arouse ...", p. 1B). The addiction caused by nicotine can make quitting smoking harder than quitting some hard drugs. Nicotine gives the smoker his "lift" in the morning, but can cause drowsiness later in the day. This is the reason that smokers have to continually smoke throughout the day.

Many have switched from regular cigarettes to cigars, low-tar and nicotine cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and snuff in order to help reduce the risks from smoking. The problem with this logic is that "tobacco is tobacco is tobacco". The ingredients in tobacco, including nicotine, are still there. With cigars, people have determined that they cannot be as bad for you as you puff them and do not have to inhale them as you do cigarettes. However, this is still burning tobacco and it still increases the risk of oral cancers of all sorts, as well as lung cancer, emphysema, etc. Over a century ago, Horace Greely said a cigar is a "fire at one end and a fool at the other" (Time, p. 69).

Low tar and nicotine do not help either. While they reduce the intake of these two ingredients through the filter, it has been noted that people smoke more of these cigarettes because of the need for more nicotine. Also, people have been known to close up the holes in the filter on these cigarettes in order to get more tar and nicotine. Because low tar and nicotine lose some of their

flavor, flavor enhancers have to be added. Again, we are back to ingredients that become carcinogens (cancer causing agents) when burned.

Smokeless tobacco increases the risk of a pre-cancerous condition called leukoplakia. Smokeless tobacco contains several carcinogens, and causes damage to the gums and bones that support the teeth. Also, smokeless tobacco contains high levels of grit and sand that can cause uneven wear of the teeth (American Dental Association, "Smokeless Tobacco", pp. 2,3).

Cigarette smoking is the most popular form of tobacco use in the United States. In order to better understand cigarettes, I went to the Philip Morris U.S.A. website and this is some of the information contained on that site:

1. There are 115 ingredients that go into cigarettes. While not all are used in any one brand, all of these are used somewhere in the brands produced by Philip Morris U.S.A. Two processing aids used are carbon dioxide and ethyl alcohol. This company has an almost 51% of the market share in the United States in the cigarette market.
2. Besides the ingredients in the tobacco, there are 9 ingredients in the cigarette papers; 6 ingredients in the sideseam adhesive; 32 ingredients used in the monogram inks; 12 ingredients used in the filtration materials; 49 ingredients used in the filter papers; and 16 ingredients in the filter adhesives.
3. Philip Morris U.S.A. points out that many of these ingredients are found in every day foods, yet reminds us that this does not make cigarettes safe. (Philip Morris U.S.A., "Tobacco ingredients ..."; "Non-tobacco components list").

While the ingredients in cigarettes may seem harmless, we have to remember that when a cigarette is set on fire, many of these seemingly harmless ingredients become dangerous to our health. It has been noted that there are over 4000 toxic substances in cigarettes. The following is a list of some of these:

Arsenic: found in rat poisons
Acetic Acid: found in hair dye developer
Acetone: found in nail polish remover
Ammonia: found in household cleaners
Benzene: found in rubber cement
Butane: found in lighter fluid
Cadmium: found in batteries
Carbon monoxide: found in car fumes
Carbon Tetrachloride: found in dry cleaning fluid
Ethanol: found in alcohol
Formaldehyde: used to embalm dead bodies
Hydrazine: found in rocket fuel
Hexamine: found in barbecue lighters
Hydrogen Cyanide: found in poison gas chambers
Lead: found in batteries
Methane: found in swamp gas
Methanol: found in rocket fuel
Naphthalenes: found in explosives

Phenol: found in disinfectants and plastics
Polonium: found in radiation
Staeric Acid: found in candle wax
Tar: found in roads
Tuluene: found in embalmers glue
(What's in a Cigarette?, p. 1)

Many have been impressed with the recent court rulings and the large tobacco settlement. All this settlement did was to give people a reason to keep the tobacco industry alive. While it seems like the tobacco industry lost, in order for them to fulfill their end of the settlement, they will have to stay in business for, at least, the next 25 years (Nicotine Victims.com, p. 1).

As Christians, we must examine the use of tobacco in light of what the Bible teaches. All that we do must be by the authority of Christ (Colossians 3:17) and to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). What does the Bible teach that relates to our subject matter?

1. The use of tobacco is sin because it is not taking care of our bodies. Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. We are to glorify God in our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19). One cannot take care of one's body and use tobacco in any form.
2. The use of tobacco is sin because it is not presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1,2). Are we offering our spiritual best when we destroy our bodies and endanger others by our use of tobacco? (Remember that second-hand smoke is harmful to others in the area.)
3. The use of tobacco is sin because it does not present the image of one who is walking in the footsteps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21). The world knows the use of tobacco is wrong. They argue their right to do so based on freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution. They do not argue that it is right to use tobacco based on any evidence from Scripture. Many that I have talked to know they will have to quit using tobacco if they become Christians.
4. The use of tobacco is sin because it does not show that we love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). The commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves is called the "royal law" by God (James 2:8). One cannot fulfill this law when one destroys self, thus bringing pain and sorrow to loved ones. One cannot fulfill this law when endangering the lives of others (second-hand smoke).
5. The use of tobacco is sin because it is addictive. Matthew 6:24 teaches us that no man can serve two masters. He will hate the one and love the other. Those who use tobacco are in the service of the tobacco, thus keeping themselves from being in service to God. One who says that he is not in service to the tobacco, then let me challenge you: "STOP YOUR USE OF TOBACCO NOW. PUT IT DOWN AND WALK AWAY FROM IT!" Few have ever quit by just stopping. In our stores, we see stop smoking kits, patches, gum, etc. to help people quit smoking. Whether people will admit it or not, they are "owned" by their tobacco.
6. The use of tobacco is sin because it is not placing God and his kingdom first in our lives (Matthew 6:33). God will never accept less than our best (Colossians 3:23). The tobacco user takes away his health and therefore his ability to serve God. The tobacco user will crave his tobacco more than his love for God The tobacco user that is a Christian will twist

scripture or make excuses in order to “justify” his practice. This is not how we as Christians should handle God’s word (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

One of the arguments used to provide some “defense” in favor of using tobacco is that it is no worse than caffeine consumption and overeating. While it is the case that the Christian must watch his intake of caffeine and that obesity is harmful to our health, does this “justify” the use of tobacco? This is one of the weakest forms of argument to try to prove something to be right. This argument is really a case of admitting that what we are doing is wrong. We are comparing our deed to something that we believe to be wrong. By saying it is no worse than something else, we are actually stating that what we are doing is equal to something we believe to be wrong. Therefore, our deed is wrong. Two wrongs have never made a right. Rather than try to justify something by something else, we need to examine Scripture and put everything to the test. We need to then remove from our lives all things that are contrary to scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The use of tobacco is sin. Some time back, I saw a saying that should help those who smoke to decide the proper course of action to take towards the use of tobacco:

“WHERE DO YOU WISH TO SPEND ETERNITY – SMOKING OR NONSMOKING?”

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Abortion

Paul Meacham

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Introduction

As it is not the author's desire to be unnecessarily gruesome in this discussion of abortion, we will not go into any of the specific methods doctors use in performing abortions. Suffice it say, that the procedures are barbaric, disgusting, and, in every sense of the word, inhumane. While it will not be pleasant, I encourage each of you, especially parents with children still at home, to visit the web sites listed at the end of this article and review the material with your children as soon as you deem them mature enough to handle it.

I know that a parent's first instinct might very well be to shield his children from this type of information. As the father of three, I completely understand. However, you should know that **teenage girls** (all emp. PDM unless otherwise stated) have 20% (that's about 300,000 per year) of all the abortions performed, and that 43% of all women will have at least one abortion in their childbearing years (Robinson). Maybe your teenager, or even pre-teen, has already been exposed to far more information than you would want. Be sure that they have the chance to learn the truth about abortion at least as early as they hear the lies.

Is Abortion Murder?

To answer the question, "Is abortion murder?" it is necessary to first determine when life begins. "Whether or not abortion should be legal turns on the answer to the question of whether and at what point a fetus is a person (Campos). The problem arises from the fact that there are many different and contradictory answers to what abortion is and when life begins.

Various legislative bodies and courts have written laws and passed judgments trying to determine from a legal standpoint when life begins. They have failed. "In the year 2000, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (UVVA) passed the House with a substantial majority, but was defeated in the senate. The law defines a fertilized ovum, an embryo, and a fetus as a full human person at any stage of development from conception to birth (Robinson, 2)." This disagreement in the Congress is representative of the strong disagreement existing among politically active people, and, therefore, their political representatives in Washington.

State political and legal efforts have not fared much better. The laws that have been passed are grossly contradictory and represent the platform of whichever political party has the deepest pockets in that particular state. While defending HB547 in 2001, Montana state senator Duane Grimes demonstrated the inability of our country to reach a legal or political determination of when life begins.

“He said he wanted to simplify the bill to make it a separate offense to harm or kill a fetus in the process of assaulting or killing a pregnant woman. ‘Thirty-five states have similar or identical laws and eight have been upheld by state supreme courts,’ Grimes added.” But he was quick to point out. “The bill exempts abortions or any other medical treatments, and any acts by a pregnant woman that results in injury to a fetus, he said. ‘We don’t want unintended abuse (Anez).’” Why write a bill that expressly recognizes that life begins at conception and should, therefore, be protected, and then, in the same bill, exempt the child’s mother of having to abide by that recognition? While it makes no sense to do so, it is the norm among state legislators. “According to Douglas Johnson, federal legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, 24 U.S. states recognize unborn children as victims for the purposes of criminal law...Of those 24, he said, 11 states cover the entire period of prenatal development and 13 define distinct stages at which an unborn child becomes a ‘human being’...However,...most state statutes, Utah’s included, specifically exempt criminal prosecution for the death of an unborn child caused by abortion (Welling).” Clearly the courts and legislatures have proven themselves unwilling, unable, and unfit to answer the question of when life begins.

Since abortion is a medical procedure, many turn to doctors and medical research experts to determine when life begins. Doctors have fared no better than lawmakers. One doctor will speak of an “embryo,” “fetus,” or “non-viable tissue mass.” Another doctor recognizes that, at the point of conception, a brand new and unique DNA code is created. He recognizes that, at the point of conception, all the genetic components of a new person are present; he needs only to have the time to develop and mature. He recognizes that if such time is allowed, without outside intervention, this, that is newly conceived, will develop into a mature human being. Therefore, that doctor will admonish the expectant mother to care well for herself and her “baby.”

This contradiction among the medical profession is so stark that sometimes the same doctor will perform an emergency C-section delivery of a premature “baby” in one room and a routine abortion of a “non-viable fetus,” of exactly the same age, in another room. Usually, the only difference in the two cases is that one mother loves and desperately wants her child to live and the other has decided that it is not in her (the mother’s) best interest to have a baby right now. Doctors, as a profession, have proven themselves no more able to determine when life begins than the lawyers and lawmakers. Whether through law or medicine, man has demonstrated that the knowledge of life’s beginning does not reside within man. As A. W. Dicus observes in his beautiful hymn, *Our God, He Is Alive*:

Secure, is life from mortal minds,
 God holds the germ within His hand,
 Tho’ men may search, they cannot find,
 For God alone does understand.

If we want to know when life begins, does it not seem wise to seek the instruction of the Giver Of Life (Genesis 2:7)? In Luke 1:41, we read, “when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the **babe** leaped in her womb.” The word translated “babe” in this verse is the Greek word BREPHOS. Here it is used to describe John the Baptist while he was yet unborn and in his mother’s womb. In Luke 2:12, the angels of God informed a group of shepherds that the Savior of the world had been born and told them they would “find the **babe** wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Here Luke, a

physician, uses the same word, BREPPOS, to describe the baby Jesus after he had been born and placed in the manger. Were this just the opinion of one more doctor we would have to dismiss it with all the rest. This doctor, however, was guided in his writing by the Holy Spirit of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The great historian Moses reported that when Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, was pregnant, she became concerned because, “the **children** struggled together within her” (Genesis 25:22). The word translated “children,” is the Hebrew word BANE. It is also the same word Moses used in Genesis 21:7, when Sarah wondered that she “should have given **children** suck?” It is clear that whether a child is yet unborn, born and at its mother’s breast, or born and lying in its bed, God sees him as a living person. Since God sees and speaks of the unborn as already alive, that settles the question for all who fear Him, the one who holds within His hand both life and death.

What Do We Really Do When We Choose Abortion?

To know whether or not abortion is an ethical practice we must understand from God’s point of view what abortion really does. The Bible teaches that God knows man even in the womb. In the 139th Psalm, the inspired songwriter of Israel praises Jehovah as the God who sees and knows everything there is to know about us, every minute of every day, no matter where we are (Psalm 139: 1-12). The Psalmist says that he knows such is true because God even knew him when he was yet in his mother’s womb and not yet fully formed.

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psalm 139:13-16).

When did God see and know me as a person? He knew me even when “I was made in secret.” When did God have record of me? Me, and all my members, were written in His book even when I was not yet fully developed. It is not necessary for the medical world to tell me when an embryo becomes a fetus and a fetus becomes a baby and a baby becomes a person. It is not necessary for the legal or political world to tell me when “life” really begins and the “blob” becomes a person and therefore has a right to life. God knew me before I was born, before I was fully formed. If He knew me then, I was a person then, no matter what any man may say. So, what do we really do when we choose abortion? We end the earthly life of one God already knows, and of whom God already has a record.

In the same context the Psalmist proclaims, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are **thy works**; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psalm 139:14). When we think of the works of God we usually think of the creation of heaven and earth (Genesis 1). Or, we may remember the many miracles Jesus performed on the earth (John 20:30-31). This passage shows us that the child developing in the womb is also a work of God.

In the 31st chapter of the book of Job, the man of patience is defending himself before four men who had come to encourage him to repent of his wickedness. Since many tragedies had befallen Job, they concluded that there must be some secret wickedness in him. One of the many defenses that Job offered to show his righteousness, was to point out that he had always considered seriously and fairly any complaint his servants had against him. Job explained his reasoning for doing so by pointing out, “Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?” (Job 31:15). Job was pointing out that all men are equal because we all have the same Maker. In doing so he identifies God as the craftsman who makes or fashions us in the womb. So, what do we really do when we choose abortion? We, according to our own council and wisdom, willingly put an end to a work in progress, a work of God.

In Psalm 127:3 we are told, “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” In examining the Hebrew language in this passage, Keil and Delitzsch conclude that the heritage and reward are not being paid of obligation but rather given by free will. Therefore, “Sons are a blessed **gift** from above” (Comments on Psalm 127:3). James teaches us that, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). While it is true that children are born in accordance with the natural laws of procreation God has put it place, that does not diminish the fact that children are given as gifts and to be blessings.

I know that some will be quick to point out that a child born to a poor, unmarried, teenage girl is not a blessing but a curse. That may be true for the teenage girl, but that does not mean that the baby would not be a blessing for someone else. At this very moment I have as dear friends, a Christian couple who are trying to adopt a baby. Recently, it appeared that everything was in place, and that they would soon have a baby girl to raise along with their three boys. They are white. They were trying to adopt a bi-racial baby, born to a prostitute who is a drug addict. This is a child that many parents would not want. This is a child that will have many difficulties to overcome. However, knowing this couple, and having seen how they are raising their boys, I am confident that they would have been wonderful parents to this girl, and they would have loved her as the blessing from God that she is. What do we really do when we choose abortion? We destroy and throw away as garbage a precious gift from God.

Many Old Testament prophets spoke of the fact that God had specifically called them to speak to the people for Him. Some of them even recorded when they were called to prophesy (Nehemiah 1:1; Ezekiel 1:1; Amos 1:1). In the case of Jeremiah, the call came before he was born. “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). Likewise, the apostle Paul told the Galatians that God had separated him from this mother’s womb to be an apostle (Galatians 1:15). Paul was not referring to the action of physically removing him from his mother’s womb. Paul was saying that, like Jeremiah, God had a plan for him even when he was yet unborn. Paul had been set apart, “separated unto the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1).

It is certain that there was a miraculous element in how God dealt with these two men. It is also certain that the time of the miraculous on earth has ceased (1 Corinthians 13:10). However, that does not

mean that God does not have a plan for each of us today. It just means that God's plan for each of us will not be miraculously revealed to us. Rather, God now calls to all through His Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14), and admonishes us to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). Through a study of and obedience to God's Word, a life of constant prayer, and a trust in God's providence, we can take and fulfill our place in God's plan. What do we really do when we choose abortion? We bring to a tragic and premature end the life of one for whom God already has a plan. In doing so, we deprive the world of all the good that one might have done in the service of the Lord.

Many today band together and demand that a woman have the right to choose what happens with her own body. I have no objection to that. If a woman doesn't want to have a baby she can **choose to remain unmarried and celibate**. If a woman wants to marry but does not want to have children, provided she and her husband agree, she can **choose any of a number of safe and effective method's of birth control that prevent conception from taking place**. If a woman who does not want to have a baby is the victim of a violent crime that results in her being pregnant, she can **choose to place the baby with a loving family** who does want him. These are all choices that women have and their right to make one of these choices should be defended and preserved by law. By the way, they already are. However, when a woman chooses to end her pregnancy through abortion what she is really doing is:

1. Ending the earthly life of someone else whom God already knows, and of whom God already has a record.
2. Ending a work of God currently in progress that results in someone other than herself
3. Destroying and throwing away as garbage someone else who is a precious gift from God.
4. Bringing to a tragic and premature end the life of someone else for whom God already had a plan.

Women should have a right to choose what they do with their **own bodies**, but clearly what abortion really does is perpetrated on someone other than the mother. No woman has the right to choose to do these things to another. Two choices might lie before you, but life is the only ethical choice. Though removed from its immediate context, the words of Deuteronomy 30:19 are particularly sobering. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

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To answer the question, "Is abortion murder?" it is necessary to first determine when life begins. "Whether or not abortion should be legal turns on the answer to the question of whether and at what point a fetus is a person (Campos). The problem arises from the fact that there are many different and contradictory answers to what abortion is and when life begins.

Various legislative bodies and courts have written laws and passed judgments trying to determine from a legal standpoint when life begins. They have failed. "In the year 2000, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (UVVA) passed the House with a substantial majority, but was defeated in the senate. The law defines a fertilized ovum, an embryo, and a fetus as a full human person at any stage of development from conception to birth (Robinson, 2)." This disagreement in the Congress is representative of the strong disagreement existing among politically active people, and, therefore, their political representatives in Washington.

State political and legal efforts have not fared much better. The laws that have been passed are grossly contradictory and represent the platform of whichever political party has the deepest pockets in that particular state. While defending HB547 in 2001, Montana state senator Duane Grimes demonstrated the inability of our country to reach a legal or political determination of when life begins.

“He said he wanted to simplify the bill to make it a separate offense to harm or kill a fetus in the process of assaulting or killing a pregnant woman. ‘Thirty-five states have similar or identical laws and eight have been upheld by state supreme courts,’ Grimes added.” But he was quick to point out. “The bill exempts abortions or any other medical treatments, and any acts by a pregnant woman that results in injury to a fetus, he said. ‘We don’t want unintended abuse (Anez).’” Why write a bill that expressly recognizes that life begins at conception and should, therefore, be protected, and then, in the same bill, exempt the child’s mother of having to abide by that recognition? While it makes no sense to do so, it is the norm among state legislators. “According to Douglas Johnson, federal legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, 24 U.S. states recognize unborn children as victims for the purposes of criminal law...Of those 24, he said, 11 states cover the entire period of prenatal development and 13 define distinct stages at which an unborn child becomes a ‘human being’...However,...most state statutes, Utah’s included, specifically exempt criminal prosecution for the death of an unborn child caused by abortion (Welling).” Clearly the courts and legislatures have proven themselves unwilling, unable, and unfit to answer the question of when life begins.

Since abortion is a medical procedure, many turn to doctors and medical research experts to determine when life begins. Doctors have fared no better than lawmakers. One doctor will speak of an “embryo,” “fetus,” or “non-viable tissue mass.” Another doctor recognizes that, at the point of conception, a brand new and unique DNA code is created. He recognizes that, at the point of conception, all the genetic components of a new person are present; he needs only to have the time to develop and mature. He recognizes that if such time is allowed, without outside intervention, this, that is newly conceived, will develop into a mature human being. Therefore, that doctor will admonish the expectant mother to care well for herself and her “baby.”

This contradiction among the medical profession is so stark that sometimes the same doctor will perform an emergency C-section delivery of a premature “baby” in one room and a routine abortion of a “non-viable fetus,” of exactly the same age, in another room. Usually, the only difference in the two cases is that one mother loves and desperately wants her child to live and the other has decided that it is not in her (the mother’s) best interest to have a baby right now. Doctors, as a profession, have proven themselves no more able to determine when life begins than the lawyers and lawmakers. Whether through law or medicine, man has demonstrated that the knowledge of life’s beginning does not reside within man. As A. W. Dicus observes in his beautiful hymn, *Our God, He Is Alive*:

Secure, is life from mortal minds,
 God holds the germ within His hand,
 Tho’ men may search, they cannot find,
 For God alone does understand.

If we want to know when life begins, does it not seem wise to seek the instruction of the Giver Of Life (Genesis 2:7)? In Luke 1:41, we read, “when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the **babe** leaped in her womb.” The word translated “babe” in this verse is the Greek word BREPHOS. Here it is used to describe John the Baptist while he was yet unborn and in his mother’s womb. In Luke 2:12, the angels of God informed a group of shepherds that the Savior of the world had been born and told them they would “find the **babe** wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Here Luke, a

physician, uses the same word, BREPPOS, to describe the baby Jesus after he had been born and placed in the manger. Were this just the opinion of one more doctor we would have to dismiss it with all the rest. This doctor, however, was guided in his writing by the Holy Spirit of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The great historian Moses reported that when Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, was pregnant, she became concerned because, “the **children** struggled together within her” (Genesis 25:22). The word translated “children,” is the Hebrew word BANE. It is also the same word Moses used in Genesis 21:7, when Sarah wondered that she “should have given **children** suck?” It is clear that whether a child is yet unborn, born and at its mother’s breast, or born and lying in its bed, God sees him as a living person. Since God sees and speaks of the unborn as already alive, that settles the question for all who fear Him, the one who holds within His hand both life and death.

What Do We Really Do When We Choose Abortion?

To know whether or not abortion is an ethical practice we must understand from God’s point of view what abortion really does. The Bible teaches that God knows man even in the womb. In the 139th Psalm, the inspired songwriter of Israel praises Jehovah as the God who sees and knows everything there is to know about us, every minute of every day, no matter where we are (Psalm 139: 1-12). The Psalmist says that he knows such is true because God even knew him when he was yet in his mother’s womb and not yet fully formed.

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psalm 139:13-16).

When did God see and know me as a person? He knew me even when “I was made in secret.” When did God have record of me? Me, and all my members, were written in His book even when I was not yet fully developed. It is not necessary for the medical world to tell me when an embryo becomes a fetus and a fetus becomes a baby and a baby becomes a person. It is not necessary for the legal or political world to tell me when “life” really begins and the “blob” becomes a person and therefore has a right to life. God knew me before I was born, before I was fully formed. If He knew me then, I was a person then, no matter what any man may say. So, what do we really do when we choose abortion? We end the earthly life of one God already knows, and of whom God already has a record.

In the same context the Psalmist proclaims, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are **thy works**; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psalm 139:14). When we think of the works of God we usually think of the creation of heaven and earth (Genesis 1). Or, we may remember the many miracles Jesus performed on the earth (John 20:30-31). This passage shows us that the child developing in the womb is also a work of God.

In the 31st chapter of the book of Job, the man of patience is defending himself before four men who had come to encourage him to repent of his wickedness. Since many tragedies had befallen Job, they concluded that there must be some secret wickedness in him. One of the many defenses that Job offered to show his righteousness, was to point out that he had always considered seriously and fairly any complaint his servants had against him. Job explained his reasoning for doing so by pointing out, “Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?” (Job 31:15). Job was pointing out that all men are equal because we all have the same Maker. In doing so he identifies God as the craftsman who makes or fashions us in the womb. So, what do we really do when we choose abortion? We, according to our own council and wisdom, willingly put an end to a work in progress, a work of God.

In Psalm 127:3 we are told, “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” In examining the Hebrew language in this passage, Keil and Delitzsch conclude that the heritage and reward are not being paid of obligation but rather given by free will. Therefore, “Sons are a blessed **gift** from above” (Comments on Psalm 127:3). James teaches us that, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). While it is true that children are born in accordance with the natural laws of procreation God has put it place, that does not diminish the fact that children are given as gifts and to be blessings.

I know that some will be quick to point out that a child born to a poor, unmarried, teenage girl is not a blessing but a curse. That may be true for the teenage girl, but that does not mean that the baby would not be a blessing for someone else. At this very moment I have as dear friends, a Christian couple who are trying to adopt a baby. Recently, it appeared that everything was in place, and that they would soon have a baby girl to raise along with their three boys. They are white. They were trying to adopt a bi-racial baby, born to a prostitute who is a drug addict. This is a child that many parents would not want. This is a child that will have many difficulties to overcome. However, knowing this couple, and having seen how they are raising their boys, I am confident that they would have been wonderful parents to this girl, and they would have loved her as the blessing from God that she is. What do we really do when we choose abortion? We destroy and throw away as garbage a precious gift from God.

Many Old Testament prophets spoke of the fact that God had specifically called them to speak to the people for Him. Some of them even recorded when they were called to prophesy (Nehemiah 1:1; Ezekiel 1:1; Amos 1:1). In the case of Jeremiah, the call came before he was born. “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). Likewise, the apostle Paul told the Galatians that God had separated him from this mother’s womb to be an apostle (Galatians 1:15). Paul was not referring to the action of physically removing him from his mother’s womb. Paul was saying that, like Jeremiah, God had a plan for him even when he was yet unborn. Paul had been set apart, “separated unto the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1).

It is certain that there was a miraculous element in how God dealt with these two men. It is also certain that the time of the miraculous on earth has ceased (1 Corinthians 13:10). However, that does not

mean that God does not have a plan for each of us today. It just means that God's plan for each of us will not be miraculously revealed to us. Rather, God now calls to all through His Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14), and admonishes us to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). Through a study of and obedience to God's Word, a life of constant prayer, and a trust in God's providence, we can take and fulfill our place in God's plan. What do we really do when we choose abortion? We bring to a tragic and premature end the life of one for whom God already has a plan. In doing so, we deprive the world of all the good that one might have done in the service of the Lord.

Many today band together and demand that a woman have the right to choose what happens with her own body. I have no objection to that. If a woman doesn't want to have a baby she can **choose to remain unmarried and celibate**. If a woman wants to marry but does not want to have children, provided she and her husband agree, she can **choose any of a number of safe and effective method's of birth control that prevent conception from taking place**. If a woman who does not want to have a baby is the victim of a violent crime that results in her being pregnant, she can **choose to place the baby with a loving family** who does want him. These are all choices that women have and their right to make one of these choices should be defended and preserved by law. By the way, they already are. However, when a woman chooses to end her pregnancy through abortion what she is really doing is:

1. Ending the earthly life of someone else whom God already knows, and of whom God already has a record.
2. Ending a work of God currently in progress that results in someone other than herself
3. Destroying and throwing away as garbage someone else who is a precious gift from God.
4. Bringing to a tragic and premature end the life of someone else for whom God already had a plan.

Women should have a right to choose what they do with their **own bodies**, but clearly what abortion really does is perpetrated on someone other than the mother. No woman has the right to choose to do these things to another. Two choices might lie before you, but life is the only ethical choice. Though removed from its immediate context, the words of Deuteronomy 30:19 are particularly sobering. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

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Fertilization Methods

Bill Goring

Bill was born in Higginsville, MO in 1944 and raised in the greater Kansas City, MO area. He was baptized in 1968 at the Winner Road congregation and attended the Kansas City School of Preaching from 1970-1973. He has also attended at Freed Hardeman College, Oklahoma Christian College and Ozark Bible College. While in Oklahoma he was an instructor at the 8th and Lee School of Biblical Studies in Lawton, Oklahoma. He has served as an instructor at the Midwest School of Biblical Studies here at 39th Street. Bill has spoken at various lectureships and gospel meetings throughout the Midwest and the Southern United States. He contributes articles for various brotherhood papers as well as tracts for the International Bible Studies series published by 39th Street. and also participates in the International Bible Studies lectures. Bill has preached for 33 years, 21 of which have been spent with the Chipman Road Church of Christ in Lee's Summit, Missouri. He and his wife, Nancy, have 4 children, 8 grandchildren and one more on the way!

Perhaps one of the greatest desires of every married couple is to have children. This is only right as the Bible tells us, "And God blessed them, and God said into them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it..."(Genesis 1:28a). When husband and wife come together as God has commanded (Genesis 2:24), it is a beautiful union. It was God's design from the very beginning that man should not be alone, so He created woman from man's own rib to be his helpmeet. From this union the first family went forth and God blessed them with children. The Psalmist tell us, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). And again, in Psalm 127: 4-5 we read, "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth, Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them..."

We can see from these passages that children are truly a blessing from God. There are, however, occasions when couples who desire children find it difficult and sometimes impossible to conceive. For these folks, such a situation can be burdensome or even devastating. That is our topic for consideration: What can we do from a moral, ethical, and most importantly, biblical standpoint when a couple is infertile?

For years, the most common answer for couples who were unable to have children was adoption. This fulfills not only the desire of the couple to have children, but also allows an orphaned child to have a family, working to the advantage of all concerned. Adoption would be the most desirable solution to infertility, and although it is costly, it is no more costly than the alternative methods used in fertility clinics. There is always foster care, but again some individuals are not emotionally equipped having children come into the home, often to be uprooted from that home after a brief stay. These are two different ways that couples have been able to fulfill their desire for children and still be pleasing in the sight of God.

In the world we live in today, however, with all of the advanced technology, there are some new so-called "answers" for infertility. Everywhere we look, the fertility clinic advertisements are running rampant with claims that they can provide a child for those who have been unable to conceive, never giving a second thought to the moral or ethical concerns of their procedures. The three, most

frequently used methods that we will look at are: Artificial Insemination, In-Vitro Fertilization and Surrogate Mothers. First we need to define what each of these are.

Artificial Insemination or (AI) - Sperm are washed and concentrated and shuttled by a catheter directly into the uterus. This is divided into three categories:

AIH - Artificial insemination using only the husband's sperm

AID - Artificial insemination using only donor sperm

AIDH - Artificial insemination using sperm from both husband and donor

When **AI** occurs using the husband's sperm and the wife's egg, we have no quarrel. The child would still be from its own biological parents with the assistance of a technological procedure. Christians could be supportive of such a procedure when done to assist normal procreation (Thompson 16).

However, **AI** can also be used in such a way as to destroy the God-ordained biological basis for the human family and parenthood. It is now possible to mix sperm and egg from any two people, and is even possible to put the fertilized embryo into any normal womb and thus have any final set of parents (or for that matter, any single person) gain custody of what will be the newborn infant. In the end, parenthood may have nothing whatsoever to do with biological relationship. (Thompson 16,17)

Nancy Pearcy writes,

By using both abortion and artificial reproduction, we are building a technology of reproduction around the parents' wishes. To put it bluntly, if you don't want the child growing within you, you can destroy it through abortion - and if you do want a child you can get one to order through a trip to the laboratory. There is an erosion of respect for existing life as a gift of God wherever we find it. We can now hire life and death at the parents' wishes. (Percy 6)

Although we are sympathetic with couples who are unable to conceive, the use of donor eggs and donor sperm are in direct conflict with what God has ordained in His plan for the family! We now have women bearing children for unmarried men, for other couples (surrogate mothers), lesbians having children together, and a host of legal complications, too long to mention. That does not even begin to cover the emotional, psychological, and physiological problems that have arisen!

So what about **In Vitro Fertilization or IVF**? This involves harvesting several eggs, which are then combined with a sperm sample in a petri dish in a lab and allowed to divide for 2-3 days - the resulting zygote is then re-introduced into the uterus. Often, the woman is injected with hormones causing "super-ovulation," so when the eggs are harvested there are more, allowing for greater chance of fertilization. The trademark of this procedure is "many are called but few are chosen!" The "choicest" eggs are picked to be fertilized, not necessarily "all" of the eggs. Even those that are fertilized are often destroyed for one reason or the other. Let's see what Dr. Sherman J. Silber has to say in his book, How To Get Pregnant With The New Technology:

For some patients, day 5 transfer to the uterus may be a good option. The problem with extended culture to day 5 is that there may be a loss of embryos that might have “made it” if they had been transferred earlier. No “in vitro” culture system is as good as the fallopian tube itself.

And again, But only 20 percent to 50 percent of day 2 embryos can develop in vitro to day five no matter how perfect the in vitro culture system. There is a huge loss therefore of what could have been viable embryos, so selection is the only advantage of blastocyst culture, and this selection has nothing to do with the “quality” of the baby, but rather just whether the embryo “makes it” or not to becoming a baby.

I think we can see from Dr. Silber’s remarks that human lives are being destroyed and this is certainly not acceptable to God. Since God is the one who “gives life and breath and all things...” (Acts 17:25), how dare we, as mortal men, make any decision that would take life from one of His little ones!

Wayne Jackson addressed this very problem in the 1985 Fort Worth Lectures,

“In more recent times, a number of human eggs have been artificially fertilized in glass dishes, transferred to female bodies, and babies ultimately brought to term. In the process, however, numerous additional fertilized eggs were sacrificially destroyed (aborted) ...”(216)

By the way, the cost for most **IVF** is \$6,000.00 to \$15,000.00 with an 18% success rate, according to the majority of reports I have found published on the Fertility Clinics’ Websites. Some couples will return for two or three visits, despite the cost. These clinics can be found all over the nation espousing their special techniques, unconcerned with the moral ethics of these procedures which often result in a high rate of miscarriages and multiple births, and a very high incidence of low birth weight babies that present with problems. Again, we haven’t touched the hem of the garment regarding the psychological and emotional ramifications of mothers who become depressed after several miscarriages, still births, or multiple babies to care for with possible birth defects. Needless to say, this is not a method of fertilization that a Christian would choose, much less, anyone who has regard for human life.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not address the matter of surrogate mothers when discussing fertilization methods.

There are cases in the Bible where couples were unable to bear children (Rachel, Hannah, Rebekeh, Elizabeth, Sampson’s mother, et al). Their only legitimate hope was prayer. But some tried other means like surrogacy. Sarai was barren (Genesis 11:30;16:2). She said that the Lord had made her barren, so she told her husband, Abram, to impregnate the handmaid, Hagar. Sarai said, “it may be that I may obtain children by her.” Thus, Hagar was a surrogate mother. Among the problems associated with this surrogacy, five are clear. First, Sarai blamed the Lord. Second, her desperation for a child was out of control. Third, she told her husband to have illicit sexual relations with another woman. Fourth, he obliged her. Fifth, the results were bad. (Meyers)

Although today, we do not typically see surrogacy involving the actual adulterous union with the chosen surrogate mother and the biological father, it does sometimes occur. This is an obvious violation of God's law. There are other means of surrogacy, however, that one might ask, "Is it alright?"

With the advanced technology of our day, classic and traditional surrogacy generally involves a healthy young woman (usually under 35 years old), who agrees with an infertile couple to be artificially inseminated with the male's sperm, carry the baby to term, then turn the baby over to the couple after birth. The infertile couple usually provides the sperm and the surrogate mother provides the egg and womb. This is the most common method.

The less common method is that of the sperm and egg coming from the infertile couple and the womb only from the surrogate - here the surrogate is not genetically related to the child.

The rarest method is where the surrogate provides the egg and the infertile couple the sperm and womb. (Robertson)

Aside from the fact that this is not the way God commanded us to go forth and multiply, the list of legal, moral and ethical ramifications is so long we could fill libraries! Just to name a few:

1. Who are the real legal parents?
2. Who are the real biological parents?
3. What if the surrogate changes her mind-surrogacy contracts have been signed and large fees paid to the surrogate.
4. What about the stress on the marriage during and after the pregnancy?
5. What about the possibility of birth defects? Will anyone want the child then?
6. Will the child be confused, emotionally upset or disturbed when informed of his/her "parent?"
7. Will the surrogate mother become emotionally unstable after giving up a baby she has carried and bonded with for nine months?

These are only a random sampling of questions which face those people who become involved in surrogacy. So many problems occur when we take matters into our own hands without consulting with God's Holy Word!

God designed the family as a man, his wife, and the resulting children from that union. Luke tells us in Acts 17:28, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring." Having been made in God's image (Genesis 1:26), and knowing what His divine plan for the family is, let us determine to follow after His will as we endeavor

to bring children into this world, being careful not to violate the laws of nature, or destroy any of His little ones.

Bert Thompson has rightfully said, Occasionally there are times when physical problems occur that are no one's "fault," resulting in a couples inability to produce children. No one should be made to feel ashamed (Thompson 26). We are not unsympathetic and our prayers certainly go out to these couples. Unfortunate as it is, Christians should realize that resorting to unethical, immoral and unbiblical methods to solve the problem is not acceptable to God. Hopefully, these couples will work together in an attempt to find solutions that will benefit not only themselves, but other children in the world who are in need of a loving family; be it foster children, orphans, or any adoptable child. If unable to do that, one can dedicate his or her life to teaching children in Bible classes, or assisting others who are in need of help in the rearing of their children. There is always a place for those who would serve God's children. When we follow after His will, all will be blessed!

Perhaps Wayne Jackson put it best when he said, "Remember this: no matter how technologically advanced humanity may become, we will never out-grow our great need for the divine guidance of Jehovah's inspired Word, the Bible." (Jackson 223)

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Euthanasia and Suicide

Eugene Jenkins

BIO Eugene is a 1980 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He is in his 9th year of laboring with the church in Oak Grove, Missouri. He is married to the former Luvenia Noblin and they have three children - Peyton, Rebecca and Tyler. Eugene has been involved in campaign work to Jamaica for many years and has lead a team of workers to the island each year since 1993. He has been a speaker on the Annual Mid-West Lectures since moving to the area and has also been a regular worker with the International Bible Studies and the Saturday Seminars held here at 39th Street.

INTRODUCTION

“Suicide has always been a contentious issue, but it is only in the twentieth century that governments have been forced to confront the issue of euthanasia” (Torr 11). As any government undertakes an issue, it is wise for her citizens to do the same (if they have not already done so) — for her rulings effect us all.

We who are Christians, in particular, need to be keenly aware of the attitudes and actions of society vs what God says about them, always remembering that God’s will shall prevail in the end, regardless of society’s desires and actions! John 12:48 ***“He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”***

THE PROMOTION OF EUTHANASIA & SUICIDE AS VIABLE ALTERNATIVES

“At it’s simplest, euthanasia involves the decision to end life” (Bloyd 12). Rita Marker, in her book, “Deadly Compassion,” says,

The typical discussion of euthanasia, couched in the language of choice and individual rights, gives the impression that a persons’ rights to be free of painful and unwanted medical intervention is at issue. This perception, coupled with euphemisms like the “right to die,” “death with dignity,” and, more recently, “aid-in-dying,” has led to a mistaken belief that euthanasia allows the natural process of dying to take its course.

Nothing could be further from reality. Euthanasia is making people die, rather than letting them die. It is giving a cancer patient a lethal injection, for example, actually to cause death, as opposed to stopping chemotherapy and allowing the patient to die. Put bluntly, euthanasia means killing in the name of compassion. (7)

Barbra J. Lougue, in her book, “Last Rights,” defines euthanasia as “Death Control.”

Death control is deliberate behavior that causes a quicker death for a person suffering from an incurable condition, or complex of conditions, including degenerative symptoms of old age. It encompasses self-deliverance (suicide or autoeuthanasia), where the individual terminates her own life, and assisted suicide (euthanasia), in which a mentally competent person makes the decision to die but receives help in implementing his plan. (1)

Suicide, is simply, “the act of killing oneself intentionally” (Neufeldt 1339). It has taken place, to some degree, throughout the ages, and “the idea of a noble death carried over to early Roman society. A person who no longer felt useful or suffered disgrace might find suicide the acceptable way to die” (Gay 26).

