

Lecture 1: *Ethics* » *What Is It and Why Should I Care?*

What Is Ethics?

Ethics As a System of Thought

A Christian Definition of Ethics

Seeking to apply the commandments of Scripture to the various aspects of our lives.

The Law and the New Testament Believer

Ceremonial Law

Judicial or Civil Law

Moral Law

The Three Uses of the Law for the New Testament Believer

Use 1:

Use 2:

Use 3:

Discussion 1: *Ethics* » *What Is It and Why Should I Care?*

Questions from the Lecture

1. In your own words, briefly describe what the study of ethics is.
2. In the Bible, the phrase “way of life” or the word “life” are used to capture the essence of what we study in ethics. Look at Ephesians 4:17-24 and 1 Peter 3:13-16. Describe the contrast the Scripture draws in those passages. Is there such a thing as a right or wrong ethic?
3. In *Westminster Shorter Catechism* #3 we are asked, “What do the Scriptures principally teach?” The answer comes back, “The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.” How does this question and answer help us understand the Bible as the source of how we are to determine our ethical standards?
4. In the lecture we identified three different categories of laws in the Bible: ceremonial, judicial, and moral. Describe each of these kinds of laws and how we are to relate to them. Use Hebrews 9:11-14, Deuteronomy 22:8, 1 Timothy 5:8, Deuteronomy 4:12-13 to help you.
5. We saw 3 uses in our relationship to the law. The first is to make us aware of our guilt and drive us to Christ. The second is to restrain sin in general. The third is to form a guide for our walk in our sanctification. What use is primarily being utilized in the study of ethics?
6. Based on *Westminster Shorter Catechism* #1 what is our main purpose in life? How should our ethics be defined?

Questions from the Reading

1. In chapter 5 Dr. Clark asserts there can be any foundation for any moral prescriptions, or commandments, if you remove God from the equation. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. What is the problem with appealing to the state to be our final arbiter of right and wrong?
3. One of the other grounds for discerning ethical values is utilitarianism: the pursuit of the greatest amount of pleasure for the largest number of people. What is the problem with this approach?
4. In chapter 8, Dr. Clark deals with “The Christian and the Law.” One of the common objections to our obedience to the law is that we are now under grace (see Galatians 3:2-3). However, what does Christ teach in Matthew 5:19? How does Ephesians 2:8-10 help us to understand the idea of being under grace?
5. Are we supposed to sin as God’s people (see Romans 6:1-2)? If we are not to sin, how will we know how to structure our lives (see 1 John 3:24)?