

**EAST AFRICA BIBLE COLLEGE**

**CONFERENCE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

# **Christian Ethics**

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**INTERNATIONAL PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH**

**ELDORET, KENYA**

**East Africa Bible College**  
**Christian Ethics**  
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**EABC Mission Statement:**

To provide Biblical and theological training to equip men and women for the work of Christian ministry.

**EABC Vision Statement:**

To be a Christ-centered Bible college training men and women to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations of Africa.

**EABC Motto:**

Training to Reach the Unreached

**Course Description:**

This class is not a study in ethics in general but in Christian ethics in particular. As Christians, we believe that the system of ethics and morals presented by God and described in Scripture is the supreme standard of ethics since it is based on supreme authority, God's Word. Thus, we do not adopt different ethical systems in various settings. We always operate in harmony with God's system. Thus, this course studies the Biblical principles for living a Christ-centered life in this world and the worldview that makes such a lifestyle possible. The course also presents a method that Christians can use in deciding what is right and wrong for human behavior. Two central themes in this course are the ethical teachings of Scripture and the importance of having Christ-centered motivations/mindsets behind our actions and ethical decisions.

**Course Goals:**

- A. To develop a foundation for a Christ-centered lifestyle and ethics.
- B. To obtain an understanding of the Biblical principles of Christian ethics.
- C. To understand the importance of developing a Christ-centered worldview.
- D. To understanding how Christ Jesus serves as our perfect example in living ethically according to the standards of the Bible

**Resource Texts Used:**

- A. Tillman, William M. and Timothy D. Gilbert, *Christian Ethics: A Primer* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986).
- B. Olupona, Jacob K., ed., *African Tradition Religion in Contemporary Society* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1991).
- C. Stassen, Glen H. and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003).
- D. Barnette, Henlee H., *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961).

# Christian Ethics

## Scripture Memorization Instructions

Instructions: Memorize the following in regards to the 10 Commandments

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17

Commandment 1: You shall have no other gods before me.

Commandment 2: You shall not make idols.

Commandment 3: You shall not misuse the name of God.

Commandment 4: Remember to keep a holy, Sabbath day.

Commandment 5: Honor your father and mother.

Commandment 6: You shall not murder.

Commandment 7: You shall not commit adultery.

Commandment 8: You shall not steal.

Commandment 9: You shall not make false statements.

Commandment 10: You shall not covet anything.

Also Memorize **Mark 12:30-31** from any translation you choose.

# CHRISTIAN ETHICS

## East Africa Bible College

### Introduction

#### I. What is Ethics

##### A. General Definition

1. Ethics describe an objective standard for determining right and wrong; an agreed upon system of rules to live by.
2. Every community and profession has a system of ethics by which members are expected to live.
  - i. Sometimes these ethical systems are well established and/or even written down.
  - ii. Sometimes these ethical systems are unwritten or inconsistent.

##### B. Christian Ethics:

1. Christians also have a system of ethics. We do not rely primarily are ethical standards that arise from the world or even from our own communities.
2. Christian ethics is a systematic explanation of the teaching of Scripture and the example of Jesus applied to the total life of the individual (privately and publicly) and actualized by the power of the Spirit.
3. The ethical system of Christian is based on living in the pattern set by God and demonstrated in Christ Jesus.
4. Christians hold to the Christian ethics above every other ethical system.

##### C. Other Terms in Ethical Studies:

1. Culture: A shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs, and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behaviour.
2. Morals: customs or habits held by individual people; personal standards of right and wrong
3. Worldview: a theory of the world used for living in the world; how one views the world

#### II. Why Study Christian Ethics

##### A. Ethical Living is Commanded by God

1. Leviticus 19:1-2
2. Colossians 3:17
3. 2 Corinthians 5:10
4. Romans 12:1-2
5. Note that these commands should not be viewed as burdens we must bear. These are blessings. God has invited us to live in a better way that that of the

world and we are able to achieve this calling by the power of the Holy Spirit and with the help of ongoing discipleship. Ethics is a daily discipline and not only an overarching system.

B. Ethical Living is an Act of Love Towards God

1. Daniel 3:13-18
2. John 14:15
3. Matthew 15:3-9

C. The Giving of Ethics is God's Act of Love Toward Us

1. Proverbs 11:3
2. Luke 12:2-3
3. Luke 16:10
4. Galatians 6:7-10
5. 1 Timothy 6:10
6. Philippians 2:1-19

# Understanding Worldview

- I. The Importance of Worldview
  - A. Everyone has a system of ethics.
  - B. This system of ethics is greatly influenced by worldview.
  - C. Before we can examine and learn ethics, we must first examine and discover our worldview.
- II. Defining Worldview
  - A. A worldview describes a consistent (to a varying degree) and essential sense of existence and provides a framework for generating, sustaining, and applying knowledge.
    1. Generating knowledge – our worldview determines what we will learn and accept as true.
    2. Sustaining knowledge – our worldview determines what information we will retain (keep) and what information we will reject.
    3. Applying knowledge – our worldview determines how we will use the information we have.
  - B. James Sire writes, “A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world.”
    1. Presuppositions are fundamental or basic ideas that we believe to be true. Our presuppositions may be:
      - i. True
      - ii. False
      - iii. Somewhere in between
    2. We may or may not be aware of our worldview:
      - i. Conscious worldview – we are aware.
      - ii. Unconscious worldview – we are not aware.
    3. We may or may not always operate within our worldview:
      - i. Consistent – always operate within our worldview.
      - ii. Inconsistent – sometimes operate outside our worldview.
- III. Elements of a Worldview:
  - A. Epistemology
    1. Epistemology is the standard or basis with which I decide what is true and false.
    2. Worldview is the filter through which we evaluate all information.
  - B. Ontology

1. Ontology is the examination of reality.
  2. What is real? What is the world made of?
- C. Aesthetics
1. Aesthetics refers to our value systems.
  2. This answers the question of what is real and what is the highest good.
- D. Teleology
1. Teleology refers to the purpose and meaning of life
  2. Why are we here and what is the meaning of history?
- IV. Eight Essential Questions Answered by Our Worldview
- A. What is prime reality – what is really real?
  - B. What is the nature of external reality – what is the world around us?
  - C. What is a human being?
  - D. What happens to a person at death?
  - E. Why and how is it possible to know anything at all?
  - F. How do we know what is right and wrong?
  - G. What is the meaning of human history?
  - H. What are my personal, life-orienting, core commitments?
- V. Forces that Shape Worldview
- A. Foundational Elements
    1. Family
    2. Culture
    3. Society
    4. Experiences
  - B. Additional Elements
    1. Religion
    2. Education
    3. Experiences
- VI. Examining Worldview
- A. Christian ethics cannot even be attempted without first developing/adopting a Christian worldview.
  - B. People may label themselves as Christian but live their life with a worldview that is anti-Christian.
- VII. What is a Christian Worldview
- A. A Christian worldview is one that is ultimately based on the Bible and committed to loving service to God.
    1. Many will say they have this worldview but operate within the framework of a non-Biblical worldview.

2. Your worldview is less determined by what you say and more by what you do.
3. Christians may look different within different cultures but ultimately they all maintain certain central truths (see eight questions answered below).

B. The Christian Worldview's answers to the eight questions of worldview.

1. What is prime or ultimate reality?

- i. Ultimate reality is God.
- ii. Everything that was and is and will be comes from Him. As Creator, He is the source of all creation. He Himself was not created but has created everything. He is ultimate reality. Absolutely everything exists in submission to Him. We can know him from the Scriptures:
  - a. God is Infinite – He always was and always will be. He was never created. This means that He is the only self-existent being. Everything else relies on Him.
  - b. God is Triune – God is one yet exists in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This means that even though God is the only God, he exists in community, relationship, and love.
  - c. God is Personal – God has made a way for us to not only know about Him but also to know Him personally as savior & friend.
  - d. God is Transcendent – God is above the world. He is not bound or controlled by anything. He sustains the world.
  - e. God is Omnipresent – God is everywhere all the time.
  - f. God is Omniscient – God knows everything that can be known.
  - g. God is Omnipotent – God is able to do anything He needs to do.
  - h. God is Sovereign – God is ruler over everything. Everything exists in submission to Him.
  - i. God is Good – His nature and character is good. That means we can trust God and know He has our best interests in mind. God's goodness is demonstrated in two ways:
    - 1) Justice/Holiness – God has a standard of living that he expects people to live by. It's not a standard of bondage but freedom from sin. (1 John 1:5).
    - 2) Love – God is love and has shown His love to us through Jesus (John 3:16; 1 John 4:6).

2. What is the nature of external reality (what is the world around us)?

- i. The world around us (external reality) is the creation of God.
- ii. God created everything out of nothing (ex nihilo) because only God is uncreated.



- a. Genesis 1-2 is the true story of how God created the heavens and the earth.
      - b. God spoke everything into existence from nothing.
    - iii. God created a natural system under which the world would operate.
      - a. The world does not operate in chaos but under a system put in place by God.
      - b. Since God created that system, He can operate outside of it (through miracles) but everything else must operate within it.
      - c. However, this system includes human free will and decision. Even though God knows what we will do, our actions are not predetermined by Him.
3. What is a human being?
- i. A human being is a unique creation that is created in the image of God.
    - a. We are not animal. We did not evolve from animals but were created in God's image.
    - b. We are not like God in power and majesty but we are like God in our ability to make decision.
      - 1) We are not bound to instincts, environment, or circumstances. We can decide for ourselves what is the best decision and course of action.
      - 2) As Christians, we also have the Holy Spirit to help us make the right decisions.
    - c. Since we are created in God's image we can have relationship with God.
      - 1) We were created to be in relationship with God.
      - 2) People feel the emptiness of being out of relationship with God.
    - d. Even though we were created in God's image we are all iniquitous with varying qualities, skills, and physical features.
      - 1) Discrimination towards certain people is unacceptable as we are all created in the image of God.
      - 2) There is unity among diversity in God's creation.
      - 3) God demonstrated his creativity in creation. Human diversity and creativity is a product of God.
    - e. Because humans are created in God's image, humans have a unique level of intelligence.

