

Christian Ethics

1. Claim: Thou shalt not lie/bear false witness

*The argument itself

2. Premises: 9th Commandment

*The support of the argument

3. Warrants/Presuppositions

*What you assume to be true

Christian Ethics Summary

All 3 must be fulfilled for an action to be “right”:

- Motive (pure in heart)
- Standard (God’s Law/Word/Nature)
- Goal (glory of God)

Jesus on Ethics

- 1) *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength* = Duty-based ethics (deontology) [Kant] Non-consequential = GOD (If you only stay here you're a Pharisee)
- 2) *and the second is like it, Love your neighbor* = Virtue ethics, Aretaic ethics (*arete*) [Aristotle] = OTHERS (If you only stay here you're a secular humanist)
- 3) *as yourself* = Consequentialism, Teleological [Mill] = SELF (If you only stay here you're a narcissist)

Q# What is the basis of morality?

Why do humans have a universal consciousness?

1. Natural Law - Plato and the Greeks

What is the basis of morality?

2. Cultural Relativism - “cultures determine what is wrong and what is right.”

OR

“The belief that truth and morals are relative to one’s culture”

Postmodernism/Relativism

“I can find no ultimate basis for ‘ought.’”

- Mihailo Markovic

“Human beings may, and do, make up their own rules.” - Max Hocutt

“In those days...everyone did what was right in his own eyes” - Judges 21:25

Question: In what areas do you see this mentality in our culture?

What is the basis of morality?

3. ***Individual Relativism*** - “My truth may be different than your truth.”

* Our word against your word

4. ***Moral Relativism*** - Morals are relative to the individual and the situation

*No objective basis upon which ethics are grounded

Postmodernism/Relativism self-defeating?

- Richard Rorty says that it is the wrong question to ask
= PM/Rel. is not SUBJECT to logic or reason.

Postmodernism/Relativism self-defeating?

- “There are no moral/ethical absolutes.”

Q# Logically self-defeating statement?

Q# If Relativism is true then:

“Relativism is true **SOME OF THE TIME.**”

Postmodernism/Relativism

Big Question:

“If there is no objective moral reality, then why concern ourselves with ethical issues?”

= Why even talk about right & wrong?

David Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Manitou Springs, Summit Press: 2006), 156.

Postmodernism/Relativism self-defeating?

Q# How can there be moral responsibility?

- Honesty
- Fairness
- Equality
- Loyalty
- Courage
- Reliability
- Justice
- Sincerity

Q# How will society fare if there are no moral responsibilities?

What is the basis for morality?

5. Nihilism - Nietzsche “ubermensch”

*The will to power

“The Transvaluation of All Values”

No God, no morality, no purpose, no
hope...except for Raw Power

What is the basis of morality?

6. **Apostle Paul (Christian Theism)** - *“For when the Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”* Romans 2:14-15

= Ethics are grounded in the nature of God

Relativism

- 1. Cognitive relativism (truth)** - Cognitive relativism affirms that all truth is relative. This would mean that no system of truth is more valid than another one, and that there is no objective standard of truth. It would, naturally, deny that there is a God of absolute truth.
- 2. Moral/ethical relativism** - All morals are relative to the social group within which they are constructed.
- 3. Situational relativism** - Ethics (right and wrong) are dependent upon the situation.

Claim: There are no absolutes! Each person determines what is right and wrong for them.

Christian response: Are you absolutely sure?

Examples

Suttee



Examples

Ancient Assyria



Examples

- Third Reich (Nazi Germany)



Examples

Child molestation

*Biological Determinism

Examples

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

8 Questions on Questionable Activities

- 1) Am I fully persuaded that it is right? - Rom. 14:5,14, 23
- 2) Can I do it as unto the Lord? - Romans 14:6-8
- 3) Can I do it without being a stumbling block to my brother or sister in Christ? - Romans 14:13,15,20-21
- 4) Does it bring peace? - Romans 14:17-18; Col. 3:15,17
- 5) Does it edify my brother? - Romans 14:19
- 6) Is it profitable? (spiritually healthy) - 1 Cor. 6:12 = does this help me meet my goal of Christ-likeness?

8 Questions on Questionable Activities

7) Does it enslave me? - 1 Cor. 6:12

8) Does it bring glory to God? - 1 Cor. 10:31

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