“The modern right-to-die movement can be tracked back to 1935, when a group of intellectual mavericks...founded the British Euthanasia Society” (Torr 11). Such efforts were opposed by the Judeo-Christian doctrine which, “held — and still holds — that God ordained life and that each life is sacred” (Gay 26). “Word War II put a temporary halt to these movements...and the euthanasia debate did not resurface in America until the 1970s” (Torr 11).

Why did it take so long for the call for legalized euthanasia/suicide to resurface? Because of what Americans and Europeans learned about the despicable acts of the Nazis under German dictator Adolf Hitler. “During world War II, the Nazis launched a secret euthanasia program that they claimed was mercy killing but was actually a calculated and cruel extermination of people the Nazis labeled ‘useless eaters’” (Gay 27). “Nazi officials emptied the country’s hospitals of the aged, the handicapped, and chronically ill people of all ages. These patients were shipped off to special institutions to be secretly killed” (Bloyd 48).

In more recent times the debate on “the right to die” has escalated and support for “assisted suicide” seems to be growing. A “Gallup Poll” shows very clearly the changing mind set through the years. The question was asked,

When a person has disease that cannot be cured, do you think doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient’s life by some painless means if the patient and his family request it? The responses:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Put out of misery (%)</i>	<i>Wrong (%)</i>
1947	37	54
1973	53	40
1978	58	38
1980	61	34
1985	64	33
1986	66	30 (Lougue 81)

When we add to this, a chart which Sunni Bloyd speaks of, in her book on Euthanasia, which notes Physicians’ response to the statement, “*There are some situations in which assisted suicide should be legal*”, it becomes very scary. The answers were: “Yes, 53%; No, 37% and Neutral, 10%” (80).

Thankfully, “Many physicians say they would be clouding their roles as healers if they helped patients to die. They could never accept the idea of being both a healer and a killer” (Gay 36).

With more and more efforts to legalize euthanasia, and so many Doctor’s being willing to participate in it — who knows what the future holds? We now have — in America — the killing of the unborn and the elderly. This is bad enough in itself, and if we continue on the road many are striving to take us down, how far will we go? Will we become like other countries, such as China, in their infanticide (another form of euthanasia)?

CHINA: August 2000 — The Huong family already had three children when the mother became pregnant again. “Family planning” officials seized the house and ordered the father to kill his newborn son, who he instead attempted to hide. Officials found the baby and drowned him in a rice paddy, in front of his parents. (Saini 25)

CHINA: February 15, 2002 — A newborn girl, her naked body still warm, lies dead in the gutter along side a road in a small town in Hunan province. She clearly has been dumped and has just died. On their way to work most passersby ignore the child. Some stop to stare and then walk on. Life goes on as normal. Eventually an elderly man puts the tiny body into a box and carries it away. (25)

Some will quickly say, “that will never happen here!” Yet, how often do we think about, much less try to do anything about, the thousands of babies that are already being murdered in our country?

Why are euthanasia and suicide promoted as viable alternatives? “Many people have come to fear a long and painful dying more than they fear death itself” (Bloyd 12). They see death as “the end” of pain, not understanding or accepting as real, life after death in heaven or hell. They, therefore, in helping a friend to die, see themselves as performing “...an act of caring and compassion” (Torr 23). So, when “...qualities of life such as being able to interact with others or being able to live with dignity are gone,” death is hastened. (Gay 29)

Also, in my estimation, a growing number are supporting euthanasia/suicide because of the cost of keeping people alive. Insurance companies take center stage in this regard, through their “managed care.” “At its best, managed care cuts medical costs by eliminating unnecessary tests, treatments and medicines. At its worst, it puts a dollar value on human life” (Altman 26).

REASONS FOR INCREASED SUICIDE (ESPECIALLY AMONG OUR YOUNG).

It is said,

About 6,000 young Americans kill themselves each year. That number is more than *three times* higher than the number of teen suicides in America 30 years ago. ... One survey found that 1 out of every 12 American high school students *tried* to commit suicide in 1990. ... White teenage males kill themselves far more than any other teenagers, accounting for over 70 percent of all teen suicides. (Schleifer 12)

“Only accidents cause more deaths each year. That means more young people die by suicide than from almost any other cause” (Smith 10).

In seeking answers as to, “Why young people commit suicide,” it should be beneficial to consider the “reasons given in notes which were left behind after suicides.” Those reasons include:

- ▶ Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- ▶ Doing poorly in school, or not being accepted for a job or by a college
- ▶ Not doing well in sports or other activities
- ▶ Moving and leaving friends behind, or having a good friend move away
- ▶ Divorce or other problems in the family (such as alcohol, drugs or sexual abuse)
- ▶ Being unable to repay a large debt
- ▶ A serious physical injury or illness
- ▶ Being responsible for an injury to another person
- ▶ Having committed a serious crime
- ▶ The death of a parent, close friend, or other family member (Schleifer 15)

Eleanor Ayer, in her book, “Teen Suicide, Is It Too Painful To Grow Up,” listed the following as causes for suicide.

- ▶ Depression - an overwhelming state of sadness or feeling of hopelessness is the root of nearly all teen suicides.
- ▶ Drugs and Alcohol - According to statistics from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 3.3 million American teenagers, or one out of every nine, are alcoholics.
- ▶ Feelings of Guilt or Shame - The burden of bringing embarrassment or disgrace to one’s family can be overpowering.
- ▶ The Pressure to Succeed (16-23)

These lists are at times hard to understand, or accept. After all, why would someone with so much to look forward to, contemplate — and even attempt (successfully or un-successfully) — suicide? We must understand that, “Most suicidal teens who talk about killing themselves are crying for help...so it is up to a friend or acquaintance who hears a teen talking about committing suicide to intervene...” (Colman 104, 105). When considering the “cry for help,” “It is interesting that many more girls than boys attempt suicide and don’t die. A suicide attempt is a way of asking for help” (Smith 10).

Is there anything, besides listening for their “cry for help,” that adults, particularly parents, can do? First of all there is a great need for parental guidance, because,

Most sociologists agree that suicide often has its roots in the home environment. Children whose home lives fit one or more of the following patters are considered higher risks for suicide.

- ▶ Two working parents
- ▶ Children born to parents who did not really want or expect them
- ▶ Families that do not express their feelings, either verbally or physically
- ▶ Only children
- ▶ Social-climber parents

- ▶ Families on the move
- ▶ Death or divorce
- ▶ Problems in the family
- ▶ Alcohol and drug abuse
- ▶ Suicidal parent
- ▶ Threatening environment
- ▶ Rejection
- ▶ Child Abuse (Ayer 24-26)

There is also a great need to look for the “warning signs.”

- ▶ a previous suicide attempt
- ▶ suicide threats
- ▶ dramatic change in eating or sleeping habits
- ▶ dramatic drop in school performance
- ▶ sudden loss of interest in activities and possessions
- ▶ extreme restlessness or irritability
- ▶ feelings of hopelessness
- ▶ feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred
- ▶ deep, prolonged depression
- ▶ drug or alcohol abuse (Goldman 47)

It is much easier to “deny” the reality of suicide, but by so doing, we may be inadvertently helping it become a reality with someone we know and love!

III. THE BIBLE RESPONSE TO EUTHANASIA and SUICIDE.

Is it ethical to encourage, assist or in any way participate in euthanasia or suicide? With such a subject, emotions too often blur the answer. In regard to Euthanasia for the sick and elderly, we don't want to see them suffering. Yet, we surely don't want to see our young people taking their own lives (unless it is an unwanted “unborn” child, many would say). While emotions are important, and necessary, they are not to determine right and wrong.

Please consider: Human life is sacred because God “. . .**giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. . .**” and “. . .**in him we live, and move, and have our being. . .For we are also his offspring**” (Acts 17:25-28). God's regard for the sacredness of life is seen in the regulation recorded in Genesis 9:6, which says, “**Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.**” This contains two very strong points: 1) Man's life is sacred for he is made in God's image. 2) The one who sheds innocent blood becomes guilty and worthy of capital punishment. This principle is re-stated in the New Testament — Romans 13:4.

In condemning the ones who shed “innocent” blood, which of the following would not be held accountable for doing so? 1) The murderer of the unborn? 2) The murderer of the old? 3) The

murderer of self (whether old or young)? None would be held unaccountable, rather all will have to answer for their deeds!

Repentance is necessary for a Christian to receive forgiveness of his sins. One who kills himself cannot repent, and will thus be lost eternally! This fact alone shows euthanasia and suicide to be unethical!!!

The Psalmist requested of God: ***“Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth”*** (Psalm 71:9). Again, in verse 18 he declared, ***“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.”***

God does not forsake the elderly, and neither should we! The wisdom and love of the elderly is very important in our society, and we need to remind them of their vital place in our lives.

The one who put King Saul to death, even though it was at Saul’s request, was condemned by God and thus put to death himself (2 Samuel 1:1-10). Will it be any different for anyone today who takes his own, or another persons, innocent life? No, those guilty will answer to the divine law-giver!

The Bible is clear! It IS NOT ETHICAL to take the innocent life of another, whether he be poor, aged, handicapped, sick, or unwanted — regardless of age; nor is it ethical to kill ourselves! Instead,

...God charges his people to benevolently care for them.

- ▶ We are to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, providing their needs (James 1:27).
- ▶ We are to rise up with respect for the aged (Leviticus 19:32).
- ▶ We are to plead the cause of the poor and oppressed (Isaiah 1:11, 23).
- ▶ We are to bear the burdens of those who are struggling through life and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).
- ▶ We who are strong are to help the weak (Romans 15:1).
- ▶ We are to do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10).

But to offer death to a suffering soul is the opposite of all these injunctions. (Waddey 87).

CONCLUSION

Although it is clear to me that both euthanasia and suicide are unethical, I also recognize that there are some things I do not know. For example, I don’t know the condition of a persons mind who takes his own life. Was he lucid? Did he know what he was doing? Surely there are occasions in which the person does indeed know what he is doing, since most plan their actions, sometimes as much as six months in advance. Yet, there may also be situations in which the person is not aware of his actions.

Will God hold someone who is not in his “right mind” accountable for harming or killing himself? That is something that I can’t answer, although the reason for his mind being “out of sorts” would probably

enter into any conclusion. We will simply have to leave that to God! In any case, let us be vigilant to “see,” “understand,” and “properly respond” to those who are in need — regardless of their age.

People lose hope, and see no way out of their problems. But there is a way out — and it is IN CHRIST! Let us never fail to show Him to those who are without hope!!!

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Living Wills And Life Support

Steve Harbison

Steve graduated from Oklahoma Christian College in 1978 with a degree in Bible. His wife of 27 years, Susie, is a teacher in Ottawa. They have two sons, Kenneth and Darren - both college students. Steve is a 1978 graduate of OCU with a degree in Bible. He has preached since 1984, having preached for 4 years in Cape Fair, Missouri then in Ottawa, Kansas since 1988. He has conducted meetings in Kansas and Missouri and has been associated with the Midwest School of Biblical Studies as an instructor for five years. He has spoken for the last five years on the Mid-West Lectures.

“Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am” (Psalm 39:4).

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.....So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:10,12).

“Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.....Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not” (Psalm 71:9,18).

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar (gray) hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Isaiah 46:4).

Today I have been asked to speak to you on the subject of: Living Wills and Life Support. There are several forms that comprise what has been known as “Living Wills.” These include Living Wills, Advanced Health Care Directives and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions. You can obtain any of these forms from any hospital. Midwest BioEthics in Kansas City, Missouri is the company that distributes the forms that I have obtained. The form will likely be accompanied by a pamphlet that will explain it to you. It also contains questions and answers that will cover most of your questions. You will want to discuss these forms with your doctor, family and perhaps an attorney, although an attorney is not required to fill them out.

These advanced directives, which is another term that we are going to be using, have been created in recent years because of certain rights that patients have. These include the right to information about your medical condition and a right to choose or refuse any treatment including any life-saving medical treatment.

Let me explain briefly what the three forms are:

Definition:

Living Wills - This is usually a 1 or 2 page form that lets you list treatments you may desire to have or not to have should you become terminally ill or injured.

Health Care Advance Directive - This is usually a 1 page, preprinted form that lets you choose what, if any treatment you may receive if you become unable to communicate your decisions. These treatments are those that may prolong your life.

Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare Decisions - This is a 1 page, preprinted form that lets you name one or more individuals who will make the medical decisions for you if you become unable to communicate your decisions. "Durable" means that the power you give to someone will continue even after you lose the ability to communicate your desires.

Living wills and advanced directives are similar to each other but they differ in one respect. Living wills become effective when you become terminally ill or injured. Health directives become effective whenever you lack the ability to make or communicate your decisions. These are usually more comprehensive than living wills.

On the forms, you will be asked to describe what to you is an "acceptable quality of life." You will need to think very carefully on this point. Some examples might include: the ability to recognize family & friends; to make decisions; to communicate; to feed myself; or to take care of myself. These forms can be customized to fit the desires of each one. You may indicate just exactly what is an acceptable quality of life for you.

The forms also allow you to refuse certain treatments or to have them tried for a while and then, if they prove to be ineffective, your directive can remove them. Some examples of treatment you can request or refuse include: resuscitation (CPR), dialysis, ventilator, food or water by tube, chemotherapy, transfusions, surgery or antibiotics.

One of the "treatments" on this list was the use of a feeding tube. You may request to have the use of one or not to have it used. You may also request to have it used for a while and then removed. Here, I believe, is where a Christian needs to be very careful. In my mind there is a big difference in withholding a feeding tube and in withdrawing a feeding tube.

In choosing someone to be your Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare Decisions, you should be careful to choose someone you can certainly trust to carry out your wishes and also someone who shares the same goals, values and hopes for this life and the next life as do you. When you give someone the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare Decisions, you need to realize that you are granting to that person very broad powers over you. These include:

- 1) The power to consent, refuse or withdraw any treatment for you,
- 2) The power to make all necessary arrangements for any hospital, hospice, nursing home or other health care organization and to employ any health care personnel,
- 3) The power to request, receive and review any information regarding your physical or mental health, including your hospital and medical records,
- 4) The power to move you into or out of any state or institution to comply with your wishes,
- 5) The power to take legal action, if needed, to do what you desire,

- 6) The power to make decisions regarding any autopsy, organ donation and even the disposition of your body, and,
- 7) The power to become your guardian if needed.

So take great care in giving someone this kind of power over you.

Here are three reasons why I believe that the use of a Living Will or Advanced Healthcare Directives are a good idea.

- 1) It gives me the opportunity to direct my own medical treatment after I have become unable to do so because of sickness or injury.
- 2) It saves my family from having to make life and death decisions for me at a critical time. It is hard to make these kinds of decisions for others.
- 3) As a Christian, I think differently than those in the world. The world holds onto life here because that is all they have. As a Christian, I have more than this life, I have eternal life.

Next, I would like to tell you of some principles concerning life and death that the Bible teaches us. These principles will help you in deciding what decisions to make concerning your own life.

- 1) Life is a gift from God. Genesis 2:7; Acts 17:24-26
- 2) Everyone dies. Hebrews 9:27; Joshua 23:14; Luke 16:22
- 3) Death is merely the separation of the human spirit from the human body. James 2:26
- 4) Health problems are to be expected with old age and doctors cannot always heal us. Ecclesiastes 12:2-5; Luke 8:43
- 5) No Christian should ever fear death. Revelation 1:17,18
- 6) We will rise again. John 5:28,29; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
- 7) Death is not the end of our existence. Luke 16:22,23
- 8) Between Christians, death is only a temporary separation. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 9) Between Christians and non-Christians death is an eternal separation. Luke 16:22-26
- 10) Death for a Christian is called: gain; far better; blessed; and precious. Philippians 1:21,23; Revelation 14:13; Psalm 116:15
- 11) Death is a release from sufferings and labors. Job 3:17; Revelation 14:13
- 12) Death is the "door" between here and eternity. 2 Corinthians 5:1
- 13) One's life does not consist in what he possesses or in the measure of his health or in the number of years to his life, but only in the blessings which Jesus can bestow. Luke 12:15; (Paul was sick, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Timothy was sick, 1 Timothy 5:23; Trophimus was sick 2 Timothy 4:20) John 10:10
- 14) This world is not my home. Hebrews 11:13,16
- 15) In all things, our minds are to be set on things above. Colossians 3:1-3
- 16) Life for a Christian is Christ and fruitful labors. Philippians 1:21-25
- 17) Life for a non-Christian (or an unfaithful Christian) is an opportunity to repent and be saved. Ecclesiastes 9:4

When the time of our death draws near, what should be our primary concern? I have noticed in the New Testament that a number of people were willing to “let go” of their lives when they realized that their time was at hand.

- ◆ Jesus Matthew 27:50 – “He yielded up the ghost”

 Luke 23:46 – “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit and thus he gave up the ghost”

 John 19:30 – “It is finished and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost”
- ◆ Stephen Acts 7:59,60 – “Lay not this sin to their charge”
- ◆ Antipas Revelation 2:13 – “My faithful martyr”
- ◆ James Acts 12:2 – Accepted death by the sword
- ◆ John Revelation 22:20 – “Even so, come Lord Jesus”
- ◆ Paul 2 Timothy 4:6-8 – “The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”

Consider with me Paul's thoughts which are recorded in Romans 14:7,8. He says, “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.”

I believe that Paul is teaching us that our lives and our deaths ought to give honor and glory to the Lord. We belong to the Lord whether we live or die. We do not live our lives as we wish to live them or anyone else on earth but only as the Lord directs us through His Word. I should be grateful for my life, whatever life He has given me. I should be grateful for this life even at the time of my death. I should not cause my Lord any shame to be one who wears His name in my life or in my death.

The Christian and His Money

Fred Rhodes

Fred preaches for the church in Jamesport, Missouri. His family background includes association with the Mennonite Church and thus Fred is able to labor in an effective fashion with the large Amish population in the Jamesport area.

A subject that is on the mind of many today is money. We hear of it constantly on the news relating to the stock market, embezzlement and related issues. But as with any thing that relates to life the question for any that strive to please God is what is our responsibility in using the money that we have?

God gives us guidelines in the use of our money as he does with every area of life (2 Peter 1:3). God teaches us that we are not to love money when he informs us in 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Certainly the love of money has caused many people to participate in sinful activities to acquire money. Those who get involved in sin to acquire money will bring upon themselves many heartaches and problems. It is important to not make a pendulum swing and say that money is the root of evil. The root of evil is identified by God as the love for it.

Unfortunately, many associate more money with happiness. They put an emphasis in their life on gaining more money to do the things they would like to do and on having the things they would like to have. In doing this it is easy to put God on the back burner. Forgetting the admonition of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 to "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." God spoke through Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5:10 on this subject where it says, "he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity." This is easy to see among those who have money. Often they are miserable. Simply because money does not bring happiness. With money comes responsibilities.

God teaches us to use the money we have been blessed with properly. Ephesians 4:28 says, "let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." In the admonition to work so that we will have money to help others it is easy to see that responsibility comes with the gaining of money.

In considering that we are to use our money properly it is important to remember that we are stewards of what God has blessed us with. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." A steward is one that has the responsibility of overseeing the possessions of another that have been placed in their trust or care. Psalm 24:1 teaches us that all belongs to God when it says, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Therefore, all that we gain and possess in life belongs to God. It is just on loan. And therefore being on loan to us, we will give an account to God for how we use it.

SOME GUIDELINES IN DEALING WITH MONEY

One basic thing that we learn from God's Word is that we are to work to gain money. We learn this by God's blessings pronounced on the industrious individual. He says in Proverbs 13:11, "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase." We can even go back to the garden of Eden and see that God gave Adam work to do. Even before the fall, they were given work to do. It is easy to see an industrious attitude in Ephesians 4:28 where the man that works has enough for him and his family and some to spare for others that have needs. But as always it must be kept in mind that this industrious way of life must not find God in the background of ones life. But we must put the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, even before our work to gain money (Matthew 6:24-34).

Another concern of the Christian is in the area of taxes paid to a government. Some will choose to not pay taxes to the ruling government for various reasons. Some from a stingy attitude. Others from a dislike of things going on in the government. But note what the apostle Paul said to the Christians who were under the ungodly government of Rome in Romans 13:6,7. "For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to who fear; honour to whom honour." From the context of Romans 13 we learn that God places the government in the role of governing. They are there to punish the evil doer. And they are there by his "ordaining" (Romans 13:1). Therefore it is plain that we must pay taxes.

Along this line it is necessary to consider the taking of exemptions to escape paying certain taxes. It is very clear that since God has placed "the powers that be" (Romans 13:1) in charge, that if the "powers that be" make a ruling that certain exemptions are lawful, it would be right and proper to take each and every exemption that would apply to our situation. Obviously, it can be seen by this that we would not lie about our situation to escape paying taxes that are our responsibility to pay.

Another concern involving money that faces us today, as it has for centuries is borrowing and loaning of our money for interest. A quick history lesson from the Old Testament reveals God commanding the Israelites that they not charge usury to their poor brethren (Exodus 22:25). In dealing with this subject before they went into the land of Canaan Moses stated they could charge interest to a stranger but not to a brother (Deuteronomy 23:20). In looking at this we acknowledge that it gives us insight into the mind of God but is not binding on us today who live under new law.

In the New Testament we find no prohibitions on charging interest. Jesus did refer to the receiving of interest in his parable in Matthew 25:27. It was spoke of in a favorable light as something that a servant of his should have at least done with what was placed in his care. This in order to gain some good from it. Since there are no prohibitions on charging interest to another it should not be wrong.

But we must consider our responsibility to "him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28). This may be compared to the "poor" in the Old Testament. With the change in the New Testament. This giving to the poor does not even expect the "principle" to be returned. Much less interest to be charged. So even though the New Testament does allow one to charge interest. Discretion must be used. Those who are in dire straits are not there to be made a gain from. But our responsibility is to give not to make a gain from.

Some will wonder about taking on debt. The passage in Romans 13:8 will be referred to to back up this belief. It says, "owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." This context is not referring to borrowing money for needs in life. Instead it is easy to see in the next two verses that it is talking about having love for others that will not let us sin against them. On the same point of taking on debt it is plain that our society has taken on much debt for things that are not necessary. Thus stripping themselves of peace of mind and much good that could be done in the name of the Lord with the money that is wasted. Colossians 3:5 teaches us that "covetousness is idolatry". Jesus also teaches that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). This desire for things creates much unnecessary debt in our society. Debt therefore should be reserved for things that are of a necessary nature.

What about CD's, money market accounts, savings accounts, etc.? Saving for retirement is big business. Our economy has thrived on this concept for many years and as we have seen lately it has consumed a whole lot of retirement savings. Some who have saved for years and accumulated much wealth squander it in retirement at the expense of leaving God out of their lives. Even though Jesus taught that we are to trust in God for our living while putting the kingdom of God first, (Matthew 6:24-34) he does not condemn putting money back for future use. The passage in Luke 12:16-21 dealing with the bigger barns does not condemn saving. It does condemn saving for the purpose of having treasure for self while not being rich toward God.

The key in saving for retirement or any other matter in life is that God must come first. Before the savings. Jesus plainly said that we are to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth (Matthew 6:19,20). In consideration of this it should be remembered that we in this nation are wealthy. The poorest have much. Even the disciples thought this of themselves when Jesus taught of the difficulty a rich man would have in entering into the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:23-26).

Frugality is a subject that comes up. Usually being scoffed at in our society. To begin with it is best to understand that being frugal is not miserly. It is, according to *Websters Dictionary*, "characterized by or reflecting economy in the expenditure of resources". God says clearly in Proverbs 21:20 that the wise are frugal. "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up." Hence we can see that the attitude of spend it up since we cannot take it with us is not considered wise by God. But the "foolish man spendeth it up". Jesus models frugality for us in John 6:12 when he instructed the disciples to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." A modern example of frugality can be seen in waiting to buy a new TV until money can be saved to buy one instead of going into debt for our wants. Or by buying a less expensive car so that we will not cut back on part of our gift to God.

Giving to God is a matter of great importance to the Christian. It is also one that the way the Christian handles the money that God has blessed them with will hinge on. If a person squanders his blessings from God he will not give as he should. In the Old Law God instructed his servants to put him first in their giving. We can see that in his instructions in Proverbs 3:9,10 that he is to be honored with the "firstfruits of all thine increase" Notice he did not say part but all. This teaching is inherent in the command to give to God as he "hath prospered him". (1 Corinthians 16:2) The point being we consider how we prosper and give to God accordingly. Not giving to God from the leftovers after we have spent what we want. But giving to God first and of the best.

To give as we prosper must be considered. Thayers Greek Lexicon says that to prosper means to "be successful". If a farmer's crop is a total failure he did not prosper. If we are laid off from our job and did not get a pay check we did not prosper. If we have income we prosper. The Jews understood that when they were to give as they prospered that they gave God 10% of their prosperity. This principle of giving 10% of our earnings is used by Abraham before the Old Law came into effect (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1-4). We have a much better law than they had under the Old (Hebrews 8:6). Therefore, it would seem logical that we should use the 10% figure as a proper place to start in our giving. Considering that we must be "rich" toward God with the use of our money, (Luke 12:15) not stingy and selfish. And considering that Abraham before the Old Law even used this as a gauge in giving to God (Hebrews 7:2).

It is also necessary to mention that to not give back to God properly would make us a thief. We learn this from the Jews who held back part of their 10% (Malachi 3:8-10). According to Thayers Greek Lexicon, tithe means, "a tenth part". 1 Corinthians 6:10 teaches us that a thief will be lost. We also learn in Malachi 3:10,11 that to give properly to God will bring blessings.

THE CHRISTIANS ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY

The attitude the servant of God has towards money is very important. God teaches us what our attitude should be. In Philippians 4:11 Paul talking about finances said, "not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." In dealing with our finances we should take patiently the situation we are in. Not straining with all that we have to gain more.

It is also imperative that the child of God use wisely what God has placed in their care. If proper care is used in handling the money God placed in our control, most of the financial dilemmas we experience would be eliminated. We learn in 1 Corinthians 4:2 a steward must be found faithful. We are stewards of what God has placed in our care. We will each, also give an account to God of how we handle ourselves (Romans 14:12).

The Christian should have an attitude of making sure that God gets his share. If that attitude is kept during the week days, when the first of the week comes around there will rarely not be enough to give "as God hath prospered him" (1 Corinthians 16:2). Especially since expenditures will have been based on this basic teaching.

As the Christian lives, the attitude must also be one of laying up "treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19-21). With this attitude in place in the Christian's life all expenditures, debts, methods of gaining money and giving back to God will fall into place. Remembering that the way we use our blessings here effect our eternity when this life is over.

The Ethics of Jesus in His Earthly Ministry

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Introduction

At the tender, impressionable age of twelve, Jesus told Mary and Joseph that He “must be about my Father’s business” (Luke 2:49). Between twelve and thirty He grew or advanced in wisdom, stature and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). Scripture, not situational ethics, was His constant norm and determined delight.

His Unbending Loyalty to God’s Word and Will

At Jacob’s well in John 4 He told His disciples, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work: (v. 34). At a synagogue in Capernaum He stated, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). His expressed intention at all time was, “...For I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). That the Father was so pleased with Him is evidenced at the Lord’s baptism and His transfiguration (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). The Father gave Him a commandment and that is what He spoke (John 12:49-50). Early in the Lord’s Prayer He prayed, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). On Calvary He cried out in triumph, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Scripture, not situational settings, held total attraction for God’s loyal and lovely Son.

His Ethics in the Heat of Temptation

Subsequent to His baptism by John in the river Jordan He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan (Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4). He had fasted forty days. Great and desperate must have been His hunger. The devil charged Him to assert His power, if He were God’s Son, and turn stones into bread. The situation would have suggested that He do that very thing. But Scripture, Deuteronomy 8:3, said *no*. He followed Scripture. Next, the Lord was tempted by Satan to jump from the dizzy heights of the temple to the Kidron Valley below. The situation might have said, “Take the dare and show him you can glide to the rocky valley safely.” But Scripture, Deuteronomy 6:16, said *no*. He stayed with Scripture. The devil then sought to secure worship from Him promising world dominion promptly. The situation would have said, “This is much easier than the way of Calvary; go for it!” Scripture, Deuteronomy 6:13, said *no*. Situation ethics held no attraction or affinity to the Scripture-bound Son of God.

Ethics and His Enemies

In the Sermon on the Mount He counseled that prayers be prayed for enemies, that blessing be given for those who would curse and persecute and that good be done for those who would do harm and injury (Matthew 5:43ff). Again and again in His ministry He taught His enemies the truth they needed to hear and heed. At the time of His arrest when Peter tried to defend Him with a drawn sword, the militant apostle was told to sheathe his sword for all who took the sword would perish with it. Jesus could have called twelve legions of angels to His defense (Matthew 26:51-56).

He even healed the cut-off ear of Malchus who was of the arresting party (John 18:10-11; Luke 22:50-51). We all know what situational norms would have done in such occurrences! He prayed for His enemies while on the rugged, Roman cross (Luke 23:34). His death was for the one who betrayed Him, denied Him, called for His death and mocked Him during the six hours He was suspended between the heaven He had made and the earth that rejected its Divine Creator as well as for those who loved Him, adored Him and counted Him the Captain of their salvation.

Ethics and His Disciples

Potential leaders of men and seekers after public offices usually paint glowing pictures of how rosy it will be for all if they are elected. Most always they are unable to fulfill or make good on their promises.

Jesus never misled any of His followers. Early in the Sermon on the Mount He spoke of the persecutions they were sure to meet in the future (Matthew 5:10-12). With constancy He told them there was a cross to bear before there would be a crown to wear (Luke 9:23). There was a price to discipleship that the likes of the rich young ruler could not accept (Matthew 19:16-22). James and John were promised their own baptism or immersion in suffering (Matthew 20:22-23). Peter was told what manner of death his would be (John 21:18ff). Jesus conditioned them for the hatred that would surely come their way (John 15:18ff; 16:2). When He gave the famed Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24-25; Mark 13 and Luke 21 there were warnings aplenty of what would come their way leading up and into the destruction of Jerusalem. He knew there would be persecutions hurled at His disciples from members of their families. Fathers and sons would be at distant poles. So would mother and daughters. So would in-laws with family frameworks (Matthew 10:34-36).

Jesus was perfectly honest as He called men and women into His great work.

Ethics and How He Dealt with Controversial Matters

A man's honesty is tested quite seriously when he faces enormous peer pressure to bend to the right or to the left instead of pursuing the straight line of integrity and total honesty. Jesus stood taller than Mount Hermon in these momentous matters.

What He would do with the law of Moses was controversial then and still is I might add. The Jews thought the Mosaic system was eternal and never would be annulled or abrogated. Yet in the Sermon on the Mount He told what He planned to do. When it came time for Him to go to Calvary, he nailed the former covenant to the cross and the middle wall of partition was broken down permanently as per Colossians 2 and Ephesians 2.

What could or could not be done on the sabbath was deeply controversial. Great miracles were frequently performed by Him on sabbath days. He never violated the sabbath day but kept it perfectly even as He did all Mosaic mandates. He stood His ground and would not be saddled with the ridiculous laws they imposed about proper sabbath observances. They filled that day with burdensome trivialities bearing no divine authority at all.

Roman taxation was controversial. The Pharisees and Herodians sought to impale Him upon one

of two horns of dilemma relative to this matter. He answered their carefully crafted query with consummate skill and relative ease in Matthew 22. Truth prevailed.

Sadducean infidelity was controversial. With the woman married consecutively to the seven brothers and as to whose wife will she be in the resurrection, they thought they could make Him look foolish in contending for the validity of the resurrection and a future life. He answered truthfully and egg was on their faces—not His.

Marriage, divorce and remarriage was controversial in His day for a surety. The schools of Hillel and Shammai were poles apart in their respective teaching on this important matter. A question was posed to Him in Matthew 19:3ff about whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause. Promptly, He went to Genesis 2 and showed from the beginning that marriage involved a man and woman and was to be for life. Jesus set forth the truth about marriage, the evils of divorce and the one ground permitting the innocent party to put away the guilty party and with the right to enter marriage with another who is eligible. The guilty party has no right to enter into marriage with another. It would be adulterous for him/her to do so.

The kingdom was controversial then and still is thanks to the premillennial proponents who abound in our badly divided religious world. Even His disciples, during His ministry, thought in terms of a materialistic kingdom with His rule here on earth. Lethal dispensational premillennialism makes the same tragic and inexcusable blunder in our day. This system looks for a worldly kingdom ruled over by Jesus on a Jerusalem throne with political plums passed out to them at will—their will! And it will last a thousand years, they contended. Jesus knew perfectly what manner of kingdom he and the Father planned - a spiritual one with His throne in heaven at Jehovah's right hand. He never misled anybody about the true nature of that kingdom as premillennial proponents do en masse detail today. For shame!

Treatment of others in Jesus' day was very controversial. Yet He taught the Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12. He taught the doing of good to those who curse and despise us (Matthew 5:43ff). He taught what being a real neighbor is like in the Good Samaritan narrative.

The Great Commission would be controversial throughout the future of Christianity. Yet He gave it in simple and sublime language. He told us during His ministry that we must hear, believe in Him, repent of sins, confess Him before men and be immersed (Mark 4:23-24; John 8:21, 24; Luke 13:3,5; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:16).

Some Applications

We face a world that rejects absolutes, that wishes to throw out God that, seeks to craft religion according to personal preferences and contends that all religions are of equal validity and merit. Jesus stood opposed to all such while He was here and we must do more of the same if pleasing to Him we would be. The controversial did not frighten Him; neither should it us. The exposure of error never did intimidate Him into silence; neither should it us. The presence of so much dishonesty in His world did not drive Him away from the high plane of total honesty and integrity He ever maintained. Neither should it us. That people forsook His as in John 6 or that Judas

betrayed Him in Matthew 26 did not thwart His determination to pursue the right tenaciously and cling to it minus any and all compromise.

Conclusion

His ethical excellency is a marvelous model for the emulation by all of us.

Can We Determine Right Or Wrong?

Author

Perry Cotham was born to Christian parents January 5, 1912 in Murray, Kentucky. He was baptized at an early age began preaching soon after in 1929 at the age of 17. He graduated from Freed-Hardeman College (then a junior college) 1931. He then entered college at his hometown of Murray, Kentucky and graduated from Murray State University in 1934. While attending college he preached for several of the area churches and conducted meetings. After several years of local work in Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas he began full time meeting work in 1972. Since that time he has preached in all 50 of the United States and in all inhabited continents of the world, including over 70 nations. He has written 16 tracts and published 3 debate books with those of the Pentecostal persuasion. Perry lives in Grand Prairie, Texas.

Jesus once declared to some: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye *shall know the truth*, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). This statement clearly implies that one can know the truth of God's Word.

However, determining right and wrong depends upon a proper attitude of a person's mind. Christ also stated: "If any man *will do his will*, he shall *know* of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). So one must be willing to do the will of God. He must be of a disposition to obey the Lord's commandments or have an honest desire to obey the Lord in all things.

It is the purpose of this study to show from the Holy Scriptures that a person with average intelligence can learn what is right and what is wrong in religion and that he can obey the Lord for his soul's salvation. Nevertheless, to do so does require an honest heart and a willingness to obey the Lord. Note again the reading of John 7:17 found in other translations besides the King James Version:

- If any man *willeth* to do his will, he shall know of the teaching (ASV).
- If any one *wants* to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine (NKJV).
- If any man is *willing* to do His will, he shall know of the teaching (NASB).

A SIMPLE ILLUSTRATION

Let us suppose that in this good city of several public elementary schools there is confusion on the part of some of the teachers and the students as to the correct answer to the equation of two times two equals four ($2 \times 2 = 4$). One teacher says the answer is four, another says it is five, and so on. Still others say that it does not make any difference which answer the students puts on his paper if he, or she, is satisfied with the answer, after all it is a matter of one's own interpretation. So no answer will be marked wrong on the final examinations. This would certainly be confusion in the school system and in the minds of the students.

How can the matter be correctly settled? The answer is very simple: get a textbook that has the multiplication table in it, examine it and see what is the correct answer. Then all the teachers agree to teach the same thing from the textbook and grade all students by this correct answer that is in the book. Then all the schools would be teaching the same thing in their classes.

Now make the application of this illustration to the subject of religion. How can we determine what is right and what is wrong? We must all agree to go by the inspired Word of God. For example, what is the purpose of baptism, and what is the proper mode? What name should the followers of Christ wear? When should the Lord's Supper be observed? What kind of music should we offer in our worship to God? These questions, and many other similar questions, can be correctly answered by the Bible when we carefully examine it for the answers. Then all should teach and practice exactly what the Bible says. Peter admonished: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

But one objects, "One preacher says one thing and another says something else." That is true, but what does the Bible say? The Bible does not contradict itself. God is not the author of confusion (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33). Another says, "We cannot all understand the Bible alike." If we understand it, we understand it alike. All cannot be different and all cannot be right. If we understand that two times two equals four, and all understand it alike, we can understand the Bible alike in regard to our soul's salvation.

MUST HAVE RIGHT ATTITUDE

During Christ's personal ministry, we have an account of Him speaking a series of parables by the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 13:11-52). He later explained to His disciples why He spoke in parables and why some did not understand the things spoken. It was not His fault if some of the Jews did not understand Him. Also Jesus said:

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matthew 13:14-15).

This was a quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10, which was literally fulfilled during the time of the prophet; but in the time of Christ the people then had the same attitude toward God's Word. Like Israel of old, they too, had closed their eyes upon the truth and rejected divine teaching. The words of Isaiah were, therefore, as well fitted to express the character of these people during the personal ministry of Christ as in the time of the prophet. In this sense then the words were fulfilled (cf. Acts 28:25-27). The people were prejudiced; they would not see the truth or understand what was contrary to their opinions or desires.

This attitude is by no means uncommon in the religious world today concerning what is right and what is wrong. The reception of any truth from God's Word depends wholly upon the attitude of the

individual who is hearing it proclaimed or reading it. His prejudices, formed maybe in years gone by, prevent him from accepting the teaching of the truths concerning his soul's salvation. This, however, is not the fault of the Word of God.

Some declare that they cannot really know the truth, what is right and what is wrong, as there are so many different "interpretations" of the Bible. Some reject the teaching of the Bible because it is against their former teaching. One should ask himself: "Do I have a desire to learn and to do God's will regardless of what may have been my teaching in the past?" "Am I really hungering and thirsting after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6)? "Am I free of prejudices so that I can say, "Speak, Lord, and I will hear; command, and I will obey" (cf. 1 Samuel 3:9)?

A person must reach that point of honesty with himself in order to know what is right and to do it, according to the words of Christ in John 7:17. God's Word is plain, simple and easy to be understood as to what the Lord wants us to believe and do in religion. Man's attitude then should be: "Show me the way, Lord; I want the truth; what is my duty? I really want to go to heaven when I die."

GOD'S WAY VERSUS "MY WAY"

There are many who would not mind becoming Christians and serving the Lord if God would let them dictate the terms on which that could be brought about. Many are willing to worship God if the Lord will let them do as they please and do what they like. David declared: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24); "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105; cf. Psalm 1).

After His resurrection and prior to His ascension, Christ declared: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18 ASV). We are to hear Christ (Matthew 17-5; Acts 3:22-23; Hebrews 12:25; 5:9).

EXAMPLE OF SINCERITY

The account of the conversion of the Ethiopian officer, the secretary of the treasury of Queen Candace's government, shows a person who was of a willing and sincere heart (Acts 8:26-39). Wanting to know what the will of the Lord was, he was reading the Scriptures when Philip, the evangelist, met him. Philip "preached unto him Jesus," and after he had learned the Lord's plan of salvation, he immediately confessed his faith in Christ and was baptized. Then "he went on his way rejoicing." He learned the Lord's will, and he obeyed it.

Did the eunuch learn what was right? Indeed so. Can a person, who is accountable, learn that same message today? We think so. One of the greatest deceptions the devil has ever put upon mankind is to suggest that one cannot, with an honest heart, read and understand his duty to God for his soul's salvation. To remove this deception of Satan will result in many souls who would have otherwise been lost, being with God eternally.

MAN RESPONSIBLE

If an intelligent person cannot understand, or know, God's will for him by reading it or hearing it preached, then the Lord is responsible for that person's condition if he is eternally lost. Could God have made the message plainer or more simple in His Word but did not because He could not? If so, this reflects on the ability of God. If God could have made it plainer but He did not because He did not care if a person understood it or not, this then reflects upon the morality of God as a loving and just Being. If man needs more teaching than is in the Bible to know and to do God's will to be saved, then why did not God give us all these things that we need?