- f. Because humans are created in God's image, humans have dignity and value.
    - 1) Murder and abuse is wrong since the object of that type of destruction is God's image.
    - 2) Every life is precious and should be valued.
  - g. God wants us to live as people created in His image.
  - ii. Human beings were created good but experienced a fall in Genesis 3 as a product of rebellion against God (sin).
    - a. When mankind used his free will to sin, mankind chose to rebel against God. This sin had several results:
      - 1) The image of God was marred in mankind.
      - 2) Mankind felt guilt, shame, and fear.
      - 3) Mankind experienced separation from God.
      - 4) Mankind experienced spiritual death and eventual physical death .
    - b. The Fall of Man is still affecting us today.
      - 1) Man is selfish, seeking to please self rather than God.
      - 2) Mankind is sinful, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
      - 3) Mankind is morally corrupt, less able to discern good, evil, and the will of God and less willing to live by the standards of God.
      - 4) Mankind is alienated (separated) from God and unable to restore that relationship alone.
  - iii. Mankind needs a savior to be reconciled to God.
    - a. Mankind looks for salvation in a number of ways:
      - 1) Good Works
      - 2) Other Religions
      - 3) Worldly Things
    - b. Jesus is the only way to experience true salvation and liberation from sin and the Fall.
  - iv. Mankind can be saved and redeemed through the work of Jesus.
4. What happens to a person at death?
- i. When a Christian dies:
    - a. The person is glorified, they receive a fully redeemed body.
    - b. The person enters into eternal life with God and His people in heaven.

- c. The person will continue to exist forever in unhindered relationship with God.
  - ii. When a sinner dies:
    - a. The person is not destroyed or ceases to exist.
    - b. The person enters into eternal torment in hell.
    - c. The person experiences eternal separation from God.
- 5. Why and how is it possible to know anything at all?
  - i. Human beings can know both the world around them and God because God has given humankind the capacity and ability to learn and know.
    - a. God created people with a level of unique intelligence.
    - b. However, not everything can be known or comprehended using human intelligence alone.
  - ii. Human beings can know both the world around them and God because God has given humankind special revelation about Himself and the nature of the world around us.
    - a. Revelation (revealed information) about God and the things of God comes in two forms:
      - 1) General Revelation – information available to all mankind through creation and nature (Rom. 1:20).
      - 2) Special Revelation – information about God and the things of God available only through supernatural means and divine initiative. The greatest source and example of special revelation is the Bible.
    - b. All human beings have access to general revelation but special revelation only comes through the work and initiative of God.
  - iii. The Christian worldview believes and accepts that humankind can have knowledge from both natural means and supernatural means
    - a. In creation God gave humankind (naturally) the intelligence to learn, the capacity to comprehend, and the ability to retain information
    - b. Throughout history God has given humankind special revelation (supernaturally) which reveals information otherwise unavailable, incomprehensible, and undecipherable to humankind.
  - iv. Some worldviews deny the reality of natural revelation while others deny the reality of supernatural revelation. Christians affirm both have a place for humanity.

6. How do we determine what is right and wrong?

- i. For Christians, the source of ethics (right and wrong) is found in God.
- ii. Many modern worldviews view ethics as a subject of relativity.
  - a. Relativity in terms of ethics means that there is no absolute standards with which to judge what is right and wrong.
  - b. Each person (or culture or society) decides for itself what is right and wrong. What is wrong for you may not be wrong for me. What is right for me may not be right for you.
  - c. This moral relativism, however, is not found in Christianity.
- iii. Christians believe that there is an absolute standard with which to measure what is right and wrong.
  - a. That absolute standard is found in God.
  - b. That absolute standard is true for all people, at all times, everywhere.
- iv. God's standard of right and wrong (Christian ethics) is revealed to us Scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ.
  - a. The Bible is to be the absolute moral authority in the life of the believer.
  - b. Jesus Christ is to be the absolute moral example by which all believers should pattern their life.

7. What is the meaning of human history?

- i. Christians see human history as a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfilment of God's purposes for humanity and the universe
- ii. Human history is not:
  - a. Reversible – history cannot be undone or changed.
  - b. Repeatable – history cannot be relived.
  - c. Meaningless – God is using human activity to bring out his divine will and purpose.
  - d. Cyclical – history is not an eternal cycle but has a beginning, middle, and end.
- iii. The Christian understanding of human free will does not conflict with this view of human history.
  - a. God is so powerful; he can use our decisions to bring about his will. Thus, human decisions are not fixed or predetermined.

- b. Even though God knows the decisions humans will make, He did not pre-ordain those decisions. Humans choose freely what they do and do not do.
      - c. God is sovereign over the entire world and can intervene whenever He wishes. Often in history you can see the intervention of God. Yet the majority of human history is composed of human decisions and consequences. God works through the human free will to bring about His purposes.
    - iv. Christians view human history in the following pattern:
      - a. Creation
      - b. Fall
      - c. Redemption
      - d. Glorification
8. What are my personal, life-orienting, core commitments?
- i. The core-commitment of all Christians is to serve and glorify God forever.
  - ii. Our commitments are determined by and reveal our worldview.
  - iii. For Christians, life-orienting, core commitments are determined by scripture: Please read these verses during your study time today.
    - a. Micah 6:8
    - b. Matthew 6:33
    - c. Psalms 86:12
    - d. Mark 12:29-31
    - e. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
    - f. Matthew 28:18-20
    - g. Revelation 5:9-12
    - h. 1 Corinthians 10:31

## VIII. Confronting Culture

### A. Two Unhealthy Ways to View Worldly Culture and Christianity

#### 1. Syncretism

- i. Scott Moreau defines syncretism as the “blending of one idea, practice, or attitude with another.” He goes on to specify that Christians define syncretism as “the replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements.”
- ii. Syncretism is forcing Christianity to accommodate to cultural aspects which are actually in opposition to Christian belief and teaching.

#### 2. Ethnocentrism

- i. Ethnocentrism is the view that one's own culture is always superior to others. This view diminishes the value of different cultures and communities.
- ii. When Ethnocentrism is brought into Christianity, it often claims that even Christianity must be practiced only in ways that are compatible and/or rooted in a certain culture.

## B. Developing the Christian Worldview

### 1. Mark 7:1-13:

- i. Three Issues
  - a. Problem
  - b. Solution
  - c. Warning
- ii. See also Matthew 15:1-7

### 2. The Problem: Tradition/Culture has been exalted above God's Word

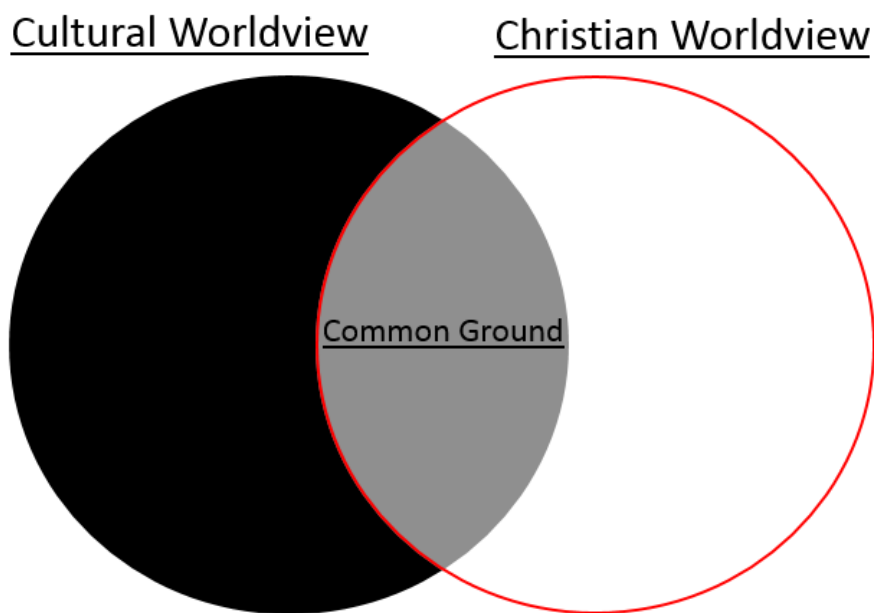
### 3. The Solution:

- i. Exalt the Word of God above Culture and Tradition.
- ii. Jesus challenged the culture of the Pharisees in view of God's Word.
- iii. Jesus and the Bible challenges every culture.
- iv. Why does Christianity challenge our culture:
  - a. Proverbs 14:12
  - b. Romans 12:1-2
    - 1) If you conform to the world you will be unable to discern the way of God
    - 2) But if you are transformed by the Word you will be able to know the way of God
- v. How do we face the challenges of Jesus to our culture?
  - a. Our life must be lived in accordance with God's Word and patterned after Jesus Christ.
  - b. We must adopt a Christian Worldview even as we remain residents of this world and members of our local communities.
  - c. In order to do this we must examine and evaluate our culture using the Bible as our standard and Jesus as our example.
    - 1) The Importance of the Word of God as our standard
      - 1. Psalm 119:105
      - 2. 2 Peter 1:19-21
    - 2) The Supremacy of Jesus Christ as our example
      - 1. Philippians 2:5

## 2. Hebrews 4:15

- vi. This process of developing a Christian Worldview within the context of our community has four steps
  - a. We must train our mind to understand and see the world as God does. This takes time but it begins with a definite commitment to do so.
  - b. Using the Word of God as our guide, we can identify the aspects of our culture which are in harmony with the Word of God. This is the overlap between our culture and the Kingdom of God.
  - c. We should pray that God will redeem the aspects of our culture that can bring glory to God. We can also work to make that happen.
  - d. We must abandon the aspects of our culture that are in conflict with the Word of God

vii. Diagram:



### 4. Warnings

- i. Failure to exalt God's Word over Man's culture will nullify the Word of God in your life (Mark 7:13)
  - a. You can not separate your culture and faith
  - b. Christianity should invade every area of your life
  - c. Matthew 6:24

- ii. There are aspects in every culture that are in conflict with the Word of God
  - a. If we continue to practice things that are in conflict with the Word of God, have we really been transformed or are we just conforming to the patterns of this world.
  - b. Refusing to abandon anti-Biblical cultural beliefs and practices leaves us in bondage.
  - c. Hebrews 12:1
- iii. We must be willing to personally abandon the aspects of our own culture that are in conflict with the Word of God.
- iv. We must be willing to publically (but respectfully) confront the aspects of our surrounding culture that are in conflict with the Word of God.
- v. Unless we do this, our efforts to live ethically according to the Bible will be limited and unsuccessful in the long-term.



