



Christian Ethics

A Christian Theology of Morality

Study Guide

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I N S T I T U T E O F
T H E O L O G I C A L
S T U D I E S



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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Lecture I: <i>Introduction (1)</i> | 2 |
| Lecture II: <i>Introduction (2)</i> | 3 |
| Lecture III: <i>Analysis of Current Ethical Systems</i> | 3 |
| Lecture IV: <i>Theories of Obligation (1): Deontology</i> | 4 |
| Lecture V: <i>Theories of Obligation (2): Consequentialism/Teleology</i> | 4 |
| Lecture VI: <i>Theories of Obligation (3): Consequentialism/Teleology</i> | 5 |
| Lecture VII: <i>Theories of Value (1)</i> | 5 |
| Lecture VIII: <i>Theories of Value (2)</i> | 6 |
| Lecture IX: <i>Theories of Value (3)</i> | 6 |
| Lecture X: <i>Introduction to a Biblical Theology of Ethics (1)</i> | 7 |
| Lecture XI: <i>Introduction to a Biblical Theology of Ethics (2)</i> | 8 |
| Lecture XII: <i>Introduction to a Biblical Theology of Ethics (3)</i> | 9 |
| Lecture XIII: <i>A Biblical Theory of Value (1)</i> | 9 |
| Lecture XIV: <i>A Biblical Theory of Value (2)</i> | 10 |
| Lecture XV: <i>A Biblical Theory of Value (3)</i> | 11 |
| Lecture XVI: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation: The Adamic Standard For Duty (1)</i> | 12 |
| Lecture XVII: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation (2)</i> | 12 |
| Lecture XVIII: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation (3)</i> | 13 |
| Lecture XIX: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation (4)</i> | 13 |
| Lecture XX: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation (5)</i> | 14 |
| Lecture XXI: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation (6)</i> | 14 |
| Lecture XXII: <i>A Biblical Theory of Obligation (7)</i> | 15 |
| Lecture XXIII: <i>The Dynamic of Christian Theistic Ethics</i> | 16 |
| Study Questions..... | 18 |
| Bibliography..... | 25 |

Lecture Outlines

Lecture I

INTRODUCTION (1)



I. What Is Ethics?

- A. Theory of Obligation
- B. Theory of Value
- C. Theory of Motivation

II. Methodology

- A. Authoritarianism
- B. Inductive Theories
- C. Analytical Theories

III. The 20th Century Ethical Dilemma

- A. Nature of the Dilemma
 - 1. Rise of relativism.
 - 2. Loss of moral restraint.
- B. Causes of the Dilemma
 - 1. Philosophical shift.
 - a. Autonomy of human will
 - b. Ultimacy of process
 - 2. Systems committed to relativism.
 - a. Scientific reductionism
 - b. Irrationalism/existentialism
 - 3. Growth of scientific, psychological, & cultural anthropology.
 - 4. Instrumentalist theory of education.

Lecture Outlines

5. Scientific and technological revolution.

Lecture II

INTRODUCTION (2)

I. Words and their Meaning

A. Moral Maxims

1. Acting *according to* scientific law.
2. Acting *from* moral law.

B. Ethical Norms

1. Deontological.
2. Consequential/teleological.

C. Normative Ethics

1. Judgment of conduct.
2. Judgment of values.
3. Pervasive nature of normative ethics.
4. Justification of moral judgment.