The truth is, God "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3) in terms easy to be understood and obeyed. The lack of obedience then is because people "shut their eyes, stop their ears, and bar the door of their hearts" to truth. It is impossible for that man who does this to ever learn the truth and obey it. Why? He does not want the truth. A person of that disposition is certain to be lost eternally. Hence, the Bible teaches that each person is accountable and responsible for his own soul's salvation (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

There are some who think that the Holy Spirit in some direct, personal way gives additional help or insight into the Holy Scriptures, in addition to the Bible, to help them know the Lord's will. But this is not taught in God's Word. Too, there are some statements of Scripture that are misapplied and used to teach people that they cannot read and understand the Bible. We mention two such statements:

First, in 2 Peter 1:20 is the statement that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any *private* interpretation." This is used to teach that an ordinary person needs someone who has extra divine help or guidance of the Holy Spirit to explain the Scriptures to him. And there are those who claim to have this power. But such an idea that there are certain ones today who are being divinely guided to help explain the Word of God is not taught in this passage. The apostles and prophets were divinely inspired to give us God's Word; "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). For example, Paul received his message by divine inspiration and wrote it down; then he said, "whereby, *when ye read, ye may understand...* as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:3-5). Also, Paul wrote: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable... That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto *all* good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The apostles were guided into "all truth" by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Again, Paul affirmed in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, that the words of God are verbally inspired. So the Bible is the verbally inspired, inerrant, and complete will of God.

So, verse 23, of 1 Peter 2, explains why the prophecies given by inspired prophets were not of any "private interpretation." They were not giving their own, private interpretation of the "signs of the time" concerning future events. They were guided by the Holy Spirit to write what would happen, not their own ideas. The passage has absolutely nothing to do with a person needing today any extra direct help from the Holy Spirit to understand God's will or some person divinely

guided to help explain it to him. A person can read and learn his duty to God by reading and studying for himself if he is honest and sincere.

Second, some refer to passages of Scripture which state that the gospel of Christ is a “mystery” revealed, as in Ephesians 3:3, and infer that the gospel of Christ which was once hidden in the mind of God and has now been revealed, is “mysterious” and cannot be understood by the common man. This is a gross misunderstanding of the passages. The Bible is a *revelation* of God’s will.

The word *mystery*, as used in the Scriptures, signifies a secret, something that was kept secret in God’s mind from man’s understanding until God revealed it to us by the Spirit. Once God’s will was revealed, it was no longer a mystery (cf Romans 16:25-27). In 1 Corinthians 2:7-13, Paul tells of the gospel of the Christian Age as having been in God’s mind from all eternity (Ephesians 3:10-11) but now revealed unto us by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets. In this connection he refers to a prophecy by Isaiah “that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,” (referring to the many blessings in the Christian Age). Then Paul says that “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit” (vs 10). Paul also said, “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (words, ASV)” (vs 13).

(Incidentally, 1 Corinthians 2-9 is not a funeral text to be applied to heaven, although it is often used in that way. The language refers to the blessings in the age of the Lord’s church when it was once established. It has now been established, since the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2). So the gospel is no longer a mystery, and it is certainly not mysterious. Isaiah prophesied centuries before the Lord’s church was established and spoke of things yet to come which no one knew exactly.)

“KNOW EVERYTHING”

Some then sneeringly ask, “Well, then do you know everything that is in the Bible? The answer is no, emphatically **NO**. But I do understand God’s will to me as to what I must do to be saved, the name to wear, and how to worship and serve the Lord in living the Christian life, for everything that is necessary for our salvation is plain and can be easily understood by all rational beings. We can know that if people will hear and obey the word of God, it will save them; but if they will not, it will condemn them in the last day. Truth can be known, that is, truth for our spiritual freedom. Jesus said so. A lack of reverence and indifference toward the Word of God is a lack of reverence for God. This is the spirit of liberalism. It is a very dangerous attitude. But some will ask, “If you can know the truth, then who was Cain’s wife, what was Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh,’ etc.?” Those questions do not pertain to knowing and understanding God’s will to be saved from sin by the grace of God and in living the Christian life faithfully in order to go to heaven when this earthly life is over.

MYSTERIES IN THE BIBLE

Again, some ask: "Since we can know the truth and know right from wrong, are there not mysteries in the Bible that cannot be answered?" The answer again is yes. Indeed, there are mysteries in the Word of God, that is, many things that we are not able to understand. Among them, we could say that we do not know how God could cure Naaman of his leprosy by his dipping seven times in the river Jordan (2 Kings 5:1-14). We do not know how the blind man was cured, by his washing in the Pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7). But the Lord cured Naaman, and the blind man received his sight when they both obeyed the Lord.

Why did God tell Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan River? Why did it have to be in the Jordan? We do not know the answer to those questions. Why did he have to dip seven times? We do not know. Would not some other river have been as good as the Jordan? After all, there were rivers in his own country, Abanah and Pharper. No, because the Lord said: "In the River Jordan." Well, would not one dipping in the river be sufficient? No, because the prophet of God said: "Seven times." If Naaman had dipped one time and then stopped, would he have been cured of his leprosy? No, because God said: "Seven times." But why seven times if God could cure him by dipping one time? We do not know, that is God's side of the matter.

Did the water in the river have any power to cure Naaman of his leprosy? Indeed not. Then why dip in the river? Because that is what God told him to do. Could Naaman see any reason for doing this? No. But when Naaman finally did what the Lord told him to do, he was cured of his leprosy. It was the Lord that bestowed the blessing of healing, but not until Naaman had obeyed the Lord. If Naaman had refused to do what the Lord told him to do, would he have been cured of his leprosy? Certainly not! He had to obey the Lord to receive the blessing.

Well, was the instruction given to Naaman simple? Could he at the time he was told what to do understand it? Indeed so. That was his side of the matter. Naaman's refusal to obey at first was not due to the fact that he could not understand what the prophet of God had told him to do. It was because he, from a human standpoint, could not see any reason for doing it. The command was simple, easy to be understood and easy to be obeyed. Hence, when Naaman obeyed the Lord, he was cured of his leprosy!

The same principle applies to all people today. We can easily understand and obey God's will for us, and when we obey the Lord, we will be blessed.

TWO SIDES TO SALVATION

We should always remember that there are two sides to man's salvation: God's side and man's side. God's side is to provide for man his forgiveness by His grace and to tell man what conditions are to be met to obtain His blessings. Man's side is to learn and obey the conditions by his obedient faith in God; these conditions are always simple and easy to understand and to obey. Man needs only to trust the Lord and do His will. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

MYSTERIES IN NATURE

However, there are mysteries in the realm of nature as well as in the Bible, which we cannot fully understand. For instance, how are our physical bodies nourished and sustained in all their parts by our eating certain foods? We know some things about it, but much of it is a mystery to us. The same food will help put white skin on the body of one person, black skin on another person and yellow skin on another. Can we explain that?

We do not understand how a sheep and a goose can eat the same food in the field and it produce wool on a sheep's back and feathers on the goose's back. We do not understand how a black cow can eat green grass and give white milk from which we get yellow butter. But we can feed and milk the cow, drink the milk and eat the butter and enjoy the benefits therefrom.

The God of Nature is the God of Revelation, and in both realms there are things we cannot know. The natural realm is full of such mysteries. Here is a man in this state. He has a very limited education, in fact, he cannot even spell the words "agriculture" or "horticulture." Yet, in the springtime he can prepare the soil, plant corn seed, knowing that the seed will reproduce after its kind, then later cultivate the ground, and finally gather the corn, have the corn ground and he and his family can eat good cornbread. Does he fully understand all about the growth of the corn seed? Indeed not! Yet he does his part, and God in His providence in the natural realm does the rest. Does the farmer necessarily need to know how the seed grows in the ground and produce a harvest of corn for him to plant the seeds? Of course, he does not. But he does not refuse to plant the seeds because he cannot fully understand how the seed reproduces after its kind and multiplies. It would be just as foolish for a man, therefore, to reject the book of Nature because he cannot understand its mysteries as it would be for him to reject the Bible (the Book of Revelation) because he cannot fully understand all of its mysteries. This one thing we must keep in mind: *the mysteries in nature and in the Bible are always on God's side and never on man's side.*

It was a mystery how God healed Naaman when he dipped in the Jordan and how He gave sight to the blind man when he washed in the pool of Siloam. But the mystery in both cases was God's side. So it is with man's salvation. Man has only to believe and obey. His part is plain and simple and easy to obey. There is absolutely no mystery on man's side.

We may not know why baptism is made a condition of salvation to a penitent believer (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16), but like Naaman and the blind man, we can believe and obey. Hence, we proclaim to every one this message: *take God at His word, believe what He says, do what He commands, and trust Him for the fulfillment of His promises.* We can know right and wrong in the realm of religion if we are honest and sincere in the study of God's Word. His Word is truth (John 17:17). It will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). "And ye shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32).

Sir Walter Scott, one of Scotland's distinguished novelists and poets (1771-1832), truthfully said concerning the Bible:

Within this ample volume lies
The mystery of mysteries,
Happiest they of human race
To whom God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way,
And better had they ne'er been born
Who read to doubt or read to scorn.

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Honesty

John Shafer

John and his wife Linda (Kramer) have been married since November 1968 and have three daughters. John works for the United States Postal Service, serving as a postmaster. John has spoken on lectures in Colorado and Nebraska. He has worked with the IBS lectureships in Minnesota and done overseas work in Estonia (2 trips) and India (2 trips). John shares the preaching duties at the church in Kearney, Nebraska, speaking every other Lord's Day morning and also regularly teaching a Sunday evening class and also a young boys class on Wednesday.

There are a number of sayings or proverbs concerning honesty. Of course we've all heard, "Honesty is the best policy." But then there is also, "Honesty is the best policy but Insanity is a better defense." Years ago there was a song called, "Honesty" by Billy Joel. One part of the song was, "Honesty is hardly ever heard."

Many, if asked, would state that they believe we should be honest at all times but judging by our actions, do we truly believe it? In today's world we often joke about those that we believe to be dishonest: Politicians, lawyers, automobile salesmen, fishermen (the one that got away) and yes even preachers. We many times excuse the lack of honesty or perhaps rationalize it. However we need to realize as Christians, we are called to a higher standard.

Today I hope to examine the Bible teaching concerning honesty. First let's see what the word means: implies a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way.

As we look first in the Old Testament, we see the initial lie being told by Satan. Genesis 3:4 "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:" Satan changed but one word. He was dishonest! Until this lie, we have no knowledge of anything less than the truth, no knowledge of anyone being less than honest. But since that time we realize that honesty is not necessarily the norm anymore. Just look at Adam. He immediately places the blame of sin on Eve even though from the scriptures it shows that he was there with her when she took the fruit, Genesis 3:6. In Genesis 3:12 "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Then of course we have the dishonesty of Cain in Genesis 4:9.

In Leviticus 6:1ff...we see that we sin against the Lord when we lie. Then in Leviticus 19:11 "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." We see stealing, dealing falsely and lying all tied together. They are all wrong and should not be something that we are involved in. Indeed the New Testament also tells us not to lie but that lying should not be a part of the Christians life. Colossians 3:8 "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

John 8:44 tells us who our Father is if we lie. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

We need to understand that if we speak the truth in order to deceive, it too is a lie. Abraham was guilty of such. Genesis 12:10 "And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. 11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: 12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. 13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee." Was Sarai his sister? Yes she was but she was also his wife. Did he tell the truth? Only partially. In so doing not only did Abraham sin but his lie caused great plagues on Pharaoh and his house. Yes our lies can quite often not only hurt us but others as well. Now did Abraham learn from this? Probably not as we see in Genesis 20:1-7 that Abraham repeats the same sin and this time almost causes a king to die. Our sinning, our lying can cause others to sin and such should not be charged against a Christian. In Genesis 26:6-11 we see like Father like son as Isaac commits a similar lie concerning Rebekah. Yes the sin of lying can be contagious.

Honesty is something that needs to be practiced daily. It shouldn't be one of those things that happens only when we are around other Christians. We cannot say something while among Christians and then change our tune when around those who are not. Romans 12:17 "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." All should know that we are honest to perhaps a fault. 2Corinthians 8:21 "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." We have no choice if we are going to follow God but to be honest.

We as Christians need to be honest to those we work for. In other words give 8 hours work for 8 hours pay. So many times we forget about the preacher. Yes we sometimes say they only work maybe 4 or 5 hours a week. But I would suggest you walk in their shoes. However the rise of the internet has taken many preachers away from their work. Many will spend hours on end in chat groups. They'll spend hours discussing the Bible with other members throughout the world but not lift a finger to call on a member of the congregation they work with, set up a study, etc. Brethren we need to spend time in study but we need to put that study to work. We indeed need to lift up the hands of those who truly work honestly amongst us, but we also need to correct those who walk dishonestly.

We need to be honest when we teach and preach. We need to be honest with those we teach concerning their salvation. To do otherwise is to fall short. Yet those who seek God also need to be honest. In Luke 8, the parable of the sower is told. Then in verse 15 we are told, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Those who seek the truth must indeed have an honest and good heart.

God's truth has been revealed in His Word and given by the Holy Spirit, John 16:13. We need to be honest in presenting the whole truth because it is the Word of God that will judge us, John 12:48.

God's Word is pure and we need to make certain that we do not make a law or command where God has not, Proverbs 30:5,6. We should not shirk our duties as Christians by letting the world keep us from serving as we should.

Honesty is not something we should not have but rather it is a requirement. If we are not honest, we will end up lost. Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

And as we close the study we turn to Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Are There Bible Examples of Situation Ethics?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Introduction

In recent years there has been an immense amount of publicity given to what Joseph Fletcher, in his popular but poisonous book *Situation Ethics*, developed into a philosophy. It is another devilish device to substitute human situations calling for a moral response for what the Scriptures State. Situation ethics is totally subjective with each person deciding in a given moment whether he is going to do what he wants to do or what Scripture, God's Word, enjoins on him. Scripture is objective, meaning that we appeal for authority for our action to a source external to us. That source is the Word of God *period*.

Religious proponents of situation ethics frequently appeal to selected actions in both testaments contending that they have a Biblical basis for their situational decisions. I shall number and note some of these with prompt refutations then submitted.

(1) The Egyptian Midwives. The Egyptian Pharaoh, fearing Israel's great growth and deeming them a potential threat to Egypt in future warfare, commanded the midwives to kill Hebrew males at birth and preserve the female babies. Shiphrah and Puah, midwives who are named, feared God and "saved the men children alive" (Exodus 1:17). The Egyptian king called them to give an account as to why they had disobeyed his strict orders. They answered, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come into them" (Exodus 1:19). God dealt well with the midwives as per verse 20.

Various objections have been raised relative to all this. Did only two midwives serve all Israelite women en masse? The two named ones might well have been the chief ones and had others working under them. Did these two lie to Pharaoh and did God approve of such? Again, they may have been the only ones since the Hebrew women, healthier and stronger than Egyptian women, gave birth before the midwives were summoned. Neighbors and members of the household may have assisted the childbirth's. God blessed the midwives because they honored a divine decree rather than a cruel, cold and callused human edict from an insensitive dictator. There is *no* situational ethics system approved here.

(2) Rahab the Harlot and Her Lie. Joshua, the leader who succeeded Moses, sent two men to spy out Jericho prior to their taking of it. They were befriended, shielded and assisted by Rahab. What about her past and did God approve of such? Some have contended that she was merely an innkeeper and not a harlot in the usual sense of the word at all. There seems to be little doubt that in her past she had been a prostitute selling her body for immoral purposes. But this was in her past-not the present and certainly not the future. She is commended in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 because of her faith, works of righteousness and deep fear of God. She came into the Hebrew family by marriage and became an ancestor of both David and Jesus as related in Matthew 1:4-6. In marvelous fashion she demonstrated the transforming power of God and His Word in her checkered life. Impurity was traded for purity and piety. Paganism was exchanged for the worship and service of the one true and living God-Jehovah.

What about the lies she told the Jericho authorities relative to the two spies in Joshua 2:3ff? Did God approve of such? God Himself cannot lie as we note in Hebrews 6:18 and Titus 1:2. Therefore, He cannot and will not approve or condone the lies of anybody. Remember that she is from a pagan past and is just beginning to learn of the one true and living God. She did what her meager knowledge of right and wrong suggested. This also is military strategy. In the battle later to take Ai, Joshua feigned a military movement to get the Ai soldier away from their home base in order that Israel might conquer the city. Do we fault him for so doing? The bible does not for God gave them the victory. Let us judge Rahab by what she became and remained and not by a past action when her knowledge of God and His law of honesty was so very deficient in her heart. There is no divine approval of situation ethics throughout this whole account. If so, where is it?

(3) David and the Showbread. We read about this initially in 1 Samuel 21:3ff. Jesus alluded to such when His enemies accused His disciples of a Sabbath day violation as they plucked ears of grain on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:1ff, Mark 2:23ff, and Luke 6:1ff). The disciples were not violating the Sabbath by such permitted actions at all. Had they been doing so, Jesus would have been the very first one to correct such an infraction. In answer, Jesus referred to David and the showbread and what the priests did regularly on each Sabbath day. He showed their glaring inconsistency. They exonerated David, their great Hebrew hero, of any blame yet he ate that which was unlawful. Jesus called David's actions unlawful yet His enemies found no fault in what David had done. Yet they faulted the disciples who had not violated the Sabbath day by their grain plucking at all. He also told His enemies of what the priests did on the Sabbath days and yet were blameless. As the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus knew and knew perfectly what was proper and improper by what of actions on the Sabbath day. His disciples were without fault in what they had done. There is no situational ethics system operating here as evidenced by Jesus' defense of his disciples. He did not say David did right by partaking of the show bread in a time of need. He defended His disciples and the priestly actions on the Sabbath day because neither group stood guilty of Sabbath day violations.

(4) The Imprecatory Psalms. Objections are frequently leveled against some of the sentiments in Psalms claiming they breathe forth a spirit of vengeance and a desire for punishment to be inflicted upon enemies of Israel. Here are a few of them-3: 7, 5:9,10, 18:34ff, 35:1ff, 58:4ff, 137:9, 139:19ff, 140:8ff, 141:1ff, and 149:7ff. There are others but these will serve our purpose in noting a few of them. Do these offer situations that determine right and wrong actions? What observations can be offered by way of answer? The following are taken from my book, *Studies In Psalms*, which I wrote during the 1980's.

It will not do to deny, as some have done, the inspiration of these Psalms. David wrote some of these sentiments and he affirmed, "the Spirit of the lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2). Peter affirmed in Acts 1:16 that David spoke by the Holy Spirit. He would be one of the holy men who spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

All of the so-called imprecations were against enemies of righteousness. Not that first one was directed against the pure and pious.

Some of these simply registered how different ones would feel when they engaged in these

atrocities such as with the Babylonians in their coming destruction as set out in Psalm 137:8,9.

A head of state-David made some of these imprecations for instance-who was legally obligated to mete out punishment to criminals who warred against the Israelite state. Civil government has always had the divine approval and obligation to punish evil men. Paul and Peter both deal with this in Romans 13:1ff and 1Peter 2:13,14.

The very fact that God frequently used his people as an instrument to punish wicked people would have encouraged the sure development of such sentiments. Look at the conquering of the pagan nations by Joshua and the military exploits by both judges and kings later in the Old Testament.

It is right-never wrong-that evil be punished. This is an undergirding principle of our whole system of law. The way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). A part of that present punishment is meted out by duly authorized civil powers.

Some of these no doubt reflected the true feelings of men less than perfect and the bible is not to be defaulted and its inspiration impeached any more for these than for other imperfections associated with the finite scribes of Holy Writ and the erring people they portrayed.

All these Psalmists lived under a law greatly inferior to Christianity. It is wrong, grossly so, to judge them by Christianity when they never lived a day under the sunlit truths of Jesus and Christianity.

These will not solve all questions about these difficult-to-understand verses but perhaps will aid to some degree as touching why they are recorded.

These offer no syllable of support for situations to be authoritative norms in what we think, say and do. Only the Word of God can do that.

(5) The Woman Taken in Adultery. The apostle John is the lone penman to include this. He recorded it in John 8:1-11. The Lord had spent the previous night on the Mount of Olives. He may have lodge with Martha, Mary and Lazarus since Bethany, their home, is situated on the eastern slopes of Olivet. Early in the morning He returned to the temple area and taught. His enemies brought (dragged is in the Greek construction here) an adulterous woman before Him charging her with that very act. They claim to have caught her in the very act of adultery. They reminded Him of what Moses taught about stoning such in Deuteronomy 22:22. They asked for a verdict from Him. They were not interested in justice or even honoring Moses. Had they been, the man who was also involved would have been brought with her. If caught in the very act, the man was present when they apprehended her. Rome had removed capital punishment powers from Jewish circles. Had he said stone her, they would have hailed Him to the Roman authorities as someone opposing Caesar's law. Had he said to spare her they would have told the people that He was undermining Mosaic authority in such matters. They did not mind which horn of the dilemma he took. They either forgot or ignored Deuteronomy 17:7 about the witnesses to prosecute such an actions. Hence, he charged the ones without sin to cast the first stone. From the oldest to the youngest all her accusers made a hasty and embarrassing exit. With all of them gone, the Lord told her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

He did not condone her sin but sought to lead her to a higher plateau of purity.

There are no situation ethics principles at work here-not that first one.

CONCLUSION

Situation ethics are never found with God's approval in either testament. Eve and the serpent appealed to it in Eden. In modern times we have to go to the writings of such men as Joseph Fletcher, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr and John A T. Robinson to educate us relative to this poisonous system of situation ethics.

Scripture, not situations, determines human thoughts, words and actions.

Organ Transplants and Blood Transfusions

Toney L. Smith

Toney is a native of Arkansas, born in Nashville and raised in Texarkana. He is a 1982 graduate of Brown Trail School of Preaching and later taught there for 6 years. He has done local work in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and now works with the church in Dresden, Tennessee. He and his wife Debby have 3 sons and 2 grandsons and another due in October.

It has been stated that we are now living in the best of times. We are clothed better, fed better, travel better and things are generally easier than ever before. We have comfortable homes with hot and cold running water. And without doubt we have access to the finest medical care ever experienced in the history of our world. We are now enjoying the age of space technology and scientific advancements have soared beyond anything imagined fifty or sixty years ago. However, with all this progress man seems to be regressing in the area of ethics and morals. On every hand men are "cutting the apron strings" from God and the absolute standards of ethics and morality contained in His word are being abandoned.

As science has advanced, the tendencies of some men who seek to be smarter than the God of heaven has advanced as well. The medical field has in some instances taken on the position of making themselves gods. Many of these advancements have been very beneficial to mankind and to the ethical climate of our society, while others are completely at odds with Biblical principles. Some have set out to bind things which are not founded upon Biblical truths. Our task in this lesson is to examine the ethics involved in organ transplantation and blood transfusions. Our aim will be to establish Biblically whether or not these practices are in harmony with the word of God or whether they are condemned.

DEFINE ETHICS

Ethics and moral action involves the study of man's activities and the determination of whether these actions are right or wrong. We must have an absolute standard to make this distinction. Both ethics and morals are derived from the Greek word ETHOS. It is a term scientifically applied to the general science of determining that which is right and that which is wrong. Ethics, therefore is the set of precepts which govern right and honorable living.

The coming of Christianity marked a revolution in ethics. It introduced a single standard as man's guide to that which is right or wrong. In the Christian view, a person is totally dependent upon God and His word to achieve an understanding of correct behavior. The fundamental Christian ethical belief is grounded in what is commonly known as the golden rule, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). We see the same principle in the injunction to love one's neighbor as thyself (Leviticus 19:18), to love one's enemies (Matthew 5:44); and to, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Jesus taught that the fundamentals of faith are encompassed in the commandment; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27). Proper ethical standards are found only in the inspired word of God (Psalm 119:11).

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS

In this section of our study we will seek to answer the question of whether it is right or wrong to use blood transfusions. There are a few who feel that the use of blood in this manner is a violation of scripture. The most notable religious group to affirm this position is the Jehovah Witnesses. They claim that all Christians must abstain from blood and the early church understood this as a universal rule. They often appeal to early uninspired writers to bolster their claim and take some Bible passages out of context. Based upon these two things, the Jehovah’s Witnesses reject the medical practice of blood being given intravenously to help in the preservation of life. We will not be able to cover all of the material that refutes their claims but will deal with the manner in which they interpret Acts 15:13-29.

In this passage James is affirming that the prophets had spoken of the time when the Gentile would be ushered into the kingdom. To do so he cites Amos 9:11-12 which gives the picture of the tabernacle being rebuilt so that the Gentiles might be saved. James charged the Jewish Christians not to trouble the Gentile Christians except to inform them to “abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:20). These four things were mentioned because they were common occurrences among the Gentile people. The Jehovah’s Witnesses take the “abstain from blood” to mean blood must not be used in transfusions because this constitutes the eating of blood.

The blood represents the life that is in men (Leviticus 17:13-14). Moses, by inspiration, penned these words more than three thousand years before William Harvey, an English physician, discovered the circulatory system. Life is sustained because the red blood cells carry oxygen throughout the body. This fact was not understood in the medical community until a few centuries ago. In fact, in 1799 when George Washington became ill from an acute cold and eventually died this was not common knowledge. His death was not caused so much from the ailment, but because of the blood letting that took place. The scientific principle that states life is in the blood was taught many years before the death of our first president (Genesis 9:4). The blood coursing through our veins represents life, a fact taught in each of the three dispensations. This precept was taught in the Patriarchal age (Genesis 9:3-4), the Mosaical age (Leviticus 17:13-14), and in the Christian dispensation as well (Acts 15:20). The eating of blood was condemned not just because it was associated with idol worship but because this precept was said to be wrong from the beginning. Many today eat blood in some form or another. Some eat puddings made from blood, drink blood, or eat a kind of sausage made from blood. The prohibition for such is understood under all three dispensations. Clearly stated, the consumption of blood as food is condemned in the word of God. This is the message being taught in Acts 15:28-29.

Having established this fact, we now turn our attention to the subject of blood transfusions. We must point out that eating blood is the prohibition in Acts 15:20, 28-29 not the receiving of blood

transfusions. Some in the religious world, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, believe and teach that blood transfusions are parallel to eating blood. However, transfusions are for the purpose of saving and maintaining life. God chose for a mother to feed her unborn child by means of blood through the umbilical cord. This fact clearly shows a great difference from a Biblical standpoint in the matter of eating blood, which is sinful, and in taking life-giving properties via the transfusion of blood.

It is interesting to note in the early years of the Witnesses they did not advocate their present position relative to blood transfusions. The current application of certain Bible texts, notably Acts 15:28-29, to support a blood prohibition by Christians was not shared by Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Watch Tower Society. In a commentary about the apostolic council of Acts 15, Russell said, "He (James) further suggested writing to them merely that they abstain from pollutions of idols (verse 29), and from things strangled and from blood - as by eating such things they might become stumbling blocks to their Jewish brethren." So even though blood transfusions were not yet in use, Russell's position was clear in that he did not consider the dietary law on blood as binding for Christians. After his death, the Witnesses changed their position and felt that the "blood prohibition" in Genesis 9:4 applies to all men. In 1954 blood transfusions and blood products are officially banned as "pagan and God-dishonoring." (Watch Tower 7/1/45, p. 198-201) Their link between the eating of blood and the transfusion of blood was stated very clearly in that same issue of Watch Tower on page 415. This article states, "A patient in the hospital may be fed through the mouth, through the nose, or through the veins. When sugar solutions are given intravenously, it is called intravenous feeding. So the hospital's own terminology recognizes the process of putting nutrition into one's system via the veins. Hence the attendant administering transfusion is feeding the patient blood through the veins, and the patient receiving it is eating through its veins." Their belief is that a blood transfusion is the same as eating the blood. This is a false conclusion based upon an improper application of both medical and Biblical facts. Acts 15:28-29 is not dealing with life saving blood transfusions but the oral consumption of blood.

I am amazed at a new wrinkle in the Jehovah's Witnesses position about blood transfusions. The Watchtower Society now approves *hemopure*, a new oxygen carrying solution made from the blood of cows (www.ajwrb.org). I cannot imagine why they would condemn the use of human blood products and then approve the blood product of an animal. In Leviticus 17:10-12 the prohibition relative to the consumption of blood referred to the blood of animals offered on the altar (vs. 11). Verse 10 clearly says; "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people." There is no consistency in their practice by allowing the product of animal blood to be used while condemning the use of human blood transfusions.

ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

Organ transplantation is the practice of removing usable organs from people and giving them to others who is seriously ill. Every year about 20,000 organ transplants take place. Although it is not generally known to the public, research on cardiac transplantation began as long ago as 1905 and continued progressively until 1960, when the first successful complete replacement of the heart in dogs was reported. The work was complicated and the failure rate was very high. Since that time the

success rate has been greatly improved by the use of drugs that help keep the body from rejecting the donated organ. However, this increased success rate has raised many ethical questions. The methods of procuring organs have come under close scrutiny. Questions are being raised that need to be answered. Should people profit from the donation of organs? Should only the wealthy benefit from organ transplantation? Does the Bible condemn the practice? These and many more questions are being asked. Our lesson will deal with the ethical aspects of organ transplantation.

There are several religious groups, most notably the Watch Tower Society, who would not accept the advancing technology surrounding organ transplantation. In *The Watch Tower*, 11/15/67, p. 702, the following statement was made, "when there is a diseased or defective organ, the usual way health is restored is by taking in nutrients. The body uses food eaten to repair or heal the organ, gradually replacing the cells. When men of science conclude that this normal process will no longer work and they suggest removing the organ and replacing it directly with an organ from another human, this is simply a shortcut. Those who submit to such operations are thus living off the flesh of another human. That is **cannibalistic**..." The article goes on to say God did not grant permission for such to occur. However, in the March 15, 1980 issue, the mandate was changed to say that it would be a matter of conscience (p. 31). The Bible did not change! Who then has made it a matter of conscience? God or men?

On the subject of who can be an organ recipient, we read discussions concerning selection of the recipients based on whether one contributed to his or her own illnesses or not. Should an alcoholic be equally eligible for a liver transplant as a person who is suffering from liver failure due to other causes for which they were not responsible? Should a smoker have the same rights to a lung transplant as the non-smoker?

There are some issues that are clearly in violation of God's law. It is becoming more and more popular to "harvest" organs from aborted fetuses. Recently the legislation for the Adult Organ Transplant Program was expanded by the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA) to include the fetus as an organ donor. They justify this proposal on the basis that the dead fetus parallels that of the dead adult cadaver as an organ donor. Currently this practice is being used to experiment in the cure for Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's Chorea, and spinal cord or other neural injuries. (Rae) Of course this practice violates God's word concerning the taking of a life. (Exodus 20:13) In my mind this practice is accepted because many do not understand or do not want to understand when life begins. God's word plainly states that life begins at conception (Job 3:3).

Another issue which needs to be considered is the question of when death occurs. In the past, death was determined when there was no respiration and no heartbeat. Then the term "*brainstem dead*" began to be used. This meant that those who were determined to be "*brainstem dead*" could be removed from the life support system. Then in 1979, a memorandum from the Royal Colleges and their faculties determined that "*brainstem dead*" patients were already dead. Organs could not be taken from these ventilated patients for transplantation and this decision led to the practice of electively ventilating potential donors. Prior to that there was a time frame between death and the removal of the deceased's organs. Since this ruling went in force, organs have been removed from donors BEFORE the ventilator is switched off. Clearly this violates the ethics of preserving life. In fact

it very well may be the taking of a life. After reading several pieces of documentation dealing with the pronouncement of “*brainstem death*”, I was shocked at some conclusions that are inevitable. In the sequence of events, after a doctor pronounces the patient “*brainstem dead*”, the donor is then taken to the operating room and the organs are harvested. The ventilator is not turned off until all the organs that are needed have been removed. It is THEN that the time of death is recorded in the Operating Register. Clearly the person filling out the Register could not have regarded the patient as being dead until after the harvesting. There is a serious problem when someone manipulates death for his or her own purpose. Life is terminated only when the body and spirit are separated (James 2:26).

The question of ethics also arises when financial gain is considered. Some are going about trying to sell organs that can be spared. Some feel that since they can live and function well without certain organs, it is perfectly proper to make merchandise of their spare body parts. In certain countries the organs of criminals are put on the market to the highest bidder. In China prisoners can be executed for crimes such as robbery, drug dealing, and black market activities in addition to murder. It is extremely rare for those accused not to be found guilty of their accused crimes. As soon as the prisoner is sentenced, blood samples are taken for grouping. The prisoner’s appeals are hardly ever considered, much less upheld. Ambulances wait at the site of executions, and fresh organs from healthy young persons are harvested, to be transplanted into recipients abroad. The recipients pay from \$17,000 to \$40,000 for the harvested organ depending upon the type of organ it is (www.organtx.org).

As we have noted, there are some situations and conditions of organ transplants that clearly are unethical. However, there are some factors which are ethical and proper for our consideration. In my mind one of the greatest ethical considerations involved in organ transplantations is that of the preservation of life. It is always ethical to preserve life, so long as it does not violate some other law God. It is God who gave life to His creation, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Since God gave life, men must not take it away and should do all possible to preserve and maintain it.

The issue of human mortality is addressed throughout the Bible. Death entered the world through Adam (Genesis 3:9) and it remains with us as a reminder of man’s disobedience to God. Death is one thing no man can escape (Hebrews 9:27). Life is fragile at best (Psalm 103:15-16) and men should never intentionally destroy it. In connection with this fact, we must ever seek to preserve life wherever and whenever possible. Organ transplantations are not unethical in and of themselves. It is the abuse of the ability to preserve life that becomes an ethical issue. The apostle Paul strongly alluded to the possibility of helping one in need, by the giving of an eye (Galatians 4:13-15). Why would Paul use this example if the act would be a sinful practice? We would do well to consider even the very act of God in the creation of Eve. God took a rib from Adam and used it to make the woman (Genesis 2:21-22). I believe that we can search through all the Bible and find nothing that prohibits organ transplantation. We do find some principles that would make the procedure unethical, but the violation of a proper principle does not nullify the action itself.

CONCLUSION

The world is moving forward in many technical areas. Science and medicine have made great strides over the past twenty five years. Some for our good while some are to the detriment of mankind. In the areas of our discussion much good has come from the advancement in medical knowledge and surgical procedures. It is good when people can take advantage of such advancement and can prolong and maintain a better quality of life. However, we must be careful not to step over into God's realm. Men must not try to act like God by making decisions that solely are His.

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Ethical Concerns of Godly Evangelists

George Jensen

George was raised in California. Graduated from the College of Evangelists in 1984. Married the former Miss Joy Jackson in 1985. Graduated from the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions in 1988. Preached for South San Francisco congregation (5 years), and helped establish the congregation in Pacifica, California (8 years). Served as contributing faculty for the Golden Gate Bible Institute. He and Joy have four children. Has made mission trips to India, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, New Zealand, and Jamaica. He now preaches for the church in Menlo, Iowa.

Godly evangelists of our day occupy a noble position. They stand at the present end of a long and continuing line of heralds for God stretching back into antiquity. Any man considering taking his place in this line should do so with great forethought. Those already therein ought also to ponder again the weight of their responsibility. The Holy Spirit warns: "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (James 3:1). "It would appear that there was a disposition on the part of the early converts to the word to desire the attention and influence which attended its teaching; and these, without sufficient preparation, were disposed to attempt that which they were not qualified to do" (Woods 154). Would-be, and present preachers, ought to consider carefully that they "will be judged more strictly," as brother McCord aptly renders the phrase.

Knowing the power of the preacher's influence, Paul wrote: "[B]e thou an ensample to them that believe, in work, in manner of life, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). The ethical concerns for a preacher are divided into two broad categories: (1) "take heed to thyself," and (2) "to thy teaching" (I Timothy 4:16). When this charge is properly executed it results in the salvation of both the preacher himself and those that hear him (I Timothy 4:16b). Conversely, when preachers err, they often "overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:18b).

May we examine the preacher's ethical concerns under three main headings: (1) handling the Word, (2) handling non-textual information, and (3) handling personal matters.

Handling the Word

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). "Study" is the rendering familiar from the King James translation. The original verb is accurately expressed by "diligence" and also by "zealous" as found in Galatians 2:10. Such exertion would include careful study and adequate preparation. This writer is concerned by the apparent lack of personal preparation on the part of some preaching brothers. A sample of e-mail requests may indicate a growing problem. What problem? – You ask! The practice of a preacher searching for a sermon outline, on line, on Saturday night! Cyber-space sharing of canned sermons without personal study and preparation may well be the ethical pitfall of the generation X preacher. The internet/e-mail medium is a wonderful tool that can be used to great advantage. Some of you may be reading this lesson via the electronic avenue. Many preachers however, discipline themselves to diligently make personal preparation and resist any urge to simply

regurgitate the material of others. What do great preachers such as J.W. McGarvey, N.B. Hardeman, Guy Woods, Roy Lanier Sr., and Hugo McCord have in common? They are all making great contributions to the kingdom from countless hours of personal study; some posthumously. May theirs not be a dying breed!

With the pressure of being called upon for Bible answers comes another possible pitfall. In order to avoid embarrassment the preacher is hesitant to ever answer with three honest words: "I don't know." Such an attitude is similar to those "desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm" (1 Timothy 1:7). It is better to not answer at all than to "confidently affirm" what must later be denied.

While most preachers may be able to define the difference between *exegesis* (*bring out* the meaning) and *eisegesis* (*reading into*), they, through lack of diligence, may slump into the latter. For example, when faced with the need to "prove a point" he may go in search of "proof" to buttress a point already fixed in his mind. This "cart before the horse" mentality has resulted in debates among brethren, which could have been wholly avoided.

Back in 1990, brother Wayne Jackson had a trio of articles titled: "Defending the Faith With A Broken Sword." He explained the significance of this title as follows:

It is a commendable thing to want to defend the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Such efforts, however, only serve the cause of truth when they are biblically sound and reasonably argued.however, some teachers, with the very best of motives, have nevertheless wielded a "broken sword" in their sincere attempts to contend for the faith (Jackson 6).

The examination was made of verses, which are used (or we should say abused) to support a teaching, which is of itself biblical. For example, when affirming the cessation of miraculous gifts, first Corinthians chapter thirteen is a legitimate text to use. The context clearly contrasts the miraculous/temporary/partial with the written/permanent/complete revelation. It is true that the adjective "perfect" of verse ten is a neuter gender in the original. But to say, "Neuter can *never* be used to refer to Christ!" – is to argue falsely. While it is not the usual, Luke 1:35 and 1 John 1:1 contain neuter words which refer to Christ. The "complete thing" of verse ten does not refer to Christ, but appealing to the neuter gender alone is insufficient.

A writer once wondered: "why we never use Zechariah 1:5 when teaching on the subject of demon possession." Brother Lanier Sr. responded: "I cannot speak for other writers, but I do not see anything in the verse about demon possession" (Roy Lanier Sr. 1:123). Obviously the querist was read to employ the verse in a discussion, which it had no bearing upon.

The specific *charge* (2 Timothy 4:1) given to the *evangelist* (2 Timothy 4:5) is to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). A balanced and regular diet of "the bread of life" (John 6:35, 48, 63) is vital for the health of a congregation. Sadly, in a world filled with flash and showiness, some preachers have resorted (in varying degrees) to using similar tactics. Within the brotherhood there is growing acceptance of *performance worship*, and the proclamation has not been unaffected. Some preachers

find themselves in competition for congregational attention from grand dramatic presentations. In a feeble effort to compete he begins to fill his lessons with ostentatious gestures, pomes, current events, and stories. Some conscientious listeners may wait, ready to turn in the Bible to the verse cited, but find themselves waiting, and waiting, and waiting. It is little wonder that many are “weak and sickly” (1 Corinthians 11:30) since “belief cometh of hearing ...the word” (Romans 10:17) and they are not hearing such word! Dear preacher, regain the fervor of heralds who declared: “thus saith Jehovah of hosts...” (Zechariah 1:3)!