## Steps for Applying Christian Ethics

### I. Introduction

- A. Adopting a Christian Worldview prepares believers to practice Christian Ethics. A Christian worldview does not merely teach us right behavior, its helps us develop right perspectives, understandings, and motivations which will naturally produce good decision and right behavior.
- B. Without a Christian worldview, we may occasionally behave like a Christian but consistently hold on to concepts that are opposed to Christianity. This will ultimately lead us to make bad decisions and demonstrate bad behavior.
- C. Rather than focus on outward actions, we must begin by submitting to inward renewal of both the heard and the mind (Romans 12:1-2). When God changes our heart and our mind, we will bear the fruit of righteousness. Outward demonstrations which do not arise from inward renewal will be only temporary.

### II. The Steps of Making Ethical Decisions in Christianity

- A. Step 1: Compile and analyze all the facts.
  - 1. We cannot make best decisions with limited information. Even if you think the know all the fact, exhaust all efforts to investigate and gather information.
  - 2. Whether we are deciding for ourselves what we should do or helping others make the best decisions, we need as much information about the issue as possible.
  - 3. Sometimes quick decisions are necessary but we would do well to delay our decisions as much as possible until we have sufficient facts and information.
- B. Step 2: Pray and seek for the help and discernment of the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. We must begin with prayer. Prayer serves four purposes in Ethics:
    - i. Prayer is a demonstration that we are trusting in God and relying on His help.
    - ii. Prayer prepares our mind for the task of making ethical decisions.
    - iii. Prayer is how we invite the help of the Holy Spirit.
    - iv. Prayer is how we hear from God.
  - 2. Prayer is the beginning but not the end of making ethical decisions. The help of the Holy Spirit will often involve illuminating our minds to what God has already spoken through his Word in the Bible. The Holy Spirit will only instruct us in ways that are in harmony with Scripture.
- C. Step 3: Consider the whole of Scripture.
  - 1. Examine what the Bible says about the issue at hand.
  - 2. Do not base your decision on one Scripture alone. Look at every passage available to give the fuller picture of God's heart and instructions on the issue.

3. Confirm all Old Testament teaching with the New Testament. Sometimes Jesus or other New Testament writers will clarify Old Testament teaching with New Covenant perspective. The Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament but we study the Old Testament now through the lens of the New Covenant. Thus, New Covenant teaching must inform our understanding and application of Old Testament passages.
4. Ultimately, Scripture will be your guide. Even if you feel you know what decision to make, confirm all decisions with Scriptures. If you find you are out of harmony with the Bible, make a different decision that is in harmony with Scripture.
5. Finally, do not wait for ethical crises to turn to the Bible. Consistent Bible study will preemptively prepare us to make good decisions. (see 2 Timothy 4:2).

#### D. Step 4: Consult with others

1. We need to identify people with whom we can consult when we are facing ethical decisions. We may not need to consult much with others for common ethical decisions but when difficult situations arise, we can often find value in the counsel of others. (see Acts 15:25).
2. We should also invest in resources that we can use to better understand the Bible. Such resources include Bible school notes, study Bibles, Bible commentaries, and other resources to aid understanding. Many of these resources are available online but we **MUST** be careful about using the internet for Bible study. Only use reputable sites because there is much on the internet that is wrong, bad, or deceptive.

#### E. Step 5: Make a decision in light of your faithful research, prayer, study, and consultations.

1. Our best decisions are informed by Scripture, prayer, and the input of others.
2. Uncertainty in regards to ethical decisions is a sure indication that more prayer, study, and consultation is needed. Do not feel ashamed for not knowing. Often, our best studies and discoveries in Bible study arise from places of uncertainty.

#### F. Step 6: Act upon your decision.

1. Good decisions must lead to right action. As James writes, faith without works is dead (James 2:26).
2. Our actions also set the example for Ethical beliefs and behavior in our family and community.

### III. The Wrong Method for Making Ethical Decisions – Situational Ethics

- A. Situation ethics is an ethical method that holds to the idea that the primary concern in making ethical decisions is the situation itself. We should cater our decisions to every situation.
- B. This is wrong because our ethical standards are set by the Bible, not by the situation.
- C. Consider the dangers of situation ethics as seen in Judges 17:6.

## **Ethical Systems in the Bible:**

### **Old Testament Law for New Covenant Believers**

#### **IV. The Nature of Old Testament Law**

- A. The purpose of the Law
  - 1. To establish God's model for ethical living and right worship
  - 2. To show the people how to live in right relationship with God.
  - 3. In Romans 3 we see that another purpose of the law was to make people aware of their sinfulness, the inability to save themselves, and their need for a savior to save them.
- B. Salvation under the Old Testament Law included:
  - 1. Observing the Law perfectly
  - 2. Continuously participating in the sacrificial system of shedding of blood to cover sins
  - 3. Ultimately, however, this method has limited power since it was contingent upon human effort (Hebrews 9:7; 10:3).
- C. Jesus and the Law of Moses
  - 1. Christ was prophesied in the law (Deut. 18:18; Micah 5:3; Isaiah 53; Acts 3:22-23)
  - 2. Christ fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17; Romans 10:4; Ephesians 2:14-16)
  - 3. Christ became the ultimate sacrifice (Matthew 26:8; Romans 3:23-26; Ephesians 1:7; Mark 10:45; Revelation 1:5b; Hebrews 9:11 – 10:29)
  - 4. Christ lived under the law to redeem those under the law (Gal. 4:4-5)
  - 5. Christ recognized the authority of the law (Luke 10:25-26) but also the weakness of the law and the need for a new covenant (Luke 22:20)
  - 6. Christ kept the law perfectly (John 8)
- D. Paul's New Covenant Teaching on the Law
  - 1. Romans 3:19-24 - No one is able to keep the law perfectly (this is supported by the rest of the Old Testament in light of Israel's history and the message of the prophets The law was given to make us aware of our sinfulness
  - 2. Galatians 2:15-16 – No one can be justified by the law
  - 3. Romans 8:3-4 – God sent Jesus who fulfilled the law for us so that we can stand righteous before God
  - 4. Galatians 3:19-25 – the purpose of the law is to point us to Jesus
  - 5. We need a savior who can do for us what we can not do for ourselves.
  - 6. The law gives us an eager expectation/ anticipation for Jesus
  - 7. The law (recognizing our sinfulness) and our inability to keep it (recognizing our depravity) leads us to faith in Jesus Christ who can keep the law and give us his righteousness.

8. Ultimately, however, Paul was not against the Old Testament law. He was against a attempting a method of salvation based on following the law but he never abandoned the law. Paul often quotes the law and used it as his basis for his New Covenant ethical teachings and understanding.

## **V. The Traditional Approach to the Law**

- A. Traditionally, New Testament believers have divided the law into three categories:
  1. Moral Law
  2. Civil Law
  3. Ceremonial (Religious) Law
- B. The “civil law” are those applying only to the ancient nation of Israel because they dealt with the country’s legal system.
- C. The “ceremonial law” are those applying only to the religious of ancient Israel (before Jesus) because they dealt with the temple worship, sacrifices, and festivals. Many of these laws were fulfilled in Christ.
- D. The “moral law” are those universal, theological principles found among the Old Testament Law that applies to all people, at all times, everywhere. These laws are not limited to one nation or one form of worship. They reveal the character of God and apply to all everyone.
- E. This system of categorizing the Old Testament Laws taught that New Covenant believers were only responsible for keeping the moral law but not the ceremonial and civil law. While this system may be helpful in our interpretation of the Old Testament Law, good Biblical interpreters understand that there is truth for today behind every verse. Therefore, we should not allow this approach to cause us to neglect parts of the Law.

## **VI. Putting the Law in Proper Context**

- A. The law reveals the heart of the law-maker. Every law given by God teaches us something regarding God’s value system and character. Even if we are longer bound to a particular law we can still learn from that law and honor the principle behind the law. For example:
  1. The laws concerning sacrifice have been fulfilled in Christ. We are no longer required to take animals to the Jerusalem Temple for sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus is all sufficient.
  2. Even though that law has been fulfilled, there is still a principle from God there that we should learn and honor. God requires atonement for sin through a blood sacrifice. Sin is so serious that blood is required for forgiveness.
  3. We honor this law not by slaughtering animals on an alter but by taking seriously the problem of sin and the great price that Jesus had to pay to resolve that problem.
- B. The Status of the Old Testament
  1. The Mosaic (or Old) Covenant no longer functions as God’s primary covenant with humanity. The Old Covenant was the foundation for the New Covenant which now

serves as God's primary covenant with humanity. This does not mean that we reject the Old Covenant but rather that we allow the Old Covenant to inform our understanding of the entire Covenant system between God and humanity and we interpret the Old Covenant through the New Covenant.

2. Therefore, as mentioned above, many of the actual commands of the Old Testament law are no longer applicable to us. Nevertheless, we still find great truth in the principles those law convey.
  - i. Jesus did not remove the righteous demands of the law but rather he fulfilled those righteous demands.
  - ii. Jesus is also the ultimate interpreter of the Old Testament law.
3. Thus, we must interpret the law through the teachings of the New Testament.
  - i. Many laws no longer apply to us in terms of direct, literal mandates to be carried out.
  - ii. However, the Old Testament law does contain timeless principles and lessons that are applicable to us as New Covenant believers.
4. Nevertheless, certain Old Testament Laws still apply to us in terms of direct, literal mandates and these are those laws dealing with the morals and ethics of the Kingdom of God as seen chiefly in the 10 commandments.