II. The History of Ethics in Western Culture

A. Naturalism

B. Idealism

Lecture III

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ETHICAL SYSTEMS

I. Antinomianism

A. Existentialism

B. Logical Positivism/Linguistic Analysis

II. Generalism/Utilitarianism

III. Situationism



Lecture Outlines

IV. Ideal Absolutism

V. Conflicting Absolutism

VI. Graded Absolutism



Lecture IV

THEORIES OF OBLIGATION (1): DEONTOLOGY

I. Overview

A. Consequences Are Irrelevant to Rightness. (Kant)

B. Consequences Are Partially Relevant to Rightness. (Ross)

II. Rule Deontology

A. Single Rule

B. Multiple Rule

III. Act Deontology

IV. Survey of Deontological Theories of Obligation

A. Kant's Categorical Imperative (Single Rule Deontology)

B. Ross' *Prima Facie* Duty (Multiple Rule Deontology)

Lecture V

THEORIES OF OBLIGATION (2): CONSEQUENTIALISM/TELEOLOGY

I. Overview: Consequences Alone Determine Rightness

II. Utilitarianism

A. Hedonistic Utilitarianism

B. Eudaemonistic Utilitarianism

C. Agathistic Utilitarianism

Lecture Outlines

III. Survey of Consequentialist/Teleological Theories of Obligation

- A. Bentham's Hedonism
- B. Mill's Eudaemonism



Lecture VI

THEORIES OF OBLIGATION (3): CONSEQUENTIALISM/TELEOLOGY

- I. Sanctions in Consequentialism
- II. Mill's Proof of the Principle of Utility
 - A. The Proof Presented
 - B. The Proof Evaluated
- III. Act Utilitarianism
- IV. Rule Utilitarianism
- V. The Principle of Utility Evaluated

Lecture VII

THEORIES OF VALUE (1)

- I. Classification of Values
 - A. Intrinsic Value
 - B. Extrinsic Value
 - 1. Instrumental values.
 - 2. Beneficial values.
 - 3. Contributory values.
- II. The Use of the Word *Good*
 - A. Attributive

Lecture Outlines

B. Predicate

III. The Affirmation and Definition of Intrinsic Value

A. Aristotle

B. George Edward Moore

C. W. David Ross

D. Ewing

E. Richard Brandt



Lecture VIII

THEORIES OF VALUE (2)

I. The Denial of Intrinsic Value

A. John Dewey

B. Contextualism

1. Abraham Kaplan.
2. Sidney Hook.

C. Problems with Denial of Intrinsic Values

II. What Is Good? Value Monism; Aristotle's Happiness

Lecture IX

THEORIES OF VALUE (3)

I. What Is Good? Value Monism (continued)

A. Kant's Good Will

B. Pleasure

1. Proponents.
 - a. Epicurus

Lecture Outlines

- b. Sidgwick
- c. Ryle

2. Evaluation.

C. Self-realization

D. God

II. What Is Good? Value Pluralism

A. Moore and Rushdall: Ideal Utilitarianism

B. W. David Ross



Lecture X

INTRODUCTION TO A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF ETHICS (1)

I. Basic Questions in Christian Ethics

- A. What is man?
- B. What standard exists to judge man's conduct?
- C. What is the purpose of human action?

II. Biblical Words for Conduct

- A. *'ethos*
- B. *'anastrophe*
- C. *'odos*

III. Two Theses of Christian Ethics

- A. X is Good = X is Willed by God
- B. X is Right = X is Willed by God

Lecture Outlines

IV. Implications of the Theses

- A. Moral Judgments Are Metaphysical and Epistemological Statements
- B. The Will of God is Universal and Ubiquitous
- C. Not all Behavior is Moral
- D. God is the Absolute Legislator of His Will
- E. Duty is Derived from Being
- F. Ethical Judgments Are Justified by Propositional Revelation



Lecture XI

INTRODUCTION TO A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF ETHICS (2)

I. Two Questions

- A. Does the Bible Teach One Ethic? Matthew 19:3-8
 - 1. Progressive revelation.
 - 2. Development of the redemptive principle.
 - 3. Efficacy and diffusion of the ministry of the Spirit.
- B. Where is This One Ethic?
 - 1. Internal: Conscience.
 - a. Romans 2:14,15
 - b. Jeremiah 31:33
 - c. Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:8-10
 - 2. External: Creation ordinance.

