



Chapter Twenty Four: How Then Shall We Live?, Part 1

Right Standard

“According to the Word”

Focus on the Authority of God’s Commands
Command Ethics

1Co 7:19

What matters: “Keeping the Commandments of God”

In counseling:

Question: “What does God’s Word say about the problem?”

The Normative Perspective:

What does Scripture say about our duty, our ethical norm, our obligation? • What does Scripture say about our situation? • What does Scripture say about what God is working in us?

A Christian Deontological Ethic

WCF 16.7

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also

Heidelberg Catechism

No. 91

“Only that which arises out of true faith, conforms to God’s law, and is done for his glory...”

Right Goal

“To a Right End, the Glory of God”

Focus on the History of Redemption
Narrative Ethics

Gal 6:15

What matters: “New Creation”

In counseling:

Question: “What’s the problem?”

The Situational Perspective:

God’s actions in creation and providence • God’s goals in creation: his glory (1Co 10:31), the evangelization and nurture of people of all nations (Mt 28:19-20); the success of his Kingdom (Mt 6:33) • What are the best means of accomplishing God’s purposes? • What are the consequences of our actions? If we do “x,” will that enhance the glory of God and his blessing on his people? What is the best means to realize God’s purposes?

A Christian Teleological or Consequential Ethic

Right Motive

“From a Heart Purified by Faith”

Focus on the Presence of the Holy Spirit
Virtue Ethics

Gal 5:6

What matters: “Faith Working through Love”

In counseling:

Question: “How do I need to change by the power of the Holy Spirit within me?”

The Existential Perspective:

How must I change if I am to do God’s will? What is happening in this situation to my heart-relation to God? What wisdom does my regenerate heart bring (because Scripture doesn’t script everything — see the books of Proverbs & Ecclesiastes, for instance; and see Col 1:9; 2:3-4; 3:14-17)? What is at stake in any ethical judgment for my sanctification, my inner character?

A Christian Motive- or Virtue-Based Ethic