## **VII. Practical Advice for Interpreting Old Testament Law**

- A. Step 1: Understand what the text meant to the original audience.
  1. After careful reading, consider the nature of the particular law or laws you are studying. Try to identify how this particular law related to the old covenant and original readers.
  2. Identify clearly what the law demanded of the original audience. What is the idea behind the command that God is trying to communicate.
  3. Pay close attention to the information found in your study of the historical/cultural context.
- B. Step 2: Determine the differences between the original audience and us today. Some of those differences include:
  1. We are saved within the New Covenant.
  2. We are not living in the Promised Land.
  3. We do not worship in a Temple or make sacrifices. Rather God lives inside us.
  4. Today we live in the reality of Jesus and His work.
  5. We have different governments, different neighboring religions, and difference ways of living (modern lifestyles).
- C. Step 3: Find the universal principle – That message within or behind the law that applies to all people at all time everywhere.

1. Remember, each Old Testament law (moral, civil, and ceremonial) contains a universal truth that is applicable to all of God's people, everywhere, at all times. Even though we do not follow the specific law today, we are responsible to the universal/theological principle behind that law.
  2. The law reveals the heart of the lawmaker.
  3. Ask: "What is the theological principle that is reflected in this specific law?"
- D. Step 4: Cross into the New Testament. Does the New Testament teaching modify the principle? If so, how?
1. For every principle we find the Old Testament, we must see if the New Testament affirms, modifies, or adds to that principle.
  2. In this step we develop a New Testament (New Covenant) expression for the universal/theological principle from the Old Testament (Old Covenant). We do not deny the validity or the importance of the Old Testament but we do affirm and acknowledge that we live in a New Covenant with a New Testament.
  3. Remember that the universal principle must address the entire Christian community. These principles are the heart of God's message for His church.

## **Ethical Systems in the Bible:**

### **The Ten Commandments as Ethical Principles**

- I. The Old Testament Contains the Law of God for Israel, God's chosen people.
  - A. There are 613 individual laws listed in the Books of the Law
  - B. Those laws are summarized in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).
    1. The first four commandments address man's relationship with God.
    2. The last six commandments address man's relationship with other people.
- II. The Ten Commandments
  - A. **Commandment 1: You shall have no other gods before me.**
    1. This deals with the heart of Christian dedication and first question of worldview.
      - i. If God is our supreme reality, we will love, honor, and obey Him.
      - ii. If we hold another "god" above the God of the Bible, we will have a system of ethics that is not in harmony with the Bible.
    2. It is sinful to worship any "god" or thing other than the God of the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).
    3. This commandment is for our benefit:
      - i. God does not need us but we need Him.
      - ii. If we dedicate ourselves to Him we dedicate ourselves to the One who has our greatest good in mind. All others will only leave us wanting but God will fulfill and save us completely.
    4. How can we obey this commandment every day?
      - i. We can obey this commandment in our daily life by demonstrating love, honor, and obedience to God.
      - ii. We obey by praying to God, living for God, and loving like God.
    5. New Testament Affirmation: Matthew 22:37 and 1 Corinthians 8:6
  - B. **Commandment 2: You shall not make idols.**
    1. The commandment deals with our Christian commitments and answers the eighth question of worldview.
      - i. We must give all our worship and commitment to God (Exodus 20:5). He is a jealous God and does not want to share us.
      - ii. If we truly belong to God, we will keep Him (and His lifestyle) as the priority in our life.
    2. Idol worship is sinful and can take place in various forms.
      - i. Traditional idol worship involved sacrifice and worship to false gods.

- ii. Modern idol worship can take place when we center the majority of our time and adoration on anything other than God.
  - iii. Many people worship the idols of material possession and power and their decisions are based not on serving God but serving self or serving whatever brings material possessions and power.
3. This commandment is for our benefit:
- i. Klaus Bockmuehl writes, “You are no longer responsible for success, only for obedience.”
  - ii. This commandment frees us from the burden or selfishness and self-promotion.
  - iii. Most forms of idol worship is rooted in selfishness. The worshipper is worshipping to get something from what is worshipped. Idols are not worshipped based on loving relationship but selfish ambition.
4. How can we obey this commandment everyday?
- i. Check your motivations. Are your actions motivated by God or self-promotion?
  - ii. Examine where your time, money, and resources are going. Make sure it is all committed to God.
5. New Testament Affirmation: 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 John 5:21; and 1 Cor. 6:9

**C. Commandment 3: You shall not misuse the name of God.**

1. This commandment deals with the value of God (worldview question 1 – ultimate reality).
- i. God’s name is the highest name in the universe and deserves the most respect because God is the ultimate being of the universe.
  - ii. Psalms 7:17; 83:18
2. God does not prohibit us from using His name. Rather, we are commanded never to use it in vain.
- i. We are allowed (and encouraged) to use God’s name in the following:
    - a. Identifying ourselves (Exodus 3:10; 1 Peter 2:10; Acts 11:26).
    - b. Praise and Worship (2 Sam. 22:50; Psalms 18:49; Rom. 15:9).
    - c. Prayer (Psalms 116:17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:21).
    - d. Testifying and Witnessing (Exodus 5:1-3; Acts 9:15).
  - ii. We are never allowed to use God’s name in vain, that is, in a way that is inappropriate, abusive, or misrepresentative of God.
    - a. Inappropriate – God’s name is not to be used in any way that devalues or dishonors that name.



- b. Abusive – God’s name is not to be used in any way that is insulting, foul, or cruel.
- c. Misrepresentative – God’s name is not to be used with anything that is contrary to His nature.

3. This commandment is for our benefit:

- i. God’s name, when used appropriately, powerful for the believer (Jeremiah 10:6).
- ii. God’s name, when misused, brings a curse on the user (Exodus 20:7).

4. How can I obey this commandment everyday?

- i. When you use God’s name, use it respectfully, appropriately, and in a manner that honors God for the value he possesses as the ultimate being of the universe:
  - a. When you take God’s name as a believer, represent it properly.
  - b. Praise and worship God regularly.
  - c. Pray in God’s name appropriately and often.
  - d. Testify or witness in and to God’s name as you have opportunity.
  - e. Treat God’s name with care and concern for its reputation.
- ii. Never use God’s name in a way that diminishes his value

5. New Testament Affirmation: Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17 1 Pt. 4:11, 14

#### **D. Commandment 4: Remember to keep a holy, Sabbath day.**

1. What is the Sabbath Day

- i. God set aside the first Sabbath during the creation event (Genesis 2:1-3). God’s Sabbath was not for His benefit because God never gets tired and needs no rest. God instituted the Sabbath for mankind’s benefit (as an example for us). See Mark 2:27
- ii. The Jewish people continued to mark the Sabbath (even until now) as a day of rest and worship.
- iii. The Jewish Sabbath was held from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.
- iv. Christians, however, celebrated their Sabbath on Sunday to mark the day Jesus was resurrected (Acts 20:7).

2. The Purpose of the Sabbath Day

- i. A day dedicated to worship and honor God.
- ii. A day set aside for rest and rejuvenation.
- iii. A day for spiritual and physical renewal.

3. Why is this a commandment?

- i. When we fail to make time for God, our spiritual condition will weaken and our relationship with God will fade.
  - ii. When we fail to rest our bodies, our physical condition will weaken and our relationships with other will fade.
  - iii. When we take a Sabbath we demonstrate that our faith is in God and not in our ability or the things of the world.
  - iv. Even though every day should be dedicated to God, the Sabbath day is the day we renew our commitment and ensure that we are dedicating every day to God.
4. New Testament Affirmation: Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-8
5. How can I obey this commandment every day?
- i. Make sure you take at least one day to devote to rest and worship each week.
  - ii. Let your Sabbath day be the day you renew your strength and relationship with the Lord so you can live for God the rest of the week.

**E. Commandment 5: Honor your father and mother.**

1. This commandment deals with the seventh question of worldview, what is the meaning of human history.
  - i. It is no accident that God has given you to your parents and your parents to you.
  - ii. God uses your parents to accomplish His will in your life.
  - iii. For this reason we should honor our parents. This Biblical honor includes:
    - a. Obedience (Proverbs 1:8)
    - b. Love (Proverbs 17:6)
    - c. Respect (Proverbs 23:22)
    - d. Care (1 Timothy 5:4)
2. This commandment address giving respect to those placed in authority over us
  - i. Parents are the first authority figures we are placed under. We must learn to honor them because it will be our responsibility to honor those in authority over us for the rest of our life.
  - ii. Just as we cannot choose our parents, we do not always choose those placed in spiritual, social, or political authority over us. Yet, we are instructed in scripture to honor them as far as possible.
    - a. Romans 13:1
    - b. Acts 5:29
3. This commandment addresses the role of family in the ministry.

- i. The Biblical order of priority and loyalty is as follows:
    - a. God (Matthew 10:37-39)
    - b. Family (Mark 7:9-13)
    - c. Ministry (2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6)
  - ii. We must be careful not to put something in the wrong place. Many ministers and leaders have failed in this.
4. New Testament Affirmation: Ephesians 6:1-3; Mark 7:10 (Other NT references have been given above).
5. How can I obey this commandment everyday?
- i. Honor your family in the way set forth in scripture.
  - ii. Honor authority in the way set for in scripture.