Handling Non-textual Information

In his line of duty the man of god must constantly handle all manner of non-biblical information. His personal ethics and integrity herein are also put to the test. First of all, may we consider things spoken in confidence. His devotion to the word, logically equips the preacher to answer personal questions, which arise among the membership. There is no biblical ground for *auricular confession* (“Private personal confession, made ‘in the ear’ of the confessor...”, Attwater, 44) as required by Catholicism. Still, members often confide in the preacher, even sharing shocking personal sins. Proper personal ethics will restrain the receiver from “leaking” the information to others. “The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts” (Proverbs 26:22). The preacher should not *assume* that his wife (or anyone else) is the unstated exception to confidentiality. He should tell no one without the direct agreement of the confider. The preacher is a true helper when he points both offenders and those offended to Matthew 5:23, 24 and Matthew 18:15-17 respectively.

Secondly, our attention turns to the use of material(s) produced by others. We have previously noted the sharing of materials electronically. But when does legitimate use of material cross the line and become plagiarism? Plagiarize is defined as: “to take ideas, writings, etc. from [another] and pass them off as one’s own” (Webster). And a plagiarist is: “one who plagiarizes; a literary thief” (Webster). If all such thieves were put on crosses, how vacant would our pulpits be?! There seems to be the rationale by some that, since “we be brethren,” it is share and share as you like.

Within the copyright laws there is the “fair use” provision. The *fair use* is included to allow for such legitimate uses as critiques, comments, news reporting, research, etc. Section 107 of the law sets forth factors which help determine whether a use may rightly be considered under the *fair use* clause:

- (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofited educational purposes;
 - (2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
 - (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole and
 - (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.
- (Dobkin 1019-1020)

It is evident from such terms as “commercial nature” and “potential market for or value of,” that rightful *gain* is a primary consideration the law is striving to regulate. However, the child of God should be motivated by a higher concern. “Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17b). The practice of rewording some or all of a borrowed writing and keeping the source silent does not free one of plagiarism. The conscientious man will not hesitate to give credit where credit

is due. In his book on homiletics, John Broadus included a section titled: "Plagiarism and Borrowing." Sadly, the section is omitted in later editions.

There are two extremes. On the one hand, a mistake desire for originality and independence causes some able men to abstain from reading anything on the text of subject. ... The other extreme is that of reading instead of thinking, just cramming the mind with a medley of other men's thoughts, and constructing a discourse out of these (Broadus 90).

So as not to go overboard in citing sources, note: "Avoid, too, an ostentatious display of wide reading. Let the acknowledgement interrupt as little as possible the flow of thought..." (91). A good rule of thumb is offered – "never make use of another's contribution in a way that would be embarrassing to confess in public or that would be embarrassing if the author were present" (92). The *golden rule* (Matthew 7:12) would also motivate one to give proper credit when borrowing from the efforts of others.

Thirdly, there is the matter of reporting and presentations. The minister may give a report about a missionary campaign, periodically update his supporters, present a proposal to the elders, and the list could go on and on. In some instances, temptation may exist for the man to "shade the truth" so as to cast the information in a more favorable light. For example, some supporters of missionary efforts are so driven solely by numbers that they will only continue to support efforts which produce the number of baptisms which they deem fitting. Thankfully, God's demand upon us is to plant and water and He will give the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). However, facing possible loss of support, the missionary may give *inflated numbers* in hopes of placating the supporter. Whether on paper or on the lips – lying is sin (Revelation 21:8). The initial lying of Ananias and Sapphira was to purposefully leave a false impression, which would make them look generous (Acts 5:1-3). They acted so as to cause people to think they gave all the proceeds from their sale. God's punishment for the sin was death (Acts 5:5, 10). Similarly today, one may utter a series of true statements, but carefully leave out some truth, thus purposefully leaving a misimpression – such is also sin.

Handling Personal Matters

Whether he likes it or not, the preacher is more often than not – scrutinized. His words, actions, decisions, and attitudes are observed. Knowing this to be true, Paul exhorted Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). This call to a pure personal ethic applies to all evangelists today.

First, we shall address abuses of his respected position. The man behind the pulpit is in a unique position. He is to "put the brethren in mind" of things (1 Timothy 4:6) and he must "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). He must however, refrain from using the pulpit as a whipping post. When the preacher learns of one member's problem, often the wise choice would be to go, preferably with an elder, and talk to the individual personally. This choice requires courage and love. It will often bring about pleasant results. He has approached the person in the way he would want to be treated if he were in his shoes. However, to choose rather to mount the podium and hurl condemnation upon one, often fails to achieve the desired result. Yes, there are times when

public rebuke is needed. "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (1 Timothy 5:20).

Another abuse of the position may come in his dealing with ladies. Often ladies like to give the preacher special attention. It may be expressed by cards of encouragement, baking some treat, or a personal visit. Such gestures make his work pleasant and are uplifting. However, much caution must be exercised by the man of God. He is to treat "the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, in all purity" (1 Timothy 5:2). The preacher is to treat the younger ladies "as" (*hos*) sisters, that is, as he would a sister in the flesh. "No sort of behavior will so easily make or mar the young preacher as his conduct with young women" (Robertson 4:583). Flirting is a sport that the minister must not play. And if he meets privately with a lady, he will do so with someone else at least in the vicinity.

The preacher must also refuse to abuse his position by pressuring other in matters of opinion. The preacher, if he is a man of conviction, will also have strong feelings about what he thinks is best in matters of judgment. Fervor in this area must be kept in check. Some congregations, with and without bishops, have preachers who are "pushing their agendas" and "ram-rod" relentlessly their personal preferences. Even when other men rally in agreement, and opinion may not be bound. Recall the incident with the apostle Paul. He thought it was "not good to take with them him [Mark] who withdrew them from Pamphylia" (Acts 15:38). So adamant was he that "there arose a sharp contention" (Acts 15:39). While Paul personally chose not to select Mark, he did not demand that others refuse to use him! Preaching brothers, make sure you do not take a hard stand against what you deem to be unwise. Make your firm stand against all that is sin!

A second area of personal concern must be his family. If the preacher is a married man, and especially if he has children, there is a pitfall peculiar to him. Namely, in his devotion to teaching and assisting others, he might neglect his own household. A bachelor may devote himself, without familial responsibilities, to the work of an evangelist. While the married man must rightly give some time and effort to "how he may please his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:33). And every father is to nurture his children "in the chastening and the admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Elders, supporters, and members generally, must be educated to understand this point as it related to the minister. He must not only be allowed, but encouraged, to take some time for his family. In this we are not speaking of a once or twice a year vacation. Sadly, some have converted many, but lost their own children.

One more area in personal ethics, which should be discussed, relates to finances. Money matters matter! One obligation given to all believers is found in 1 Corinthians 16:2. While most English translations omit it, the word "every" (*kata*) is in the original text. Thus, brother McCord rightly translates it as an "every Sunday" obligation. The preacher is not exempt from giving every week. He should in fact, "be an ensample to them that believe" (1 Timothy 4:12) in dependability and generosity.

The preacher must also be honest in his financial arrangements. He must not leave a trail of debts (Romans 13:8). His personal monies and those of the church must be kept distinct.

He must also resist making decisions based upon financial considerations alone. "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

What are some closing remarks, which might be fitting for preachers? Surely some of Paul's last words to Timothy would be appropriate. "But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:5).

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Sex and Ethics

Michael P. Wyatt

Introduction

We want to be crystal clear at the beginning of this lesson that all we hope to say regarding the sexual relationship between men and women and such attitudes and practices are to be taken in harmony with plain Bible teaching. We know that every human being has certain basic needs, desires and drives which God has given to each. Humans have the responsibility for meeting those needs, desires and drives in ways which are approved in God's word. The Bible furnishes us completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17), but we must avail ourselves of the great blessings of learning and submitting to the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).

Sexuality must Be God Based

Sexuality is a basic part of man's total physical, mental, social and spiritual make-up. The Bible contains much teaching on the subject of sexuality and marriage, therefore showing that God wants us to learn, accept and apply the Bible teaching regarding sexual matters. Since the Bible has teachings on this subject, then God intends for us to know about it. Sexuality is a gift from God, and that means that sex is good! God made it so (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-25; 1 Timothy 2:13-14). God said that it was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). It is thus clear that God intended for marriage to contribute to human well-being and happiness and the sexual relationship plays a part in that union.

It is clear that the physical union (in an approved marriage) of man and woman has the blessing of God. In our anything-goes society there seems to be different reactions to sex. There are some who engage in even illicit sex and have no guilt at all. At the other extreme there are some who are incapable of sexual expression, even in marriage, without guilt feelings. Some over-emphasize it, while others under-emphasize it. It seems clear that some people can hardly think of anything else, and on the other extreme others want to "wish it away."

Sex – Good or Evil?

We are discussing the idea of sex in a marriage relationship between husband and wife, in approval of God's marriage laws. Some mistakenly hold that celibacy is a superior state than intimacy and sexual intercourse in a marriage relationship. That even in marriage, abstinence from sex is superior to engaging in sexual intimacy. Some feel that because a husband and wife are passionately attracted (physically) to one another that something must be wrong with their relationship. Such ideas are in error.

Sex within an approved marriage is not a "work of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21); it is an act of love with God's approval. A wholesome love life may very well involve a great deal of passionate intimacy. The apostle Paul said, "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you

not because of your incontinency” (1 Corinthians 7:5). Obviously Paul was making clear that the sexual relationship is not necessarily confined to those times when it is desired that the wife conceive a child. This, even though some have erroneously concluded that it is wrong (sinful) to really enjoy sexual intimacy, even in marriage, it is clear that there is no Biblical basis for such a conclusion. Joy and intense pleasure in the sexual relationship can intensify the love of husband and wife for each other. Sexual intimacy in marriage has to do with expressing the love – the deep and profound feeling – which each of the two has for the other. Each act says, in effect, “I am yours; you are mine – I love you deeply and devoutly as my own. We are one, and we become even more one in this act of love.” The physical relationship is thus a symbolic expression of other values besides itself. It expresses the desire of two persons to share their lives completely in a mutual commitment of love and trust in marriage.

Because of some childhood experiences and improper teaching there are those who find it difficult to feel both pure and sensual at one and the same time. They have been taught that such matters are “dirty,” “impure,” or “sinful.” If a person’s spouse should have such feelings, they should respect those feelings – not asking them to violate their conscience – while they seek to help them to see from plain Bible teaching (for example, Proverbs 5:15-19) that such a view is mistaken.

Thus, given the Biblical view, it is seen that the crowning act of intimacy cannot be treated as mere sensual indulgence. Rather, it is a union which affects the whole personality of each of the two parties involved. When following God’s laws, sexual intimacy is deemed good and wholesome, a union to make two one.

Sex and Marriage

Sex and marriage go hand in hand! Sexual intimacy is not all there is to marriage, it is not even the most important aspect, but it is very important. Marriage without sex is an incomplete arrangement, for there is a crucial element lacking for the establishment and maintenance of oneness. The sexual relationship enhances marriage by giving it a meaning and value which it would not otherwise have. The sexual union provides each with an “added language,” a way of saying, “I love you,” which cannot be expressed in any other way. This “added language” can only be spoken by those who are married, and it is the means of expressing the deepest feelings and assurances of love and commitment of the whole life to another and this is done in a medium which is more flexible, more expressive and more profound than ordinary human speech.

It is therefore absurd to say that the greater and more spiritual a love is, the less it will require physical expression. This view involves the erroneous concept that the body is a vehicle of sin (but not of grace) and that the body itself is evil. But, since the sexual relationship is a gift of God, even the body itself is a sacred trust from God – a vehicle of grace as well as of sin, as Paul plainly taught in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. And, so, it is not a superior or spiritual love that denies physical intimate expression, it is rather a lack of love – an unwillingness to take seriously the physical needs of the partner, a rejection of the gift of God. It is for this very reason that Paul calls withholding a “fraud.” Each person in marriage has a right to the physical fulfillment of love which is found in physical intimacy and, so, sexual union is the enrichment of love – that is already present between two persons. The quality of the sexual union will depend upon the quality of the

love and the oneness it expresses and can cause the love which is already present to grow and grow.

Sex Education Begins at Home

The Bible is all-sufficient to teach in regard to the matter of sex (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It must be emphasized that sex education must begin in the home, with the child being taught by his/her parents what God's Word says on the subject. Paul instructed parents to "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). This means that parents are responsible for the total training of the child's body, mind and soul. The sexual relationship must be made to appear as the beautiful gift which God intended it to be. Parents must teach their children, not only the total physical elements of sex education, but also the emotional and spiritual elements as well.

Parents not only have the obligation of teaching their children about the physical aspects of sex but also the emotional and moral ethics involved. Children should be taught, both by word and example, to be kind and loving in all relationships of life. They should be taught that, after marriage, this loving kindness and patience must manifest itself in the sexual relationship.

Parents must teach their children that sexual intercourse can be engaged in with God's approval ONLY in marriage. Both partners in the marriage must be eligible for God to accept it as a married relationship (Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Parents must teach their children that all sexual intercourse outside of marriage (fornication) is sin! They must also be taught that all who engage in such and who die without repenting will be lost (Revelation 21:8; Galatians 5:19-21).

We must teach our children that sexual relationship is a gift from God. The physical union (in an approved marriage) of man and woman has the blessing of God. Our children need to be taught that the sexual relationship is a gift that must be kept until marriage. It is a beautiful gift from God with pure white wrapping paper and a beautiful ribbon and bow. You keep that gift intact and you take it into marriage with you. Only there can that gift be opened with God's approval and enjoyed the way God meant for it to be enjoyed. We need to tell our children what happens when they take that gift and open it outside of marriage. When they rip off that bow and ribbon and tear that wrapping paper without God's approval. We need to tell them how lives are ruined, and how the joy and happiness of a beautiful marriage relationship can be tarnished and spotted. They need to be taught that the gift comes from God, and that while it is theirs to control, God expects His Will to be followed. And that Will stresses sexual intercourse in marriage only!

Our children need to know that, not only does the Bible forbid sexual intercourse outside of marriage, but also even the unchaste handling (fondling) of males and females who are not married. The apostle Paul listed such handling among the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Such familiarity must be limited to those who are married to each other. Paul says that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The Bible warns against fornication (1 Corinthians 6:9). Paul also says to "flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18). The man in the church at Corinth who was guilty of fornication with his father's wife was the proper object of disfellowship upon the part of the church there (1 Corinthians 5). And so it is clear that God limits sexual

liberties and actual sexual intercourse to those who are scripturally married to each other. Mothers teach your daughters, and fathers teach your sons.

Sex Education and the Church

Just as parents (in the home) must not shirk their responsibility in teaching their children regarding sex education, just so the church (the local congregation) has a responsibility. There are spiritual matters in regard to the subject of sexual relations and the local congregation should teach what the Bible says on that subject. Competent, knowledgeable teachers in Bible classes and faithful gospel preachers from the pulpit should not ignore their responsibilities to teach the truth on these issues. These avenues can help young people make decisions regarding sexual relations which are based on truth and love rather than ignorance, fear, lust and guilt. It is tragic for the home or the congregation to leave the youth in ignorance concerning the spiritual aspects of sex. If our youth do not learn the truth concerning this matter they will “mis-learn” about it from restroom walls, salacious literature, street corners and back alleys. These wrong sources can have a devastating effect on our young people if they have not been taught properly by the home and the local congregation.

God has given man crucial instructions regarding the matter of sexual relations. God has made human beings either male or female and has put the sexual drive in both. He has also given the information as to how that drive is to be fulfilled. Sexual relations, therefore, must be considered in light of God’s laws for man, and it is the responsibility of the local congregation to provide the needed information on the subject. All that is taught on the subject should be taught in the light of Bible teaching. We must avoid the mistake of thinking (1) that the sexual relationship is all so complicated and hopeless that there is no need for striving to learn anything at all, and (2) that everything is so simple that one can take a thirty minute course and be prepared for life. This vital relationship is, in a sense, simple enough for any and all (who are eligible in God’s sight to be married, Matthew 19:9) to derive pleasure and happiness from it. Yet, on the other hand, it is sufficiently complicated that one can spend a life time learning about it.

Conclusion

It is the hardest thing we will ever talk to our kids about. It is difficult in a class of teenage boys or girls to deal with adequately. But it must be done for the sake of our children. They deserve to learn the truth as presented in God’s word, and we have the responsibility to teach the following generations. Since God thought it serious enough to give instruction in His Word, we must take it seriously enough to teach those instructions to our youth. Their future happiness could depend upon it.

Ethical Concerns of Godly Elders

Tom L. Bright, Sr.

Tom is a native of Oklahoma. He and his wife of 38 years, Jane, have two children, Tom Bright, Jr. of Olathe and Michelle Lyons of Muskogee, Oklahoma. Tom is a graduate of the Elk City School of Preaching in Elk City, Oklahoma. He has done local work in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Missouri and Tennessee. He has conducted meetings in 9 states and has participated in lectureships in 8 states. He has been an instructor in the Elk City School of Preaching and the Owasso School of Preaching. He is a past director of the West Plains School of Biblical Studies. He has done radio work in Oklahoma, Texas and Missouri. He debated Richard Jackson of the United Pentecostal Church in 1994 on the subject of miracles and also Bob Ross of the Baptist Church in 1995 on the subject of Mechanical Instruments of Music in Worship. He and his wife now live in Dyersburg, Tennessee where he preaches for the church there and also is director of the Online Academy of Biblical Studies.

Our assignment is a fascinating and needed study. We are to look at the “Ethical Concerns of Godly Elders.” Since the word “ethical” comprehends the idea of a standard for conduct and moral judgments, we are looking at a standard of conduct for elders in the Lord’s Church. This implies the idea of observing how they ought to behave when complying with that standard.

Please understand our assignment is *not* to consider the qualifications of elders. We are to look at *how elders are to conduct themselves* in different areas of their work according to the only standard we have, the Bible. The *kind* of men they are to be can be summarized as men who have the right ambition, the right kind of home, a good disposition, courageous, compassionate, men who are peacemakers and not a trouble makers, men who are spiritually-minded and not materialistic, men who have demonstrated leadership ability, who are men of the “book,” who can work with others, and those who keep themselves informed of brotherhood issues.

ELDERS ARE STEWARDS

Inspiration affirms elders are viewed by God as “stewards.” Paul wrote, “For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre” (Titus 1:7). The definition of the word translated “steward” means:

The manager of a household or of household affairs; esp. a steward, manager, superintendent, (whether free-born, or, as was usually the case, a freed-man or slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has intrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age (Thayer 440-441).

Vine (1097) adds “primarily denoted the manager of a household or estate.” This being the case, the “household affairs” here described can refer to nothing less than the care and keeping of the local

congregation which was committed to them as stewards of God's spiritual house when they accepted the responsibility of being elders in the New Testament Church.

The thrust of what is presented in Titus 1:7 is simple: The possessions (the Church) of another (Christ) is given into the hands of elders to look after, to manage, to superintend. This does not suggest that elders are the owners. Quiet the contrary, they are entrusted by God with His flock, to see after, to care for, to manage. Therefore, elders have responsibilities and obligations to God as well as to the members of the local congregation of which they are overseers.

Elders Are to Be "Watchers for Souls"

In his speech to the Ephesian elders, Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Notice, they are to "take heed" for themselves, for the flock, and "feed" the Church.

The Hebrew writer emphatically states this very thing, that is, elders are *watchers* for souls. He writes, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). According to Thayer (9), the word translated *watch* means "to be sleepless, keep awake, watch...to exercise constant vigilance over something (an image drawn from shepherds)." Vine (1224) says the word "is used metaphorically, to be watchful...The word expresses not mere wakefulness, but the watchfulness of those who are intent upon a thing."

The thing for which they are to watch is clearly stated. Paul said, "for they watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17). They are spiritual shepherds, they are to lead and our responsibility is to follow. They are to watch for dangers which affect the destiny of the souls of those they are to watch after, both in a positive and negative way.

In the area of that which is negative, we include such things as false doctrines and false practices. Notice Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). The word here rendered *watch* is different than the previous one (Hebrews 13:17). It means

1. to watch
2. metaph. give strict attention to, be cautious, active
- 2a. to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one...or lest one be led to forsake Christ...or lest one fall into sin...or be corrupted by errors, Acts 20:31 (Thayer 122).

Elders are to *watch* for souls.

God's people have faced dangers in every generation. Since the restoration movement of the late nineteenth and through the twentieth centuries, this great brotherhood has had to face the introduction

of mechanical instruments into worship, the Missionary Society, division over Bible classes, the number of cups used in distributing the fruit of the vine, the support of orphans homes, the “Change Agents,” which is a liberalism that is nothing more nor less than agnosticism. If every congregation had possessed good and Godly elders, the damage would not have been as extreme as it was.

In order for elders to be “watchers for souls,” they must possess a knowledge of the inspired word of God. They must be believers in the verbally inspired word, recognizing It as the only source of authority, intended by God to be understood by men. How can the man who knows very little about the Bible be *watchers* for souls? Can who one has no regard for the Bible as the only source of authority really be trusted to be one who watches for souls?

Elders Are To Lead or “Shepherd”

This fact is seen in Paul’s statement in Ephesians 4:11. He wrote “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” Look closely at the word “pastors.” This is truly an interesting word. The original word appears eighteen times in the New Testament and is translated “pastors” only in this passage. In the other seventeen places, it is rendered “shepherd.” Of this word, Thayer (527) says “a herdsman, esp. a shepherd...b. metaph. the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly...of the overseers of the Christian assemblies.” Shepherds of the first century were constantly aware of the surrounding circumstance. They made sure the place to which they were leading their flock was safe and secure. They would do everything in their power to remove any dangers that could cause problems to the flock. So should elders today lead the flock entrusted to them in ways sure and safe.

Elders are to “Feed” the Flock

In Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2, we read that elders are to “feed” Church, the flock. Interestingly enough, the word translated “feed” in these two passages is the verb form of the noun translated “shepherd” in the previous paragraph. The verb means “To feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep...b. trop. a. to rule, govern: of rulers...of the overseers (pastors) of the church...b. to furnish pasturage or feed; to nourish” (Thayer 527). So, in actuality we can say, “Shepherds are to shepherd the flock,” or to say it in another way, “Elders Are to Feed the Flock.”

That which they are to feed the flock is “sound doctrine.” The concept of “sound doctrine” was very important to the Holy Spirit. Paul said some would not endure “sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3). He also stated things “contrary to sound doctrine” was not according to “glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Timothy 1:10-11). Elders are to hold “fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). The “sound” doctrine refers to that which is *healthy*. If there is “sound” doctrine, there can also be *unsound* doctrine. The “unsound” doctrine is that which is opposite the healthful teachings of Christ – the truth, the once and for all delivered faith (Jude 3).

Elders have the responsibility to see that only the *truth* is proclaimed from the pulpit and in the classrooms. When error is promulgated they have the obligation to act and act speedily. They must

encourage and admonish, exhort and convince those guilty. When all else fails, their responsibility is to lead the congregation in disciplinary action.

Elders must know what material is being taught in the classrooms, giving their blessing on truth when it is taught and refusing error. Just as they have the right to permit or reject material that is used in the classroom, so they also have the authority to determine which versions of the Bible are used in the classrooms and in the pulpit. Shepherds are to shepherd!

Other Areas of Their Work

There are many other things that we could enlarge upon, but we will just notice some of them in passing. Elders are to support the weak (Acts 20:35). They are to *admonish* (1 Thessalonians 5:12), *rule* (Hebrews 13:17), and be *mouth stoppers* (Titus 1:11). This is truly a task which God would not give to any person. It takes a special person to be an elder. It takes a special person to follow their lead.

It is only when we meditate upon the responsibilities of elders can we really appreciate what they are to do. Truly they have a monumental task and every member should be most appreciative of their work.

Undoubtedly, these are truly ethical concerns godly elders should have. Every man serving in this capacity should look closely at the things here presented and then consider if they are fulfilling their obligations as elders in the New Testament Church.

ELDERS MUST OVERSEE THE WORKS SUPPORTED

When a congregation is involved in support of other works around the world, the elders have “ethical concerns” here also. Sometimes elders are just like too many members: They think by supporting works “in the mission field,” they are relieved of their responsibility at home. Far too often, “mission work” is little more than salve for the conscience.

Elders must know the person they are supporting in the mission field is doctrine of Christ. They should be aware of his personal life as well as his reputation in the community. It is my personal conviction elders should not depend on the “monthly reports” the man sends out, but must know every aspect of the man’s life.

It is not by accident that we sometimes hear of men going into the mission field because they “are tired of fighting the brethren” or of “being under unqualified elders.” Indeed, this should tell us something! The basic thought is, once in “the mission field,” they will not be bothered by elders – they can “do their own thing!”

There are various ways an eldership can fulfill the above suggestions. First, they can “know the man.” If he is no stranger to the elders, if they know him as honest, sincere, dedicated, trustworthy, and of unquestioned character, then it is with confidence they know he is truly active in the Lord’s work.

A second thing is they can go to the place *unannounced!* So often when elders are planning on visiting a man in the field, they will warn him days, weeks, and sometimes months in advance of their arrival. If the man is dishonest, he has all the time he needs to remove or hide the things he is doing or teaching the elders would not approve of if they knew he was guilty of such. It should not be this way, but sometimes it is.

ELDERS MUST OVERSEE THE “FINANCIAL” ASPECTS OF THE CONGREGATION

By the above caption, I am not contending the elders “take over the check book.” What I am saying is, they should “provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17). Whether we like it or not, generally speaking our brethren have more questions and concerns about the *financial aspects* of the local congregation than most all of the other areas combined. They might be concerned about false doctrine and false teachers, they might be concerned about moral issues, but most especially are they concerned about what is done with the monies collected.

Simply by being honest and straightforward in monetary matters, many potential problems can be stopped before they are started. For instance, when an honest and forthright accounting is made of all receipts and expenditures, there will be no legitimate reason for questions about how (for what) the monies is spent.

Paul was aware of this very principle. Concerning the contributions the churches of Macedonia and Achaia had made for the relief of the poor saints in Judea, Paul wrote,

And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you” (2 Corinthians 8:19-22).

Here, Paul has reference to the transportation and delivery of these funds in such a way there could be no criticism whatsoever that something dishonest or unchristian like was being done for personal benefit. Notice, this apostle said “no blame...Providing for honest things...in the sight of men” (verses 20-21). Certainly Paul saw this as an “ethical concern” which needed attention. Should elders do any less? Indeed not!

The monies collected do not belong to the elders – it is not theirs! Nonetheless, they have a responsibility, as God’s stewards, to see that monetary matters are conducted in such a way that would honor the name of Christ. The must be sure the monies collected are accounted for in a way no criticism can be offered.

Likewise, they have the responsibility to see the money is used for things scriptural in nature. This would be included in the previously mentioned sections. No support, financial or otherwise, should ever be given to false doctrine or those who advocate it.

Ethical concerns of godly elders looks closely at their conduct, as elders, according to the commands and principles revealed in God's inspired word. We pray that all elders are deeply concerned with these "ethical concerns."

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Drugs and Alcohol

Terry L. Mabery

Terry was baptized at the age of 13 in 1958. As a teenager he preached monthly for two rural congregations. He was married in 1965 to Mary Herbst. They have two grown children, Shelley (married with four sons) and Brett (still single). Terry graduated in 1967 from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a bachelor's degree in education and also has post graduate work in physics. He taught mathematics and physics in public schools in St. Louis County from 1967 to 1977. During that time he became a deacon at the Lemay church of Christ in St. Louis County, working with evangelism and youth. He was hired in 1975 to work more in depth with the youth and evangelism. In 1977 he was hired to work full time with the church and began full time preaching there in 1979. In 1997 began working with the Collinsville church of Christ in Collinsville, Illinois where he now preaches. In 1999 he was appointed as an elder of the congregation there. Terry has preached in youth rallies and gospel meetings in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Virginia, and West Virginia. He has preached in and directed crusades to Jamaica, West Indies. He has also preached and participated in work in Murmansk, Russia, the largest city in the world above the Arctic Circle and has taught in the Murmansk Bible College.

[*Unless otherwise noted, the American Standard Version is used for all quotes from scripture.]

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has cited the following regarding the use of illicit drugs in the United States.

In 1999, about 14.8 million Americans were current users of illicit drugs, meaning they used an illicit drug at least once during the month prior to being interviewed for the latest National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, an annual nationwide survey among Americans age 12 and older. About 3.5 million were dependent on illicit drugs; and additional 8.2 million were dependent on alcohol (1).

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, there were 19,102 deaths from drug-induced causes in 1999 from legal and illegal drugs. The month prior to being interviewed in 1999, 7% of youth ages 12-17 had smoked marijuana. In 2000, 21.6% of high school seniors had done the same. In addition, 1.9 % of persons ages 18-25 had used cocaine the month before being interviewed in 1999, while 2.1% of high school seniors interviewed in 2000 had done so. Also in 2000, 2.2% of high school seniors had used inhalants the previous month (*Illegal Drug...1*). Regarding alcohol use, the same agency reported 19,171 alcohol-induced deaths in the United States each year, not including motor vehicle fatalities. There were 26,259 deaths in 1999 from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, which was the twelfth leading cause of death in the United States. They also reported that 52% of Americans twelve and over interviewed in 1999 had drunk alcohol in the previous month. Of those, 15% were "binge drinkers," consuming five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the previous month (*Alcohol Use...1*).

One can see that the twenty-first century American society has a drug habit. When considering alcohol and drugs, one should understand that this is not two problems, but one. For alcohol is a drug.

Therefore, drug and alcohol use and abuse will be considered together. The problem, of course, does not include the proper use of drugs for medicinal purposes, but misuse and recreational purposes. Jesus approved the use of a physician to maintain good health (Luke 5:31). That would include approval of the methods and practices available to the physician who has the well being of the individual in mind.

According to the controlled substance act of 1971, there are five categories of drugs. Sedatives and tranquilizers act as a depressant to the central nervous system, along with barbiturates and alcohol, which is the most widely known and used of these. "Some have falsely thought alcohol to be a stimulant because after a few drinks the subject feels he can perform amazing feats. This is of course due to the euphoria produced by the central nervous system sedation" (Alls 48). As with others in this category, alcohol is addictive. According to the *Infoplease Almanac*, "...nearly 14 million Americans — 1 in every 13 adults — abuse alcohol or are alcoholic. Several million more adults engage in risky drinking patterns that could lead to alcohol problems" (Infoplease 1). Stimulants, such as amphetamines, cocaine, and caffeine speed up the nervous system. These drugs do not cause physical addiction, but psychological dependence (Alls 58). A third category is that of narcotics, such as heroin, morphine and codeine. These, under proper direction, of course, have a use in our society as pain relievers. They are classified as central nervous system depressants. They are highly addictive (Alls 39-40). Fourth are the hallucinogens, such as mescaline and LSD. These cause change in perception and consciousness. Similarly, the fifth category is the cannabis, such as marijuana and hashish. These alter the mood, thinking, and behavior of the individual. Some place these in with the hallucinogens. All of these drugs are either physically or psychologically addictive. All of them, when abused, can cause harm to the individual, even resulting in death.

When one considers the health costs, the destruction of property, the loss of work, and other costs related to this problem of alcohol and drugs, one can understand the tremendous drain on the economy. In addition, when one considers the homes and individuals that are ruined by alcohol and drugs, one understands the great destructiveness of this problem. However, there is a matter of far greater importance that one should consider. Not only can alcohol and drugs destroy an individual's life and family here on this earth, it can bring one's eternal soul to destruction, which is far worse. For a man's soul is worth more than all the world (Matthew 16:26).

Consider now this twenty-first century problem in view of first century ethics as revealed in the word of God, the Bible.

First Century Ethics Regarding Alcohol and Drugs

There is no doubt or argument that the Bible warns of strong drink and condemns drunkenness. Wine is called a mocker (Proverbs 20:1) and brings one to poverty (Proverbs 21:17; Proverbs 23:21). It causes contentions and brings sorrow (Proverbs 23:29-30). It distorts thinking and behavior (Proverbs 23:30-35; Proverbs 31:4-7). Paul warns that one should not walk in drunkenness (Romans 13:13), and he lists drunkenness as one of the works of the flesh which will condemn one's soul (Galatians 5:19-21). After all, the recreational use of alcohol and drugs is for the very purpose of

fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Paul makes it clear that one is not to make “provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14).

Those warnings are just as valid for other drugs. For they, too, are mockers. They bring one to poverty and sorrow, cause contentions, and distort thinking and behavior. Also, The term drunkenness merely indicates intoxication. According to Strong, the Greek word, *methai*, drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21), is “apparently a primary word; an intoxicant, i.e. (by implication) intoxication.” Intoxication is “an abnormal state that is essentially a poisoning,” and poison is “a substance that through its chemical action usually kills, injures, or impairs an organism” (Webster’s Dictionary). Intoxication, therefore, or drunkenness, applies quite well in the case of other drugs. They produce an “abnormal state” as a result of the poisoning. One could, also, argue the case of condemnation of the use of drugs from the term “sorcery” that is listed among the works of the flesh condemned by Paul (Galatians 5:19-21). “Sorcery” is from the Greek word, *farmakeia*, from which we get our word pharmacy. Vines defines the word, “(Eng., ‘pharmacy,’ etc.) primarily signified the use of medicine, drugs, spells; then, poisoning; then, sorcery” (Vol. IV, 51). Certainly it is in a different context, but “sorcery,” as Paul used it, included the misuse of medicines, drugs. Therefore, it could be concluded that his use of the term condemns the misuse and abuse today, even if it is in a different context.

In addition to the outright condemnation of the use of drugs, including alcohol, there are other reasons that the Christian should not partake of such on a recreational basis.

As mentioned earlier, all these drugs are addictive either physically or psychologically. That means that one comes under the control of the drug and is not in full control of self. In addition, the drugs usually effect the ability of the user to think clearly and rationally, to react normally, and behave ordinarily. All of this describes one who is no longer in control but is being controlled. This does not mean one is forced or overwhelmed, but that one has yielded himself/herself to another master, a chemical substance (Romans 6:16). No one is forced to misuse or abuse these drugs. The choice is made by the individual to do so. One does not have to go very far, then, before he/she is under the control of the drug. The Christian is to be under the control of God, as His servant. Jesus said that one cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), and Paul made it clear that one is not to be brought under the control of anything other than God, even if it is an expedient (1 Corinthians 6:12). One enslaved to these drugs, one brought under the power of these drugs, is no longer yielding oneself to the control of God, but to a chemical substance.

The Christian belongs to God and should use His body with this in mind. Paul wrote, “Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). From this passage one understands that the Christian’s body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. One does not belong to oneself, but to God. Therefore, the Christian is to glorify God in the body. Can one really think one can defile the temple of the Holy Spirit with mind altering drugs and be pleasing to God? Can one actually think one can glorify God in one’s body while under the influence of mind altering drugs? The Christian, realizing that his physical body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and is to be used to the glory of God, will not defile it with drugs used to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, drugs which destroy the body God has given.

The above consideration logically leads to another problem with the use of drugs. If one is not glorifying God when using alcohol and drugs, that one is not a shining light unto others (Matthew 5:16). Even in matters of expediency, the apostle Paul makes it clear that one sins against others and against Christ when one becomes a stumbling block to them (1 Corinthians 8:9, 12). It should be evident, then, that one likewise sins against those they influence and against Christ as a user of drugs.

Finally, the Christian should observe that the government is ordained of God and is to be obeyed (Romans 13:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13). In the case of most drugs, it is against the law of the land to use them for recreational purposes. Alcohol, of course, is one exception to that, though it is illegal to drive with blood levels of alcohol above a certain percent. It does not matter whether the drug is a legal drug being misused or an illegal drug used for recreational purposes, it is against the law of the land and, therefore, against the law of God.

One can, therefore, clearly understand that the use of alcohol and/or drugs is condemned by God. The use of such is a work of the flesh, replaces God as one's master, destroys the temple of God, causes one to sin against others, and is illegal according to civil law, thus sinful.

What about Social Drinking?

However, many view the occasional drink of alcohol in a different light. These agree that drunkenness is condemned, but they rationalize that drinking small amounts of alcoholic beverage is not.

The American society is a drinking society. One might feel out of place at a business luncheon or a social gathering unless one drinks lightly with the others. Some have even lost employment because of a refusal to do so when it is expected in business. Others think an occasional drink at the restaurant or at home is of no harm. If it were not against civil laws, one might even try to make the same argument for the occasional use of some drugs, such as marijuana.

One argument often appealed to for approval of such actions is that Jesus turned the water to wine at the wedding feast (John 2:1-11). One cannot, however, hastily conclude that the "wine" produced by the miracle of Jesus was fermented and alcoholic in nature, thus intoxicating. The term *oinos*, translated wine, was used in various ways, not always meaning a fermented drink.

"Nothing is clearer to those who have studied this question than that the Hebrew word *yain* and the Greek word *oinos* were, as Professor Sir R. Jebb says of *oinos*, general words in those early days, and were used to describe sometimes the fruit on the vines, the juice in the grapes, the juice when it was being pressed out, when it was preserved in an unfermented state and therefore unintoxicating, and when it was fermented and intoxicating" (De Welt 326).

De Welt went on to give examples of different uses in antiquity: Anacreon wrote some five hundred years, B.C., "Only males tread the grapes, setting free the *oinos* (wine);" Varro spoke of "gathering wine," Columella of "unintoxicating wine," and Cato of "hanging wine (grapes on the vine)." Ovid said,

“And scarce can the grapes contain the wine they have within” (326-27). Some have argued that there was no method in antiquity that allowed preservation of the unfermented juice. Jeffcoat gives several methods in antiquity by which the process of fermentation could be prevented so that the juice of the grape was kept or preserved fresh (31-35). Regarding John 2:10, some take the term “drunk freely (ASV)” or “well drunk (KJV)” to mean they were intoxicated, implying, therefore, that what Jesus produced would have been the same. Jeffcoat, on the other hand, consulted forty-three versions or translations of the Bible and found eighteen different renderings of the phrase, all of which stressed quantity rather than quality (41). Also, even without the above considerations, one can know without a doubt that what Jesus produced was unfermented juice of the grape. Habakkuk makes it clear that one who would give his neighbor drink, adding his venom to make him drunken, would sin (Habakkuk 2:15-16). Yet, both Peter and Paul wrote explicitly that Jesus was without sin (1 Peter 2:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). With confidence one can know that Jesus did not turn the water into an intoxicating drink.

A second commonly heard argument used to support “social drinking” is from the qualifications of elders and deacons. The elder is to be “not given to wine (KJV)” or “no brawler (ASV)” (1 Timothy 3:3), while the deacon is to be “not given to much wine” (1 Timothy 3:8). Paul would be contradicting himself if he meant that the elder could imbibe in intoxicating beverages as long as he was not addicted. For the elder is also to be “vigilant (KJV)” or “temperate (ASV)” (1 Timothy 3:2). The Greek word from which this comes, *neefalion*, means “sober, temperate; abstaining from wine” (Thayer 425). Vincent adds that it means “to be sober” with reference to drink (1026). For the elder to be not given to wine “cannot, therefore, mean merely freedom from their excessive use. On the other hand, they probably carry their literal signification, ‘not near wine,’ and even forbid the presence of an elder at drinking parties (Jeffcoat 74). Paul, also, creates for himself a dilemma if he means that the deacon can have a little intoxicating beverage, but not too much. If that reasoning would be correct, does Paul then mean that a little desire of filthy lucre is acceptable, yet being greedy of it is not (1 Timothy 3:8)? Likewise, does Solomon mean to indicate that a little wickedness is acceptable when he wrote, “Be not overmuch wicked” (Ecclesiastes 7:17)? Though Paul is saying the deacon must not be one who gives himself over to much wine, he is not necessarily condoning the use of a little wine. “One of the qualifications of the deacon is that he cannot be given to drunkenness. While other passages condemn the use of alcoholic beverages, this one condemns the excessive use of the same” (Wacaster 470).