II. Epistemological Basis for Theistic Christian Ethics

- A. Origin of Knowledge
- B. Nature of Knowledge

Lecture Outlines

Lecture XII

INTRODUCTION TO A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF ETHICS (3)

I. Epistemological Basis for Theistic Christian Ethics (continued)

A. Tests of Knowledge

B. Limits of Knowledge

II. Metaphysical Basis for Theistic Christian Ethics

A. God-Concept

1. Character.
2. Independent.
3. Creator.

B. Man-Concept

1. Character.
2. Dependent.
3. Analog.

C. Sin and the Plan of God

D. Is Man a Synthesis of Eternal and Temporal?

Lecture XIII

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF VALUE (1)

I. Introduction

II. General *Summum Bonum*

III. Individual *Summum Bonum*

A. Roles of the Individual

B. Development of the Will



Lecture Outlines

C. Righteousness in Right Relationships

Lecture XIV

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF VALUE (2)

I. Social *Summum Bonum*

II. Characteristics of the *Summum Bonum*

- A. It Makes an Absolute Demand
- B. It Comes as the Gift of Grace
- C. It Necessitates the Destruction of the Works of Evil
- D. It is an Ethic of Hope

III. The *Summum Bonum* in the Old Testament

- A. Absolute Demand
 - 1. Adam: Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - 2. Abraham: Sacrifice of Isaac.
 - 3. Israel: Law.
- B. Gift of Grace
 - 1. Protevangelium: Genesis 3:15.
 - 2. Abraham: Call, Birth of Isaac.
 - 3. Jacob: Progenitor of Israel.
 - 4. Israel: Redemption from Egypt.
- C. Destruction of Evil
 - 1. Abraham.
 - 2. Israel: Obedience to Law.
 - 3. Imprecatory Psalms.
- D. Ethic of Hope
 - 1. Abraham: Land/Immediate.
 - 2. Job: Resurrection/Ulimate.



Lecture Outlines

Lecture XV

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF VALUE (3)



I. Review

II. The *Summum Bonum* in the New Testament

A. Absolute Demand

1. Intensified: Matthew 5:48.
2. Satisfied: in Christ.
3. Example of Christ.
 - a. Worthy of imitation
 - (1) Perfection has cosmic significance.
 - (2) Jesus' example presupposes the fall of man.
 - (3) Jesus' example presupposes substitutionary atonement.
 - b. Dangers of imitation
 - (1) Imitation must not obscure Creator/creature distinction.
 - (2) Union with Christ is ethical, not metaphysical.
 - (3) God's ideal for man also ethical, not metaphysical.
 - (4) Christ's mediatorial role is not to be imitated.

B. Gift of Grace

1. Development of concept of grace in New Testament.
2. Quickly lost after the apostolic era.
3. Not limited to "soul-saving".

C. Destruction of Evil

1. The proclamation of the gospel.
2. The doctrine of separation.
3. The doctrine of sanctification.
4. The doctrine of atonement.

Lecture Outlines

D. Ethic of Hope

III. Summary

Lecture XVI

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION: THE ADAMIC STANDARD FOR DUTY (1)

I. The *Imago Dei*

II. The Nature of Moral Commands

- A. There is a Distinction Between Perpetual and Temporal Moral Commands
- B. Perpetually Binding Commands Are Marked with the Character of God

III. The Creation Ordinances

- A. Procreation
- B. Dominion/Stewardship: Heb. *radab*
- C. Work/Industry: Heb. '*abad*, Lat. *cultura*
- D. Sabbath: Activity of another kind
- E. Monogamous Marriage: Genesis 2:24-25

Lecture XVII

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION (2)