**F. Commandment 6: You shall not murder**

1. This commandment deals with the third question of worldview, what is a human being?
- i. As Christians we understand that all human beings (regardless of race, tribe, gender, or color) are created in God's image. Therefore, every human being as unique level of value in the world.
  - ii. The value given to humans as people carrying God's image make murder and abuse wrong. Murder destroys the image of God.
2. Murder
- i. We must understand that murder is defined as intentional, premeditated (planned) killing of a human being.
    - a. Intentional – done with the purpose of taking life.
    - b. Premeditates – planned and thought out beforehand.
  - ii. This definition allows for self-defense. We are permitted in Scripture to defend ourselves against attacks (Numbers 35:16-25).
  - iii. Intentional, planned murder, however, is a grave sin against God.
3. Abortion and Infanticide
- i. Abortion is defined as the killing of an unborn fetus in the mother's womb. Abortions can be caused in a number of ways including physical violence against the mother, ingesting drugs or anything intended to harm the fetus, and physically attacking the fetus with a foreign object.
  - ii. Infanticide is the intentional murder of a newborn baby whether by actual killing, starvation, or abandonment.

- iii. Abortion and Infanticide are both forms of murder and just as sinful as killing to a fully grown person.
- iv. The value of a human being does not increase with age or development. We are valuable to God and carry God's image from the time of conception.
- v. Since all human beings are created in God's image, Christians should never participate in abortion or infanticide. Even though the fetus is unborn, even in the womb it carries the image of God and has value as such. (Psalms 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5).
- vi. Christian leaders should counsel against abortion and assist with family with either raising the child or offering it for adoption or institutional care. Murder is never an option.
- vii. Some see abortion as acceptable when it is necessary to save the life of the mother. These instances are rare but do happen. In these cases, the decision for abortion must be weighed carefully, prayerfully, and with the guidance of medical and spiritual leadership.

#### 4. Neglect and Abuse

- i. Even though neglect and abuse do not always lead to death, it is a factor in many deaths.
- ii. Since God's image dwells in people, our duty as Christians is to enhance life, not diminish or destroy it. Therefore, neglect and abuse is also sinful. It has the potential to lead to death and is certainly intentional and planned.
- iii. Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9

#### 5. War

- i. Killing is a result of war. For this reason war must be approached with a great deal of caution for the Christian.
- ii. See the Bible study on war and the Christian viewpoints beginning on page 46.

#### 6. Death Penalty

- i. The death penalty is used by many governments to punish the most evil of criminals. This means of punishment is certainly planned and intentional killing. How is the Christian to respond?
  - a. While the Bible commands the individual believer never to murder, it seems to give governments the option of using the death penalty (capital punishment) as just means of punishment (Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:1-5).

- b. While the death penalty remains an option for governments, it should not only be used when guilt is certain and reasonable trials have taken place (Numbers 35:22-30).
- ii. Mod Justice
  - a. Mob justice or “community justice” is when the group (usually unofficial) stands in judgment over the accused and acts swiftly to bring punishment in the form of brutal beating or death. Many times this is done on the streets with much confusion.
  - b. Christians should never participate in mob justice because of a number of reasons:
    - i. It does not allow for fair trials as described in scripture (Numbers 35:22-30). The death penalty is reserved for governing authorities and not to be taken into the hands of individuals. If the person is wrongly accused and killed, the crowd is guilty of murder.
    - ii. It supersedes the governing authorities. In Romans 13:1-5, Paul writes that God has put this form of punishment in the hands of the government and not individual people. Even if those governing authorities are corrupt or ineffective, we are to trust God for them and not take matters into our own hands when it comes to the death penalty.
    - iii. For the individual, vengeance is to be left in the hands of God (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19). We can (and should) submit wrongdoers to the governing authorities but not take vengeance into our own hands.

## 7. Euthanasia

- i. Euthanasia can be defined in two ways:
  - a. Granting or inducing death to those who desire death out of great pain, misery, sickness, or life-threatening injury.
  - b. The purposeful killing of those who are deemed no longer valuable to the community.
- ii. In either category, Euthanasia should never be practiced by the Christian because it is essentially murder.
- iii. Euthanasia is often described as merciful yet we know that life and death are only to be given and taken by God (Job 14:5).

- iv. Euthanasia is not, however, allowing death to come to those for whom death is imminent and inevitable.

#### 8. Suicide

- i. Suicide is murder of the self. While accidental suicides do occur, there are cases where people intentionally and willfully kill themselves.
- ii. God opposed to suicide because it is destruction of human life and a form of murder.
- iii. As Christian leaders, we must counsel against suicide in all cases, regardless of the circumstances.
- iv. We must also be aware, however, that some suicides are brought on by mental problems whereby the person killing themselves are not even in a stable state of mind.

#### 9. New Testament Affirmation: John 10:10 and Revelation 22:15

#### 10. Jesus and the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment

- i. Jesus specifically addressed the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment in Matthew 5:21-22.
- ii. Jesus does not diminish this commandment but actually adds another level of warning: if you murder in your heart, it is as if you have already murdered with your hands.
- iii. In the mind of Jesus, even our enemies have great value (Matt. 5:44).
- iv. Human life is so valuable to God that even the thought of taking it or destroying it is wicked in the sight of God.
- v. How valuable do you hold human life?

#### 11. How do I obey this commandment everyday?

- i. The opposite of taking life is enriching life. Our role as Christians is to help make life better for people.
- ii. To obey the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is more than just not murdering. We should obey this commandment by doing what we can to make life better for the world.

### **G. Commandment 7: You shall not commit adultery**

#### 1. Adultery is sexual unfaithfulness in the context of marriage.

- i. The commandment against adultery is a commandment for marriage in the Biblical sense.
- ii. God wants us to have a healthy, Biblical marriage.

#### 2. What about Polygamy?

- i. Polygamy is a difficult subject to address because there seems to be much Biblical support of polygamy in the Old Testament.
- ii. However, the New Testament makes a definite stance for monogamy:

- a. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus teaches on Old Testament doctrine that in marriage two people, one man and one woman, join together to become one flesh. Just as God made one man and one woman for each other in the beginning, that remains the plan of God today.
- b. When Paul addresses married couples, he speaks in the singular, the wife (one) should honor the husband and husband should love his wife (one). (Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 7)
- c. Paul specifically limited church leaders to people with only one spouse (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).
- d. In Revelation 21:9; God is described as having one bride. Even though the church is His bride and the church is made up of many different people, God is not seen as having many wives but one bride.
- e. The early church leaders were either not married or had only one wife. Even though polygamy and promiscuity were culturally acceptable in their day, they chose not to participate because of their religious beliefs.
- f. In light of the New Testament, the IPHC expects its members (and all believers) to be monogamous if they choose to marry. If a polygamous family receives Christ, we do not demand that the family be broken. Polygamous marriage within a believer's home subsequent to salvation, however, is grounds for church discipline.

### 3. Homosexuality

- i. Homosexuality is defined as sexual attraction and activity with a member of the same sex.
- ii. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul explicitly condemns homosexuality.
- iii. God's plan from the beginning has been that marriage and sexual activity should only be realized between one man and one woman.
  - a. Homosexuality is a type of sexual perversion that comes as a result of the fall within certain people (Romans 1:18-27).
  - b. Homosexuality has been accepted in much of the Roman culture yet the church stood against it as a sin against God.
- iv. Homosexuality is wrong and should be condemned yet we are called to minister even to the homosexuals. They need Jesus and we should not

be afraid or unwilling to lovingly share with Gospel with any sinner, including homosexuals.

4. Jesus and the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment:

- i. Jesus specifically addressed the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment in Matthew 5:27-30.
- ii. Jesus does not diminish this commandment but actually adds another level of warning: If you commit adultery in your mind, it is as if you have already committed adultery with your body.
- iii. In the view of Jesus, sexual purity should be kept even in the mind of the believer.

5. How do I obey this commandment every day?

- i. We must remain sexually pure in body and in mind. Sex within Biblical marriage is perfectly acceptable in God's sight. Yet sex in any form outside the Biblical parameters is sinful and breaks the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment (including pornography).
- ii. Our responsibility as Christians is not only to abstain from adultery but strengthen the marriage relationship as instructed by Paul.

**H. Commandment 8: You shall not steal**

1. This commandment deals with a fundamental aspect of human relationships.

- i. Human relationships in the Kingdom of God are based on love. Theft exhibits a lack of love, respect, and concern and reveals an inward selfishness that destroys relationships with both God and mankind.
- ii. The act of stealing in scripture is closely associated with and described as a work of Satan (Job 1-2; John 10:10).

2. This commandment forbids robbery and/or destruction of property not belonging to you.

- i. Thievery in any form is a sin.
- ii. Willful destruction of another's property is also a form of stealing and forbidden by God.
- iii. Love motivates us to give, not steal. Robbery or destruction of property is an act of contempt and evil (Isaiah 61:8).

3. Greed and Contentment

- i. Greed is the root of many thefts. Greed was also an aspect of the first sin. Greed is an attitude of irrational and gluttonous want (an unhealthy desire for things) found within the sin nature that must be put to death is one is to live for Christ and obey the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment.
- ii. The opposite of greed is contentment. Contentment is satisfaction with what we have. We should desire to have the things God wants us to



possess but learn to be satisfied (content) with what we have in the present. As Christians, we much exchange greed for contentment (Philippians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5).

#### 4. Business Practices

- i. This commandment addresses both personal and business practices. The same ethics we hold to in personal life must be held in our business life (Leviticus 19:36; Proverbs 11:1; Amos 8; Matthew 22:21).
- ii. According to Scripture, we cannot separate our business from our faith. A Christian must be completely honest in all transactions, including taxes.

#### 5. Taking Advantage of People

- i. Stealing goes beyond theft of property. We can steal from people by misusing them (Isaiah 10:1-4).
- ii. Slavery, forced labor, oppression of the weak or venerable, and financial cheating is all forms of stealing and forbidden by the Bible (Deuteronomy 24:15).

#### 6. Tithing

- i. God declares in Malachi 3:6-12 that it is possible to steal from Him. When we fail to pay our tithes, we have stolen from God.
- ii. The tithe is 10% of all income earned (even secular income). This 10% is to be given to God regularly (Leviticus 27:30).

