

The Importance of Our Ethic

- Morality is how we think we should act. Ethics is how we decide what is moral.
- John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me.
 - Were most Jewish people sincere?
 - For what did the rabbis search the Scriptures?
 - How do many church-going people today do the same thing?

The Importance of Our Ethic

- Galatians
- 2:15 – 21 We are declared acceptable by God because we are “in” the faith of Jesus, not because we follow certain rituals. Why do church-goers focus on practices?
 - 3:2 – 9 Are you being transformed by the Spirit or by observing the right practices?
 - 5:1 Why have church leaders abandoned liberty?
 - 6:9 Practices make us weary; faith renews.

The Importance of Our Ethic

- Colossians 2:23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.
- Some trust in human leadership, submit to claims to authority, and believe that understanding is for the few.
- Some trust themselves, resulting in self-worth and self-justification.

Why Did God Create?

- Our chosen ethic determines what we do with the gospel.
- Examples of inadequate ethics:
 - God did not anticipate sin and has been vainly trying to fix it.
 - God will keep those who reach a certain level of performance or belief.
 - God made us sinful to rescue us.
 - God wanted to be praised.
 - God wanted to be loved and to love.

Why Did God Create?

- The universe was created for Jesus (and by Jesus)
 - Colossians 1:16
 - Hebrews 2:10
- The purpose was to teach angels and to bring people and angels together.
 - Ephesians 3:10 – 11
 - Ephesians 1:10
 - Hebrews 12:22 – 24

Why Did God Create?

- The objective was and is for all spirits, both human and angelic, to have the character of Jesus.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18
 - 2 Peter 1:2 – 4
 - Colossians 3:10
 - Romans 8:29
- The purpose of creation was:
 - To build an incubator for faith
 - To build a family of spirits for eternity

Our Ethic Governs Our Behavior

- The governing principle is faith, not authority
 - “In the name of” does not mean “by the authority of,” but “from within the essential quality of.”
 - If faith does not govern behavior, it is not faith (James 2:14 – 26).
 - We have an objective standard (Hebrews 4:15, Philippians 2:5 – 8).
 - We must have His faith (Romans 3:26), which has been accomplished (Romans 4:16, Galatians 2:20, 2 Peter 1:4)

Our Ethic Governs Our Behavior

- The objective of God is the same as the will of God or the desire of God or the purpose of God.
- The faithful can understand the will of God
 - Ephesians 1:9
 - Ephesians 5:17
 - Colossians 1:9
 - Romans 12:2
- The faithful can do the will of God
 - Colossians 4:12
 - Hebrews 10:36

Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers, And Mature Believers.

- Unbelievers
 - 1 Corinthians 5:9 – 13
 - God judges the morality of outsiders.
 - Acts 2:40, 3:17, 8:30, 14:15, 17:29
 - The need of outsiders is to recognize that their ethics have failed to provide what they seek.
 - Colossians 4:5 – 6

Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers, And Mature Believers.

- Unbelievers
 - Ephesians 5:1 – 21 (focusing on the parts that relate to outsiders)
 - 5:1 – 2 Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us (Romans 12:1 – 2)
 - 5:3 – 7 Do not be partakers with them
 - 5:8 – 14 Be light to them so that they may see successful ethics.

Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers, And Mature Believers.

- Unbelievers
 - Ephesians 5:15 – 21
 - Walk in wisdom
 - Repurpose time
 - Be fulfilled with the Spirit
 - Sing about spiritual things
 - Be known as a thankful (happy) person
 - Submit to one another as an illustration of your ethics (John 17:20 – 26)

Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers, And Mature Believers.

- Unbelievers
 - 2 Timothy 2:24 – 26
 - Gentle, patient, humble
 - Able to teach, not quarrel
 - Our correction only works if God first does His part
 - What is the meaning of “if God perhaps will grant them repentance”?

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- Unbelievers
 - 2 Corinthians 3:16 – 6:10 Ethics of evangelism
 - 3:16 – 4:1 Because we are being transformed, we do not loose heart
 - 4:2 Commending ourselves to every man’s conscience
 - 4:6 God shines out of us to light their way

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- Unbelievers
 - 2 Corinthians 3:16 – 6:10 Ethics of evangelism
 - 4:10 – 11 The life of Jesus may be manifested through us
 - 4:13 I believed, therefore I speak
 - 5:11 Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men
 - 5:14 The love of Christ compels us

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- Unbelievers
 - 2 Corinthians 3:16 – 6:10 Ethics of evangelism
 - 5:16 We regard no one according to the flesh
 - 5:18 – 20 He has given us this ministry of reconciliation
 - 6:4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God (how?)

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- The Immature
 - Romans 14
 - 14:1 What defines a “dispute over doubtful things”?
 - 14:3 Both sides are admonished. Neither the weak nor the strong is in control.
 - 14:5 – 6, 14 – 15 May this concept be applied to more than holidays and foods?

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- The Immature
 - Romans 14
 - 14:19 The ethics are edification and peace.
 - 14:22 Can we be united if we are not the same? How far does liberty extend?
 - 14:23 “Whatever is not from faith is sin.” May this be understood as a general truth?

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- The Immature
 - 1 Corinthians 8
 - 8:1 The ethics are edification and love.
 - 8:7 Does idolatry still affect the church?
 - 8:9 A “stumbling block” causes me to reject Jesus and return to paganism.
 - Should the weak to control the liberty of the strong or the strong to control the liberty of the weak?