A third argument commonly used in support of social drinking is that Paul told Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach’s sake (1 Timothy 5:23). Actually, this confirms the idea that Timothy knew to abstain. Why else would Paul have needed to encourage him to use the wine (Patton 93)? Besides, this was an exhortation to use the wine for medicinal purposes. Such is not the case of social drinking or a little recreational use of marijuana. It would be more along the line of the legal use of a prescription given by a doctor. As indicated earlier, such use is not prohibited, for Jesus indicated the use of a doctor, which would include the means available to him, for good health (Luke 5:31). In addition, one cannot assume that the wine spoken of by Paul was an alcoholic, intoxicating wine. Various forms of unfermented “wine” were used for medicinal purposes (Patton 93-94). Therefore, this does not in any way approve of the use of a little beverage alcohol or illegal drug.

The question about social drinking, and therefore even small amounts of other drugs used recreationally, can be answered finally and completely from Paul's comments to the church at Ephesus. Paul wrote, "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The term, "drunken," is from the Greek, *methusko*. Vines defines this as "signifies to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process or the state expressed in No. 1), to become intoxicated" (Vol. I, 341). Young gives, "to begin to be softened" (275). Another defines it, "to inebriate, make drunk" (Moulton 261). Paul, therefore, was exhorting the Ephesians not to even begin to become drunk. It is sin.

Medical science agrees with the concept that one begins to be drunk from the very beginning, the very first drink. Jeffcoat states,

"as previously indicated [pp. 85-91, TLM], the finer grades of judgment, concentration, and understanding are the first to be affected. Such effect, which may occur **after as little as one drink** [emphasis TLM]...Tests by delicate instruments have indicated that small doses of ethyl alcohol also affect the functions of sight, hearing, and touch sensation...This is the reason, that after an extensive study, it has been determined that the efficiency of operating an automobile is affected progressively from the first measurable quantity of alcohol in the blood" (91).

British scientists have found that even modest amounts of alcohol will make the opposite sex appear better-looking (Reuters Ltd). That explains the commercial this author has heard for a particular cut rate liquor establishment, "The more of our beer that she drinks, the better you look." As pointed out earlier, after a few drinks one feels extremely confident and euphoric. One will not realize the true effect the alcohol, or other drug, has had on oneself (Alls 48).

All of this shows quite well that from the first drink of alcohol, and likewise from the first use of drugs, one begins poisoning the body, begins the process of being intoxicated, and sins.

Conclusion

The evidence has been presented to show that the use of drugs, including alcohol, is harmful to the body and harmful to the soul. The Bible warns of the dangers of strong drink, and therefore, in principle, of drugs. It not only condemns drunkenness, but it condemns the very beginning of drunkenness, which comes with the very first drink.

Every Christian should heed the warning of Peter, "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Could there be any fleshly lust which wars more against the soul than the lust for alcohol and/or drugs?

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Ethics and Racism

Jack H. Williams

Introduction

Are you a “face looker”? Do you look upon the outward appearance and “prejudge” an individual based on some outward characteristic? – race, religion, culture, financial standing, occupation? MANY in the world and sadly even in the church do.

The fact is that God has an ethic (determination of right or wrong and application of that principle to our lives) for us regarding our thought and interaction with those around us. To do other than this “ethic” is to “prejudge” ... be prejudiced – the most common act of which is racism.

The Problem Exemplified

The problem is prevalent in our world. I can remember growing up in North Texas and seeing and hearing things that attested to the sad condition regarding race relationships. Several times I heard police talk about how to use their flashlight in controlling unruly suspects. It was noted that the normal use was to hold the flashlight in the middle and use it carefully as a club to subdue the individual if needed. But then matter of factly it was added that if the suspect were a black man the procedure was a bit different – the flashlight was to be held by the very end so as to gain more leverage and hitting power... “after all, the skulls of these _____ are much thicker since they are less evolved.” Even going to the local Sears brought forth the prejudice. Water fountains were provided, but clearly marked for either “whites only” or “colored.” Some may be saying that things have changed and thankfully they have, but sadly racism is still alive and well, though not as outright as it once was. Racial slurs still abound for whites, blacks, hispanic, or any other race you care to mention! (Such slurs enable those filled with hate to view their foes as something less than human, thus the prejudice seems justified). Hatred and suspicion are apparent when one even drives through a part of town “not for their kind of people.” Yes, our society still abounds with racism ... and not many are shocked by its presence. After all the world is a wicked place!

But the problem does not stop at the world. One would have to be very naive to deny the existence of racism in the religious world, and even within the church of our Lord. Notice a few quotes from our brethren:

Segregation against Negroes in our churches and colleges was strongly denounced by Abilene Christian College Bible professor Carl Spain in one of the main speeches of the annual ACC Bible Lectureship which closed January[sic] 25.

He asked the crowd in Sewell Auditorium, "Are we moral cowards on this issue?"

Spain cited the case of a Negro Church of Christ evangelist in Abilene who was forced to attend McMurry College (a Methodist institution) across town because Abilene Christian College would not give him credit for Bible work." (Christian Chronicle 17 (8 March 1960): 1,4.)

During the sixties it was clearly a huge issue facing the church. But what of the current situation? Have we left this horrible blight behind? One need only pick up books that will help us find a church of Christ in any given community to see the problem is still very much alive. Notice how many congregations would be marked "predominantly black." Each of us is probably aware of the distinction given in most every community regarding a congregation being "black", "white", "hispanic" and the like. It is not uncommon to hear people make statements that one of another race "would be better of with his own people"! I have even heard those in the overseas mission fields deride those of a given race by negative stereotypes.

The Sin Exposed – Racism (Prejudice) is Sin Because...

It is in conflict with the "law of love".

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (1 John 4:7-11)

... all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10)

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:36-40)

It is in conflict with the Lord's prohibition of respect of persons

What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. (Acts 10:15)

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (Acts 10:34-35)

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. (James 2:1)

It is in conflict with the New Testament idea of the unity of the church

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:20-21)

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)

It denies the one blood:

God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26)

It denies the Bible lineages:

Genesis 1 – Adam and Eve; Genesis 6-9 – Noah and his family

Answering Some of the "What Abouts" and "What Ifs"

How does the Bible explain the various races?

This really gets to the crux of the problem! There are some prevalent ideas that seemingly shape the mindset of many "christians" more than we would like to admit. For example, are you aware of the tenets of evolution set forth by Darwin? Most think of his famous book as *The Origin of Species*, but that is only a part of the title. The complete title is *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. The full title sets for the premise that sadly has pervaded our society, that there are "favoured races." I remember well hearing as I grew up that in the "evolutionary scheme" that the white man was the most advanced, while the other races were not so far removed from their evolutionary roots.

Following this popular (but erroneous) theory can be life changing and in fact world changing. One very famous individual who was much swayed by this premise was Adolph Hitler! And oh, how he changed the world with his "evolutionary" thinking! But how many, even within the church, actually give heed to the idea of the "white man" being more

evolved than “they” are? It is a frightening thought. Of course evolution has no support in the Word of God. One must choose either the Bible (Exodus 20:11) or evolution. The fact is that there is no support either Biblical or scientific for the foolishness of evolution.

Others look to the various races as having come about as a result of a punishment. These ignorantly seek to find the source of a different color of skin in Cain’s “mark” of Genesis 5! Of course the Bible sets forth that Cain’s curse was that he would be a fugitive and a vagabond (12). And the “mark” set upon Cain in verse 14 prevented persecution and death ... not caused it! Others look to the “curse of Ham” in Genesis 9. But the Bible student finds that this was actually a curse upon Canaan, Ham’s son and it was that he would be a servant to Seth (26-27), nothing about skin color!

Of course the truth of God’s Word – one blood, one genealogy forever puts to rest the idea of “superior” races. The origin of the different genetic makeups that have resulted in a diversity of skin color and other features can be traced likely to the events of Genesis 11. Here the “segregation” due to the confounding of the languages by God would clearly explain the variations of the nations due to genetic pooling.

“What about God forbidding certain relationships, isn’t that prejudice and racism.”

Israelite was forbidden to mix with the Gentiles, but again a study of God’s Word dispels any idea of racism being set forth as a pattern. The demanded separation was not due to “racial prejudice” but was rather a matter of bringing forth the “seed”. The Bible fact is that a perversion of this did become a problem once the “Seed” had come. One need only read of the confrontation of Peter by Paul in Galatians 2 for his act of prejudice in refusing to be seen with the Gentiles to see that such distinctions were to be ceased.

Of course God still demands separation of His children from some. Ephesians 5:11 forbids fellowship, but note that it has nothing to do with race. Rather it is a separation based on the refusal to fellowship SIN. Nothing is said of race in such passages.

“What if your daughter married ‘one of them’”

Given the situation in our society, it may in fact be wise to count the cost of entering into a “mixed marriage”, but there is NO Biblical reason to oppose such unions! The sad fact is that the very statement to which we respond shows the tragedy of reverting to the degrading language of “one of them” again! It truly exposes more than most desire. Such emotional pleas really emphasize the lack of Bible or reason in upholding the foolishness of racism.

The Tragedy of Racism

Racism sinful and thus causes the loss of one's soul. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (James 2:8-9).

Racism divides, and thus makes the Christ and His Cross of none effect (Ephesians 2).

Racism destroys true fellowship and its benefits. Those who engage in racism lose many benefits from their brothers and sisters whom they refuse to fellowship fully:

Romans 15:14 - able to admonish one another

Galatians 5:13 - serve one another

1 Thessalonians 4:18 - comfort one another

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - edify one another

Hebrews 3:13 - exhort one another daily...

Hebrews 10:23-25 - provoke unto love and good works... exhort one another in the assembly

It destroys the unity that Jesus prayed for that would cause the world to believe that Jesus was sent of the Father (John 17:21)

Do We See The Color God Sees?

Remember my original question? ... "Are you a face looker?" In Acts 10:34-35 we read: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The term "respecter of persons" is from the Greek word PROSOPOLEMPTES which is a compound word from "PROSON, a face or person" and "LAMBANO, to lay hold of" (Vine's 851). You see God IS NOT a "face looker" and neither should we be! James warns about this very thing when he says, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (2:1). Here a form of that same word is used of which Vine's says: "the fault of one who, when responsible to give judgment, has respect to the position, rank, popularity, or circumstances of men, instead of their intrinsic conditions" (851).

God doesn't see skin color, nor does He see the person's social standing, financial situation... *What color does He see?*

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

To God the world is not "black and white", but "red and white!" ... sinful or saved!

When God sent Samuel to select His chosen to be king, Samuel went to Jesse's house. Jesse's son Eliab was brought before Samuel and he thought this must surely be the Lord's anointed because of his stature and countenance, ...

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

We must strive to be godly (Titus 2:11) – and if we do so we too will learn to see the colors He does instead of the skin or any other outward mark. If that is godliness (and it is) then to do otherwise is to be *ungodly!*

Conclusion

Do you realize that the Bible does not even mention race? (In fact our society never used it as it does today until the 1800's with the popularization of Darwin's works!) The Bible does mention nations and languages and emphasizes that God loves them all (John 3:16), wants all to be one (John 17) and desires they be in one body (Ephesians 2). Isn't it time that we started being ethical in this matter and having the same goal?

The fact is that when the judgment comes "all nations" will be gathered before Him (Matthew 25). *If you don't want to be with "them" on this earth, I can assure you that the Father will not force you to be with "them" in heaven.*

The Church and Politics

Jay Yeager

My heartfelt thanks to the elders, deacons, preacher and members of the 39th Street congregation for the invitation to participate in this year's lectureship program. My hope and prayer is, and will be, that only good may come from this wonderful effort!

Christians understand a fundamental principle; namely, that God expects us to be a force in this world. We are to preach the truth, defend the truth, and live the truth (Matthew 28:19-20; Philippians 1:17; Titus 2:11-12). This trio of responsibilities (enjoined on every Christian) goes far beyond the church building where the saints meet. This influence is to be felt in the home, neighborhood, community and nation (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15).

The purpose of this particular lecture is to address the church's (collectively and individually) responsibility toward the political system of our country. I am certainly aware of the debate among Christians and non-Christians alike over the issue of separation of church and state. Since this is the "heart" for many, it would seem appropriate to study what the laws of men say regarding separation of church and state, then what the law of Christ teaches.

Separation of Church and State and the Laws of Men

Under what is commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights, we have the First Amendment which reads: "**Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the rights of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances**". Religiously speaking, there are three clauses, three prohibitions: 1) "An establishment of religion". 2) "The free exercise thereof". 3) "The freedom of speech". The essence of these three clauses guarantees that religion can be practiced free from government interference. The controversy occurs when one clause is played against the other. For instance, those who argue against any type of religious activity in school, argue that it violates the "establishment" clause (meaning that Government must remain neutral, neither endorsing nor favoring one religion above another). Those who argue for religious activity in school, base their argument upon the "free exercise thereof" or "freedom of speech" clauses.

In eighteen cases before the Supreme Court, prior to August 18, 2000, eleven have been ruled as in violation of the "establishment" clause. A partial list would include: Bible reading, prayers in classrooms, commencement or football games, balanced treatment of evolution and creationism in the classroom, and the posting of the Ten Commandments in the schools. The court ruled that these violated the first amendment, insofar as they were viewed as advancing religion.

In seven other cases, the Supreme Court held government accommodation of religious activities. A partial list would include: Non-curricular religious activities would be afforded the same access to public facilities as those engaged in any other type of non-curricular activities. A student religious publication may enjoy the same freedom of speech as every other student

publications. After school use of school facilities by religious groups cannot be discriminated against because they are religious. Government can sponsor patriotic ceremonies; for instance, the Pledge of Allegiance and saluting the flag, but they cannot make it mandatory.

Justice Stewart held a different view on prayer and Bible reading in school. His comments following the decision of the High Court on *Abington School District v. Schempp* in 1963 are at the very least thought provoking. *“A compulsory state education system so structures a child’s life that if religious exercises are held to be impermissible activities in schools, religion is placed at an artificial and state-created disadvantage. Viewed in this light, permission of such exercises for those who want them is necessary if the schools are to be neutral in matters of religion. And a refusal to permit religious exercises thus is seen, not as a realization of state neutrality, but rather as the establishment of a religion of secularism, or at least, as government support of the beliefs of those who think that religious exercises should be conducted only in private”* Id. at 313 (CRS Report for Congress – Prayer and Religion in the Public Schools: What Is, and Is Not, Permitted. By David M. Ackerman Legislative Attorney, American Law Division. Special thanks to the offices of United States Senator Mike DeWine for providing the CRS Report for Congress).

Separation of Church and State and the Law of Christ

May I first make a needful observation? Namely, that government is a part of the law of Christ; therefore, it seems strange to me that brethren would argue that Christians are not permitted to participate fully in that which the law of Christ authorizes. Can Christians pray for those in positions of authority (1 Timothy 2:1-3), but not use their voice in the election of those authorities? Can Christians give of their means to financially support the government (Matthew 23:17-21; Romans 13:6) but not use their voice to determine how the money is spent? Can Christians obey the government (Romans 13:1-2), (with certain restriction, of course-- Acts 5:29) and not use their voice to help enact laws that are just and fair? Can Christians cry for a moral nation (Proverbs 14:34) and not use their voice on moral issues? Can Christians seek (even demand) protection from evil and wicked men but deny that a Christian can be a part of that protection? Is there one law of Christ or two? Surely, every faithful member recognizes that there is one law of Christ, and every accountable soul is amenable to that law (Matthew 28:18; Luke 19:14-27; John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

There is a separation of church and state (government) inasmuch as each functions in a different realm of responsibility. The government’s role of protecting society (Romans 13:3-4) is vastly different from the church’s role of trying to save society (Mark 16:15-16). However, every person ought to recognize that both (church and government) are ordained of God (Ephesians 3:10-11; Romans 13:1-2). That being true, and it is, Christians simply cannot be indifferent toward a government that God in His infinite wisdom has placed on this earth.

I wish that it were a simple matter of encouraging Christians to be involved in shaping the political landscape of our country, but far too often, when financial and moral issues collide, otherwise thoughtful brethren let money dictate their choice. Beloved, when money causes us

to turn our back on what's right, we had better do some fast soul searching. No child of God can play the ostrich when evil runs for office.

Can any one of us put our conscience to sleep and vote for those who advocate the taking of the unborn or partial born child? ***"In Rama was there a voice heard, Lamentation, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for the children"*** (Matthew 28:18). Brethren, I wonder how many tears have been shed for the millions of babies that have been put to death since that black of day in 1973. I know how God views the shedding of innocent blood. He hates it (Proverbs 6:17).

Those who advocate the taking of innocent life march with a slogan; namely, "A women has a right to do what she wants with her own body". I agree. If a woman does not want a child, avoid pregnancy. However, if you do become pregnant the child is not your body. If the child were her body we would never see another abortion in this country, for no women would willingly submit to the cruel and inhumane treatment done to the body of a child in putting him or her to death. That the child is not the mother's body is clearly seen in the fact that the blood type and even the gender may differ from the mother. In other words, the child is a distinct and unique individual and entitled to the right to live.

Brethren, if enough of us raise our voices and elect those who hold that life is sacred, that law can be reversed. Do we dare do anything less than use our influence for what is right?

Can morality take a back seat when politicians advance the homosexual lifestyle? And make no mistake about it; some politicians and some celebrities are working fervently to change the image of homosexuals from what they do, to an alternate lifestyle, and even in some cases as the preferred lifestyle.

For the eleven years my family and I have been in Springfield, The Springfield News-Sun has carried Ann Landers. When she died, I had hoped that a more conservative personality would replace her. To my regret, Dear Abby took her place, and in no time at all the column carried the same old deception; namely, that homosexuals do not choose their lifestyle. They are born that way! Well, Dear Abby may not hold homosexuals accountable, but God does.

1. God considers homosexuality an abomination (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13).
2. Homosexuality is unnatural and vile (Romans 1:24-28).
3. Unrepented of, homosexuals will be lost forever (Jude 7).

Beloved, can we vote for those who advance the homosexual lifestyle knowing how God views that perverted way of life? Surely each of us knows better than that!

In conclusion, we have seen that the Government and the church have different responsibilities, but that they are both ordained of God, and answerable to Him. We have, because of God's infinite wisdom, a wonderful opportunity to help shape the direction our country is traveling. Let's be a voice for that which is good, right and pure. If in the process of

standing for that which is good, we suffer some financial difficulty, brethren that is all right, because we have some wonderful promise from God. ***“I have been young, and now am I old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”*** (Psalms 37:25). ***“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you”*** (Matthew 6:33).

Gambling

Perry B. Cotham

Perry Cotham was born to Christian parents January 5, 1912 in Murray, Kentucky. He was baptized at an early age began preaching soon after in 1929 at the age of 17. He graduated from Freed-Hardeman College (then a junior college) 1931. He then entered college at his hometown of Murray, Kentucky and graduated from Murray State University in 1934. While attending college he preached for several of the area churches and conducted meetings. After several years of local work in Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas he began full time meeting work in 1972. Since that time he has preached in all 50 of the United States and in all inhabited continents of the world, including over 70 nations. He has written 16 tracts and published 3 debate books with those of the Pentecostal persuasion. Perry lives in Grand Prairie, Texas.

It is a well known fact that there has been a moral decline in our beloved nation within the past several years. Gambling, fraud deceit and immorality are plainly evidences of it. Christianity is morality transfigured into obedience to the law of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Years ago, children were taught early in life by loving parents that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that people should obey its teachings. They were taught to be good, law-abiding citizens. Gospel preachers told people to “fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). They taught that gambling was an evil vice and should be shunned by all, both young and old alike. Today it is different. Gambling is big business in our nation. Teenagers are entering the gambling world in increasing numbers.

GAMBLING DEFINED

Webster’s Dictionary defines gambling. “To play or game for money or other stake. To hazard, wager. To stake or wager in gaming” (410). Many people seem to have trouble in understanding what constitutes gambling and what does not. The devil is our enemy and lying is one of his weapons to deceive us (John 8:44).

Gambling is playing for money – the betting on the results of a game or the playing of a game of chance for money. Gambling always involves risk in order to obtain something for nothing and often means losing what one has and obtaining nothing. It is getting something for nothing without rendering service or exchange of goods. It is an attempt to get money without earning it. Therefore it is a vice.

In essence, gambling is essentially stealing, a form of robbery. It is an attempt, through chance, to gain the possessions of another with nothing given in exchange. Every gambler is a parasite. He lives off what he can get from others. He is a leach on society.

Gambling in our society takes on a variety of forms: card games, dice, numbers, betting on elections, buying sweepstakes tickets, betting on horse races, slot machines, betting on sports events, bingo, buying tickets in raffles, etc. More and more the states are going to the lottery system, and more and more people are selling and buying chances.

Some say, "The State approves of the lottery, it makes much money for the government." This is one reason why gambling is growing so rapidly in our nation. Even women are entering the world of gambling. But does God approve of it? That is the question. Is it right for Christians to gamble?

Some also may say that gambling is anything that involves a chance and that all of life is a gamble, so there is nothing wrong in gambling. But they confuse the issue to try to justify gambling as it is practiced. There is a difference between tossing a coin to determine who will receive the football to start the game and the toss of dice on a table for stakes of one hundred dollars or more. There is a difference between the person who gambles to gain money without earning it and the farmer who plants a crop in the spring and expects a harvest but may fail in the autumn due to a drought. Many lose much money in gambling. There is a saying that there is a sucker born every minute. Colton said, "The gambler is a moral suicide," and Chatfield wrote, "There is but one good throw upon the dice, which is to throw them away."

Gambling and crime usually go together. Increase gambling, increase crime. Gambling and drinking of alcoholic beverages usually go together. Psychiatrists often classify habitual gambling as a mark of a disturbed personality.

GAMBLING AND COVETOUSNESS

Bible scholars have long stated that gambling involves a break of the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet..." (Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21; Romans 13:9). To covet is to wish for with eagerness. No one can see the coveting heart; it is witnessed only by him who possesses it and by the Lord. But gambling is a desire to profit, or earn money, at the expense of another. Some even gamble for great sums of money and then lose it all. Gambling is a vice, the more dangerous as it is deceitful. It is productive of many evils and injurious to the morals and health of its votaries. It has been the ruin of many worthy families, the loss of many a man's honor and the cause of suicide.

Many times, to the beginner, gambling is fascinating. Then the winner begins to push his good fortune; then his fortunes reverse. The losing gambler, in hopes of retrieving his past misfortune, goes on from bad to worse, till, in desperation, he pushes at everything, and loses his ALL!

The gambler has a greedy, covetous desire for gain at another's expense. Those who wager money on state lotteries often are those who can least afford it. The love of money – the almighty dollar – is the bottom line for both the state governments and for individuals relative to the lotteries.

Covetousness is sinful. It is that inordinate desire of having that which will give self-gratification. Self-gratification must be avoided in our lives. "Mortify (put to death, ASV) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication...and *covetousness*, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Colossians 3:5-6). Covetousness will keep a person out of heaven. Hence, gambling is morally wrong.

Gambling has a powerful and corrupting influence on society. Gambling almost inevitably leads to intemperance. Interested friends may warn, the wife may entreat with all the eloquence of her tears, children may cry for bread, but once in the fatal snare, the victim of gambling is seldom saved.

The gambling halls in our cities, tolerated and patronized, are a disgrace to our nation bearing the name of “a Christian nation.” But among those who attend and those who manage them, professors of religion are not unfrequently found. Bingo, when played for money and/or prizes, is also a form of gambling. It is especially appealing to senior citizens. Many thousands of people each year, from all classes, throw their money away by various forms of gambling. It is here that the poor man spends his last dollar. It is here that the rich man often becomes poor. Both rich and poor men lose in some kind of a lottery scheme. The avid gambler forfeits the happiness of this life and will endure the consequences of his sin in torment in the world to come (Galatians 6:7-8; Romans 6:23) – that is, unless he truly repents and turns to the Lord in obedience to God’s will and is forgiven, and then lives the Christian life faithfully until death (cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Revelation 2:10). But many a gambler has lost his wife, his family, his job, his money, his health, etc., all because of his compulsive habit of gambling, and finally he will lose his soul in torment in eternity.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

Gambling is addictive. Gambling for amusement is but the wicket gate into the hall of the damnable vice. When once in, one may find it difficult to get out. Ruin is marked over the hall of the door to the gambling den. If one regards the salvation of his own immortal soul and the happiness of his family and friends, he will shun this heart-breaking, soul-destroying, fashionable, but ruinous vice.

Once the gambler has become addicted to this vice, he soon becomes qualified for every other species of wickedness. It casts down his moral principles. Let the youth of our nation, therefore, not forget that if they are once taken in the coils of this vice, the hope of extricating themselves or of realizing their visions of wealth and happiness is exceedingly faint. They have no rational grounds to expect that they can escape the terrible consequences that are inseparately connected with this sin. If they do not become bankrupt in property, they are surely to become such in character and in moral principles. Eternal torment will be theirs unless, of course, they repent of their sins and obtain forgiveness by the grace of God (cf. Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11-12).

Although having been forgiven, they may still have to bear in their bodies the *consequences* of their earlier years of sinful living. This fact is clearly stated in the Scripture. Note these statements:

I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me (Exodus 20:5; 34:7)

For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth (Job 13:26)

His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust (Job 20:11).

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6:7-8).

STOP STEALING

When one becomes a Christian he gives up all evil practices such as stealing, cheating and gambling. In the Ephesian letter Paul wrote:

Let him that stole *steal* no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Ephesians 4:28).

Gambling is a legalized form of stealing in a sense. Some in the world call only that which is taken under cover of darkness or in secrecy stealing. But God calls the obtaining of what belongs to another by taking undue advantage stealing. The Lord regards a person a thief who takes from another his rightful due. Instead of making a living by dishonesty, a person should work in a way approved of God for a living, working with his own hands. To the Thessalonians Paul wrote:

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you (1 Thessalonians 4:11).

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

People who are able are to be regularly engaged in honest, productive labor, the thing that is good, and then help those who are truly worthy and in need of assistance. But one is not to help those who are able to work and will not do honest labor for a living.

Parents, also, need to teach their children to work in some good, honest job. Men or women who are idle, are not living by the instructions of God's Word. This is why gambling is wrong, but honest industry is the best preventive from this sin.

Theft was almost a universal vice among the heathen in the first century (as it is today in so many various ways). Hence, there was the need to teach against such to the early Christians, and this teaching is sorely needed in every nation today. God made man to toil, even in the Garden of Eden he was "to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15; cf. 3:19).

The apostle Paul was not ashamed to work with his own hands (Acts 20:34-35). He was taught early in life to be a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). No man who is able to work and support himself has a right to depend upon others by gambling or any other wrong way for his livelihood.

We realize, of course, that there are some who cannot labor and support themselves. They are too young or too old, or they are crippled, or feeble, or lying on beds of affliction. We are to work that we may have the means to contribute to their welfare (cf. James 1:27). Truly, Christianity promotes honest industry: Albert Barnes wrote: "To talk about a *lazy Christian* is about the same as to talk of burning water or freezing fire....An *honest* employment benefits everybody."

Can a Christian think he is following Christ if he engages in acts of gambling? (cf. 1 Peter 2:21). Would Jesus do it? Paul set the example for Christians to follow by working with his own hands. After all, the main business of a Christian is not to make money dishonestly and to become rich in so doing, but that he may live a good life, pleasing to God, work in an honorable way, support himself and his family, and help give to those who are in need. This way of living will help convert the work to Christ. After all, stealing is the usual effect of idleness, for "an idle brain is the Devil's workshop."

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS

Atrocious crimes are often linked with the world of gamblers. Sometimes an addictive gambler will really want to stop his gambling. There is help for him. We have *Gamblers Anonymous* just as we have *Alcoholics Anonymous* for compulsive drinkers. These organizations do much good, but there is something that is better, and that is the gospel of Christ. The only real solution to curing gambling is obedience to the will of God as found in the Holy Scripture.

PAUL AT CORINTH

The ancient city of Corinth was a commercial city and was noted for its luxury and its immorality. It was one of the most dissolute cities of the world. Paul, on his second missionary journey, went to Corinth and there he preached "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). "and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

The converts were, for the most part, those of humble rank who had been sunk in iniquity and evil customs, having lived a life of gain and sensual pleasure (1 Corinthians 1:26). There was the worship of the goddess Venus. Paul wrote them a letter afterwards in which he stated those that would not go to heaven.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuals, NKJV), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (swindlers,, NASB), shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

The Corinthians were noted for all of these crimes. But then Paul significantly stated:

And such *were* (PAST TENSE, PBC) *some of you* (WHO ARE NOW CHRISTIANS, PBC): 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 (1Corinthians 6:11).

Thus, many of those Christians had been guilty of these sins before they obeyed the gospel, but now they were forgiven. They had been converted to Christ. Note, however, that in this list of those who “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” are thieves and extortioners or swindlers.

The “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), that is, spiritual death, or eternal separation from God. Some today seem to think that they can live a life of sin and yet die and go to heaven. But this is not true. However, the vilest of sinners can repent and turn to God and by His grace be forgiven. Some at Corinth did. Nevertheless, it seems that the broad road to hell is thronged!

STOCKS, BONDS, ETC.

In the stock market one is investing in the work ethic, providing money or capital, for companies to make goods and provide services. A person also has ways of controlling the possibility of success and return on his investment. Gambling, in contrast, is nothing but chance with no hope of controlling the outcome.

In this connection some often ask about buying stocks or bonds or putting in money for interest in a bank or buying land. There is not anything wrong in doing this. This is done every day by thousands of people. But there is a difference in doing these things that are right and in gambling. Many have made money over the years by their wise investments and have used part of the income to help advance the kingdom of Christ in the world. In so doing they have laid up for themselves “treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:20). But Christianity and gambling are not compatible.

Those who preach and teach the Word of God must, on occasion, include the subject of the sin of covetousness or the undue love of money. Jesus and Paul both warned against covetousness:

Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which down men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.... Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate (distribute, ASV; willing to share, NKJV); laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:6-10,17-19).

CONCLUSION

Having seen from this study the evils of gambling, in whatever form it may be, may all who have, in the past, been guilty of it turn from it and by the grace of God receive forgiveness, as did many of those in the first century. In so doing, and then by faithfully living the Christian life thereafter, heaven will be their eternal home.

The gospel of Christ is still the means of leading sinners to abandon their sins and to turn to God. It is the only means for saving souls (Romans 1:16). Human philosophy and the passing of laws cannot do it. The gospel of Christ has proved its effectual power for reforming lives and making a better society in which to live. We entreat all to shun the vicious evils of gambling in all of its deceptive forms, obey the gospel, and live a good Christian life.

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Biblical Love and Ethics

Wayne Brewer

Wayne and his wife Susan have three children - Sarah Spradling (she and her husband are students at Freed Hardeman), Ashley (a freshman at Freed Hardeman) and Brian a junior in high school. Wayne is a 1978 graduate of Harding University. He has labored with churches in Osceola, Iowa (1978-1998), Sheridan, Arkansas (1998-2002) and is currently leading a Hispanic outreach with the Mabeldale, Arkansas church of Christ. Wayne has done evangelistic work in Latvia, Estonia and Costa Rica. He has spoken before on the Mid-West Lectures as well as assisting in the Mid-West School of Biblical Studies and the IBS Lectureships.

Biblical Love and Ethics, just what relationship do they have with one another in conjunction with the theme, *1st Century Ethics in a 21st Century World?* First, it is essential to realize that the phrase *1st Century Ethics* refers not to what everyone in the first century believed or practiced regarding ethics, but is a reference to what Jesus and the inspired writers of the New Testament taught. Second, it is essential to address the issue often raised, is it practical to expect one to live by *1st Century Ethics in a 21st Century World?* There are those who would suggest that to live by the teachings of the New Testament in a 21st Century World is an idea that borders on ridiculous. The belief is that *1st Century Ethics* are no longer applicable in a *21st Century World* because times have changed and the two centuries are vastly different. The two centuries are vastly different from a mechanical and technological perspective. Modes of travel, communication, the way goods are produced, farming, medicine, etc., have all changed, but in spite of the fact that these things have changed, changing day to day life for human beings, does that mean that human beings themselves have changed? Do husbands and wives love one another any more or less, or do parents love their children any more or less in the 21st Century than the 1st Century? The wise man, Solomon, wrote, "...*there is no new thing under the sun*" (*Ecclesiastes 1:9*). Solomon observed many changes in his lifetime, but as far as who man is and what man needs, "...*there is no new thing.*" Since man was created (*Genesis 1:26-28*), on day six, he has needed to eat, sleep, work, worship, have companionship, and to love and be loved (*Genesis 2*), and the same can be said for man in the first, fifth, tenth, and twenty-first centuries. Time has not changed the fact that in the 21st Century man is still created "*in the image of God*" (*Genesis 1:27*), "...*a living soul*" (*Genesis 2:7*).

The teachings of Jesus and the other inspired writers of the New Testament are timeless because "*the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*" (*Hebrews 4:12*). However, what about Biblical Love and Ethics? How will Biblical love affect the ethics of the 21st century man and woman? In this study worldly love, upon which many base their ethics, and Biblical love, that which was taught in the 1st century, and its impact upon our ethics, will be examined.

THERE IS A WORLDLY LOVE UPON WHICH ETHICS ARE BASED

John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him" (1 John 2:15). The love of the world, as John is using it, means thinking of this world as the total sum of our existence. Love of the world is like man of whom Jesus spoke (Luke 12:16-21), whose life was expressed by the attitude, "...eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). Today it is expressed by the philosophies of "live and let live" and "you only go round once in life." Concerning this attitude Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21). Characteristics of the love that John speaks of, the love of the world, is that it is first, self centered, and second, present centered. John explains the love of the world, "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16).

Through the years some have misunderstood what John has written, thinking that this life is to have no joy or pleasure, or that we can not appreciate the good things in this earth life. John does not mean to imply that there is to be no joy or pleasure in life, rather, John is writing with reference to loving this world above all else. Loving the world to the point of sacrificing one's eternal salvation. The Bible teaches that human beings are to appreciate this world (Psalm 8:1-9, 9:1-2, 19:1-6, Romans 1:19-20), and when man does there will be an even greater appreciation for this world, God, and self.

The impact of having a love of the world means that our ethics will spring forth from that love rather than from the love of the Father. The wise man wrote, "For as he (man) thinketh in his heart, so is he..." (Proverbs 23:7). The logical and practical end of functioning by a worldly love leads to the elevation of the creation above God, and eventually above man, and when that happens the ethics and moral standards by which man lives are lowered (Romans 1:21-32).

The impact of loving the world can also be seen in how the world defines love. The world defines love as accepting the actions or lifestyle of a person, even though that lifestyle may be dangerous to that person or someone else physically or spiritually, and even though the Bible would define such as sin. The worldly love not only accepts a sinful lifestyle, but also will not speak against such. The accusation is that when one speaks out against homosexuality, abortion, adultery, and many of the topics found in these lectures, then one, according to the world, has become judgmental, uncaring, and unloving.

Another aspect of loving the world is seen by whom one desires to be love. There are many today in the religious world, and sadly, even in the Lord's church, who like the Pharisees, "...loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42). That comes about because of a love of the world. When that is the case, where ethics are based upon a worldly definition of love, the religious and moral decision-making process will be apart from the inspired Word of God.

THERE IS A BIBLICAL LOVE UPON WHICH ETHICS ARE BASED

Since the New Testament was written in Greek we come to understand Biblical love, as we know how the word was used in the 1st century. The Greek language has several different words, which are translated into the English as love, and the one used with reference to ethics is the word "agapao." *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* defines the word in this way, "to be full of

good-will and exhibit the same, to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of" (8). Mr. Thayer is saying that this love is a decision, a determined and active interest in the genuine welfare of another person, be it for their physical or spiritual welfare. The interesting thing about this love is that it is not limited by one's feelings for or against a person. This is why Jesus said, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..."* (John 3:16), and why Paul wrote, *"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). God set the example of true Biblical love and how one is to ethically act upon that love.

Jesus taught that Biblical love must be the basis for our life, which includes our ethics. Jesus said, *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is first and greatest commandment"*(Matthew 22:37-38). How does one love God? Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15). John wrote, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments"* (1 John 5:3). Biblical love does not begin with the created, but the Creator, God. Jesus expounded on Biblical love by saying, *"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"* (Matthew 22:39-40). Jesus was saying that the true ethics by which people are to act upon are found in these two commands, loving God and love one's fellow man as himself. When one truly loves God first, as God defines love, then one will be able to truly demonstrate love for humanity. Previously it was mentioned that a worldly love is defined as accepting the actions or lifestyle of a person, no even if they are physically or spiritually dangerous to that person, or someone else. It is said that to disapprove or speak out against such is to be unloving. That may be the world's opinion, but in reality acting with Biblical love is far more loving and beneficial to the person.

Proof of Biblical love is seen in the life and words of Jesus, the One who deeply cared about people, and who deeply loved people. Jesus demonstrated great care, concern, and love for people in their situations of life, yet without accepting, compromising, or approving of their sinful lifestyle. Jesus demonstrated tremendous compassion for the woman brought to him accused of adultery, first, by challenging the attitude and motive of the accusers (John 8:7), and second, without compromise, and in true loving fashion, saying to her, *"go, and sin no more"* (John 8:11). As the old saying goes, Jesus loved the sinner, but not the sin, and she clearly understood that fact.

Biblical love will cause us to act in the best interest of another person. This may mean helping, or not helping a person in a given situation. The loving thing to do may be to give food to one truly in need, as Paul wrote, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men..."* (Galatians 6:10). Or the loving thing to do may be to not give someone a hand out, encouraging laziness, but to encouragement them to become employed, as Paul also wrote, *"if any would not work, neither should he eat"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Biblical love will do what is best for a person's physical and spiritual well being. Some parents believe love for their children is withholding discipline and allowing them to do whatever they want, but love will cause parents to *"...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4), which includes loving guidance in truth and what is right, and loving discipline, such as the wise man wrote, *"...he that loveth him (one's child) chasteneth him..."* (Proverbs 13:24). As we can see from this study, and from the writings of Paul, Biblical love is not self- centered, but consistently acts in a way that demonstrates genuine concern for God and

one's fellow man (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). John put it this way, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

Conclusion

Ethics that spring forth from a love for this world and a love defined by this world leads to self-centeredness, short-sighted decisions, and a decay in one's moral fiber. On the other hand, ethics that spring forth from a Biblical love looks upward and outward to the welfare of others, both presently and in the future. May we strive to live our lives base upon this Biblical love.

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Genetic Engineering and Cloning

Charles Coats

Charles is a native of Arkansas, born in Gurdon, Arkansas August 22, 1953. He has been married to Leanna (Darling) since June 27, 1975. They have 2 children - Brandon who preaches in Chelsea, Michigan and Ben, married to Tami, who is a student at University of Michigan Law School. Charles graduated Brown Trail School of Preaching in 1982. He has done local work in Murfreesboro, Arkansas, Mountain Grove, Missouri, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, Dierks, Arkansas, Fouke, Arkansas, Howell, Michigan and helped establish a congregation in Webberville, Michigan on 1991 where he still labors. He has conducted meetings in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. He directed a lectureship while in Dierks, Arkansas. He also maintains a full-time work with Dunnage Engineering in Brighton, Michigan as the Plant Administrator.

In May, a team headed by researchers at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA., reported the discovery of the gene that causes *fragile X syndrome*, the most common form of inherited mental retardation. The gene – the first that researchers have linked directly to intelligence – affects an estimated 1 in every 1,250 males and 1 in every 2,000 females. Its effects range from mild learning disabilities to severe retardation. French and Australian scientists in December announced the development of a test that can be used for prenatal diagnosis of the disorder – an accomplishment made possible by the gene's discovery. (*The 1992 World Book Yearbook* 93)

When touting the benefits of genetic engineering, scientists talk about how much good can be done for mankind. The paragraph above helps indicate what research is able to do in identifying genes that can be somewhat detrimental to people. It also introduces us to the dangers of genetic engineering!

For most of us, the field of genetic engineering is about as foreign as any area can be. Terms we hear that give us at least a little insight to genetic engineering are DNA, stem cell research, and cloning. In the past, we have been subjected to the idea in such books as *Frankenstein* (written in 1818 by Mary Shelley) and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (published in 1886 by Robert Louis Stevenson). And a Star Wars movie brought us into touch with genetic engineering, at least from a science fiction standpoint – *Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones*. As I was studying for this topic, I noticed at least two shows on television that dealt with clones. Genetic engineering is everywhere around us, but still we do not know that much about it.

