



REJECTING WORLDLINESS

Making Godly Decisions on Moral Issues

Lesson One

Introduction &
Situation Ethics

The Need For Authority

- Authority – Power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior (Webster)
- Ethics – A set of moral principles or values; the principles of conduct governing people (Webster)

The Need For Authority

1. What are some different sources of authority people in the world turn to in order to justify their actions?

Feelings

Friends

Conscience

Religious leaders

Parents/ family members

Governmental leaders

The Bible Is Authoritative

- Christians should be a separate people with separate morals
 - Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pt 2:9-10; 2 Cor 6:17-7:1
- The Bible contains the standards of our conduct
 - 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17

The Bible Is Authoritative

- It is the standard by which we will be judged
 - John 12:48; Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10
- The standards of God are unchanging
 - Ps 119:89; 1 Pt 1:22-25

The Bible Is Authoritative

- It covers all the temptations we may face
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pt 1:3

The Bible Is Authoritative

3. How may we be guilty of compromising God's standard of morality?

- 1 Thess 5:22 – “Abstain from every form of evil.”
- Eph 5:11 – “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”
- 1 Tim 5:22 – “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.”

Situation Ethics

- Ethical behavior is defined by the situation
- There is no absolute right or wrong
- Formally defined by Joseph Fletcher (1905-1991)

Situation Ethics

“All laws and rules and principles and ideals and norms, are only contingent, only valid if they happen to serve love in any situation...the Christian chooses what he believes to be the demands of love in the present situation.” (Fletcher, Situation Ethics, 1966)

Situation Ethics

“As we shall see, Christian situation ethics has only one norm or principle or law...that is binding and unexceptionable, always good and right regardless of the circumstances. That is ‘love’ – the agape of the summary commandments to love God and the neighbor.” (Fletcher, Situation Ethics, 1966)

Situation Ethics

“The new morality, situation ethics, declares that anything and everything is right or wrong, according to the situation.” (Fletcher, Situation Ethics, 1966)

Situation Ethics

- Only love is intrinsically good, nothing else
- The ruling norm of Christian decisions is love, nothing else
- Justice is love distributed, nothing else
- Love wills the neighbor's good, whether we like them or not

Situation Ethics

- The end justifies the means if love is promoted
- Love's decisions are made situationally, not prescriptively

Situation Ethics

5. Is situation ethics consistent with God's standard of morality?

- We must act in love, but that isn't the end of goodness (1 Cor 13; Ps 19:7-11)
- Love of God is the greatest commandment (Matt 22:37-38)
- Love of God necessitates keeping of His commandments (Jn 14:15)

Situation Ethics

5. Is situation ethics consistent with God's standard of morality?

- There is no justification for wrong means (Matt 7:22-23)
- God gave us His word so we would know how to avoid sinful behaviors (1 Jn 2:1; Col 3:17)

Situation Ethics

6. What are some consequences with following the situation ethics philosophy?

- Destroys the reputation of the Bible
- Makes love and law exclusive
- Deifies man
- Obscures right and wrong and encourages permissiveness
- Presumes each act will turn out well

Application

6. What might you say to a Christian who is following this false doctrine to help them adhere to God's standard?