#### 7. Kidnapping

- i. Even though children are not property, taking a child or adult against the will of the person or their parents (in the case of a child) is a sin and forbidden by this commandment.
- ii. Holding a person against their will for any reason is sinful (Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7).

#### 8. Jesus and the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment

- i. In Luke 6:29, Jesus commands us to be people who give even to those who would steal from us. While we do have the right to protect our property, Jesus desires for us to be characterized as people who give, not hoard or take.
- ii. In Luke 19, Jesus deals with Zacchaeus, a corrupt tax collector who came to Jesus. When Zacchaeus experienced the love of Jesus he committed to repay back everything he had stolen four times over and give continuously to the poor.

9. New Testament Affirmation 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Ephesians 4:28

10. How do I obey this commandment everyday?

- i. We must exchange greediness from contentment (Luke 12:15; 1 Timothy 6:6).
- ii. We must be people who give and never take or receive unjustly (Acts 2:25; 1 Timothy 6:18).

**I. Commandment 9: You shall not make false statements.**

1. The 9<sup>th</sup> commandment is important to God because God is a God of truth.

- i. Lying is offensive to God because it is opposite to his nature (Psalms 31:5).
- ii. Lying demonstrates a lack of respect for God and others and considered sinful in God's Kingdom (1 Corinthians 13:6; Psalms 51:5-6; Zachariah 8:16; Revelation 21:8).

2. Controlling the Tongue

- i. In James 1:26 and 3:5-9 we see that the tongue (which is the means by which we lie) is one of the most problematic parts of the body.
- ii. As a Christian, we must tame the tongue as an act of love towards God and others.

3. Speaking the Truth in Love

- i. The community of believers suffers when we lie (Acts 5) but is strengthened with we speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15, 25).
- ii. Telling the truth may be difficult but it is loving.

4. Cheating

- i. Cheating is a form of lying since by cheating you claim something (knowledge, accomplishments, etc.) that are not your own. Thus cheating is sinful and offensive to God (Acts 5; 1 Corinthians 6:7-9).
- ii. Cheating is deception and God forbids deception (2 Cor. 4:1-2).

5. Gossip

- i. Gossip is also a form of bearing false witness against a neighbor (Proverbs 16:28, 26:20; Romans 1:29).
- ii. Gossip usually arises during a conflict.
- iii. Jesus gives us a model for conflict resolution in Matthew 18:15-17.
  - a. First, we should settle any problems directly with the person involved.
  - b. Second, if the person will not be reconciled, we involve two or three advisors.

- c. Third, if the person is still not reconciled, we take the matter to the church leadership.
- d. We never deal with conflict by gossiping.

6. New Testament Affirmation: Colossians 3:9 and Romans 9:1

7. How do I obey this commandment everyday?

- i. Do not deceive, lie, or cheat.
- ii. Speak truthfully in all matters in love and concern for the community.

**J. Commandment 10: You shall not covet anything.**

1. What is “coveting?”

- i. Coveting, like greed, is an unhealthy desire for something that does not belong to you.
- ii. Coveting is sinful because it is the product of a selfish heart. Selfishness is the roots of covetousness and essentially all sin.
  - a. Adam and Eve sinned because of selfish desires.
  - b. Satan sinned out of a selfish desire.
  - c. Selfishness is evil and offensive towards God.

2. This commandment both summarizes the 10 commandments and covers all other sinful activity.

- i. Covetousness or selfishness can lead to more and more sinful activities.
- ii. Covetousness or selfishness causes us to break many of the other commandments.

3. Selfishness must be Sacrificed

- i. The sacrifice of the selfish will aids in enabling us to obey God’s commandments.
- ii. Galatians 2:20 and Philippians 2:3

4. How do I obey this commandment everyday? Be selfless, not selfish.

**III. Jesus’ Summary of the Ten Commandments**

A. Jesus gives his summary of the Ten Commandments in Matthew 22:34-40 and Matthew 7:12. His ethical teachings often included affirmations of or explanations of the ten commandments.

B. Matthew 22:34-40

- 1. Love the Lord with all you have.
- 2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

C. Matthew 7:12

- 1. “The Golden Rule”
- 2. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

## **Ethical Systems in the Bible:**

### **New Testament Ethical Teachings**

- I. Jesus Teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7):
  - A. While Jesus often taught on issues of ethics and morals, the most extensive teaching in Christian living is found in the Sermon on the Mount. You can often turn to these passages of scripture for direction on Christ-like behavior.
    1. Matthew 5-7 is actually the largest block of teaching recorded in the Bible and much of it is related to Christian ethics (behavior and morals).
    2. The Sermon on the Mount is also significant because it was taught by the initiative of Jesus. Much of the teaching given by Jesus in the Gospels is in response to the questions or actions of others. The Sermon on the Mount was unprovoked suggesting that it was on the mind of Jesus independent of any question or action of man. It was the heart of God to give us this information even if no one asked for it. This is what Jesus wanted to say.
  - B. The Character of the People of God – The type of people God blesses (Matt. 5:3-12):
    1. Humble
    2. Mournful
    3. Meek
    4. Desiring Righteousness
    5. Merciful
    6. Pure
    7. Peacemakers
    8. Persecuted for the Gospel
  - C. Salt and Light
    1. Christians are called to be positive influences in the world; they represent God in their decisions and lifestyles (Matthew 5:13-16).
    2. Salt had multiple uses in the time of Jesus. It was used to preserve and flavor food, give nutrition to people, prepare fields planting, and other uses around a home.
    3. Light also served many functions for people in the time of Jesus. Sunlight was the primary source of light in pre-electricity times, sunlight was necessary for crops to grow, and sunlight was essential for so many activities.
    4. Even the Roman philosopher Pliny wrote that “there is nothing more useful than salt and sunlight.” Jesus compares his people to these two common but valuable elements of human life.

5. Michael Wilkins observes, “the metaphor indicates that Jesus’ disciples are vitally important to the world.” However, Jesus reminds us that salt must be salty and light must shine to serve its purpose. We must be positive influences in our communities for the Kingdom of God.
- D. The Value of the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-20). Here Jesus affirms that the Old Testament is still the Word of God and a valuable source of truth even for New Covenant believers.
- E. Jesus explains Exodus 20:13 in Matthew 5:21-26
1. Murder is wrong but simply not killing anyone is not how we fulfill this commandment.
  2. We should put away all malicious thoughts towards others include thoughts that arise from tribalism and racism.
  3. We must resolve conflict quickly and appropriately. Jesus gives a model for conflict resolution in Matthew 18:15-17.
  4. Ultimately, we must respect the life and value of other people.
- F. Jesus explains Exodus 20:14 in Matthew 5:27-30
1. The prohibition against adultery addresses not only what we do with our bodies but also what we do in our minds. We must eliminate impure thoughts that demean others.
  2. We must take sin seriously and aggressively deal with those things that make our eyes and our hands (and our whole body) to do evil.
- G. Jesus explains Deuteronomy 24:1 in Matthew 5:31-32
1. Divorce is not an option outside certain limited Biblical reasons
    - i. Marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 5:32)
    - ii. Spousal abandonment (1 Corinthians 7:15)
    - iii. Abuse (The whole of Scripture indicates that God values life more than marriage so if a person’s life is in danger on account of a marriage, divorce may be permitted, see Leviticus 19:16.)
  2. Healthy marriages and relationships are necessary.
- H. Honesty and Truthfulness (Matthew 5:33-37)
1. Christians should not misuse the name of God by making and breaking promises and oaths. See also James 5:12.
  2. Christians must speak and act with integrity.
- I. Jesus explains Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; and Deuteronomy 19:21 in Matthew 5:38-42.
1. Revenge is not the priority of the believer. We value generosity above revenge.

2. This radical approach to community life demonstrates radical trust in God.
- J. Jesus explains Leviticus 19:18 in Matthew 5:43-48.
    1. The people of God practice extreme love.
    2. The parable of the Good Samaritan also demonstrates this principle (Luke 10:25-37).
  - K. Humility (Matthew 6:1-4).
  - L. Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15).
  - M. Fasting (Matthew 6:16-18).
  - N. Devotion to God (Matthew 6:19-24).
  - O. Trusting in God (Matthew 6:25-34).
  - P. Judging Others (Matthew 7:1-6).
  - Q. Faithfulness of God (Matthew 7:7-11).
  - R. The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).
  - S. Righteousness Living (Matthew 7:13-14).
  - T. The Fruit of Christians (Matthew 7:15-23).
  - U. The Assurance of Christianity (Matthew 7:24-27).
- II. The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23):
- A. The fruits of the Spirit are the results of being led by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit. The true test of spirit filled living is not speaking in tongues but living a lifestyle characterized by the qualities listed by Paul in this passage.
  - B. The Fruit (or results or product) of the Spirit in your life should be:
    1. Love (the opposite of hate)
    2. Joy (the opposite of despair)
    3. Peace (the opposite of hostility)
    4. Patience (the opposite of impatience)
    5. Kindness (the opposite of cruelty)
    6. Goodness (the opposite of evil)
    7. Faithfulness (the opposite of disloyalty)
    8. Gentleness (the opposite of violent)
    9. Self-Control (the opposite of foolishness)
- III. Paul's Description of Love
- A. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul gives us the Christian definition of love. Love is an essential to master if we are to live out Christian ethics.
  - B. Love is more vital in the life of the believer than spiritual, mental, and physical power (1 Corinthians 13:1-2, 8-12).
  - C. Generosity and sacrifice must be motivated by love (1 Corinthians 13:3). Generosity and sacrifice can be self-seeking if done out of the wrong motivations.