Genetic engineering is probably best known in the agriculture field. The producing of particular kinds of crops has been manipulated by science, so that we get more protein or more fiber or more vitamins or whatever trait we desire. Experiments are now being done that would help pork producers raise pigs that will give better chops and slabs of bacon (*Cloning* 1). Scientists are also considering the possibility of genetic engineering helping endangered species to increase their population (*Why We Should Use Cloning* 1). Arguments have been made on both sides of the issue as to whether these things are right or wrong. Many are concerned, especially in agriculture, as to the dangers of genetic engineering.

The greatest fear many have is the making of a human being. Although many attempts have been made to produce life, man is still incapable of doing so. However, scientists are continuing to work on producing a better human being, not necessarily producing a human, but manipulating birth to produce only certain kinds of humans. Genetic research is continuing to look for the genes that cause everything from alcoholism to homosexuality to Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS). It is believed by many that if these can be isolated, then we can do something about removing these genes at, or before, conception and thus produce only certain kinds of babies. The research by scientists also extends to producing an exact duplicate of a particular human being. A little bizarre, but given as a possibility through genetic research, is the idea of producing a cloned child that would be able to provide a needed organ for a child now living. This organ would have the same genetic makeup and thus not be rejected by the original child.

Cloning also provides better research capabilities for finding cures to many diseases. There are also possibilities that nuclear transfer could provide benefits to those who would like children. For instance, couples who are infertile, or have genetic disorders, could use cloning to produce a child. Equally important, women who are single could have a child using cloning instead of in-vitro fertilization or artificial insemination. Nuclear transfer could also provide children who need organ transplants to have a clone born to donate organs. Cloning could also provide a copy of a child for a couple whose child had died. (*Why We Should Use Cloning 1*)

The debate over genetic engineering has heated up in the last few years, with most of the dispute centered on stem cell research. Stem cells are the master cells that turn into all the cells found in the body. These stem cells generally come from embryos. Stem cells can be cloned and used for research. Singapore has given the go ahead on human embryo cloning (Olesen 1). Norway is introducing legislation to ban therapeutic cloning (*Norwegian government . . . 1*). And, in the United States, President Bush has made it clear that he opposes cloning in all forms (Fox 1).

The history of genetic engineering/cloning goes back to the late 1800's. Yet, no major advances were made until the 1950's. In November 1951, a frog embryo was cloned in Philadelphia. In the 1970's and 1980's, some advances were made with a German scientist claiming to have cloned three mice from embryos; a team in England that cloned a sheep's embryo; and, a team in America that cloned a cow's embryo. But, the biggest boost for genetic engineering came on July 5, 1996, when a cloned sheep by the name of Dolly was born. Dolly was cloned from a six year old sheep and reportedly had the same genetic makeup as this original sheep (*History of Cloning 1-3*).

On December 8, 1998, researchers at the Infertility Clinic at Kyeonghee University in Korea announced they had successfully cloned a human. They were not trying to clone humans, but "to clone specific, genetically identical organs for human transplant". On March 14, 2000, it was announced that five piglets had been cloned. These pigs were cloned for the purpose of organ transplants (*Human Cloning 1-4*). Researchers at Texas A&M University are at work to clone a family's dog that passed away recently. Millions of dollars have been put forth to provide this family with an exact copy of their favorite pet. In 2001, researchers at Texas A&M cloned the first cat using a private grant of \$3.7 million dollars (Rumbelow).

Those involved with genetic engineering try to persuade us that this research is good for us, because it will help us rid the world of life threatening diseases, genetic disorders, retardation, etc. They, by their work, will provide us with better food and medicine. In their minds, genetic engineering is the greatest thing on the face of the Earth. In my research, I could not help but notice that many believe that genetic engineering is giving a helping hand to the evolutionary process (Quotations related to genetics 2; *Why genetic engineering...* 2). Now, that we have a little background to genetic engineering, what should be the Christian's position on this field? Is genetic engineering, especially among humans, that which Christians can support? From here, we want to look at how genetic engineering works, and then make some observations concerning genetic research in light of God's word.

A distinction must be made at this point between genetic engineering and cloning. Although both are closely related (and cloning is a part of genetic engineering), the difference lies in the scope of each area. Genetic engineering is primarily used to describe that area where certain genes are isolated and then removed in order to produce a "better" person or thing. For instance, genes that cause retardation would be removed before implanting into an egg in order that the offspring would not have these genes that cause retardation. Thus, only babies with "good" mental faculties would be born. Genetic engineering also applies to manipulating genes in order to cause something to produce only certain traits – corn could be manipulated to give more vitamins; humans could be manipulated to have blue eyes or blond hair or, perhaps, tall stature.

Cloning, on the other hand, involves itself in producing something with the same gene makeup as its "parent" (or "donor" as scientists seem to like to call it). The idea of cloning is to produce offspring that are identical to their "parents". A clone only uses one set of genes in its production rather than the two sets of genes in normal reproduction. In cloning, there is no need for a male and female to produce offspring. There is only the need of an egg and a cell from the one scientists wish to clone.

Sexual reproduction involves a male and female and the reproductive systems of both. The male and female both offer a set of genes in this process. Their offspring would have half its genes from its mother and half its genes from its father. Thus the offspring would not be identical to either of its parents, but would have resemblances to both. The offspring's gene make up would be different than either of its parents. The only case in which the genes of the offspring would be the same is in the case of identical twins. These two would have the same gene makeup as each other, although different from either parent. (See Attachment 1 concerning sexual reproduction)

Asexual reproduction (cloning) uses the egg of the female. The nucleus of the egg is removed and a body cell from the one to be cloned is introduced into this egg. Thus, the egg now has only one set of genes, rather than the two it would normally have through sexual reproduction. The egg is then implanted into the mother's womb and brought to term. The offspring would be an identical copy of the one being cloned. While this may sound simple, it should be noted that this is a very difficult process full of failures. Dolly, the sheep that was cloned in 1996, had 277 failures before Dolly was produced. (See Attachment 2 concerning asexual reproduction).

Therapeutic cloning uses much of the same process as asexual reproduction. However, once the body cell has been implanted into the egg, the embryo is not implanted into a mother's womb. The embryos are used to generate stem cells that can be "harvested". From these stem cells, the scientists can produce such things as bone tissue, muscle tissue, or nerve tissues. These tissues can then be used in the clonal donor without fear of rejection. From therapeutic cloning comes the possibility of producing organs for transplant that will not be rejected by the clonal donor because these organs will have the same genetic makeup of the donor. (See Attachment 3 concerning therapeutic cloning).

Germline engineering combine is that which can be used to produce a "designer baby". In this area, normal sexual reproduction takes place. However, the embryos produced by this process are used to "harvest" stem cells. These stem cells are implanted with new genes (genes that carry the traits we wish to have in our "designer baby"), and then tested to see which have successfully incorporated the new genes. A stem cell that has successfully incorporated the new genes is then implanted into another egg (this egg has had its nucleus removed). The egg is then placed in a mother's womb and the baby that will be born will have the traits that we have desired for it to have (such as blond hair, blue eyes, etc.). (See Attachment 4 concerning germline engineering).

Another potential of genetic engineering is what is known as *pre-implantation diagnosis and selection*. This process involves testing fertilized eggs for the presence of disease-causing genes. Those with disease-causing or other detrimental genes would be discarded and only those with "good" genes would then be implanted in a mother's womb. This process would supposedly prevent us from bringing to term those babies that would be Mongoloid, handicapped in any way, or have any potential for life-threatening diseases down the line. (See Attachment 5 concerning pre-implantation diagnosis and selection) (*ARHP presents . . .*).

All of the processes mentioned above concerning genetic engineering and cloning are still in the experimental stage, with some success stories. While many may view genetic engineering as the key to the future success of the human race and that which will give us more quality of life, there are many ethical concerns with this work. Many have viewed genetic engineering as man "playing God". Certainly, the field of genetic engineering is centered upon the idea that man believes he knows what is best for the human race. Yet, man's attempts to provide what they believe to be best for the human race have always met with disaster. One has only to recall Adolf Hitler's attempt to produce a "master race" in Germany during the late 1930's and early 1940's to see how dangerous men can be to one another.

What then should be the Christian's perspective to genetic engineering and cloning? Please consider carefully the following:

- 1) Genetic engineering is a field that forgets that man is a three part being – body, breath, and soul. God gave the breath of life to man and man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). Man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Man is not an animal, but one who will live, die, and face God in judgment (Hebrews 9:27). While the genetic engineer may attempt to produce life, man can not create a soul.

- 2) Genetic engineering is a field that requires the death of many children in order to produce the “good” that it claims it can do. As we noticed in our discussion of genetic engineering, embryos (which are fertilized cells and thus conception has taken place) are destroyed in order to harvest what is needed or discarded because they do not meet the requirements at the time. This destruction is the taking of the life of human beings. In such passages as Job 3:3 and Jeremiah 1:5, God teaches us that life begins at conception.
- 3) Genetic engineering assumes that man is in control, i.e., we know what is best for us. Jeremiah 10:23 shows us clearly that man is not capable of directing his own steps. And, Proverbs 14:12 helps us to understand that the end of man’s devices are the ways of death.
- 4) Genetic engineering is a very selfish and prejudiced field. It is concerned with making everything “better” and producing only the “best”. Who among man has decided that man does not need some adversity in life (cf. James 1:1-5)? Who among man knows what are the “best” traits for mankind? Have we forgotten that God has made all men of one blood (Acts 17:26)? Will man through his “wisdom” decide that certain races should not exist? We should always remember that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God (1 Corinthians 1:20).
- 5) Genetic engineering involves the worship of the creature more than the creator. God is left out of the thinking involved in genetic engineering. Man is his own god. He seeks his pleasure and his own glory. This attitude is greatly condemned by God (Romans 1:25; 10:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-7).
- 6) Genetic engineering assumes we are without guidelines. The basis of genetic engineering is the evolutionary process (Man is nothing more than a superior animal. Therefore, we are doing no more to man than we would to a dog , cat, or pig). There are no limits to where man will go when he forgets that he must face God in judgment one day (2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14).
- 7) Genetic engineering forgets that the end does not justify the means. While it is important to do good, it is also important as to the means we use to accomplish this good. Everything we do must be in keeping with what God has authorized (Colossians 3:17), and must be that which brings glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Saul, king of Israel, kept part of the spoils from the battle with Amalek so they could be offered to God (1 Samuel 15:21). While his intentions were good, his method was wrong. The end never justifies the means. Saul lost his kingdom because of his actions (1 Samuel 15:22ff). Men must be careful never to “measure themselves by themselves” (2 Corinthians 10:12). Consider also Romans 3:8.

While we would never want to discourage man from seeking to help himself upon the Earth, we must remember that all that we do must be that which enables us to one day dwell eternally with God. Genetic engineering may seem like such a good thing, but when it comes to humanity, it uses the

death of many to accomplish its goals. It centers itself on self-gratification and places man in the position of thinking he is something when he is nothing. The Christian's perspective towards genetic engineering and human cloning must be to reject this field of study.

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Young People and Ethics - Why and How?

Richard Massey

Richard and his wife Cathy have three sons, all Christians. He is a 1981 graduate of Brown Trail School of Preaching. He preached his first lesson in 1979. He has done work overseas in England, Jamaica and Philippines. He labors with the church in Rising Star, Texas. He has worked with the Brown Trail School of Preaching as a part-time instructor since 1990.

Introduction

God is interested in the lives of young people. Notice the following passage: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). This passage makes it clear that the Bible was authored with the young in mind. Young and old alike can understand God’s word and become wise in matters that pertain to salvation. God has provided a perfect book, one that contains all of the necessary ethical principles needed to make man complete (2 Peter 1:3-4). Holy writ will supply us with all that is necessary to live the Christian life:

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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Regardless of age these holy principles will guide men and women, boys and girls into righteous behavior.

Recent events make it very clear that many young people in America are completely void of the ethical principles found in God’s word. From coast to coast young people (and some are very young) are committing horrendous and senseless crimes. In Littleton, Colorado two male students went on a killing spree inside a large high school. With guns and bombs they murdered twelve of their fellow-students and wounded many more. In a state of shock America was asking, “How could teenagers slaughter their peers in a school and then commit suicide?” In the state of Florida a thirteen-year-old boy shot his math teacher with a gun in the doorway of a classroom. In bewilderment, our society was again asking, “How could a child of this age be capable of cold-blooded murder?” On the eastern seaboard a pregnant teenager secretly gave birth to her baby in the ladies restroom while attending the school prom. After giving birth she disposes of the baby in the trash and immediately returns to the dance as though nothing happened. The baby died. Again in shock and amazement, we all wondered, “How could a teenager treat a human life with such callousness? How could she not care for the innocent life of her baby?” These three incidents could be multiplied many times over. They are, however, a commentary on the sorry state of American morals. Decency is absent in the minds of many in our nation today. Something is very wrong with the perception of right and wrong in the minds of young people.

The escalation of immoral behavior among America's youth underscores the need to teach Biblical ethics. Teenage pregnancy is rising annually. More than one million teenage girls become pregnant each year; over eighty percent are not married. One survey showed that thirty-nine percent of ninth graders, forty-six percent of tenth graders, fifty-nine percent of eleventh graders and sixty-seven percent of twelfth grade students are sexually active. It showed that by the time they graduate from college ninety percent of young people have become sexually active. One out of five teenagers has a drinking problem; eight million drink weekly. Suicide has become the third leading cause of death among adolescents. Escalating cases of cheating, drugs, pornography, robbery, lying, and abortion underscore the monumental problem before us. Children in this country are growing up in one of the most violent and crime-ridden countries in the world. A lack of stability in the home contributes to these problems which are spiraling out of control.

Let us not forget that young people in the church are facing these same influences of our society. They are being exposed to more ungodliness as each year passes. Parents who are not aware of these trends must wake up immediately. They must get busy doing the job God has given them. Fathers are responsible for being the number one teacher of Biblical ethics to their children (Ephesians 6:4). Naturally, mothers would want to play a major role in assisting to instill fundamental values from God's word in the hearts of their little ones. If the home does not do its part, what chance do our young people have of getting to heaven?

Young People Face Important Decisions In Life

Parents must do their part in teaching their children, but ultimately it will come down to young people making personal decisions for themselves. Parents cannot follow their children around to school and to the homes of friends constantly making decisions for them. A parent can make many decisions for their children, but sooner or later the burden shifts to the child because God has made us free moral agents.

It is an important responsibility. Our decisions should be based upon the information found in God's word. All people make significant decisions every day. When God first made Adam and Eve, they were young in the sense that they had little personal experience in making decisions. They knew enough to understand that there was one tree that God had specifically commanded them not to eat (Genesis 2:16-17). God had told them, "In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die" (v.17). One day they made a decision to disregard God's word. Their decision to sin affected them for the rest of their lives. There was no taking that decision back once the deed was done.

Ethics is associated with making decisions. The teenager that becomes pregnant did not have an accident, but rather she made a decision to be sexually active (except in cases of rape). She has made a moral and ethical decision. The killing of classmates and teachers was no mishap, rather it was a deliberate decision to become vengeful and take the innocent lives of others. The teenager that gets drunk or high on drugs does so because he/she decides to do it. God allows mankind, even the young to decide whether to do right or to behave sinfully (even if they happen to be naïve). God allows man to make personal choices. In the long ago Joshua challenged the Israelites by stating, "...choose you this day whom ye will serve..." (Josh.24:15). They had a choice to either serve

Jehovah God or to pursue the objects that men had declared deities (idols). They were challenged to make an important decision. Likewise, we are capable of choosing the direction we wished to follow.

Every ethical decision has a direct bearing on our lives. People fail to realize that once man commits a sin, it cannot be taken back. Adam and Eve could not take back the eating of the forbidden fruit. It was a deed that was done. It is true that God can forgive sins, but it is also true that damage caused by sin is often irreversible. If you commit the act of murder it cannot be undone. If a young lady chooses to be sexually active and becomes pregnant, it cannot be reversed. Abortion cannot undo the act of fornication. If a person becomes drunk, the damage caused by the alcohol is final. The worst consequence of all is sin will cause our soul to be lost (Matthew 25:30-46; Romans 6:23). As we have stated, God can forgive the sin if the proper scriptural steps are followed, but the fact of a pregnancy or a murder or even a lie cannot be undone.

Certain Influences Affect Decisions Young People Make

Man makes decisions based upon the influences that are around him. Eve partook of the forbidden fruit because Satan influenced her thinking (Genesis 3:1-6). If Satan had not spoken to the woman she may have never eaten of the fruit. If Eve had not presented the fruit to Adam, it is possible that he would have left it alone. The influence of Eve is undeniable. The evil influences of the wives of Solomon had a direct impact upon his thinking for he began to practice paganism by worshipping their idols. The names of some of the idols were Chemosh, Astoreth, Molech and Milcom. It was his wives that led him down the wrong spiritual road (1 Kings 11:1-8). His actions were an abomination to the Lord. Solomon sank deeply into sin because he surrounded himself with the wrong people. If Solomon had married one faithful Jewish woman, it is likely that he would have never exalted these idols in his heart. The reason God forbade the Hebrews from marrying those from heathen nations was because their hearts would be turned away from serving the one true God (Deuteronomy 7:1-4). Do not fail to understand the point being made, influences play a big part in the decline of ethical behavior. Television, movies and music are the three biggest influences in America today. For the past forty years these three major forms of media are responsible for establishing most of the ethical standards in this country. Television has become a wasteland for ethics of any value. Programs viewed today are doing far more damage to the morals of this country than they are good. By the time a person has graduated from high school most young folks have watched twenty-two thousand hours of television. Add to that the time young people spend watching worldly movies and listening to music saturated with offensive themes and you can start to understand why the new generation lacks moral value. Think of all the immoral behavior that is portrayed each day on television and you will see what is shaping the thinking of young people in America. What kind of purity in ethics can young people have after thousands of hours of viewing illicit activity? The thoughts presented in the music they hear is as bad as the movies. Sin has been glamorized, popularized and sensationalized by the movie, music and television industry. God is absolutely right when He says bad company will corrupt good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33). Virtuous ethics in America have been ruined by the big three. With the entrance of the internet on the scene, we can add a fourth member to this corrupting panel of strong influences.

Youth in the church are being affected by the same immoral sources. Many parents are oblivious to the vulgar messages popular songs convey as their children use them for entertainment. Television programs, music, movies and websites need to be continuously monitored by parents. Young people are not dependable judges of what is right and wrong or of what they should not be watching. God intended for children to have parental oversight. He knows that someone needs to lovingly safeguard the young from evil influences. Parents must be on constant alert for things that are inappropriate. Your children could be watching something that is very harmful to them. The PG or “parental guidance” designation on some movies should advise parents that there is a need for them to screen what their kids watch.

Young People Must Prepare Themselves To Make Proper Choices

How can we ensure that we will make the right choices? First of all, remember God. The Bible says, “Remember, now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Do not forget your Creator and that it is in Him we live, move and have our very being (Acts 17:28). He is a holy God and we are alive today to please Him, not our peers (Galatians 1:10). The book of Ecclesiastes ends with these words, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (v.13). It does not say, “fear God and try to do what everyone around you is doing.” It says, “Keep His commandments.” Be obedient to Him all of the time. You will eventually stand before Him in judgment on the last day (v.14). If you have committed sins by making the wrong ethical decisions, you will be eternally punished in a burning hell if they are not forgiven (Matthew 25:41, 46). By being alert and careful each day, you can make good decisions in your life and God will gladly reward you with a blessed home in heaven (Matthew 25:14-30). . Secondly, appreciate and respect the sanctity of life. You have been very blessed by the Lord to have life on this earth. Do not take it for granted. It is a great privilege to bear the image of God in our person (Genesis 1:26-27). Every human is made in His image. Life is a special gift from God, treat it as such. If you are a Christian, your life is especially blessed. Realize that you belong to God and that all that you do should be done to glorify Him: “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). A great price was paid for you—the precious blood of the Son of God (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Next, study more about your Creator, become familiar with His ways, endeavor to know of His likes and dislikes (John 17:3; 2 Tim. 2:15). Come to completely trust God and His word to lead you in all things that are good: “Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). You will have no regrets in eternity if you will do this. Remember, the Lord loves you and wants only the best for your future (John 10:10).

In the next place, maintain Christian friends. This will enhance your chance immensely to stay on God’s road to heaven. Earlier we mentioned that bad company will corrupt good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33). It is obvious why a parent would not want their child to be associated with juvenile delinquents. Corrupt friendships do not brighten your future. Having the wrong friends will hurt us spiritually and socially. Solomon was a very wise man, but he ruined his relationship with God

because he did not keep good company. God became angry and upset with Solomon. He began to sin because he encircled himself with people whose minds were corrupt. The evil influence of his wives devastated Solomon's spiritual strength. Many people have made this same mistake by keeping the wrong company. God is never mocked; you can be sure there will be no exceptions to His rule of evil companions (1 Corinthians 15:33). Cast your lot with those that will help you to stay faithful to the Lord.

There are Christians in prison today because they maintained friendships with people of low morals and poor character. Drug addicts got their start by hanging out with the wrong company. Alcoholics began their self-destructive lifestyle because their friends like to drink. Unwed mothers are in their unfortunate situation because they dated immoral men. Investigate these things for yourself and see if this is not true. You cannot rise above the friends that you keep. In the book of Psalms we are told, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). Your close friends should be those that are faithful to attend worship assemblies. Christian friends will reprove and rebuke you when they detect you going astray (Galatians 2:11-14). Friends that live righteously will help us get to heaven.

Next, young people should seek counsel and advice from people that are firmly grounded in the truth of the Bible. There are difficult things in life with which all of us need help. For important or difficult decisions you should go to your parents for advice. If you prefer others then try the elders, or the preacher, or a trusted brother or sister in Christ. If you are a young lady then perhaps you could seek counsel from sober minded women in the church. God has provided us a spiritual family (the church) for bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:1).

Finally, young people will be able to make good ethical choices in life if they will give a certain amount of time each day to reading their Bibles and praying. You cannot do God's will without receiving God's help. You need His counsel constantly; you can only get this through studying the Bible (Matthew 5:6; 1 Timothy 4:13). God's providential help can be accessed through prayer (Philippians 4:6-7). You have no greater friend and ally than the Lord. He tells us to come to him for help: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). He desires to help us with the needs that we have in life. Exactly how He accomplishes this is not known to us (Deuteronomy 29:29). However, the assurance that He will do what He knows is best is certainly comforting.

Conclusion

In the book of Hebrews we are told of faithful servants of God that successfully walked the road of life (Hebrews 11). They faced a world similar to ours. They had hardships; they were tempted; they faced disappointment; they made important decisions and they succeeded because they chose the way of truth. Others have wrecked and ruined their lives because they did not take the same course in life. There are two paths in life that every one must tread. You may take the broad way that the majority travels and be lost. Or you can take the narrow and difficult way that Jesus chose and be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). Be wise and choose the latter, it is the only way to the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Dating and Ethics

Larry Yarber

Introduction

In order to understand our topic better we will take a brief moment to define the terms. Ethics is defined as "...the field of study of morals or right conduct..." (Webster 337). Dating is defined as "...an appointment with a person of the opposite sex for a social engagement..." (Webster 255). Thus, our study will be to see what is morally right or wrong when two people of the opposite sex go out together to a social engagement.

First, let's point out that moral truths do exist. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth, shall make you free." (John 8:32). Truth is not relative and situational. We can and should know what is right and wrong in the area of dating.

The main objective of dating is to pick a spouse. It is also a given fact that we will marry someone we date. In light of this, we need to understand a few things about marriage. Marriage is an honorable relationship (Hebrews 13:4) and it is good for a man to obtain a wife (Proverbs 18:22). Marriage is one of the three divinely created institutions on earth (Genesis 2:18-24). The other two are the church (Matthew 16:18) and civil government (Romans 13:1-2). The purpose of marriage is at least threefold in nature. It provides companionship (Genesis 2:18), reproduction of the human race (Genesis 1:28), and fulfills the physical needs of man (1 Corinthians 7:1-2). Understanding why God created the marital realm and it's purpose should help us determine what is ethically correct when we date.

Ethically, Who Can or Should a Christian Date?

When we reflect back to a text previously noted (Genesis 2:18-24), we can see that it is not ethically right for a home to be comprised of two people of the same sex or two different species of animals. The beasts of the field were not suitable mates for mankind and god didn't create another man for Adam but a woman. Therefore, it would not be ethical to date another person of the same sex or to practice bestiality. This is wrong! Since the revisionist of our age would like to change this truth we need to remember that even Webster's definition of a date confirms our statement.

I personally believe that it is not ethically wrong for a Christian to marry a non-Christian but I do believe that it is an unwise decision. There are those who would disagree with me on this issue. Some may wonder why we would even bring this issue into the discussion. But, it is the purpose of this study to determine what is ethically right and wrong in dating, and since we are going to marry someone we date, we need to know whom a Christian can and should date. After all, if it is wrong for a Christian to marry a non-Christian then it would only follow that it is wrong for a Christian to date a non-Christian.

Since all sin is to be repented of (Luke 13:1-5) and repentance means to turn and go in the other direction, if a Christian's marriage to a non-Christian is wrong this marriage would have

to be set aside. This doesn't seem to be consistent with other scriptural teaching. Those at Corinth who were married to non-believing spouses were told to remain with them (1 Corinthians 7:12-13). Peter told Christian women how to win their unbelieving spouse to Christ (1 Peter 3:1-2). He never suggested that this was an unacceptable union and that it should be dissolved. If it was lawful for those at Corinth and those to whom Peter wrote to have unbelieving spouses, why would it be unlawful for other to have an unbelieving spouse? Why would some of these marriages need to be repented of and set aside and other held intact?

Some believe that since widows are instructed to marry "...only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39), all other Christians must marry "...only in the Lord" too. I do not argue with this theology. But what does the phrase "...only in the Lord" mean? Sometimes it means a believer (Revelation 14:13), at other times it means as God's word teaches (Ephesians 6:1). I believe the phrase "...only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39) means the widow can marry only those who are eligible for marriage as God's word instructs.

There is another text that has to be taken into consideration when discussing this matter. What does it mean when we are told not to be "...unequally yoked together with unbelievers..." (2 Corinthians 6:14)? Note, the key is "...unequally yoked...". The text doesn't state that we cannot be yoked to others but not to be so yoked to them that we would partake of evil with them. After all, "...what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness..." (1 Corinthians 6:14-16). So, while it may not be wise for a Christian to marry a non-Christian I do not believe it to be ethically immoral.

Now, let's consider why it is not wise for a believer to marry a non-believer. Sandra Humphrey, in her book entitled "Don't Kiss Toads" list some interesting statistics. She states that "Four out of every seven Christians who marry unbelievers eventually lose their own faith" (12). She also says, "...the divorce rate for religiously-mixed marriages is three times higher than for marriages in which the husband and the wife have the same faith" (12). Furthermore, she points out that "...while the national divorce rate is now over 25%, married couples who met at a Christian college have a divorce rate of only 1/2 of 1%" (15). Since our marital relationship affects our spirituality (1 Peter 3:7), why would we choose a mate or date a person who could potentially threaten our own relationship with God? Paul warned "...evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Not only does our choice of a mate affect us but also our future children. Mrs. Humphrey points out once again that "...two-thirds of the children of interfaith marriages find the decision too difficult and consequently don't accept the faith of either parent" (12). Since it is the duty of Christian parents to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4 and 1 Timothy 5:14) why endanger their future spirituality by dating or marrying a non-believer?

We need to be especially careful that when we marry we pick our mate not just for their outward beauty alone but also for their inward beauty (1 Peter 3:3-4). Physical beauty will eventually fade and then we will be left with the inward man. Many marriages end in divorce because of the ugly character of the person that we failed to see when dating. Ladies, when you've won a spouse through outward beauty alone don't be surprised when your "prince in shining armor" leaves you because your beauty begins to fade. The same will hold true for young men.

Proper Ethics When Dating

Fornication is wrong (Ephesians 5:3-5). It is unethical. Therefore, any kind of conduct when dating others which puts them or us in a compromising situation should be avoided at all costs. Paul said that we should flee youthful lusts and exhibit a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22). Inappropriate touching also referred to as petting, and kissing outside the marital realm is not in keeping with proper Christian conduct. Younger women are to be treated as sister in Christ in all purity (1 Timothy 5:1-2). Our kisses should be holy in nature, not lustful or passionate (Romans 16:16). This type of behavior leads to fornication and therefore is unethical.

Our dress also becomes a factor to be considered when going on a date. There are some questions that we need to ask ourselves. Is our dress provocative and lewd? Does it promote sensual lust in others? Older women are told to teach the younger women to be discreet and chaste (Titus 2:3-5). All Christians should adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety (1 Timothy 2:9-10). This isn't always easy to do when we live in a promiscuous society but it can and should be done. Not only are we to control our own lustful desires, but we also need to be sure that our dress doesn't cause the one we're dating to be filled with lust. This could cause both parties to engage in fornication (Matthew 5:27-28). When going on a date with others, our conduct and dress should always be ethical in nature.

Ethical Places and Actions

All Christians should seek to abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). Some of these lusts, which we need to be mindful of, are lasciviousness, drunkenness, revelings, banquetings, etc.etc. (Galatians 5:19-21 and 1 Peter 4:1-3). Those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. These things are always wrong and should be avoided when dating, since they can lead to other sins, namely fornication. Modern day dancing is designed to arouse sensual feelings in the dancer as well as the observer. Christians must not only be mindful of their own desires and emotions but also of all those around them. To create lustful desire in the heart of others is wrong (Matthew 5:27-28). While we may not be an actual participant in this activity just being there can still cause our heart to be filled with impure motives. Furthermore, Christians are to control their desires and emotions at all times and in all situations. We are not to allow outside elements to dictate our behavior (1 Corinthians 6:12). This is why it is unethical for Christians to use mind-altering drugs. The drugs control us; we don't control the drugs (Proverbs 31:4-5). As already noted not only is excessive drinking condemned but banqueting as well (1 Peter 4:3). The banqueting of yesteryear is equivalent to the social drinking of our own day and age (Daniel 5:1 and 10). Those controlled by liquor or other mind-altering drugs do things that they would never do when free from the influence of these drugs. It is never wise, and it is always wrong and dangerous for a Christian to partake in this type of activity, especially while dating.

We should also be mindful of the movies we view while dating. Pornography is rampant in today's society and arouses the lust in many. The Psalmist said "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes..." (Psalm 101:3). To avoid fornication we need to have the same attitude.

The same could be said of the music and lyrics of the songs we listen to. Christians should not listen to songs or watch programs which are filled with filthy jokes or jesting (Ephesians 5:4). Such things are not ethical and when dating tend to stimulate sensual thoughts, which in turn can lead to sinful actions.

Conclusion

As a Christian we should be careful who we date, what we wear on that date, where we go, and what we do. Just because we live in a world that is void of morality doesn't mean we should act like the people who are in it. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds rather than conformed to the image of those who live in this world (Romans 12:1-2). We need to set an ethical example before everyone around us especially in the realm of dating (1 Timothy 4:11).

Various Ethical Models

Michael Hughes

Michael is the evangelist for the church in Blue Springs, Missouri, having labored with them since February of 1998. He attended the Northside School of Preaching and has labored with churches in Louisiana and Missouri. He is a fellow laborer in the International Bible Studies lectures and the Mid-West School of Biblical Studies. He and his wife Thelma have three children, all grown.

What is Ethics? On a web site called "Ethics Connection" there is a paper with that exact question as its title. It cites a sociologist, Raymond Baumhart asking business people, "What does ethics mean to you?" Following are some of the replies that he received.

"Ethics has to do with what my feelings tell me is right or wrong."

"Ethics has to do with my religious beliefs."

"Being ethical is doing what the law requires."

"Ethics consists of the standards of behavior our society accepts."

"I don't know what the word means."

Among my brethren it would not be surprising to find answers similar to the ones above. The last one perhaps being given in reply more often than not.

Ethics simply has to do with "How am I going to act?" It deals with the question of what is the right or wrong thing to do in a given situation. Eve was confronted with an ethical dilemma when confronted by Satan in the garden of Eden. To eat the fruit or to not eat the fruit. On the one hand there were obvious (so she thought) benefits to be had by eating it, on the other hand God had told her and Adam not to eat of that tree. God had told them that they would die the day they ate of it. Satan told her that she would not die. What to do?

The Christian faces ethical questions every day of his/her life. Very often we think of ethical questions in view of the major questions that we may deal with such as the topics dealt within this lecture, abortion, cloning, warfare, euthanasia, and so forth. Ethics however are even more fundamental than that. "Do I lie to my best friend to make her feel good?" "Do I speed so I won't be late to church?" "Do I take this ream of paper home from the workplace without checking with someone?" "Do I copy this computer program for my best friend?" These things all have to do with deciding what is the right thing to do.

To get a bit more basic though it might be said also that ethics is the study of how to make those choices. In other words the choices are ethical in nature, but the means, views, concepts that we develop and bring into play in making those decisions is what ethics is all about.

"Do I do this because it makes ME feel good?" "Do I do this because it is the loving thing to do?" "Do I do this because this is what I feel is the right thing to do?" "Do I do this, but it doesn't really matter what I do anyway?" "Do I do this because this is going to accomplish what I want?" The questions can go on, but these are the questions that we ask ourselves as we decide why we are go to make a choice and they will then determine HOW we will make that choice.

Ethics for an individual boils down to this. It is the view that you have of the world (your world view), which is what will influence the decisions that you make as you face moral choices throughout your life.

As already noted, man has been faced with ethical choices and the decision of how to make those choices since the Garden of Eden. Men through the ages since then have struggled, though often unnecessarily, with how they should respond to ethical/moral dilemmas.

It is a bit difficult deciding where to start, where to go, and the direction to take in getting there in a discussion concerning various world views or ethical models without turning a short essay into a multi volume book. There is much that is interesting as to the course man has taken over the years to develop ethical views. However there is neither time nor space to go into all that could be discussed.

A person is going to hold one of two views. Whichever view they hold will be the criterion by which he or she will determine their ethical outlook to make moral decisions.

One will believe that there is either an objective standard of moral or they will decide that morality is subjective in nature.

The belief that morality or right and wrong is objective is simply to believe that there is a standard which will determine right and wrong and that the standard is just exactly that. Standard. In other words it is believed that whatever is right will be right in every situation and circumstance and that what is wrong will be wrong in every situation and circumstance. That standard is able to guide one in all the ethical/moral decisions that they may have to make. Once a person has determined that morality is objective, they will then have to determine just what that standard is. If one claims to be a Christian then they should/would believe in an objective standard of morality and would/should have come to an understanding that the standard is the word of God. (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). This will be discussed later in the lesson.

The opposite side of that coin, the idea that morality is subjective, is of course exactly the opposite. It is the idea that there is no standard for morality. In fact it may be subject to any number of things. Morality may be determined simply by how a person feels, how a group of people feel, by what makes one or many feel good, by the situation, the place, the time and on and on.

Most, if not all, of the ethical models that men have developed stem from the second belief. There is no objective standard and morality must be subjective. This is interesting since each of these models in some way deny a standard, yet by their very development promote a standard themselves which must be adhered to if one is going to follow that model. Rather interesting.

In the book *Introduction to Philosophy*, written by Norman L. Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg, the authors list what they entitle "Different Theories of the Meaning of Right." They say;

"A brief survey of the way various philosophers have conceived of the right will set the stage of the discussion of right and wrong." (353)

Part of that list with a brief explanation follows;

Might is Right	This is what is known in the business management world as the “bull in the woods” theory. The strongest man was the foreman as long as he was able to hold that position by means of physical strength. It is the view that right is determined by the one strong enough to impose their will upon others. (A dictatorship)
Morals are Mores	This as the authors state “implies a cultural relativity of morality.” (354) It is ok, because that is the culture. An example that comes to mind is the justification of nudity in certain cultures because that’s the way they do it there.
Man is the Measure	The individual determines what is right or wrong. What may be right for me may be wrong for you.
The Race is Right	Very similar to “morals are mores, it is the idea that “the human race is the court of appeals.” (355)
Right is Moderation	Stay away from extremes. “The middle of the road.” Philosophy. Unfortunately could also be known as “Straddling the fence.”
There is no Right	There is nothing that is either right or wrong. Everything is based upon feelings and emotions. There is no more strength to the statement “Terrorists should not kill innocent people.”, than there is in the statement “You should not drink carbonated beverages.”
Right is What Brings Pleasure	This is the “if it feels good, do it” philosophy. Became very popular in the 1960's in the United States. Was also advocated strongly by Anton LeVay in his book <i>The Satanic Bible</i> .
Right is the greatest good for the race	The greatest good for the greatest number of the people. Often the philosophy claimed to be held by politicians.
Good is what is desired for its own sake.	Good is defined as that which is pleasurable. It is the end to the means.
Good is undefinable	Intuition ethics. It cannot be determined just what is good, only when confronted with a situation a person will have “intuitions” of what is the right thing to do. Even then it can’t be determined why it was right or another action was wrong.
Good is what God Wills	The belief that there is an objective standard of morality that is determined by a superior being (God) to man who has conveyed to mankind what that standard is. (Jer. 10:23).

Geisler and Feinberg's list I believe give some general theories that are found in several "models" that man has developed. In the following list are some models that incorporate the theories mentioned by those two authors. Again there will be included in the list a brief overview of the model, it's basic tenets and its faults. I have tried to select from among the many models that have been developed those views with which a person may most find themselves confronted with today. Most of the following information comes from a web site <http://www.xrefer.com>.

RATIONALISM - The extreme rationalist tries to base all knowledge on reason alone. This is the exact opposite of empiricism. Frederic W. Bave in his book *The Spiritual Society: What Lurks Beyond Postmodernism*, quoting A. E. Houseman writes;

"Man occupied himself by choice with thoughts which do not range beyond the sphere of his own understanding. Rationalism was almost deified." (126)

The problem with such a philosophy in determining right or wrong is, 1. Since God cannot be "experienced" He and His ideals would be beyond reason as man understood it. 2. Man in his deceit tends to "reason" away God and His will. (Romans 1:18). It is rationalism that explains away the miracles of the Bible and ultimately reasons away the supernatural i.e. God.

UTILITARIANISM - This is the same as Geisler's "right is the greatest good for the race." In other words, morality is that which "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."¹ Notice however that this is not the greatest good, but the greatest happiness. There is a great difference. Even if one person, or even a group of persons could determine what the "greatest good" is for everyone else (with no standard to follow how could they ever come to an agreement) this is not the issue. It is far easier, at least seemingly so, to determine what brings the masses the greatest happiness.

Besides the fact that happiness does not necessarily equate to being moral, it is often the case that the masses actually turn out to be the vocal minority that clamor loudly enough to have those making the decisions rule the way they want.

We see this philosophy and this practice in American politics all the time. The American movie industry also lays claim to this philosophy as they disseminate their filth to the American public with the claim, "that is what the people want to see."

One major problem with such a view is that the majority is seldom, if ever, right. Isn't that what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:13-14?

CONSEQUENTIALISM - Is a fancy way of saying that the ends justify the means. It doesn't matter what you do as long as you get the result that you are looking for. You will see from the example that I will give that there are crossovers in many of these models. If your children are hungry, then stealing

is acceptable, because the only thing that matters is that they are fed and taken care of. (You will see the crossover as we discuss situation ethics).

This simply denies that there is any wrong just as long as good has resulted from it. Again the major problem is that there is a denial of any standard of morality that would dictate right or wrong. You may consider this ok unless you are the one that has been stolen from. Then it is not perhaps so moral.

PRAGMATISM - Very closely related to the previous view, pragmatism is the view that whatever it takes to accomplish one's goal is right. This is seen in business often as companies continue to sell that which is hazardous to the public, a safety hazard, dangerous even though they are aware of the dangers because it would be too costly to make changes to the product or to recall it from the market. It is "right" to go ahead and market the product, because in business the bottom line is the one at the bottom of the financial sheet. If it makes a profit then it is right to market it.

The problem with pragmatism is that it only looks at end results, it doesn't consider the needs of others, and ultimately it becomes amoral, (without morals).

