

# Salt and Light for the King

---

## Introduction to Christian Ethics

Mar 8, 2020

Mt 22:37-40 “And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.””

### - 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]”
  - Ethics focused
  - Bible-Centered
  - Relation of Christian ethics to other ethical systems:
    - (1) Deontological: *rules* for right and wrong
    - (2) Teleological: seeking the best *outcome*
    - (3) Virtue ethics: emphasize moral character
    - (4) Relativism: no absolute right/wrong, only relative
  - Pleasing God (Hebrews 10; 13:15-16)

### - Why should Christians study ethics?

- Disciples follow Christ’s commandments (Mt 28:19-20; Jn 14:15; 15:10; 1 Jn 5:3)
- Disciples discern God’s will (Rom 12:2; Eph 5:10; Php 1:9-11; Col 1:9-10; 2 Pet 1:5)
- Benefits:
  - (1) Holiness and maturity (Heb 5:14; 1 Thess 4:1-3; Eph 4:22-24)
  - (2) Ethical wisdom
  - (3) Wise stewardship
  - (4) Prepared for real-life
  - (5) Foundation for unknown, future ethical decisions
  - (6) Evangelistic engagement (Deut 4:5-8; 1 Pet 2:11-12)

Hear God’s standard -> conscience is convicted -> gospel -> repentance & faith

## **How we'll organize our study of ethics - The 10 Commandments:**

Protecting God's honor

- 1 - "You shall have no other gods before me."
- 2 - "You shall not make for yourself a caged image."
- 3 - "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain."
- 4 - "Remember the Sabbath day."
- 9 - "You shall not bear false witness."

Protecting human authority

- 5 - "Honor your father and you mother"

Protecting human life

- 6 - "You shall not murder"

Protecting the family

- 7 - "You shall not commit adultery"

Protecting property

- 8 - "You shall not steal."

Protecting purity of heart

- 10 - "You shall not covet."

*In which ethical areas do you want to grow in holiness and maturity?*

*What personal difficulties are your presently facing?*

*In which ethical areas do you want to increase in your understanding? Where do you have questions?*

*What ethical decision are coming in the next season of life?*

*What is likely to happen to a church or denomination that gives up learning Christian ethics for a generation or longer? Has that been true of our church, the EFCA movement?*

**- How should we study ethics?**

- Prayer (Ps 119:18; 1 Cor 2:14)
- Humility (1 Pet 5:5; James 1:19-20; 3:13, 17-18; Ps 25:8-9)
- As good Bereans!
- Reason (e.g. Mt 22:29-33, 41-45; 1 Tim 5:17-18)
- Help from others (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-16)
- Joyful praise (Ps 1:1-2; 19:7-11; 119:1-3, 14, 103, 111)

Col 1:9-10 “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

- 1     Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
      Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
      Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
      God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
- 2     Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,  
      Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
      Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
      Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
- 3     Holy, holy, holy! tho' the darkness hide Thee  
      Tho' the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;  
      Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,  
      Perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.
- 4     Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
      All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth and sky, and sea;  
      Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!  
      God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

[\*Logos Hymnal\*](#), 1st edition. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995).

## Bible Verses

Mt 22:37-40 “And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.””

### - What is Christian ethics?

- Pleasing God: goal is “God’s *approval*” (Heb 10, 13:15-16)

Heb 13:15-16 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

### - Why should Christians study ethics?

- Disciples follow Christ’s commandments (Mt 28:19-20; Jn 14:15; 15:10; 1 Jn 5:3)

Mt 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.””

Jn 14:15 ““If you love me, you will *keep my commandments*.””

- Disciples discern God’s will (Rom 12:2; Eph 5:10; Php 1:9-11; Col 1:9-10; 2 Pet 1:5)

Rom 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing *you may discern what is the will of God*, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Eph 5:10 “and try to *discern what is pleasing* to the Lord.”

- Benefits:

Heb 5:14 “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment *trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil*.”

1 Thess 4:1-3 “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *how you ought to walk and to please God*, just as you are doing, *that you do so more and more*. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality.”

Eph 4:22-24 “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Deut 4:5-8 “See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will

say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?"

1 Pet 2:11-12 "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

- **How should we study ethics?**

- Prayer (Ps 119:18; 1 Cor 2:14)

Ps 119:18 "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. "

1 Cor 2:14-16 "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."

- Humility (1 Pet 5:5; James 1:19-20; 3:13, 17-18; Ps 25:8-9)

1 Pet 5:5 "Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.""

James 1:19-20 "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

James 3:13, 17-18 "If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well....But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

Ps 25:8-9 "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way."

- Reason (e.g. Mt 22:29-33, 41-45; 1 Tim 5:17-18)

Mt 22:29-33 "But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching."

Mt 22:41-45 "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to

him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet” ’? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.”

1 Tim 5:17-18 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.””

- Help from others (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-16)

1 Cor 12:28 “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third *teachers*, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.”

Eph 4:11-16 “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

- Joyful praise (Ps 1:1-2; 19:7-11; 119:1-3, 14, 103, 111)

Ps 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.”

Ps 19:7-11 “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Ps 119:1-3 “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!”

Ps 119:14 “In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.

Ps 119:103 “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Ps 119:111 “Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.”