I. The Adamic Standard for Duty (continued)

- A. Monogamous Marriage (continued)
- B. Summary

II. Post-Flood Standards: Genesis 6-9

- A. The Institution of Capital Punishment



Lecture Outlines

B. The Expansion of Man's Diet

III. The Old Testament Redemptive Standard

A. Historical Development of Temporarily Binding Commands

B. Introduction to the Ten Commandments

1. Approaches to the Ten Commandments.
2. Redemption precedes governance.
3. Treaty form of the Ten Commandments.

Lecture XVIII

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION (3)

I. The Old Testament Redemptive Standard (continued)

A. Historical Setting

B. Structure of the Ten Commandments

1. God's exclusive claims: Words 1-3.
2. God's basic institutions: Words 4-5.
3. Basic human obligations: Words 6-7
4. Basic social obligations: Words 8-10

II. Moral Content of the Ten Commandments

A. Word 1: The Expression of Ultimate Choice

B. Word 2: God Alone may Image Himself

Lecture XIX

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION (4)

I. Word 3: Freely Use My Name for Legitimate Purposes

II. Word 4: Work is Not to be the Central Focus of Life

III. Word 5: Advance the Spiritual Heritage Received from Parents



Lecture Outlines

Lecture XX

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION (5)

- I. Word 6: Do all you can to nurture and preserve life
- II. Word 7: Keep Inviolate the Sexual Integrity of Your Brother's Wife
- III. Word 8: Respect the Property of the Disenfranchised
- IV. Word 9: Provide Determinative Witness for the Public Administration of Justice
- V. Word 10: Self-interest is Not to Characterize Our Desires

Lecture XXI

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION (6)

- I. The Application of the Ten Commandments in the Rest of the Old Testament
- II. The New Testament Redemptive Standard
 - A. Continuity and Discontinuity
 - B. The Sermon on the Mount
 1. The relationship of Christ to *Torah*.
 - a. *Kataluo*
 - b. *Pleroo*
 2. Jesus' embodiment and advancement of the Ten Commandments.
 - a. Word 6: Do not hold your brother in contempt
 - b. Word 7: Do not turn a woman into an object for lust



Lecture Outlines

Lecture XXII

A BIBLICAL THEORY OF OBLIGATION (7)

I. The New Testament Redemptive Standard (continued)

A. The New Testament

B. Christian Liberty

1. Review and introduction.
2. Positive principles.
 - a. Fitting
 - b. Controlling
 - c. Edifying
3. Negative Principles.
 - a. No stumbling block
 - b. No reproach
 - c. No common cause

II. Summary of Theory of Obligation

A. Perpetual Commands

B. Temporal Commands

C. Moral Example of Christ

D. Christian Liberty

III. The Dynamic of Christian Theistic Ethics

A. Introduction

B. Relevant Theological Ideas

1. The finality and sufficiency of Scripture.
 - a. In-prophet revelation
 - b. In-son revelation



Lecture Outlines

2. Dependence upon the person and work of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Illumination
 - b. Enablement
3. God has created man with capacities that enable him to do and know.
 - a. Linguistic capacity
 - b. Volitional capacity



Lecture XXIII

THE DYNAMIC OF CHRISTIAN THEISTIC ETHICS

I. Values and Value Systems

- A. Thesis: Values motivate decision making
- B. The Nature of Values
 1. What is a value?
 2. What is its relationship to being and knowing?
 3. Can values be measured by a standard?
- C. The Content of a Value System
 1. Classification of values.
 - a. Intrinsic value
 - b. Extrinsic value
 2. Scope of a value system.
 3. An ethical code.
 - a. Perpetual commands
 - b. Temporal commands
 - c. Principles of Christian liberty
 4. Governed by coherence.
 - a. No conflicting values

Lecture Outlines

- b. Distinction between conflicting and competing values
- c. Competing values must be ordered

II. A Model for Decision Making

- A. Define the Problem
- B. Gather Appropriate Information
- C. Build Available Alternatives
- D. Predict Consequences for the Alternatives
- E. Decide Between Alternatives by Applying the Order of Your Value System





Study Questions

Lecture I

1. Describe ethics as a discipline including what aspect of man constitutes its central focus.
2. Given all the methods of the discipline, how would you define the method most consistent with Christian theism?
3. Casuality is a complex idea. What were the most important causes of the ethical shift in western culture and what kind of causes were they?