RELATIVISM - Everything is relative to the group, situation, place, time etc., to which it may be happening. It is much like the "morals are mores" in the above list. It again denies that there is any absolute standard of right or wrong, but whatever may be ascertained by that particular group or society as right or wrong. Of course with so many different societies, groups, peoples in the world then there is no way to determine what is right or wrong. It is totally up to the whim of any given group.

SITUATION ETHICS - In 1966 Joseph Fletcher wrote his (now infamous to some) book *Situation Ethics*, in which he developed his ethical model which has come to be known by the name of his book.

This philosophy teaches that the individual and the situation will cause a determination of what is the right thing to do. There is not an overriding right or wrong, but each situation contains within it the capability of being an exception to the rule, (which doesn't actually exist). The only overriding rule that must be applied is love. In other words, what is the "loving thing to do." This however is not really a law, but only a motive. In other words it is merely a justification for one's actions.

At http://www.faithnet.freeseve.co.uk/situation_ethics.htm, there is an article entitled *Situation Ethics/Proportionalism*. The author is not identified, but there are two paragraphs that give the basic tenets of situation ethics in the form of four working and six fundamental principles that I believe are worthy of looking at.

"Four working principles: 1) The practical course of an action is motivated by love; 2) The necessity to always respond in love to each situation; 3) The necessity to accept the premise of acting in love by faith rather than by reason; 4) The desire to put people, not laws, first.

Six fundamental principles: 1) No actions are intrinsically right or wrong. Nothing is good in and of itself except for love. Actions are good if they help people and bad if they don't. One cannot expect to live responsibly with moral absolutes; 2) Good actions should not be done for reward (E.g. experiencing a good feeling or seeking altruistic deeds in return) but should be done for their own sake. Jesus and Paul taught love as the highest principle above the Law; 3) Justice is love at work in the community; 4) Love is practical and not selective. We should show love to all, even our enemies. Christian love is unconditional; 5) Love is the end - never a means to something else; 6) Humans have the responsibility of freedom. They are not bound by any Law. With this comes the responsibility to 'do the most loving thing' in every situation."

The author continues as he quotes another work;

"Fletcher claims that it is a mistake to generalise. (sic) You can't say 'Is it ever right to lie to your family?' The answer must be, 'I don't know, give me an example.' A concrete situation is needed, not a generalisation. ([sic] 'It all depends' may well be the watchword of the Situationist. (Vardy & Grosch p.130)"

We once again see the denial of an objective standard of morality in favor of letting the "loving thing" be the guideline for what is right. What however is the loving thing. Who will determine that? How will it be determined? As you can see, it all boils down to subjectivism. The person will end up doing what "they" THINK is the "right and loving thing to do."

HUMANISM - *This view determines that man is the ultimate being and is the decider of what is right for him. Humanism says the following about itself in the Humanist Manifesto I,*

"ELEVENTH: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking."

In 1973, forty years after the first manifesto, the second appeared entitled simply Humanist Manifesto II. In it are presented the following tenets;

"Traditional moral codes and newer irrational cults both fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow. False "theologies of hope" and messianic ideologies, substituting new dogmas for old, cannot cope with existing world realities. They separate rather than unite peoples."

"Humanity, to survive, requires bold and daring measures. We need to extend the uses of scientific method, not renounce them, to fuse reason with compassion in order to build constructive social and moral values. Confronted by many possible futures, we must decide which to pursue. The ultimate goal should be the fulfillment of the potential for

growth in each human personality -- not for the favored few, but for all of humankind. Only a shared world and global measures will suffice."

"But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."

And finally,

THIRD: We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes of humanism. We strive for the good life, here and now. The goal is to pursue life's enrichment despite debasing forces of vulgarization, commercialization, and dehumanization."

In other words, what I need, or think that I need, will determine what is right or wrong. The goal is the good life here and now. The ideal of humanism is that man is his own god and thus can determine his own morality.

Humanism declares the same lie that Satan declared to Eve in the garden. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5).

Obviously none of the above are models or views that the Christian can use as they make their decisions from day to day. What ethic then should we follow?

Perry C. Cotham edited a book in 1979 entitled, Christian Social Ethics. Chapter three is an article by James W. Thompson. He states the following,

"When we turn to the New Testament, we discover that it is no easy task to derive an ethic from Jesus and the early church. Indeed, the very word "ethics" is the legacy of the Greek philosophers, for whom ethics was the rational obligations and concepts of right and wrong. Thus if we are to follow the traditional definitions of ethics as "the systematic account of our judgements of right and wrong," we will find that the New Testament is not primarily a book about ethics." (45-46)

That is not to say however that the Bible is void in this area or that it does not provide us with the tools that we need to make ethical decisions for it does.

(2 Peter 1:3 KJV) "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:"

(2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: {17} That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

If these passages are true, and they are, then we can find in the scriptures all that is needed for us to make an informed ethical decision regardless of where medical technology takes us, in spite of what new thing may come along that requires us to make difficult choices in this life.

Many have been the authors that I have looked at in the preparation of this material that has indicated that ethical choices are harder today than they have ever been. However we need to realize that the issues of abortion, euthanasia, suicide and related topics have nearly always been with man. Does God provide us with sufficient information as to how we deal with them and make decisions concerning them? Indeed he does.

Other things that we may have to make decisions about that are there because of technology are such things as in vitro fertilization, cloning, stem cell research. Are these new though? Indeed the things man is doing may be new, but if we get right down to the basics of each of these things and learn what is on the dark side so to speak of the bright picture our scientist paint for us, are they not just the same old issues dressed in new clothes? Therefore if the Bible was relevant to the first century with its problem, then it is also relevant today, the problems have simply taken on a new face.

It is interesting that Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6 KJV). Righteousness of course has to do with being right. If Jesus told us that seeking righteousness would make us happy or blessed then He surely did not leave us bereft of the means and knowledge of how to seek it. In fact, in the very lesson that He made that statement, the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7), He gives what should become the basis of the Christian's lifestyle and the foundation for his ethical decision making.

The beatitudes, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart, and blessed are the peacemakers.

As he continues with His lesson he teaches us that we are to be a light (of righteousness) to the community through our good works, that we should not speak rashly against another in anger - to do so is parallel with murder, settle our differences, do not look at the opposite sex lustfully, divorce for fornication only, go the extra mile, love your enemy, forgive those that trespass against you amongst others that perhaps could be listed.

Paul taught that Christian ethics were different from the world,

"Knowye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} 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." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 KJV).

James taught that one could not "hold hands" with the world,

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, knowye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4 KJV),

Then John pointed out that we must not love the world,

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. {17} And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17 KJV).

The Bible addresses ethics in such places as Galatians 5:19-21,

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, {20} Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, {21} Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.",

Colossians 3:1-10, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. {2} Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. {3} For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. {4} When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. {5} Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: {6} For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: {7} In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. {8} But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. {9} Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; {10} And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:", and Rev. 21:8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers,

and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

It also deals with ethics in such places as, Philippians 4:8,

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

2 Peter 1:5-8 KJV "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; {6} And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; {7} And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. {8} For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.",

and Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, {23} Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

How do we apply the things we read in the Bible to our decision making or how do we make ethical decisions as a Christian? Following are some questions, I do not know their original source, but if we ask ourselves these questions then they should be helpful to us in making good righteous ethical decisions.

1. **Am I commanded not to do it?** (James 4:17 KJV) "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."
2. **Can I do it for the glory of God?** (1 Corinthians 10:31 KJV) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.", (1 Cor 6:19 KJV) "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"
3. **Can I do it in the name of the Lord?** (Colossians 3:17 KJV) "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
4. **Is it of the world?** 1 John 2:15-17
5. **Would Jesus do it?** (1 Peter 2:21 KJV) "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:" (There is nothing wrong in asking "What would Jesus do?", it just should not be a religious fad as it became in the United States and elsewhere a few years ago).
6. **Does it have the appearance of evil?** (1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV) "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

7. **Is it a weight?** (Hebrews 12:1 KJV) "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"
8. **Can I do it when I remember that God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Word dwell in me?** 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 3:17, Romans 8:9, Colossians 3:16.
9. **Is it an example of a believer?** (1 Timothy 4:12 KJV) "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
10. **Is it a stumbling block?** (1 Corinthians 8:9 KJV) "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak." Romans 14:13, 21
11. **Would you want your children to do it?** (Ephesians 6:4 KJV) "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Proverbs 22:6 KJV) "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
12. **When Jesus returns would you want to be found doing it — or wearing it?** (1 John 2:28 KJV) "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."
13. **Is there any doubt in your mind?** (Romans 14:23 KJV) "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
14. **Will it make me a better Christian?** 2 Peter 1:5-8.
15. **Will it bring pleasure to God?** (Revelation 4:11 KJV) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."
16. **Will it help lead others to Christ?** Mark 16:15-16, Matthew 28:19-20

Man will always have ethical questions to answer. As long as he does Satan will devise lies for him to believe leading him to deal with those ethical issues with unrighteous responses and ideologies.

The man of God however has been prepared if he or she will simply use the tools that God as provided to us in order that we may deal with these questions righteously.

Let us close with the words of the prophet Micah.

(Micah 6:6-9 KJV) "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? {7} Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? {8} **He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?** {9} The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it."

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Stem Cell Research

Ted Thrasher

Ted and his wife Julia have 2 children. Ted is a graduate of the McCloud School of Preaching and has labored with churches in Oklahoma and Missouri. He currently preaches at the church in Olathe, Kansas. He is a fellow laborer with the work in the Mid-West School of Biblical Studies, International Bible Studies Lectures and the Mid-West Lectures. He is an instructor in the Online Academy of Biblical Studies.

INTRODUCTION

We live in an age of great scientific wonders and advancements which is fraught with many ethical and moral questions and few clear answers from the leaders of the fields of science, economics, philosophy, politics and even religion. We also live in an age of great immorality and worldliness, where money is the god of many people and sin is considered by many to be normal, acceptable and even preferable to a life of righteousness. Being in the midst of this world, we, as Christians, cannot afford to disengage, but instead we must be able to chart a course which is true and right, while at the same time realizing the potential of and effectively using those things which are right and good in the scientific realms. We understand that true science and true religion do not conflict, because true science is but man's discovery and application of God's wisdom in His creation. However, problems arise whenever false religion or false science, or both, are held up as true and practiced.

Thankfully, unlike those who follow the ways of this world or false religion, we are not at sea without a compass. We have the great moral compass which God has given us through His inspired Word, the Bible, to guide us safely through the rocky straits of this life and lead us safely to our Heavenly home. We must rely upon It as we take Its principles, apply them to the questions of life and reach conclusions which are right and true in guiding our lives and the lives of others.

One of the major areas of ethical and moral concern in recent years is in the scientific field of genetics and reproductive techniques and research. Stem cell research has been in the midst of this concern due to the nature of how some stem cells are produced and the use of some stem cells in genetic experiments. The moral issues of human cloning and *in vitro* fertilization techniques are also connected to this controversy because of the way some stem cells are acquired for research and use.

Stem cells have been touted as one of the most important discoveries to advance medical science in our generation, perhaps in medical history! They are being used at this time in the treatment of cancer patients and other serious illnesses where conventional medical treatment has not worked well.

Those doing research in this field hold high hopes that in the future stem cells used in genetic therapy may be able to cure or significantly alleviate the suffering of people with brain disorders, heart disease, liver disease, diabetes, skin disorders and perhaps even to grow genetically matched human tissue replacements. Pharmaceutical companies hope that stem cells may help them more

efficiently test medications in the developmental stages. Some scientists hope to unlock more of the secrets of biology through stem cell research, to better treat or even avoid certain diseases.

There can be no doubt that this is exciting and hope inspiring news when considered from the aspect of those who are suffering from life-threatening and debilitating illnesses. Could it be possible, that instead of treating diseased tissue with surgery or medications, doctors could just inject some genetic material and have it replace the diseased tissue in time? That is the good intentioned hope and efforts of many doing stem cell research.

However, there are other areas of stem cell research where it would seem that some are not so well intentioned because of what it costs in terms of human life to acquire the stem cells. Further the misguided use of stem cells by some to genetically engineer what have been termed “designer babies” or even worse to fall back to the Hitler-like atrocities of eugenics in an attempt to build a master race of superior human beings, is repulsive and sickening to morally discerning people. Further, it seems that some are seeking to practice cloning techniques, while placing it under the heading of stem cell research for the betterment of mankind and the alleviation of pain and suffering.

Where should we, as Christians, stand on the moral issue of stem cell research and use? How can we cut through the moral fog and steer a true and safe course in this area of science? In our lesson, at this hour, we wish to examine some of the facts concerning stem cell research and use, and expose some principles to guide us in this area. We will ask and answer the questions: (1) What are stem cells? (2) What are the sources of stem cells? (3) What are stem cells used for? and (4) What are the moral and ethical issues involved in the research and use of stem cells from a Biblical perspective?

I. WHAT ARE STEM CELLS?

In order to understand what stem cells are, it is helpful to understand the nature of cells and somewhat of how they work, as well as the different types of stem cells. Essentially a cell is nature’s building block and has the capability to divide, as well as to be able to “specialize” and become a certain kind of cell in the body. It is now known that the cells in our bodies contain the genetic material (DNA) which can instruct the cell to be a specific part of our bodies.

Have you ever wondered why you grow hair on your head and fingernails on your fingers? Or if you have a cut on your finger why it mends back as finger tissue, rather than eye tissue? The reason is that the specific genes in those cells have been “switched on” to specialize the cell to be a hair or a fingernail or part of the finger. Even though they had the ability to be some other type of cell, the genes in them have been selected to be that specific body part, while the other genes are “switched off.”

From the moment of conception, when the egg is fertilized by the sperm, our cells start to divide and produce other cells, and in each division the cells start to become smaller and more specialized as various body parts of the embryo develops. In the second day, the fertilized egg, which is about six-thousandths of an inch in diameter, will divide and form the blastocyst, which is a hollow fluid filled membrane in which the cells continue to divide. Within three days of conception the human embryo

will have divided four times and be sixteen cells in number. At the end of a month, it will be one-eighth of an inch long and the cells will number in the millions. At the end of nine months, if all goes well, the fetus is ready to be born as a human baby.

The process of cell specialization in embryonic development has been likened to that of the development of a country, such as the United States. Consider the beginning as one big country without any divisions. It is divided into areas such as North, South, East and West, then into the various states with their boundaries, then the counties, districts, cities, sub-divisions, houses or buildings, rooms or offices, and parts of the rooms or cubicles. Each cell becomes more specialized with each division.

Stem cells, in the embryonic stages, are the non-specialized cells or those cells which are in the blastocyst from about three to seven days and thus they have not developed into any specific type of cell or (as the process is called) “differentiated” into a certain type of cell. They have been called nature’s “blank slates” because they can develop into any kind of cell by the genes in each stem cell being selectively “switched on” to specialize the cell to become any human cell. In later development, such as in late term fetuses and even later in children and adults, they are somewhat more specialized, but researchers are now finding that they can still be changed to a degree to become various types of specialized body cells.

There are essentially three different types of stem cells, as they are identified by the scientific community as to their degree of specialization:

1. **Totipotent** stem cells are the least specialized and fundamental type of stem cells, since they are capable of becoming any kind of cell in the development of the embryo and the tissue surrounding the embryo to the full grown fetus. The embryo itself is considered to be totipotent or capable of developing into a complete organism.
2. **Pluripotent** stem cells are those cells which can develop into almost any part of the body. They have the capacity to affect more than one organ or tissue in development. Thus, they are not fixed or locked in as to potential development, but can still differentiate into various specialized types of tissue and organ elements. These are the most commonly sought after stem cells from embryos.

They have some supposed scientific advantages over other stem cell types. They can divide over and over without forming tumors. Depending on which source one takes, there are between sixty to seventyfive stem cell lines in existence which can be kept alive indefinitely. They supposedly respond easier to stimulus to change them to specialized cells than some other types. They can divide unequally, with one cell being more specialized, while the other is a stem cell. The down side is that they are more likely to be rejected by the immune system of one being treated with gene therapy using them.

3. **Multipotent** stem cells are those cells which have developed into certain general types of body cells, such as blood cells, skin cells, brain cells, and so forth. They are capable of becoming more

specialized into the various cells needed. For instance blood stem cells can specialize into the different kinds of blood cells: white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets. They are sometimes called the progenitor or precursor cells since they can give rise to diverse cell types in response to environmental cues. At one time it was thought that they could not be changed from their various general types, but researchers have found that some can be changed into specialized cells from different general types (such as some brain stem cells can be specialized into muscle or blood cells). These are sometimes called “adult” stem cells and they exist in the human body from the developed fetus through adulthood.

II. WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF STEM CELLS?

At the present time, there are essentially five different sources of stem cells. Keep in mind that even though we list these sources, that does not mean that they are all either legal or ethical sources.

1. **Adult bone marrow, brain tissue**, and some other types of tissue, such as fat, muscle and bone. These are usually collected from a donor or the patient receiving the treatment in order that the genetic makeup of the stem cells will match the person being treated and thus minimize the possibility of immune rejection in the person being treated with them. These stem cells are called “adult” stem cells, not because they necessarily come from adults instead of children, but in contrast to stem cells taken from other sources, such as human embryos.

2. **Umbilical cord blood** taken from the umbilical cord of a newly born baby. This was the source of the stem cells used in the treatment of Molly Nash, a young Colorado girl in need of a bone marrow transplant. In order to overcome the problem of rejection, the doctors needed stem cells from a close genetic match. So, her parents decided to try *in vitro* fertilization and as a result her brother, Adam was born from whose umbilical cord blood the stem cells were obtained to treat Molly in October of 2000. Despite the good use of the stem cells obtained, a life was brought into this world, not for Adam’s intrinsic worth, but to be used and exploited as a donor for his stem cells to save his sister, Molly. Further, several other lives in the embryonic stages were taken in the IVF screening process to find the closest genetic match. Of course, the liberal media exulted of the great love and bonding of this family, but it was a blatant act of selfishness and murder of innocent life and not scientifically necessary.

This source of stem cells is readily available. If parents are willing to give informed consent for the use of umbilical cord blood to obtain stem cells, then it would be a better source in comparison to embryonic sources. However, this also raises the question of whose consent needs to be considered as well. Should parents be willing to sign over the genetic material of their babies upon birth to be used in developing new cell lines or for the treatment of others? Does the child have a right to have his/her genetic future preserved? Further, on the scientific side, these cells are not as highly valued as the pluripotent cells from earlier developmental sources.

3. **Aborted fetuses**. With informed consent, a woman who chooses to murder her fetus by abortion can choose to “donate” the fetus for the harvesting of the organs, tissue, blood and stem cells. Of course, it is possible that a fetus might be aborted or die from other causes than intentional abortion

and the fetus could be donated for this cause, but this is rare in comparison to the number of intentionally aborted fetuses in this nation. Further, this is not the most sought after source of stem cells because of the difficulty of obtaining the type of consent necessary, the immoral stigma attached to abortion and the type of stem cells obtained from fetuses are not considered as good by scientists who would rather obtain pluripotent stem cells, rather than multipotent stem cells.

4. Human embryos “left over” from *in vitro* fertilization procedures. In these cases, the embryos are produced by taking several human eggs from a woman donor and fertilizing them with the sperm from a male donor. When the embryos get to the blastocyst stage, they are screened and the “best” selected to be implanted in a woman’s womb. The remaining embryos are then destroyed, or if donated, the stem cells are harvested and used for treatments, research or developing new stem cell lines.

On August 9, 2001, President Bush called for the end of federal funding for stem cell research to groups who destroy human embryonic stem cells based upon the argument that life starts at conception. However this did not cover research on the stem cells already developed from the destruction of embryos prior to August 9, 2001. So, in April, 2002, about \$3.5 million of federal money was awarded for embryonic stem cell research to several organizations.

The advocates of this source of stem cells argue that since the unwanted embryos are going to be destroyed anyway, then it is acceptable, and in some cases, immoral, not to use them for stem cell research. Actor Christopher Reeves, who played Superman, argued that it would be wrong to throw away embryos like garbage when they could be used to save lives through stem cell research.

In addition to the excess embryos created by IVF clinics, there are a few documented cases where some have actually payed women for eggs to create human embryos for the express purpose of destroying them and harvesting their stem cells. With this step downward into the pits of moral darkness, the proponents of this source have opened a new door in the exploitation of women and murder of innocent human life, which some in our government are now attempting to close. These researchers have reached the low point in science where life is created as a commodity to be harvested and the remains discarded like an empty corn husk.

5. Human embryos created by cloning. This is where the nucleus of an egg is removed and then the nucleus of a somatic cell is transplanted into the egg to produce an embryo. The resulting embryo is allowed to progress to the blastocyst stage, and then it is destroyed when the stem cells are removed for research purposes. Proponents in favor of this source of stem cells basically argue that the embryo is not life until it is attached to the womb or that it is not truly a human life until further development takes place. Some place an arbitrary fourteen day time limit on this procedure past which the embryo must be destroyed to prohibit the cloning of developed human fetuses.

This process is also known as “therapeutic cloning.” This is where the moral and political debate over embryonic stem cell research centers at the present time. Many who are completely opposed to human cloning to produce new born children, are in favor of this method being used to produce human embryos for stem cell research. But though most in the scientific community reject human

cloning to produce a full term clone, they readily admit that the practice of cloning to produce stem cells could easily lead to better cloning techniques (if scientists could practice it legally and with the help of federal funds) which could lead to a full term clone. Further, they admit that it would be virtually impossible to control all the cloned embryos and keep some unscrupulous group of scientists from producing a full term cloned human. In Scotland, cloning for embryonic stem cell research has been legalized and clinics are gearing up to start producing new stem cell lines from these sources next year.

On January 28, 2002, Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, along with Senators Bond and Inhofe, introduced S. 1899 to prohibit human cloning and the cloning of embryos for stem cell research. On April, 20, 2002, President Bush heartily backed this bill, which the House passed by a margin of over one-hundred votes in 2001 in the House version of it. President Bush called upon the Senate to support this bill. Unfortunately, on May 1, 2002, Senator Arlen Specter, along with Senators Kennedy and Clinton, introduced S. 2439, which prohibits cloning for the purpose of transplanting the embryo in a woman, but supports cloning to produce embryos to be used for stem cell research. So, the political and scientific ethical debate continues at this time over this source of stem cells for research.

III. FOR WHAT ARE STEM CELLS USED?

Stem cells have been heralded as the panacea of medical science of the 21st century. Some good results of stem cell research can be seen in the treatment of cancer patients and other diseases. Yet we find the more we learn about what is claimed and hoped for versus the actual results, the more we realize that it is a science in its earliest stages and by no means totally understood or controlled. Those experimenting with this type of research do not know the possible outcome over time or the genetic impact it may have on future generations upon those who reproduce following genetic engineering or those who are treated with gene therapy.

There are at least six different ways that stem cells can be used. Again, this does not mean that all of these are good, moral or even legal, but they are possible uses of stem cells.

1. Somatic cell therapy or gene therapy. This is where the diseased tissue is hopefully replaced after stem cells are injected in an attempt to start the normal growth of tissue to replace the diseased tissue. In some cancer treatments, the cancer cells are killed with chemo-therapy or radiation and then the stem cells are transplanted to replace the cancerous cells and regenerate the tissue to its normal function. In the treatment of Parkinson's disease, the dopamine producing areas of the brain are injected with stem cells in an effort to replace the diseased cells and once again produce dopamine in the brain. Research on rebuilding heart tissue following a heart attack and research on the pancreas for the secretion of insulin in diabetic patients are other areas of stem cell use at this time.

2. Germ-line changes or changes in the reproductive cells of an individual or individuals in order to affect the genetic make up of the next generation or their offspring. The common reason for this use of stem cells would be to prevent birth defects or correct genetic defects in the children of those with known genetic traits which would certainly pass to their children and perhaps bring about illness,

disease or pre-mature death in their children. While this may be more acceptable than some of the other uses of stem cells, it still opens the door to genetic screening and raises the issue of the quality of life and man's effort to pick his offspring for their so-called desirable genetic traits versus undesirable. While one might not purposely bring a child into the world who would be destined to suffer horribly or be deformed, there are other good alternatives to germ-line genetic changes, such as adoption.

3. Genetic engineering. This is an attempt to use stem cells to enhance the genetic make up of already healthy individuals so that they can be stronger, taller, more mentally alert, or more attractive in some ways. Although some may argue that this is equivalent to plastic surgery, it actually goes much deeper. It affects cellular changes in a person's body with unknown side effects. Further, no one knows at this time the effect this might have upon the lineage of a genetically engineered person. There is no medical benefit in attempting to use precious stem cells to enhance normal healthy people by using, at best, a risky procedure, when they could be used to treat those who can be helped with stem cell treatment and who are suffering from disease and illness.

4. Eugenics. This is an effort to change the genetic makeup of a group of people in an effort to improve the stock or to produce a line of people who have superior genetic features. It can also be used to produce offspring with certain preferred genetic traits and to control certain genetic characteristics such as gender, eye color, skin type, hair and other features, through genetic selection or alteration. This was the concept of Hitler as he attempted to produce a superior race to rule the world. The difference is that now it can be done in the test tube instead of using men and women to naturally produce children.

One overseas cloning factory now boasts that you can come to them and go home pregnant with the child of your dreams. Welcome to the age of designer babies where you can shop for a baby and pick out your son or daughter's traits like shopping for a new car or clothing. Woe, to those who go down this slimy path to destruction and those who promote and provide it. How disgusting and perverted this is to reasonable and morally minded people!

5. Pharmaceutical testing. Those doing research on medications to treat illnesses and promote health could test proposed medications on some lines of stem cells in an attempt to determine if they might be effective in the treatment of humans. This would hopefully speed the process and eliminate further testing on some medications which are ineffective or harmful without having to advance them to other testing. This could lower the cost of developing effective medications.

6. Biological knowledge. Stem cells can be used to increase the knowledge base of how cells and genes work and promote scientific advances in other areas of genetic treatments and help to detect and avoid genetic outcomes which could be detrimental to either the patient or the offspring. Further this could help to discover the deeper secrets of human development from conception to death.

IV. WHAT ARE THE MORAL ISSUES OF STEM CELL RESEARCH AND USE?

There are many complex and difficult political, social and economic concerns in this branch of science. However, our concern should be with the Biblical principles which guide us in our decisions. There are basically two areas of concern in this field of science: (1) The source of the stem cells used for research and use and (2) The use of the stem cells.

1. The source of stem cells. The crux of the moral problem here has to do with embryonic stem cells which are obtained by stripping the stem cells of tiny embryos, whether they are produced by IVF or by cloning procedures and the use of intentionally aborted fetuses as a source. There is no problem, per se, with obtaining stem cells from umbilical cord blood or from adults or children with their informed consent. The argument is essentially the same as that for the abortion issue or when does life begin, although there are other concerns for the future “genetic life” of one whose blood is used.

It is clear from the Bible that life begins at conception and man does not have the right to take innocent life. God recognizes that a person is living while in his mother’s womb. David recognized this truth in **Psalms 139:13-16**. Certainly, the infant who grew into the man, John the Baptist was very much alive at six months in Elizabeth’s womb (Luke 1:41-44). God recognizes the cry of murdered life (Genesis 4:10) and surely thousands of babies and embryos (which possess the potential to develop to full term babies) have been murdered at the hands of abortionists, doctors in IVF clinics and scientists in laboratories for research purposes.

God’s law protects innocent human life and the Bible clearly teaches the sanctity of life, or that each life, even at the microscopic level, is to be respected and treated with dignity, since it is created in the image of God. **Genesis 9:6** says, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God, made he man.” Disregard for the sanctity of life in one stage, creates contempt for it in other stages. Human life in the laboratory, in the womb, in the cradle, in youth, in maturity, in old age, where do we draw the line when we start murdering innocent life?

Some argue that life does not begin with the fertilization of the egg or that the cloned embryo is not really life, until it is implanted in a woman’s womb. However, if that is case, then why do the same people want to set a time limit to destroy the cloned embryo after fourteen days of development? They know that it has the *potential* to develop into further stages of human life, just as the embryos being destroyed from fertilization, if implanted in the womb, could develop into a full term fetus. Truly, the legs of the lame are not equal!

Of course, some do admit they are destroying life, but reason that it would be destroyed anyway, so why not put it to some good use? This is pragmatism or the faulty concept that the end justifies the means. In other words, our killing the embryo to produce stem cells justifies the killing of it much more than just killing it. Paul answered this false reasoning in **Romans 3:7-8**, “For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just.” The end of producing stem cells to help others, does not justify killing innocent human life in the embryonic stage.

Further, we protect even those who deserve to die, such as those sentenced to death for crimes they have committed, from this type of barbarous death. We do not take a death row inmate and start carving him up to harvest his organs and body parts for medical uses. We have enough respect for life to treat it with dignity, even when one is condemned to die.

Another problem area with cloned embryos is that they are produced asexually or without a father or mother. This is a blatant disregard for God's law of procreation, which from the beginning has been one man and one woman joined together in marriage, who enjoy the privileges of the marriage bed and bring children into this world through normal sexual relations (Genesis 1:28; 2:18-25; Hebrews 13:4). Some argue that twins (or at least one of them) are produced asexually when the cells divide into two identical embryos. However, this is not done without the fertilization of a human egg, as is cloning.

Still another area of concern with cloning embryos is the necessity of eggs to use in the cloning process. This is an effort to create life to exploit it and to gain either economically or scientifically. It is a form of prostitution, when women sell their eggs to research laboratories to produce cloned embryos from them. In an effort of some to get around the limited supply of human eggs, some are now using animal eggs from cows and pigs to create cloned embryos.

2. The use of stem cells. In this area there may be fewer concerns, but they are still grave in their consequences. Certainly the use of stem cells when used properly to treat disease, to test medications in development and to further the knowledge of biology is not unethical, immoral or wrong from a Biblical perspective. There may be some individual cases, even in these categories that would be wrong, if done for the wrong motivation or at the expense of another's health or spiritual well being. But, the proper use of stem cells, per se, in these areas would not be wrong.

However, the use of stem cells in the areas of genetic engineering or eugenics is morally and Biblically wrong from the perspective that human life is being altered at the genetic level to make changes which are motivated for evil purposes and which may adversely affect generations to come. These, as well as cloning, are a violation of God's law of procreation because life is being created without the normal sexual relations of a man and woman. Further, some of the procedures used in genetic engineering use multiple embryos which are destroyed in order to achieve the desired results. Obviously, this would involve the taking of several innocent human lives to accomplish.

Further, there is the possibility that the outcome of some of these attempts, just as in cloning attempts, may turn out to produce genetic deformities or other genetic defects in generations to come. The truth is those experimenting with this just do not have all the answers.

CONCLUSION

Stem cell research and use seems to have great potential to benefit mankind, but as with many other sciences, such as nuclear physics, it has great potential for destruction as well in the wrong hands. In fact this research has resulted in the destruction of innocent human life and improper use with unknown consequences at the hands of some researchers who disrespect moral principles.

In **1 Thessalonians 5:20-21**, Paul wrote, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." Let us prove or test all things by the standard of God's Word and abstain from and stand opposed to those things which violate God's laws for the sake of science or any other cause, while at the same time, we carefully embrace and use those things which are proven to be right and good according to God's Word. To do otherwise is to chart a course which will lead to destruction.

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Evangelism and Ethics

Jim O'Connor

Jim is a graduate of the Northside School of Preaching in Harrison, Arkansas. He began preaching in 1969. In 2002 he made his 13th journey to Europe and his 29th trip to India. His overseas work is under the oversight of the elders at the 39th Street church of Christ. His labors take him regularly to India, Estonia, Latvia, Philippines, Singapore and Costa Rica. His wife Judy is his co-laborer on many of the evangelistic journeys. They are also strongly involved in correspondence course work throughout the world. Jim has authored many tracts in the International Bible Studies series and also many of the lessons in the IBS Correspondence Course series. He is one of the writers for the International Bible Studies publication. While in the United States he is a frequent speaker on lectureships and gospel meetings.

“Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men”.

These words of Paul from 2 Corinthians 8:20-21 remind us that Paul knew there was a standard by which he must govern himself and his activity in serving the Lord. He knew the importance of ethical activity in all phases of the Christian life.

So many today seem to have the idea that whatever works is justified, with the “works” being judged by my man’s subjective judgement rather than by the word of God. They don’t ask “Is it authorized?”, or “Is it right?” - only “Does it work?”. This is a dangerous philosophy to work by because it has no standard of authority other than that of the local situation at the time of the application. This is “situation ethics”, and it is wrong because we are never to permit the situation to govern what is, or what is not, ethical.

ETHICS DEFINED

Voltaire said, “If you wish to converse with me, define your terms”. This is always needful. The reason one cannot converse with Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Scientists, and even some of our own brethren, is that they have redefined terms to mean something other than what we mean. Webster defines Ethics as “The science which treats of the nature and grounds of moral obligations; moral philosophy, which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it; the science of duty”.

Ethics can refer to “social acceptance”. In a culture where bigamy is common it would be ethical to have two wives. In a culture where alcoholic wine is served with meals it would be ethical to drink alcoholic wine. However, I am of the conviction that when culture and scripture clash, the culture must change. We have a standard that transcends local social customs and habits. As Mason said to Dixon, “We have to draw the line somewhere”. And we draw the line where God drew it. Paul wrote to Timothy, “*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*”(1 Timothy 3:15). This was instruction relating to his conduct as a Christian. His ethical standard of living.

MORE FROM THE BIBLE ON ETHICS

In Titus 2:11-12 Paul wrote; *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”*. Peter wrote; *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters”* (1 Peter 4:15).

We are to follow the divine advice through James to *“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”* (James 2:12). Paul’s serious admonition in Romans 12:1-2 is to be taken to heart. Here he wrote; *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”*.

Why argue this point? Isn’t it common sense? Well, yes, it should be; but still there are some who have a warped sense of ethics and it is essential that we remind each other of the right and wrong of this situation. Case in point. After reviewing an article in his bulletin of July 6, 1983, James Robert Jarrell, then preaching at the Grandview Church of Christ, made this comment: *“All this verbal twisting and squirming by the author of the above article would not be necessary if he would accept the teaching of the scriptures that we are justified by the principle of grace through faith, NOT by the principle of law keeping. God does not impute to the Christian his sins - ANY of his sins, whether they be sins of false belief, evil attitude, evil thought, evil deed, or sins of omission”*. He then cites Romans 4:8 as his authority for that statement, which isn’t even a distant relative to what Paul was writing about. We twinge when we read such nonsense from our brethren, but we have much of this attitude being practiced in evangelism.

JUSTIFYING EXCUSES

Our brethren are masters at making excuses to justify false practices. When introducing his sermon on “Excuses” some years back the preacher said, *“My brethren got up this lesson”*. To justify the use of very intoxicating wine in the Lord’s Supper a brother in Brasov, Romania told us there was no grape juice available. We saw fresh grapes at the market. What does one get when one squeezes grapes? To justify using our sisters as translators they argue that no men are available to do the job, as though the absence of what’s right makes the practice of what’s wrong justifiable. To justify using known false teachers on a lectureship or in a gospel meeting brethren say his reputation as a speaker will draw a crowd and he has promised not to preach on “that” subject here. There’s more wrong with that than I have time in this lesson to deal with. Suppose there are no Bibles available to distribute. Should I distribute the Koran as a substitute? Suppose there is no money available to buy Bibles. Should I steal money in order to buy them? Do I need to continue the stupid examples to show the folly of what is deemed acceptable among our brethren?

FAULTY DEFINITIONS OF FAITH

I think sometimes the problem lies in problems with defining faith. A brother, now deceased so I won't give his name, wrote the following: "The efforts of some modernist teachers and writers to move the churches of Christ away from doctrinal matters under the guise of our responsibility to exalt Jesus Christ seems to me to be comparable to the practices of the liberal Disciples of Christ who engineered the innovations of affiliation with missionary societies and the introduction of mechanical instruments of music in worship during the latter part of the 1800's. To them it matters little what we do as worship just so long as the focus is on our faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ". What this brother said was true, except for the latter statement. If we do ANYTHING in worship that is NOT AUTHORIZED then our focus is NOT ON OUR FAITH IN GOD AND IN HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST. The same holds true with evangelism. We cannot justify evangelizing through error by saying our focus is on Christ. IT IS A LIE, PURE AND SIMPLE! Romans 10:17 makes it clear that you cannot do anything BY FAITH that is not authorized in the scriptures.

EXAMPLES OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES IN EVANGELISM

Any who have traveled much into other countries have experienced the strong demands for bribery payments. Such corruption is in nearly every level of some of the governments we have to deal with. Felix told Paul, "*when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*". Luke says that "*he hoped also that money should have been given of him of Paul, that he might loose him*" (Acts 24:25-26). Felix wanted a bribe but he got none from Paul. Bribery is extortion and we can neither engage in it nor give in to it (1 Corinthians 5:11).

Fund raising is another area that is very challenging to remain honest in. Some engage in "you for me, me for you" tactic which is deceitful. This is done by two men each raising funds for the other with the money going into a common account and being shared. It is easier to raise funds for others than it is to raise funds for one's self. The only redeeming thing in this tactic would be if the congregations know that this is the tactic being used. However, I would not be comfortable with it from any angle.

I am of the personal conviction that it is unethical to take money from a congregation that is either "liberal" or "anti". The same would sanctify stolen money if it was used in evangelism. The brother who took money from the Methodists to do mission work because he could not get it from brethren did wrong.

Another problem is the misappropriation of funds. Funds given for evangelism should be used for what they are given for. For instance, if I am given money for Bibles I cannot use that money for tracts (unless I get permission from the giver to do so). This is a major problem in some countries and we have a constant fight to get done what we send money for. A brother in the Philippines took money from me to print our tracts but used the money to print his own tracts. In my mind he was a thief. There is no way to justify such actions.

It is unethical for brethren to raise funds to print Bibles, then use that money to print versions of the Bible that are unworthy of being called Bibles. The Eastern European Missions, a Bible printing work in Vienna, is printing the NIV. Shame on them for doing so. The World Bible Translation Center is publishing the "Easy To Read" version. It has so many problems that it also cannot be honestly called

a Bible. Why do brethren do this? Why do brethren support this? I really don't know because it would be just as easy to publish a Bible that teaches truth as to publish one that does not do so.

False teaching is also a problem in our world today, as it has been since the days of the apostles. And, brethren, FALSE TEACHING IS NOT EVANGELISM! It matters not whether it is done by the denominations, or by our brethren, if truth is not being preached evangelism is not being done.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most unethical of all are the petty excuses being used for not evangelizing. It matters not how sound in the faith you may be academically, if you are not teaching it to others, you are not sound in the faith.

Ethics In The Workplace

Don Underwood

There is certainly a need within the business affairs of life for people to know and understand ethics. Like all issues of life, we must be taught ethics in order to practice ethics. The word *ethics* in the Greek is *ethos* and means a custom or manner or habit. Webster defines ethics to mean “a system of moral values.” To be ethical means “conforming to accepted professional standards of conduct.” As Christians, we must conform to God’s professional standard—*the word!* Hence, when Paul told the church at Rome, *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* (Romans 12:2). Paul is telling the church they must conform to the ways of God. In doing so, our mind or inward man or spiritual man is changed. This ethical change is good!

Furthermore, ethics is a word that assumes within the very definition of its meaning that one has a system of moral values that the individual has accepted as a standard of conduct. Unfortunately, if one does not have an ethical approach to life, then people are free to do whatever they desire. Thus, God makes the difference in the business affairs of people and our work places.

In the Work Place One must Be Trusted and Dependable.

First of all, work place ethics implies that we ought to be trusted and dependable in our work.

In Genesis 39:1-6 and 41:38-41 we read of the trust and dependability of Joseph.

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and all that he had, that the Lord, blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand: and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and wellfavoured. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

In the eyes of the Potiphar, Joseph had *found grace in his sight*. Simply put, Joseph was trusted. From this account of the Pharaoh, Joseph was entrusted with all the wealth in the land. The Pharaoh trusted him completely. Where did Joseph learn to be ethical? From God. Joseph lived his life in view of the eyes of the Lord. We too live our lives before the eyes of God. Like Joseph, we cannot hide anything from God.

In 2 Kings 12:15 we read of honesty, “Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.”

The *men* in this verse has reference to those men who delivered the money unto the workmen. These *men* did not need to be followed up to see if the workmen received their wages. Why?