D. The Qualities of Love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) – Love is. . .

1. Patient
2. Kind
3. Not envious (not covetous but content)
4. Not boastful (but is humble)
5. Not proud
6. Not rude
7. Not self-seeking (not selfish)
8. Not easily angered (but is gentle)
9. Keeping no record of wrongs (this means forgiving)
10. Not delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth.
11. Always protecting
12. Always trusting
13. Always hoping
14. Always persevering (faithful)
15. Never failing

# Ministerial Ethics

*By Paul Oxley*

- A. Ministers must live as holy and righteous children of God.
1. Ministers must be born-again.
  2. Ministers must live in a manner worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 1:15; Ephesians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:12.
- B. All ministers must meet the requirements (for deacons and bishops) found in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-13.
- 3
- C. Ministers must have godly motives for ministry. The proper motivation for ministry is love - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13.
1. Love is the greatest gift God has given us.
  2. "Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love - make it your aim..." - 1 Corinthians 14:1 (The Amplified Bible).
  3. "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us..." - Ephesians 5:1,2 (NASB).
  4. Because God is love and His Spirit dwells within you, every word, action and attitude should be in line with the question, "is this what Love would do?"
- D. It is unethical for a minister to elevate himself above the authority which has been given by God - Matthew 20:20-28.
1. God gives ministers the authority and the ability to serve. This is a Biblical principle.
  2. "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" - Matthew 20:28 (New American Standard Bible).
  3. **Those who function as ministry gifts in the Body of Christ** are to be supporting the rest of the Body, not ruling the Body.
    - a. Serve and minister to the flock; do not lord over them - 1 Peter 5:2,3; Matthew 20:25-27
    - b. Ministers are not responsible to exercise authority over the faith of others but to work with them as fellow laborers. Through your teaching and by your personal example, encourage others-,to use their faith in God.  
**"Not that we have dominion [over you] and lord it over your faith,** but (rather that we work with you as) fellow laborers (to promote) your joy, for in [your] faith [that is, in your strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God] you stand firm" - II Corinthians 1:24 (The Amplified Bible).
  4. Ministers who exercise authority in a wrong manner will be brought to nothing. They will be given over to their enemy, Satan, for destruction - Jeremiah 34:12-20.



5. Do not encourage or allow the people to make you an idol' or to lift you above Jesus - Matthew 10:24.

4

- E. Ministers must be gentle when dealing with the people yet they must also speak with authority - Isaiah 40:10,11, Colossians 4:6

- F Each minister has the responsibility to obey the laws which govern the country in which he or she ministers - I Peter 2:13-17.

1. Submit yourselves to the laws - I Peter 2:13,14.
2. As you do this, ignorant and foolish men will be silenced by your obedience - I Peter 2:15.
3. Do not use your heavenly citizenship (Philippians 3:20) as an excuse to disobey the law of the land - I Peter 2-16.

- G. Ministers must have a good reputation with those in the secular world and those in the Christian community.

1. 1 Timothy 3:7 in The Amplified Bible reads, "Furthermore he must have a good reputation and be well thought of by those outside [the church]...."
2. When the Apostles chose helpers in ministry, one of the requirements was that those people be of honest report. This refers to those who are known to be of excellent reputation and upright character.
3. An example of this character is seen in III John 1'-. "Demetrius has warm commendation from everyone, and from the Truth itself; we add our testimony also, and you know that our testimony is true, - III John 12 (The Amplified Bible).

- H. The standard for a minister's thought life is found in Philippians 4:2.

1. Any thinking which does not measure up to this standard is not in line with Christian ethics.
2. We serve a Holy God and His standards are holiness in every area, thought, word and deed.

- I Ministers must avoid sexual sin.

1. Maintain your home life and marriage. Follow the principles of godly marriage found in Ephesians 5.
  2. Make a definite decision that you will not engage in moral uncleanness or sexual sin - Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.
  3. Do not allow thoughts of immorality to enter or remain in your mind. Keep your mind renewed with the Word. Attack Satan's thoughts with the name of Jesus and the Word of God - II Corinthians 10:5.
- 4 Stay out of situations where the enemy or your flesh could tempt YOU.

5. Run from sexual sin and its temptation - Colossians 3:5,8.
- a. "Away then with sinful, earthly things; deaden the evil desires lurking within you; have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust and shameful desires; don't worship the good things of life, for that is idolatry."
 

"but now is the time to cast off and throw away all these rotten garments of anger, hatred, cursing, and dirty language" - Colossians 3:5,8 (The Living Bible).
  - b. **If you are married, run to your spouse.** Together see: godly counsel as necessary.
  - c. If you are not married and you are having difficulty overcoming sexual sin and its temptation, go to a minister who you can trust for godly, wise counsel. Go to a mature minister who will not talk to others about you and your situation. Go to a minister who knows how to keep a confidence.
- J. Your goal as a minister must be that of pleasing God -1 Thessalonians 2:4. The desire to please men or envy the works of men is unethical according to Christian standards. You are not to try to please men (even godly men) for personal gain - Jude 4,16; John 12:42,43
- K. Ministers must avoid every appearance of evil - 1 Thessalonians 5:22. Listed are some practical helpful suggestions.
1. Never minister alone with a member of the opposite gender other than your husband or wife.
  2. It is best not to meet with a person of the opposite gender (alone) in private or in public. Always have someone with you, preferably your husband or wife. When counseling, have other people present in the room or counsel with the door open, being sure that others can see you at all times. By doing this, you will avoid being falsely accused.
  4. Do not say, "It could never happen to me. I would never be falsely accused." if you have this attitude you will not be on guard against the enemy's traps and deceptions. (This challenges the enemy to try to defeat you.)
- L. Ministers must not use the ministry for personal gain.
1. Money must never be your motive for ministry - I Peter 5:1-3.
    - b. In Ezekiel 34:1-10, the ministers were not properly functioning in their Biblical roles.
      - (1) They were to feed the sheep, not to concentrate on feeding themselves - verses 2,3,8.
      - (2) God was not pleased with the attitudes and actions of these shepherds - verse 9 and 10.
      - (3) Placing yourself and your fleshy desires above the needs of the people is against Christian ethics.

2. There are no special privileges for those who are in the ministry.
  - a. Matthew 23:1-14.
  - b. In the ministry it is improper to desire prestige or to be elevated above others.
  - c. In Micah 3:9-12, the Prophet Micah speaks to Israel by the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord, revealing the sin which had accursed and the result of that sin.
  
3. Ministers must never be manipulated by money.
  - a. in the Old Testament, the prophet Balaam displeased the Lord because he accepted money to prophesy - II Peter 2:1E,16.
  - b. if people give gifts, be sure they are not expecting something in return.
  - c. Do not take a bribe or allow someone to manipulate the ministry through money - Deuteronomy 16:19.
  
4. The proper attitude toward money is seen in Matthew 6:19-24; Romans 6:16,7  
Mark- 10:24,25~, - i Timothy 6:9-11; Acts 4-32.
  
- M. Ministers must be moderate (not excessive) in all things -Philippians 4:5.
  1. Do not live in a way which will bring offense to others or cause them to stumble - i Corinthians 10:31,32; Romans 24:16,21; II Corianthian2 6:3,4.
  
  2. Be moderate. Live like there is something more important in your life than worldly goods - 7- Peter 2:11,12.
  
0. Never misuse or abuse your position of authority in the church.
  1. Do not use the pulpit to promote anything other than the gospel of Christ.
  2. Do not use your position of authority to control or manipulate people's lives (Acts 20:29,30).
  
- P. Ministers must not criticize others or speak slander against anyone.
  1. Titus 3:1,2 tells you to "speak evil of no man".
  2. Ephesians 4:31 says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice."
  3. A critical attitude will eventually destroy a ministry.
  4. Never say anything which would cause the listeners to think less of a member of your congregation or other ministers - Ephesians 4:29.
  5. Whether in private or from the pulpit, do not verbally attack a person who disagrees with you.

## **II. Practical Advice For Survival In An Unethical World.**

- A. Many ministers try to be independent. God put us together in one Body, the Church. Ministers are not exceptions to the plan of God. We need each other.

1. Seek out godly fellowship with other ministers. Do not isolate yourself from Christian fellowship.
  2. Develop relationships with other ministers so that godly counsel can be gained in difficult times.
  3. Do not be opposed to working with another ministry or church to achieve part of the plan of God. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in this area. We are all part of the same Body of Christ.
- B. To maintain ethical standards you must avoid those who cause divisions and **offense in the Body of Christ - II Peter 2:1-3,12,13; Romans 16:17-19.**
- C. To maintain ethical standards ministers must avoid close (participating) fellowship with those in the world.
1. In I Corinthians 15:33 the Greek word ethos is used to describe ethics. In this verse, ethos is translated as meaning manners or morals.
    - a. "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals(New American Standard Bible).
    - b. "Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships, (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character" (The Amplified Bible).
  2. Psalm 1: 1 says, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" (New American Standard Bible).
- D, Concentrate on developing your character. **The ministry will reflect the minister.**
1. Walk in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23).
  2. Minister with the heart of the shepherd (I Peter 5:2-4).
- E. Do not measure what you are doing against other ministries or ministers. Measure yourself against God's Word, His standards, His principles for living and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Follow God's plan for the ministry as it pertains to and involves you.
- F. In Luke 22:31 Jesus warned Peter that Satan wanted to sift him. This is a warning for us today. The enemy wants to destroy our effectiveness, so ministers are the targets of concentrated demonic attack. Be aware of his strategies and temptations. Stand strong in your authority over him.
- G. When working with another Christian worker, do not undermine their authority and turn people against them for your own advantage -Luke 6:36,37.

- H. The attitudes you hold against others will become the attitudes others will develop against you. In other words, if you view others as incompetent and unable to do anything, then others will **also begin to think** that of you - Luke 6:31.
- i. When permanently leaving a church, for whatever reason, do not take any of the people of the congregation with you and start your own church. If you are going to start a new church it should be in a new area where there will be no possibility of any members of the church you left coming to your new church.

IV. Conclusion.

- A. The high standard of God's law of love should be your goal of thought and action in all your dealings in life.
- B. "But seek for (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom, and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides" - Matthew 6:33 (The Amplified Bible).
- C. "And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way" Luke 6:31 (New American Standard Bible).