Lecture II

1. How are moral judgments justified from a Christian perspective?
2. What is the difference between a deontological theory of obligation and a consequential theory?
3. How do judgments of value relate to judgments of obligation?
4. State the major tenets of idealism and naturalism.

Lecture III

1. What is a moral conflict?
2. How would the ideal absolutist resolve a moral conflict? How would the conflicting absolutist? How would the graded absolutist?
3. Develop a critique of graded absolutism and offer your evaluation of its purported Biblical basis.
4. How do you deal with moral conflicts in your life?

Lecture IV

1. Why would the act deontologist always be able to win the argument with a rule deontologist?
2. State Kant's single rule deontological theory of obligation and suggest some of its weaknesses.
3. List the six prima facie duties of Ross and show which of them are consequential in character.
4. What is the primary problem with multiple rule deontological systems as presented by Fletcher?



Study Questions

Lectures V and VI

1. What are the primary criteria for applying any utilitarian system of ethics?
2. Evaluate Mill's proof of the principle of utility.
3. What is the primary problem with quantitative hedonism?
4. How does the need for the principle of justice in all utilitarianism systems destroy the system by begging the question?

Lecture VII

1. Define the following values: intrinsic, instrumental and beneficial.
2. What is the distinction between the attributive and the predicative use of the word *good*?
3. What is the difference between Moore's definition of intrinsic good and that of Ross?

Lecture VIII

1. State John Dewey's thesis of the denial of intrinsic value.
2. How does Dewey overcome the problem of value crisis in life that blocks behavior patterns?
3. What is the main thesis of the contextualist? Show how this system diverges from Dewey's instrumentalism.
4. What is the best way to show that people cannot live with a system that denies intrinsic value?

Lecture IX

1. What are the essential differences in defining pleasure for Epicurus, Sidgwick and Ryle?
2. Describe Kant's concept of the good will as the only intrinsic good and offer a critique of the idea.
3. Value pluralists, following Plato, developed a very strong argument against only one intrinsic good. Carefully state the argument as a categorical syllogism.



Study Questions

Lecture X

1. Explain the Biblical concept of conduct by reflecting on the New Testament words that are used for moral conduct.
2. What is the significance of the fact that the Christian theory of obligation and the Christian theory of value are unified in the concept of the will of God?
3. How does a Christian theistic ethic integrate with a Christian view of being and knowing?
4. What is the relationship between the evidence for a moral judgment and evidence for the judgment?

Lecture XI

1. How do the ideas of progressive revelation, progressive development of redemptive mediacy, and the wide diffusion of the gifts and efficacy of the Spirit at Pentecost help to relieve the tension between what seem to be antithetical elements in the biblical ethic?
2. How would you demonstrate the truthfulness of the assertion that man is both in law and under law?
3. When it comes to the origin of knowledge, how would you state your position given the transcendental base for ethics?

Lecture XII

1. State the God concept of Christian ethics and show how it coheres with the revelational starting point.
2. Provide the basis for the assertion that the whole man is the whole image.
3. What is the biblical basis for the assertion that the whole man is created including his spirit?
4. What was Adam's moral condition in the garden in advance of the fall?

Lecture XIII

1. Why is doing the will of God asserted to be both man's obligation and his highest good (intrinsic value)?
2. Define the Kingdom of God in relation to man's highest good.
3. How do we develop the backbone, the spontaneity and the scope of our wills?



Study Questions

4. If righteousness is relational then state what the task of man's will is when it comes to righteousness as the sinews which binds the Kingdom together?