Because these *men* were trusted. There was no question as to their honesty. We too must be of the same mold and character.

Nehemiah wrote of faithful men,

And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren (Nehemiah 13:13).

These men were counted trustworthy. In other words, they had ethics. In having ethics, they held to a standard of conduct—the word of God! The bottom line, it is ethical to pay people promptly. In doing so, we practice in a simple way ethics.

The young servant Daniel was a man of ethics. In Daniel 6:1-6 we read of his ethical standard.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. The presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

Daniel, as a result of being faithful unto the Lord received preference in the Babylonian kingdom. He was a man who held to an ethical code of conduct. It was this higher standard that separated him from all others. Ethics is a great divider of people. Daniel serves as a great example for all to follow in their work places. He is an excellent role model for each of us.

Paul told the Corinthian church, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

The context addresses the responsibilities of ministers and their work as faithful stewards. As stewards of the Living God, ministers have the responsibility to preach and then practice what they preach. In other words, they must walk the talk. A requirement of stewards is faithfulness. Thus, if we apply the principle of faithfulness, as found within the stewards of God to our business ethics; our earthly work would be blessed and enhanced. It behooves all business owners and all laborers to use faithfully ethics in all their earthly affairs.

From these verses, we see that ethics involves trust to do the work at hand. The Lord expects His people to be faithful in practicing ethics and establishing a reputation of being ethical. May we always work to this end in our places of work.

Work Place Ethics Involves Honesty

At one time in our nation’s history a person’s word or hand shake sealed a business deal. Unfortunately, the world has changed considerably, including the aspect of honesty. The Christian in the work place must immerse him or herself in *honesty*. Honesty is an integral part of being ethical. Honesty is a quality of ethics.

In the book of Deuteronomy we read of being honest in our business dealings,

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that their days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto thy Lord thy God¹⁶ (25:13-16).

The context of speaks of honesty. We cannot hold to two different standards in the business world and be accepted of the Lord Almighty! Those who are dishonest, are an abomination unto the Lord, but those who are just, honest and ethical in the work place, God will bless. God has always required and expected His servants to be honest.

The wise man said, *A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight* (Proverbs 11:1).

- The just weight is God's standard, His measurement.

God is pleased with those who are just, i.e. honest in their work place. When we are honest in our work, then God is pleased with our actions and others appreciate our integrity.

Divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 20:10).

The emphasis of both passages of scriptures is the moral high ground in our work place. May we always strive to be honest in all things (Romans 12:17).

The prophet Isaiah spoke how the righteous must walk and their reward for doing that which is right, *He that walketh righteously, speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;¹⁵ He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure¹⁶* (Isaiah 33:15-16).

The honest businessperson acts in a certain way...*a righteous way!* This righteous way is established upon a code of conduct, a standard of ethics, the word of God. In following the word of God as a light to guide us in the work place (Psalm 119:105), we walk and talk right before men and God. *We Abstain from all appearances of evil* (I Thessalonians 5:22). Thus, we become a people who shun evil and do the good. Paul stressed honesty to the church at Rome, *Recompence to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men* (Romans 12:17).

-- In Romans 12:17 God commands Christians to be honest unto all, and this would include our business dealings and our work relationships. Ethics must be applied to all aspects of our labors, not just some aspects of our work.

-- Hence, our honesty becomes those things that we do before people. It behooves us to confirm the habit of honesty as second nature. Then, we will practice all things good and decent in our business affairs.

Peter addressed honesty this way, *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation* (I Peter 2:12).

- The honest worker, via their behavior, i.e. their *conversation* will bring glory unto the Lord. As a result, God will honor those who serve Him in such a way (John 12:26).

The bottom line, ethics and honesty go hand in hand, they compliment one another in life. May we always hold to the moral high ground of ethics in our work place.

In the Work Place, We must Do the Will of God.

Work place ethics involves doing things in accordance to the will of God. This means that we strive to conform all aspects of our work to what God commands in His word, the Bible.

In Proverbs 27:23 we read, *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.*

Our work place needs to be filled with diligence. As the shepherd's flocks needs daily care, our work needs to be approached in like manner. Thus, we need to approach our earthly activities in conjunction with the word of God and not separate ourselves from His will.

The words of the Preacher...(Ecclesiastes 1:1) tells us this wisdom in Ecclesiastes 9:10, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

In the work place, we need to give our work our all! This is what God expects and this is inclusive of business ethics. Hence, it is God's will that we give it our all. That is, put all our heart into our work.

In addition to putting our all into whatever we do, we need to put God first. In Acts 16:14-15 we read, *And a certain woman named Lydia, seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 14 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. 15*

From this account, we see that Lydia put the Lord *first!* Though she was on a business trip, she still made time for God. Remember, God wants His people to profit and prosper, but He commands His people to NEVER forget who He is (Deuteronomy 8:18). May we never forget God.

Thus, business ethics involves placing God first, even if we are on a business trip and at some distant location.

Paul told Titus, *In all things shewing thy self a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity* (Titus 2:7).

"The expression *good work* or *good works* is used six times in the three chapters of Titus. The *good works* of the book are not just benevolent in nature, but they refer to all that is upright and good – to an honest and holy life." (Curtis A. Cates, The Epistles of I and II Timothy, Titus, Arnold Sexton, Firm Foundation Publishing House, Inc., 1986, p 237).

A further point, our *good works* become a pattern in our lives.

Thus, in all things, which would include by principle our earthly labors, we must develop a pattern of doing good works that includes and not excludes God. If our lives are absent and void of God, we are most miserable.

As we establish a pattern of doing good works in our lives and especially in our business affairs, we will do the will of God.

As we conclude this section, James spoke directly to all with regards to God's will and our earthly plans. *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:13 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.14 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.15 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.16 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin17* (James 4:13-17).

Our work place ethics are governed by the will of God. These ethics are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11). Thus, God needs to be the center of our life and our work. We build our lives and work around God. In doing so, our work places will be influenced by the will of God and not our will.

May we always strive to do the will of God and place God first in the work place. As a result of doing this simple action, we will avoid the temptation of sin.

God's will for us in our work places is to work diligently and never put Him second! Remember, never forget God. Biblical ethics demand that we put God first! If we place our Lord second, He will place us second on the day of judgment.

Our Work Places must Be Moral, Ethical, Legal and Biblical

The Christian must not be in a work place contrary to the nature of God. Whatever business or work or profession a Christian is involved with, must be moral, ethical, legal and Biblical. Without these aspects or principles, the Christian must abstain from such work.

The wise man said in Proverbs 16:8, "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right." The focus of this verse is righteousness. A little righteousness is far better than great profits.

There are many work places that reap great revenues, but are wrong and sinful within themselves. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry, and so is abortion, prostitution, and illegal drugs, and all of these industries are wrong! It is better to have little revenues, than suffer the condemnation from God because of what we gain financially from certain businesses that are immoral, unethical or illegal. As a Christian, we have the responsibility to do that, which is right in the sight of God. Hence, do those things that are right! Never give up righteousness for something in this world.

The book of Proverbs continues to instruct us in the right way of doing business, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death* (Proverbs 21:6).

Unjust and unethical gain or profit is wrong! All of our profit or wealth must be acquired ethically.

The *lying tongue* in the work place is sinful and unethical. It is sinful in that God commands His people to be truthful and it is unethical in that it is contrary to the standard of God. But, how many times will employees or workers lie or deceive others for the employer? The Christian must be careful not to allow themselves to be used in unethical ways and means within the work place.

We further learn from Proverbs, *He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor* (Proverbs 28:8).

Certain businesses involve their employees in work that take advantage of debtors to their detriment. In the past, we would call these employers *loan sharks*. They certainly use their unscrupulous means as they oppress the borrower. In certain situations, this would be called extortion, while the extortioner labels this as profit. Thus, it would be ethically unacceptable for a Christian to make financial gain through these means, or to enable the boss to profit accordingly due to your effort in the work place.

Furthermore, this kind of profit making goes against the Lord Almighty. Thus, those people who practice such profit making and work in such an environment need to take heed!

In Acts 19:24-27 we read of a business that made its profit in contrast to Biblical principles. Hence, it was an industry in opposition to our Lord. *For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, who all Asia and the world worshippeth."*

These silversmiths were losing money due to the preaching of truth. The people were giving up the idols that the silversmiths were making. Bottom line, they were losing money! There was no need to worship something made by man, and this is still true today. In this particular example, it is scripturally wrong to be a partaker of this kind of business. In light of how they were using their trade for the cause of idolatry! To clarify this comment, there is nothing wrong in making things out of silver or other precious metals, but what they made was contrary to the word of God.

This situation serves as a great example for Christians not to align themselves to those industries that make their profit against clear Bible teachings.

These examples are only a representation of immoral, unethical, illegal or un-Biblical ways in which people can work and make money. When money or profit is made at the loss of others, this is wrong! Profit that is ethical, is made at the exchange of some service or product. May we always abstain from that which is evil and hold to that which is good (I Thessalonians 5:22).

Conclusion

In conclusion, to be ethical means to apply God's word to our lives and this includes our work and labor. Basically, we must live what God commands.

Isaiah the prophet wrote, *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them* (Isaiah 34:16).

The command for all people including Christians in the work place, is to seek out the book and once we find it, read it and apply what we read to our work. In doing so, we will find that God's word will only enhance our productivity and our treatment of others.

Thus, by making God's will an everyday ingredient in our work places, we will enhance our work and make our place of employment better.

God's ethical standard is never old fashioned nor outdated! God expects workers to rise to His level of ethics and not to apply their own manmade ethical standards.

If we mold our lives after an ethical standard and live by a code of ethics, then let that standard and code be the word of God. We need His will in all of our work places. May our attitude be as John so clearly taught, *If any man will do His will...*(John 7:17). May it be our will, to do God's will.

In this particular lesson we have seen the urgency for Christians to apply Biblical ethics in their places of labor.

- First of all, the Christian in the work place needs to be trusted and dependable, this is ethical and right.
- Secondly, we must be honest in all things, and this includes our work places.
- Furthermore, in the work place the Christian must fulfill the will of God. In doing so, we please God in our industry.
- Finally, the Christian must not place themselves in a work place environment that is immoral, unethical, illegal or un-Biblical. We must guard ourselves from evil associations (1 Corinthians 15:33).

As Christians, we must bring the word of God into our daily lives. We must live by what is written and not by what may seem right unto us (Proverbs 14:12). For it is God that directs our steps (Jeremiah 10:23, and Psalm 199:105).

Capital Punishment

Chuck Northrop

Chuck Northrop was born in Pratt, Kansas, and raised in Towanda, Kansas. He married the former Jody Casebolt of Wichita, Kan. Together, they raised four children Shane, a school teacher in St. Charles, Missouri; Jeremy, a student at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee ; Michelle Nelson, a student at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma; and Lisa, also student at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. They also have four grandchildren.

Chuck graduated from the Preston Road School of Preaching in Dallas, under the direction of Eldred Stevens. He has labored in local work with churches in Texas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. He has preached in 19 states and three foreign countries. He also served as an instructor of the Midwest School of Biblical Studies in Independence, Missouri, the Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies in Chandler, Oklahoma, and the Kiev School of Preaching in Kiev, Ukraine. More recently, he served as the director of the Kiev School of Preaching. Besides Ukraine, Chuck has also made mission trips into Latvia and Taiwan.

Besides numerous bulletin articles, he writes regularly for several brotherhood publications. He has also authored three books: "We Can Rest Assured," a study of assurance in 1 John; "Biblically Speaking about the Church," 88 short articles on the church of the Bible; and "So Great a Cloud of Witnesses," a study of the great faith chapter, Hebrews 11.

Humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27). "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Humans are not made in the physical image of God, but are spiritual and eternal beings like God. That makes us, the human race, unique from the rest of creation. Human life, therefore, is sacred, and we above all creatures great and small should recognize and realize the sanctity of life.

As we examine the topic of "Capital Punishment," we are not concerned with the political views of society whether here in America or in Africa or in Europe. Political views are not the standard and are most often based upon the fallible reasoning of man. The words of Jeremiah the prophet ought to ring loud and clear. He wrote, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Solomon also commented on the subject when he wrote, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Our examination concerns the Bible, God's word. We are asking for a "thus saith the Lord" on the topic of "Capital Punishment." The Bible is the inerrant, inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17) and provides for mankind "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Therefore, we should expect the Bible to provide some principle, some rule, or some ideology on this matter. Such is clearly provided.

Finally in way of introduction, we need to speak about our approach to the topic. The topic of "Capital Punishment" is an emotionally charged topic. For this reason, we need to strive to set aside

emotions, and let reason prevail. We need to set aside our feelings, and let God's word speak. We need to open our minds and put on the garments of integrity, honesty, and rightness. And when we put such on, we will make the necessary application, and we will bring our views into conformity with what God teaches.

Civil Authorities

The role of civil authorities in God's scheme of things is clear. There are three institutions which God instituted. With the creation, God established the first institution — the home. Later as the population of man grew, He would establish the nations. And though it was in the mind of God before the foundation of the earth, God established the church about five thousand years after the creation. Concerning the role of civil authorities, Paul wrote, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." The "higher powers" of this verse refers to civil governments, and every person is to be in subjection unto civil authorities. Why? Because God through His providence has provided them for us. This does not mean that every ruler and every government and every deed of every ruler and every government are approved of God. It simply means the ultimate source of civil authority is God. Divine origin does not mean perfection. Man has divine origin. God created us, but man is not perfect. All men have sinned. The home has divine origin, but because the home is comprised of imperfect humans, it lacks perfection. So, it is with civil governments.

Paul continues in Romans 13 by stating, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (verse 2). It is a very serious matter to resist civil authority. Why? Because to resist civil authority is to resist God. When a person violates the laws of a nation, he violates the law of God. This principle is stated several times within the New Testament. Writing to Titus, Paul said, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). Peter wrote, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:13,14). Keep in mind, when Paul and Peter penned these words, Christians were being persecuted by the Roman government. Even in such circumstances, man is to submit to the higher powers. Whether we agree with a law or not makes little difference. We are still to be subject to governmental authority. The only exception to this rule is when the laws of a nation violates the laws of God (Acts 5:29).

Continuing in Romans 13, Paul wrote, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" (verse 3). Here Paul alludes to the God-given purpose to which governments serve — "for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:14). Law abiding citizens do not need to fear governmental authority. However, law breaking citizens ought to fear such.

In addition, Romans 13:4 states, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The nations exist to serve God. In fact, the first few verses

of chapter 13 continues with a subject introduced in chapter 12 (Hightower 194). Paul wrote, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (12:19). Personal vengeance is clearly condemned. However, civil authority is God’s minister or servant to bring vengeance upon the evil doer. Those who do evil ought to be afraid of civil authority because God intends for nations to bear the sword. The sword in this passage refers to the instrument of execution though not exclusive to this purpose (see Matthew 26:52; Luke 21:24; Acts 12:2; 16:27; Hebrews 11:34, 37; Revelation 13:10) (Hightower 198). By inspiration, Paul understood there are some crimes which demand the death penalty. This principle is found in other passages of scriptures. Moses wrote, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:6). In Acts 25:11 Paul states, “For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.” When Jesus quietly stood before Pilate during His mock trial, Pilate chastised the Lord by reminding Him of his authority. Notice Jesus’ response, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:10,11). Jesus clearly states Pilate’s authority to execute criminals was given to him by God.

We conclude our study of Romans 13 with verse 5, “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” Paul brings the thought to application and conclusion. Two reasons are given for obeying civil authority: to avoid punishment and to avoid violating one’s conscience (Weir 244).

Purpose

Notice again our text of Romans 13:4 which says, “for he (the civil authority - CN) beareth not the sword in vain.” “In vain” means “without purpose” or “without just cause” (Strongs). In other words, the bearing of the sword by the civil government serves a purpose. So we ask, “What purpose does it serve?”

Certainly one of the primary purposes capital punishment serves is as an effective deterrent (Taylor 229). In part, this is what the Holy Spirit had in mind. Notice the number of references Paul by inspiration made to terror and fear:

- ! “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.”
- ! “Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?”
- ! “But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid;”

Though some will argue, punishment for crimes do deter offenses. Speeding tickets deter speeders. It is bad enough on our streets and highways, but could you imagine how much worse it would be if no tickets were issued. A person can argue that tickets do not deter speeders, but it is always amazing to watch how slow traffic flows when a highway patrol car is visible. Admittedly, the “slap on the hand” by some judicial systems like ours in the U.S. do not seemingly deter crimes. However, that is not the fault of the principle found within scripture, but how the principle is not practiced in faulty judicial systems. When swift and sure punishment of crimes are judged and administered, then crimes will be deterred.

Another purpose for capital punishment is the protection of society. When murderers are killed, they will not murder again, and society is protected from them (Taylor 229). However, some will argue that jails protect society from criminals. That may be true to some extent, but no matter how secure we think a jail or a prison is, some cunning criminal will find a way to escape and menace society. Also, prisons may protect society from most prisoners, but it does not protect prisoners from their fellow inmates. Murders and violent crimes are common place within prison walls. Capital punishment enacted by governing authorities protect all of society from violent criminals.

Objections

Probably the most often heard objection to capital punishment is the sixth commandment of the Decalogue — “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13; see also Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:21; Romans 13:9). The sixth commandment is not an absolute prohibition against taking of life. The word “kill” actually means “to commit murder” (Strongs). Clearly the prohibition was not against all killing because the penalty for violating it was death. In Deuteronomy 19:11,12, Moses wrote, “But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die” (Meadows 219)

Another often heard objection against capital punishment is it is not loving. Such an objection is absurd and narrow in focus for it focuses upon the criminals and ignores the victims. Those who object think it is loving for a judge to slap a criminal’s hand, tell him not to do it again, and send him to jail for a few short years. When the criminal is released, he perpetrates another crime, and the process starts again. Question: Is it loving to allow the criminal the opportunity to victimize another precious soul? When appropriate punishment is not served, it allows criminals the opportunity to commit other heinous crimes. Besides, Bible love demands discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11). God is love (1 John 4:8). God provides civil authority to discipline and/or punish evildoers. Therefore, it must be loving to discipline and/or punish evildoers.

A further objection is capital punishment was for the Mosaic dispensation. The truth is, however, it is for all dispensations. Genesis 9:6 which says, “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” was given to Noah during Patriarchy. Capital punishment for murder and other crimes (most scholars count twentyplus crimes) was given to Moses in the Mosaic age. And in the New Testament age, Romans 13:4 speaks loud and clear.

Lenski points out another objection in his commentary on Romans which he refuted (792). The objection says if Paul had written later after Nero began his reign of terror against Christians, “he would not have written as he does.” The objection overlooks inspiration. The all-knowing Spirit of God would have known such. Lenski points out the Jews had Herod the Great who persecuted and killed them, the Sanhedrin crucified Christ and employed Saul to persecute Christians (792).

In addition, some object on the basis of the question, “What crimes would deserve capital punishment?” The Old Testament which was written for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11) would, in the least, be a good place to start. Having said this, there is another

consideration: our ignorance does not relieve us of our responsibility. Though there may be some crimes we are not sure of, there are some violent crimes we can be sure that deserve capital punishment such as premeditated murder, rape, and vicious assaults.

The next objection we will consider is when capital punishment is practiced, it ends any chance of conversion. The reality is when a person is left to his own devices such as is the case with criminals, they wax worse and worse. But also consider this: God has “appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31). There will come a time when God’s patience will come to an end, and He will destroy the world and bring men into judgment (2 Peter 3:9-11). Since God is our example and standard of righteousness, and since He has provided a way to punish evildoers (civil authority), then it is right and just for the patience of men to end and bring judgment upon workers of iniquity. God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9) and “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), and, yet, He terminated the physical lives of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). By doing such, He also terminated any chance of repentance.

A final objection some make is that it is right for non-Christians but not for Christians to practice capital punishment. Civil authorities work through individuals. This objection stem from the question of sin. Is it sinful for a person to wield the sword, tighten the noose, flip the switch, or give an injection to carry out capital punishment for the civil government? We have already established that it is right for civil authorities to practice capital punishment. How can this take place without an individual working for the civil authority? It cannot. Since capital punishment cannot be accomplished without the actions of an individual, then it must be right for an individual to carry out capital punishment for the civil authority. Is it right for the non-Christian but not the Christian? Are there two standards for sin? No, of course not. There is not a standard for the sinner and another for the saint. All men are amenable to the law of God. If it is right for one, then it is right for the other (Weir 245). At this point someone objects and says, “God sometimes used evil men to accomplish His purpose.” While this is true, God never asked men, whether good or bad, to commit an evil deed (Hightower 200). Having said this, it may be the case that some people would violate their conscience by carrying out this action for the state. If that be the case, then it would be sin for that individual (Romans 14:23; 1 John 3:20, 21).

Conclusion

Though some would argue, yet the Bible is clear. God has provided civil governments “for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.” One aspect of the punishment of evildoers is the nation “beareth not the sword in vain.” Though not limited to capital punishment, this statement certainly would include it. It is right, just, and fair for the civil authorities to deter crime and protect society by means of capital punishment.

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Ethics and Marriage

Toney L. Smith

Toney is a native of Arkansas, born in Nashville and raised in Texarkana. He is a 1982 graduate of Brown Trail School of Preaching and later taught there for 6 years. He has done local work in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and now works with the church in Dresden, Tennessee. He and his wife Debby have 3 sons and 2 grandsons and another due in October.

We live in a world that seems to have no concern for ethics and morals in any phase of life. Just when I think I have heard it all or that things could not get worse, I find I am wrong again! It used to be that we were not surprised when a young couple decided to “live” together rather than marry. Now it seems this trend has caught on among the more mature citizens. In the July/August 2000 issue of the Modern Maturity magazine we read, “Unmarried opposite-sex couples 65 and older rose 73 percent from 1990 to 1999, according to the U. S. Census Bureau. Obviously, shacking up isn’t just a dollar decision. Some couples have soured on marriage. Others have seen their kids cohabit so they’re comfortable with it.” (11) In such cases, as well as other attitudes concerning marriage, ethics and morals have been tossed out the window.

Ethics is defined by Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary as “...a set of moral principles and values; a theory or system of moral values...” (392). Many souls will spend an eternity in damnation because they failed to recognize that God has rules and regulations for marriage. Just as in any realm of life men have sought to circumvent the clear teachings found in God’s word (Revelation 22:18-19). Ethics play a great role in the health and stability of the marriage. Without observing the laws set in place by God men cannot find happiness in the home and it will not be as God intended. Men have tried in vain to live by their own laws and by their own morality. Jeremiah the prophet said in the long ago; “I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). While the Proverbs writer said; “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 16:25). With those verses in mind let us now observe the ethics that are to be a part of a godly marriage.

FROM THE BEGINNING

After God had made man (Genesis 2:7), He saw the need for a suitable helper (Genesis 2:18) and so He made Eve who would be Adam’s wife. At the same time God gave the law regulating the bonds of matrimony (Genesis 2:24). He made one woman, for one man, for life. The couple then violated God’s commandment concerning the tree in the midst of the garden (Genesis 3:3) and sin was introduced into the world. Not long after this, men began violating the ethics set in place to govern the home. In Genesis 4:19 we read of Lamech taking two wives and things have not been the same since. From the beginning God has had a law in place for all men relative to the home and marriage. As we observe some of the ethics of marriage let us keep in mind, these are God’s ways and these Bible principles must be observed so as to make the marriage happy and successful. When these statutes are set aside, the home will suffer and it cannot be what God intends for the home and

marriage to be. The ethics and morals found in our homes play a great part in the success of our nation as well.

MARRIAGE DEFINED

The very definition of marriage has been twisted to accommodate the situational ethics of our times. Marriage is commonly defined as the social institution under which a man and a woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitments, religious ceremonies and customs according to the laws under which one lives. Marriage is not simply “living together” as some like to say. Marriage is more than a convenience for people to use in pursuit of selfish goals. I had one young woman ask if hers was a binding marriage since she married only to help a friend get legal citizenship papers. I have heard of other cases as well, even from some in the church. Surely we can see the fallacy of such reasoning. When eligible couples (we will discuss who is eligible in the next section) go through the due process required by the legal statutes of the state in which they will be married and are pronounced husband and wife - they are married! Even in most states where so called “common-law” marriages are recognized, the unions are legally binding. According to Arlynn Nellhaus in the Denver Post, February 7, 1972, all couples who have entered into such agreements cannot separate and take on another partner without being guilty of bigamy. They must go through courts to get a divorce before they can take other mates.

We have some who believe and teach that it is the sexual union which joins the man and woman in marriage. The sexual relation is a God given privilege of married partners, which one partner must not withhold from the other (1 Corinthians 7:1-5). If the sexual relationship is required as a prerequisite for marriage, we would have the parents of our Lord living as husband and wife before they were actually married. An angel told Joseph to “fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife” (Matthew 1:20). Joseph obeyed in verse 24 and “took unto him his wife.” Now notice verse 25; “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.” Joseph took Mary to be his wife BEFORE he knew her in a sexual way. Therefore, we can clearly see that the sexual union is not what unites a couple in marriage.

MARRIAGE IS FOR THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE

Every married person must meet the eligibility requirements set forth in God’s word. There are those, who in God’s sight, have the right to enter into the marriage relationship and those who are not eligible to be married. The New Testament teaches clearly that there are only three classes of people who may ethically enter into the marriage bond:

- (1) Those who have never been married and are marrying one who is also scripturally eligible for marriage (Genesis 1:18-24; Matthew 19:5-6);
- (2) Those whose companion has died (Romans 7:1-4), assuming again that the marriage is to someone who is scripturally eligible; and
- (3) Those who have put away their marriage partner due to fornication on the part of the companion who is guilty of sexual unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9).

Furthermore, when we look at current trends in parts of our country we must emphasize that there is no such thing as a homosexual marriage. God did not sanction this filthiness in any walk of life, much less in the divine institution of marriage. A scriptural marriage is based upon a love that is to be held in high esteem between a man and a woman! God “made them male and female” and anything else is an abomination (Genesis 1:27-28; Ephesians 5:28-31; Romans 1:26-27).

MARRIAGE IS TO BE LIFE LONG

Today people enter into this God ordained relationship with no thought of it lasting for a lifetime. Thus, most do not last until the ink dries on the marriage licence. God said; “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6). To put asunder what God joined is a violation of the law set in place by His inspired word.

Christians, as well as non-Christians, are subject to the same marriage law. God did not intend for there to be separate standards by which men are to live. There is not a different set of ethics for the child of God and the alien sinner. Matthew 19:3-12 clearly deals with both classes of people, the believer as well as those who did not believe.

MARRIAGE REQUIRES THAT THE VOWS BE HONORED

Marriage is to have the quality of absolute fidelity. We learn from God’s faithfulness as a bridegroom what real fidelity means. Paul compares marriage to the relationship of Christ to His church (Ephesians 5:32). Christ, the bridegroom was faithfully committed to His bride, the church and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25). Faithfulness and fidelity are fundamentals for a successful marriage. Christ should be our example in honoring our marriage partners and the vows that were made.

The vows entered into at the marriage ceremony are binding. They are pronounced before God and before men. To break the vows to ones mate is a violation of trust, honesty, and faithfulness. Violating these vows will break the heart of a loving companion. It will destroy the hope and lives of little children. We must also note that to break the vows to our mate is to break the vows made to God. Since God intended that the marriage be a permanent bond, we must never forget that we are accountable to Him and His law relative to the vows made. The vows taken at marriage are simply promises we make and vow to keep. “I promise to keep myself unto thee only, so long as we both shall live“ is a familiar statement repeated in many marriage ceremonies. It is a violation of Biblical ethics when these promises are not honored. Hebrews 13:4 states that “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Marriage is honorable when men honor the marriage.

Keep in mind that God’s law is the basis for ethics in all of our lives. In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus said; “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

EACH PERSON IN A MARRIAGE HAS GOD GIVEN RESPONSIBILITIES

Ethical considerations extend even into the responsibilities which are given to each partner in a marriage. God has given a specific plan for husbands and wives in their marriage relationship. Ephesians 5:22-33 gives a clear and distinct picture of these roles.

Wives are told to “submit yourselves unto your own husbands” (Ephesians 5: 22). The world has put a bad connotation on the idea of wives being in submission to their husbands. The word submit in the original language is a compound word meaning to be under obedience. Grammatically it is present, middle, meaning a continual self-produced action. Notice Paul says; “submit yourselves.” It has nothing to do with the greater or lesser in regard to worth. It has to do with the wife recognizing God’s role for the man as the head (Ephesians 5:23) and voluntary, willingly placing herself under his headship recognizing that this is God’s plan for the home.

The husband has responsibilities as well. There are two words used in these verses relating to the husband’s treatment of his wife. The word “head” is used to illustrate the order of responsibility in the home. The husband is to lead in the home (Colossians 3:18) and guide the family with Christian character. The word “love” is also used in this passage and it is the Greek word agape (love), which means to act in the manner which is best for the object of our love. When husbands love in this manner, it will not be hard for godly women to “submit.” Notice the illustration; “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” In addition to the necessity of love in the marriage, husbands have a moral and ethical responsibility to provide for their families (1 Timothy 5:8). Many men today will not work and leave their families without the necessities of life. Many are on welfare because the husband and father will not work. God intends for men to work (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; Genesis 3:19). It is not ethically correct to shirk our God given responsibilities.

COHABITATION WITHOUT MARRIAGE IS UNETHICAL

We will conclude this material as we began by referring to the July/August 2000 AARP magazine article which really demonstrates the deplorable condition of ethics in America. Many young couples have lived in the sinful situation of cohabitation, choosing to live together as husband and wife without the “strings” being attached. The article states; “The new wedding vow: Let’s stay single. Three months after their first date, widowers Shirley Schoener and Ed Poole, then 69 and 77, were talking about marriage. But Shirley got cold feet. She was afraid she’d lose her late husband’s benefits if she walked down the aisle, so the New York City couple moved in together. Marriage just didn’t seem practical, says Shirley.” This is a clear example of situational ethics. The situation in which they found themselves seemed to be resolved in just living together. Sin never will resolve a problem (1 John 4:4-8).

CONCLUSION

We have only touched the hem of the garment in this material. God placed obligation and restrictions in the institution of marriage. Men have tried in vain to change what God intended. But try as they may, His word still reigns supreme. His word is the last word on all religious matters. Marriage is ordained

of God and He has set in place the laws which govern it. Malachi 2:15-16 gives a summation to the need for ethics in the marriage. By inspiration Malachi said; "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously." The relationship between a husband and wife will stand the test of time if, and only if ethical matters are learned and adhered to by both parties. The world view will be kept out of the marriage when proper ethics are practiced (1 John 2:15-17).

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Can A Christian Serve In The Armed Forces?

Michael P. Wyatt

On September 11, 2001, I was holding a gospel meeting in another town. The local preacher and I were enjoying our time together and getting better acquainted. The news came on of the terrible tragedy about the planes crashing into the towers and the Pentagon. Like most Americans we were shocked and horrified. We could not believe that such a thing could happen and did happen on American soil. As we began discussing the events that had transpired and what our country's response to such acts of terrorism would be, my preacher friend said to me, "I'll put the green back on and go over there and fight." And then he asked me, "wouldn't you?" And my response caught him off guard, I believe, when I answered, "No!" I quickly added that I would go if called upon and do what I could do, but I would not be engaged in combat. As we began to give our sides to the warfare issue it was very clear that we had diametrically opposite views. But here is the interesting point: we both believed, in the long run, that we each had the right to our view as long as we did not make our view binding on others. We agreed that we were still brothers, and I believe, became even closer in appreciation of each other. We had shared something with each other that not too many people are willing to talk about. We both agreed that each one must decide in their own heart what they can conscientiously do or refrain from doing during time of war. I believe that is where this issue should be decided, with the individual.

Reasons for My Changing View

I grew up during the Viet Nam War. I fully believed that I would be drafted to fight in that war as soon as I graduated High School. During those days the armed services were able to draft people into service, and numbers were drawn each year that represented birthdays, and that was the order in which you were drafted. When I was a freshman, my number was in the 200's. When I became a sophomore my number was in the 100's. My junior year my number was in the 80's. My senior year my number was six. I thought full well that my number was up and I would get that letter from the Defense Department, like so many others did, informing me of when I should report for duty. But the year I graduated from High School they stopped the draft. And there has not been a draft since. Young men turning eighteen still must register with selective service, but the draft is not being utilized at this time. Yes, during that time I would have gone and "done my duty," which would have included combat. But I have had a change of mind.

In the mid to late 70's I had a change of heart on this issue. I was in preacher training school and my life had changed. I no longer believed that it was my "duty" to go overseas and kill the enemy. I did have a desire to go overseas, but to teach the gospel. More of a seek and save mission than a search and destroy mission. This belief was solidified in my mind through a debate we had among our class at preacher training school over the carnal warfare issue. Our class was divided right down the middle with five students on each side. I have heard that another class tried to debate the issue, but it was halted after the two sides nearly got into a fist-fight. Such was not the case with our class. Without bitterness and insults, well maybe a little harmless fun, we were able to discuss what we believed the Lord wanted us to do in war time. I don't believe we changed anyone's beliefs, but we firmed up our own. Again, each side agreed that the individual should decide what they can conscientiously do or refrain from doing.

The Original Question

The question for this topic is whether or not a Christian can serve in the armed forces. And my immediate answer is, "Yes!" That might be confusing to some because often times the "pacifist position" is believed to teach that we are against being involved in war completely. Perhaps there are as many pacifist positions as there are non-pacifist positions. My idea of the pacifist position is that I believe in supporting my country, but not in combat and taking other people's lives.

To get a better understanding of the issue, I decided to talk to an enlistment officer in the town where I live. After discussing the issue with him, my conclusion is that things have changed in the military. This Staff Sergeant informed me that only about 20% of the armed forces is combat. There are many areas of service, such as: service and support; medical; computer; office, etc.. He stated that a recruit could choose a field of service and if he was a conscientious objector, one who does not believe in taking another person's life, all he had to do is choose a particular field where he/she can serve without engaging in actual combat. Yes, a person can be a conscientious objector and still serve in the armed forces. The recruit must go through basic training, which includes becoming totally familiar with the maintaining and using of a weapon. But the recruit could also decide whether or not he/she would go into the field of combat. You see, we are thankful that in the United States one is not required to serve in a combatant way; he/she can request some other way to serve their country and still be subject to the powers that be, and loyal, and an asset to their nation.

Have the Armed Forces Changed?

The recruiter told me that the armed services have changed. It is more in the field of protecting and helping. The idea of combat being just about killing is no longer the case. This recruiting sergeant was involved in Desert Storm, and said that they could not even fire their weapons at the enemy unless the enemy shot first. Even if the enemy shot over their heads they could not return fire. The enemy also had to be identified first, and then, if they commenced with hostile fire, they could then engage. The sergeant said that, in Desert Storm, the enemy was poorly clothed, fed and armed, and they willingly surrendered, realizing that they were better off as our prisoners than in their own army. And of course, we gave them food and help.

Have the armed services changed? I am not the one to answer that question for a lack of experience. But I know that my perception of it has changed. Again, my answer to the question: Can a Christian serve in the armed services? is yes! And many do. And if the draft was started again and my number came up, I would serve in some capacity without being involved in combat. If you believe you can serve in a combatant way, as my preacher friend I mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, that is between you and God.

The Old Testament and War

Many make the argument that under the Old Testament dispensation the people of God engaged in wars with divine approval. There are more than thirty-five references in the Old Testament in which God commands the use of force. In the New Testament, it is said that the author of Hebrews extols the historical conquerings of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and

Samuel – men who became mighty in war and who put foreign armies to flight (Hebrews 11:30-34). It is also said that this argument is the first response and also one of the most definite facts of the issue.

I do not believe that the correlation between Old Testament battles and common warfare today is correct. In the majority of the battles of the Old Testament it was the people of God fighting the enemies of God. Who was the leader of God's people? God, and He was the One who gave them victory. The whole situation of "church and state" was different then. The government was God! God led them in those battles. He allowed them to destroy the Canaanites. He gave the orders against the Philistines. Many times God won the battle without the people doing much of the actual killing. Read the account of Elisha in Second Kings chapter six. Is this what we are talking about with warfare today?

Who Are God's People Today?

When God was leading the people in combat in the Old Testament you can truthfully say that to fight against God's people was to fight against God. Can that be said today of any nation? The only people that belong to God today are those who make up His church. Does one particular nation today belong to God? Are our national interests in line with the cause of Christ? I believe that God still blesses our nation through His providence, and I continue to offer my prayers in that direction. But our first allegiance is to the Kingdom of God which has members in every nation. It would be difficult for me to don the uniform and train for combat and remember the universality of the church. I read of a young man who attended Oklahoma Christian College from Tokyo. He studied with some of the young men from school and was baptized in Christ. He returned home to Japan after graduation. Should war between the United States and Japan again come, what should this young man and the boys who brought him to Christ do if they meet on the battle field?

During the Civil War, James A. Garfield and T.B. Larimore fought on different sides. Garfield was commissioned a Lieutenant-colonel, and formed the 42nd Regiment of the Ohio Volunteer Infantry. These crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky to slay Confederates, some of whom were members of the church as he was. He led his troops all the way to Corinth, Mississippi. In the Southern Army was Larimore, also a member of the Lord's church and a gospel preacher. If those two men of God personally met in battle it is doubtful that they felt like exchanging in a holy kiss, or of praying together. It is hard during combat to remember the universality of the Lord's church.

Soldiers in the New Testament

Some point to the mention of soldiers in the New Testament as justifying Christians being soldiers (i.e., Acts 10, Cornelius). Again, I believe that Christians can serve their country in the armed forces without violating their conscience in regard to combat. Do you suppose that Cornelius "of the Italian band," after becoming a Christian, had he been transferred back to Italy and had been ordered to draw his sword on Paul's exposed neck, what would he have done? If Peter died the same day in the same way at the same place, as has been alleged, would Cornelius have slain the man who brought him to Christ? Paul and Peter were slain for being enemies of the state.

We read of the Philippian Jailer in Acts chapter eight. Here we read of him guarding prisoners when he is shown the gospel and becomes a Christian. We do not read anything else of his life after that. Did he remain a soldier? If he had been transferred to combat, would he have killed Christians? We know nothing of his life after conversion, and that is the same with Cornelius. I can't see using these two men or anyone else for that matter as soldiers in the New Testament justifying Christians engaging in combat today.

Justified Wars

Some say it is wrong for a Christian to help his nation in a war of conquest, but wrong for him not to help in a war of defense. Who is qualified today to decide which war is justified? Or whose side is justified? Because a nation has an inherent right to defend its existence from unlawful aggression, it cannot be said that war is never justified. But again, to what involvement should the Christian have?

Whose side was justified in the Civil War? Was the war in Viet Nam a justified war? Who defines the type of war? Napoleon said he never fought an aggressive war, but only for defense. The Japanese said they were being encircled by Western Imperialism, and only struck the first blow at Pearl Harbor in a defensive war. Consider for just a moment that we are Japanese citizens and our nation has declared a defensive war. Was it justified? Americans say no, but what do the Japanese say? And who is right? Anyone who attempts to define a defensive war or a just war is likely to hear those on the other side making opposite claims.

Conclusion

As I mentioned earlier in the lesson, I am thankful that in the United States one is not required to serve in a combatant way; he/she can request some other way to serve their country and still be subject to the powers that be, and loyal, and an asset to one's nation. I believe this is a personal matter, and that every Christian must decide in his own heart just what he can conscientiously do or refrain from doing during time of war. Christians will want to be a part of the solution to the problem, and not be a problem themselves. We will want to be the salt of the earth, and shine as Christ's light (Matthew 5:13-16).

This has been a difficult lesson for me to do, mostly because there are not many Scriptures in this lesson. As stated several times in this lesson, I believe a Christian may serve in the armed forces. The subject of whether a Christian may serve in combat, in my mind, is a matter of opinion and not a matter of doctrine. Any point that I made in this lesson that may seem to be against those who take the non-pacifist position is not meant in that fashion. They were brought up because they are the difficult arguments that I have wrestled with in making my decision. I have taken my position and do so with a clear conscience. I hope that you can do the same. I believe that you have the right to your decision on this matter of opinion. I pray that you will allow me mine.