# EAST AFRICA BIBLE COLLEGE

## Christian Ethics

### Bible Study on War

**Instructions: Read the notes and scriptures found in this Bible study (look up Scriptures in the Bible) and then write a brief summary (half a page to one page) of what the Christian response should be towards war. You may work in groups but each one must write his or her own response.**

#### I. Biblical references to "war"

- A. Old Testament - over 200 references to "war," for example
  - Exod. 17:16 - "The Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation"
  - Numb. 31:3 - "a 1000 from all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war"
  - Eccl. 3:8 - "a time for war, and a time for peace"
  - Isa. 2:4 - "Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war."
  - Micah 4:3 - "...never again will they train for war"
- B. New Testament - 18 references; for example
  - II Cor. 10:3 - "we do not wage war according to the flesh"
  - Heb. 11:34 - "men of faith...who became mighty in war"
  - James 4:1 - "source of your pleasures wage war in your members"
  - I Pet. 2:11 - "fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul"
  - Rev. 2:16 - "I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth"
  - Rev. 12:7 - "there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon..."
- C. Additional references to "fighting" and "violence" could be considered.

#### II. Defining "war" and its causes

- A. Definition of "war"
  - 1. A hostile conflict between two or more nations, states, communities or social groups employing force, violence, and/or armed confrontation.
  - 2. Such conflicts have been a constant feature of human history.
  - 3. Many nations view preparedness for war or defense as a necessity for survival.
- B. Causes of "war"
  - 1. selfish, covetous, greedy desire for gain
  - 2. defensive fear of injury or loss
  - 3. pursuit of glory, reputation, pride, ambition
  - 4. desire for power, dominion, supremacy
  - 5. passions of hatred, bigotry, revenge, extermination
  - 6. religious zeal, ideological quest

#### III. "War" and the Old Testament (Old Covenant)

- A. Nation of Israel
  - 1. Established by warfare, defeating and expelling former residents of Canaan land. Justified of:
    - a. Promise of God - cf. Gen. 12, 15,18
    - b. Retributive justice of God on Canaanites - cf. Judges 1:1-4; I Sam. 15:2
  - 2. Continued as means to maintain continuity and security of nation.
- B. God identified as leader of Israel
  - 1. Considered to be theocratic head and king of Israel - cf. Exod. 15:18; Ps. 49:2,3; 93:1,2
  - 2. Viewed as participating in their historical experiences, including war
    - Exod. 15:3 - "The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name"
    - Ps. 24:8 - "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle"
    - Joel 3:9,10 - "prepare a war; let the soldiers draw near. Beat your plowshares into swords. . ."
    - Isa. 31:5 - "Lord of hosts" (armies) - more than 200 times in O.T.
- C. Theological perspective of old covenant
  - 1. God is not a physical, blood-thirsty, war-mongering God
  - 2. Old covenant narrative is a pictorial, prefiguring in physical history of God's intentions for His people
    - a. Physical warfare is pictorial portrayal of spiritual warfare
      - (1) of good conquering evil
      - (2) of God defeating Satan
    - b. War regarded as necessary evil to achieve salvation of God for His people.
      - (1) restoration of Israel couched in apocalyptic, figurative language of war - cf. Ezek 38,39
      - (2) Messianic deliverer to defeat Satanic forces
    - c. Prophetic reference to a new covenant

- (1) promised covenant - cf. Jere. 31:31-34
- (2) internal, spiritual realities - cf. Heb. 8:10-12; 10:16
- (3) peaceful community - cf. Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3
- (4) Messianic "Prince of Peace" - cf. Isa. 9:6

#### **IV. "War" and the New Testament (New Covenant)**

- A. Jesus comes as fulfillment of God's intent
  - 1. Promised Messianic deliverer - the Christ - Matt. 16:16-21
  - 2. Primary message is that of a radically different "kingdom"
    - a. Unlike old covenant picture of physical kingdom
      - (1) Not nationalistic - I Pet. 2:9
      - (2) Not militaristic - Jn. 18:36
      - (3) Not ethnic or racialistic - Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:13-16
    - b. Christocentric Lordship of Christ
      - (1) Christ reigns - Lk 1:33
      - (2) Christians reign in life through Him - Rom. 5:17,21
  - 3. Jesus defeated forces of evil in ultimate cosmic conflict
    - a. Did so as recipient of violence, rather than in exercise of violence - cf. I Pet. 2:21-23
    - b. Decisively destroyed diabolic reign, once and for all - Jn. 12:31,32; 19:30; I Jn. 3:8
  - 4. New covenant relationship with God is established
    - a. Internal realities of God's character - Heb. 8:10; 10:16
    - b. Lord of peace at work in Christians - II Thess. 3:16
  - 5. Church constitutes new Israel, people of God - Gal. 6:16; I Pet. 2:9,10
    - a. To be community of peace; new Jerusalem - Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12
    - b. To be peacemakers - Matt. 5:9
- B. Conflict and warfare terminology in the New Testament
  - 1. Only one (1) definite reference to physical war in New Testament:
    - Heb. 11:33,34 - "those who by faith conquered kingdoms, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight"
  - 2. No warnings for Christian involvement in physical battle or war in the New Testament.
  - 3. No direct statements that Christian involvement in war is prohibited.
  - 4. Warfare terminology in N.T. is predominantly metaphorical and figurative.
    - a. Christ's battle with and defeat of evil powers - cf. Col. 2:15; Eph. 4:8; Rev. 12:7-9
    - b. Christian's engagement in spiritual and behavioral conflict
      - (1) psychological - Rom. 7:23; James 4:1; I Pet. 2:11
      - (2) world-system - Eph. 6:10-20; I Tim. 1:18; 6:12; II Tim. 4:7

#### **V. History of the Church's attitude toward "war"**

- A. Opposition to involvement in war
  - 1. Many of early church fathers indicated that Christians should not participate in war.
  - 2. No record of Christians participating in large numbers in military prior to 174 A.D.
  - 3. Until 323 A.D. almost all Christian literature repudiates involvement in military service and war. Some allowed for non-combative roles.
  - 4. Some soldiers were excluded from participation in the Lord's Supper until they had confessed of their sin of shedding blood.
  - 5. From Constantine (323 A.D.) onwards, when Christianity became official Roman religion, objection to war decline
  - 6. Throughout Church history there have been varying kinds of pacifists
    - a. Waldensians
    - b. Mennonites
    - c. Brethren
    - d. Quakers
- B. Acceptance of involvement in war
  - 1. Tertullian (197 A.D.) reported many Christians in the Roman army
  - 2. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.) indicated a soldier should "abide in that calling wherein he was called" (cf. I Cor. 7:24)
  - 3. After Constantine (323 A.D.) objection to involvement in war declined
  - 4. Ambrose (d.397) - "one who does not defend another from injury is as much at fault as the perpetrator."
  - 5. Augustine (354-430) - A war can be just when
    - a. appointed by God,
    - b. it repulses wanton attack,
    - c. seeks restoration of peace
  - 6. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) - Three criteria for just war:
    - a. waged by legitimate governmental authority,
    - b. against an enemy who deserves punishment for wrongdoing,
    - c. with the motivation that good should prevail and evil be removed.

7. Luther (1483-1546) defended the natural rights of nations to defend themselves.
8. Calvin noted that retributive justice is entrusted to civil governments by God, for the wicked ought to be punished, and the righteous ought to intercede on behalf of the wronged.

## **VI. Definition and types of pacifism**

- A. Definition of pacifism
  1. Pacifism means "opposition to war"
  2. English word "pacifism" derived from Latin *pacificus*, (peace)
  3. Pacifism not to be confused with passivism (inactivity).
- B. Types of pacifism
  1. Humanistic pacifism
    - a. essential goodness of human nature should forestall such
    - b. education will instruct men to avoid ignorance of war
    - c. self-preservation dictates avoidance
  2. Social pacifism
    - a. non-violent social change - Gandhi
    - b. programming for social development of utopian society
  3. Legalistic pacifism
    - a. "thou shalt not kill"
    - b. War is an absolute evil, wrong, sin
  4. Moralistic pacifism
    - a. war is immoral
    - b. subjective convictions of conscientious objection
  5. Political pacifism
    - a. active ideological protest
    - b. it is in the self-interest of nations to avoid war
    - c. solidarity of nations should police their interactions
  6. Anarchistic pacifism
    - a. anti-establishmentarianism - oppose the war-machine
    - b. "make love, not war"
  7. Apocalyptic pacifism
    - a. "we are just waiting for God to bring it to an end"
    - b. "not worth fighting for"
  8. Isolationistic pacifism
    - a. "ours is an enclave of peace"
    - b. "others can; we cannot"
  9. Mystic pacifism
    - a. "It's all an illusion"
    - b. "We are above all this worldly fuss"
    - c. Avoid the worldly system
    - d. practice the inward self-discipline of meditative peace
    - e. visualize peace; eliminate hate
  10. Religious pacifism
    - a. church law disallows
    - b. evangelize others; don't kill them
    - c. imitation of Jesus
    - d. willingness to accept self-sacrifice and suffering
  11. Lordship pacifism
    - a. Christ in me does not seek war
    - b. Available to express His peaceful character and action

## **VII. Finding the balance between the physical and spiritual realms.**

- A. Citizens of physical, earthly nation
  1. Legitimate God-ordained authority of human government - Rom. 13:3-6; Matt. 22:21
  2. Christian responsibility to obey government - Rom. 13:1-3,5,7; I Pet. 2:13-15
- B. Citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20); spiritual kingdom
  1. Not a militaristic, warring kingdom - Matt. 26:52; Jn. 18:36
  2. Peacemakers (Matt. 5:9) who love their enemies (Matt. 5:43) and are non-retaliatory (Rom. 12:19)
  3. Individual right of conviction (Rom. 14:5) and conscience (Heb. 13:18)
- C. Desiring to let the peace of Christ control us (Col. 3:15), in order to live peaceably with all (Rom 12:18)
- D. Allowing the law of love (Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14) to seek the highest good of all men.