Lecture XIV

1. What is the societal highest good for Christian ethics?
2. What is the Biblical basis for the assertion that perfection is normal and therefore has cosmic significance?
3. If evil is an insult to a holy God then what should be our response to it in ourselves, other selves and in the world?
4. Explain why grace is essential to a Christian theory of values.
5. What does the tree of the knowledge of good and evil have in common with the test of Abraham in the offering of Isaac?
6. Relate the *Protevangelium* to the birth of Isaac, the blessing of Jacob, and the redemption of Israel out of Egypt.
7. How does the destruction of the works of evil fit the pattern of the imprecatory Psalms?
8. What is the best way to explain the scope of the hope of both Job and Abraham?

Lecture XV

1. How is the absolute demand intensified in the New Testament for both Christ and us?
2. What does the phrase, "our perfection is substitutionary," mean in relation to the absolute demand?
3. List the dangers in the imitation of Christ literature.
4. Develop the concept of grace in the theology of Paul. Show how this is an advancement over the Old Testament concept of grace.
5. Why do we no longer need proximate fulfillment of our hope as was needed in the Old Testament?

Lecture XVI

1. Image is a very significant concept when it comes to creation ethics. What reasons can you give for the fact that image was an inadequate moral guide in the garden?



Study Questions

2. What is the distinction between perpetually binding and temporarily binding commands? Give illustrations of each kind.
3. What justification is there for asserting that Sabbath is a creation ordinance?
4. Discuss the twofold office of man as servant/steward and show its relationship to the creation ordinances.
5. What kind of culture was Adam to develop in the garden?

Lecture XVII

1. What are the constituent elements of marriage?
2. How does male/female relate to the image of God?
3. Should capital punishment be sustained today? If so, on what basis should it be sustained? If not, why not?
4. How do the temporarily binding commands relate to the perpetually binding ones?
5. How does the use of Near Eastern Treaty Form for the Ten Words impact their moral distinctiveness?
6. State the relationship between redemption, grace, and commandment in the prologue to the Ten Words.

Lecture XVIII

1. State some reasons for accepting the fourfold structure of the Ten Commandments rather than the twofold structure.
2. How does the first word relate to the *Summum Bonum* of seeking the Kingdom first?
3. What is the primary focus of the second word?
4. Discuss the purpose of positive and negative commands.

Lecture XIX

1. List the appropriate uses of the Divine Name.
2. How do the first three commands make an exclusive claim on Israel?



Study Questions

3. Explain the relationship of the creation Sabbath to the redemptive Sabbath.
4. How is honor of parents lived out in the community of the redeemed?

Lecture XX

1. Why should the translation “murder” be set aside for the translation “kill?”
2. Should how the 6th and 7th commands are expanded by Jesus in His sermon on the mount?
3. Show how the poor are protected by the eighth word.
4. What aspects of the character of God are displayed in the first eight words?
5. Give a brief summary of each word showing how they begin and end with idolatry.

Lecture XXI

1. Illustrate how the prophets wove the Ten Words into the fabric of Israel’s urban life.
2. What is the precise connotation of “fulfill” in Mt. 5:17?
3. State in your own words the relationship of the Ten Words to Christ.
4. If advancement is a legitimate aspect of what Christ does with the Ten Words, then explain how He advances the sixth and the seventh words in Matthew 5.

Lecture XXII

1. What are the positive principles of Christian Liberty?
2. Are these principles deontological or consequential? Give evidence for your assertions.
3. How would you describe the role of the Holy Spirit in decision making for the believer?
4. Defend the assertion that the Bible is our only and sufficient rule of faith and practice?

Lecture XXIII

1. What is the relationship between the being of something, the meaning of it and the value of it?
2. By what standard can our values be measured?
3. How is the ethical code used in moral decision making?



Study Questions

4. Describe the relationship of a person's value set to his frame of reference?
5. By what method do we put our Biblical values in order to guide decision making?
6. Briefly state and describe the five step decision making model.



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