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- The Immature
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1 – 15
 - 3:1 – 4 Paul called them “brethren” despite the fact that they were not spiritual but carnal.
 - 3:5 – 10 Church agriculture is a team effort.
 - 3:11 – 15 The quality of the edifice depends on the quality of construction.

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- The Immature
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1 – 15
 - Where is the line between “real” churches and “false” churches?
 - Does the New Testament contain a list of essentials?
 - Who decides what is essential and what is expedient?

**Our Ethic Causes Us to Behave Differently
Toward Unbelievers, Immature Believers,
And Mature Believers.**

- The Mature
 - Who decides who falls in which category?
 - Followers are admonished to follow the faith of those whose conduct illustrates their faith (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 13).
 - The mature are not admonished to take authority.

Ethics Evolve

- If we learn something new about faith, our previous faith was deficient.
- If we were wrong and learn better, our previous faith was defective.
- If we learn nothing new in a reasonable period of time, are we still acceptable?
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1 Carnal, yet brethren.
 - Hebrews 5:12 Dismay over slow maturity
 - 2 Peter 1:2 – 9 If increasing, fruitful
 - 1 Corinthians 13:2 Faith without love is...

The Acceptable Ethic

- God is not obligated to accept us by our actions. We know we are accepted when God initiates actions through us.
- 2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.
- 1 John 3:16 – 24
 - If we lay down our lives for the brethren and share and love, we know.
 - If we see in ourselves the work of the Spirit, we know.

The Acceptable Ethic

- The objective is transformation into the image of Jesus, not achievement
 - 2 Corinthians 3:12 – 18
 - Romans 8:29 – 30
 - Colossians 3:9 – 10
- Have I accomplished that which is beyond my ability?
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7
 - 1 Peter 4:11
 - Romans 8:13

The Acceptable Ethic

- Do I seek nutrition?
 - 1 Peter 2:2
 - Hebrews 10:24 – 25
 - Hebrews 5:12 – 6:3
 - 1 Corinthians 11:30
- If our ethics do not evolve, we are dead.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Physical handicaps
 - John 9:2 – 3 Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Neither ...but that the works of God may be revealed in him.
 - Galatians 4:13 – 15 Because of a physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first...Where then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Natural processes (including natural disasters)
 - Romans 8:18 – 25
 - Jesus created the world this way, as an incubator for faith.
 - If we focus on the decay of this world, we are not thinking spiritually.
 - Luke 13:4
 - Accidents happen; God did not cause them.
 - Accidents remind us that we must be prepared.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us a punishment for sin.
 - Jesus was without sin; He was executed.
 - The apostles suffered many things.
 - Some bad things happen as a natural result of bad choices
 - If God punished us on earth, we would be free at Judgment.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us a punishment for sin.
 - Hebrews 12:7 – 11
 - Punishment is a response to the past. Discipline is practicing for the future. They are never the same thing.
 - If God disciplines us and we see it as a bad thing, we are carnal, not spiritual.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us a punishment for sin.
 - 1 Peter 4:12 – 19
 - “Fiery trials” are normal
 - Do not be ashamed
 - Christians can handle this; feel sorry for the outsiders who cannot.
 - Trials bring us closer to God.
 - 2 Timothy 3:12 Persecution is to be expected.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us a punishment for sin.
 - Our definition of “bad” may be skewed.
 - If I die other than of “natural” causes, I get to go home early. Is this bad?
 - If unbelievers die sooner than expected, we trust that God is just; they had sufficient opportunity many times over.
 - Debilitating injury: that the works of God may be revealed in me.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us by the works of the devil.
 - What evidence exists that specific events are caused by Satan?
 - Often, adverse events can be traced easily to the poor choices of people.
 - Often, the causes are too complex to unravel.
 - Do we need to know? Faith says that God has it covered.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us by the works of the devil.
 - At the time of Jesus, Satan had authority over this world (Luke 4:6, John 14:30).
 - Paul implied that, in his time, this was still the case (Ephesians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 4:4).
 - The best efforts of Satan could be overcome by believers (Ephesians 6:11, James 4:7, 1 John 3:8)

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us by the works of the devil.
 - Zechariah 13:2 In connection with the time of the Messiah, both prophets and unclean spirits were removed. Jesus applied this chapter to Himself (Matthew 26:31).
 - When 1 Peter was written, Satan was active on earth (1 Peter 5:8). When 2 Peter was written, angels who sinned had been chained (2 Peter 2:4), repeated in Jude 6.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us by the works of the devil.
 - The sequence of events of Satan’s exile to earth and short reign are in Revelation 12.
 - Satan was the power behind the throne of Rome, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem (Revelation 13, 17, and 18)
 - These were the worst times in all of history (Matthew 24:21, Mark 13:19), cut short for the sake of the elect.

Test Case: The Problem of Suffering

- Many believe that bad things happen to us by the works of the devil.
 - Satan is bound in the abyss (Revelation 20:3) and can deceive the nations no longer.
 - Jesus is king of the world now (Revelation 1:5, 2:27, 11:15, 12:5, 19:15, Psalm 2:8 – 9).
 - If Satan is still king of the world, Jesus lost.