

Salt and Light for the King

3: Source of Ethics

Apr 5, 2020

Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Review

- What is Christian ethics?

- Christian ethics = “any study that answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us about which acts, attitudes, and personal character traits receive God’s approval, and which do not? [Grudem, *Christian Ethics*, 37...from John Frame]”

- What is the basis for ethical standards? God’s moral character.

Source of Christian Ethics

- Where do Christian ethical standards come from?

- The Bible (Ps 1:1-2; Ps 119:1-6, 9, 105; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - Psalm 1:1-2 “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”
 - Psalm 119:1-6, 9 “Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.” ... “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
- *What are some objections to using the Bible to learn how to live?*

- What truths about Scripture impact Christian ethics?

• Authority

- The words of the sovereign Lord and King, God himself (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21)
- The Spirit must illuminate the spiritual mind (1 Cor 2:14; Jn 10:27)
 - 1 Cor 2:14 “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”
 - Q: *What are some other proposed authorities for ethics?*
- Therefore...believe, submit to and obey the Word (Isaiah 66:2)
 - Isaiah 66:2 “All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”

• Clarity

- God gave us a Bible we can understand (Deut 6:6-7; Ps 19:7; 2 Tim 3:14-17)
 - Deut 6:6-7 “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
- And yet...
 - We are dependent upon the Spirit (1 Cor 2:12, 14; 2 Cor 3:14-18)
 - 1 Cor 2:12, 14 “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”
 - We must meditate on God’s Word (Ps 1:2; Ps 119:15, 23, 48, 78)
 - Psalm 1:2 “but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”
 - We exert effort in our study of the Bible (Ezra 7:10)
- Therefore...if we can understand the Word, we should live it (James 1:22)
 - James 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”
- *How does the clarity of Scripture encourage your study of ethics?*

- **Necessity**

- We need the Bible to know the gospel of salvation and God's will for how we live
- Therefore...nourish your souls with the Word (Mt 4:4)

- **Sufficiency**

- Scripture contains *all* the words needed for salvation and life (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - Wrong:
 - Right:
- *How does the necessity and sufficiency of Scripture impact your study of ethics?*

As long as we search the Bible, we can be confident ethical decision-makers

Psalm 119:44-45 "I will keep your law continually, forever and ever, and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts.

Psalm 119:165 "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble."

Next time: What is the goal of Christian ethics?

Speak, O Lord (Getty)

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
That the light of Christ might be seen today
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Words of pow'r that can never fail—

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built

To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Holy reverence, true humility;
In the radiance of Your purity.
Your majestic love and authority.
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
That will echo down through eternity.
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
And the earth is filled with Your glory.