

Christian Worldview and Ethics

CRU – *Institute of Biblical Studies*

February 25 – March 1, 2019

Instructor: Mark Liederbach

mliederbach@sebts.edu

Course Description

Human beings were created with the high purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever (I Cor. 10:31, Psalm 16:11). Properly understood, the discipline of Christian Ethics is the pursuit of God and the worship of him in and through each and every context of daily life. Making ethical choices that both magnify the glory of God and lead to human flourishing, then, requires not only the proper formation and ordering of one's worldview (reason), but also one's loves (affections) and choices (will). Further, in light of Jesus' command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20), the temporal goal of ethics is not to "win the culture wars," but to bring every human being into proper relationship with the Triune God of the universe such that the knowledge of the glory of Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).

A primary objective of the course is to equip disciples of Jesus Christ not only to live a life of worship, but to do so in a way that effectively engages individuals and the culture with the wondrous Gospel of Jesus Christ. A class on Worldview and Ethics, therefore, ought to always be understood as a journey of both worship and mission. It seeks to bring glory to God in an ever increasing and expanding fashion.

In terms of this class there are five components of this journey we will explore:

- 1.) The examination of personal perspectives and misconceptions regarding the nature of ethics and the practice of Christian holiness.
- 2.) The brief examination of various ethical models.
- 3.) The development of a biblically and theologically sound foundation for ethical theory.
- 4.) Application of biblically and theologically sound ethical theory to contemporary issues of life and practice.
- 5.) The engagement of others (both individuals and society as a whole) for the purpose of redemptive witness and the increase of God honoring worship throughout all creation.

In order to accomplish these goals the lectures and readings draw on the wisdom of Scripture as the primary and ultimate source of authority for understanding and shaping ethical ideas and practice. We will, however, also consider insights and ideas from several Western Religious traditions (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish) as well as broadly humanistic / philosophical perspectives. These traditions and ideas, however, will be constantly subject to evaluation in light of the authoritative, immutable standard of God's Word.

Course Objectives: By the end of this two-week course, students will demonstrate that they:

- a) Understand core Christian moral convictions, values, worldview and virtues of Christian faith;
- b) Have learned the basic skills of critical moral thinking and analysis to reason ethically from the Scriptures;
- c) Understand and can assess different ethical systems or narratives and assumptions besides their own;
- d) Have learned how to identify and apply core Christian worldview, values and virtues to major contemporary ethical issues
- e) Better understand the importance of ethics for evangelism, discipleship, movement-launching, and cross-cultural mission; and
- f) Have gained greater confidence in the Scriptures as "the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks" (Cru SOF).

Required Texts

Allberry, Sam. *Is God Anti-Gay?* Epsom, Surrey, U.K. The Good Book Company, 2013.
ISBN: 9781908762313. (82 pages)

Liederbach, Mark. *Chasing Infinity: Discipleship as the Pursuit of Infinite Treasure*. Orlando, FL.: CruPress, 2017. ISBN: 1-57334-111-8. (184 Pages).

Liederbach, Mark – “What is Sexy? Exploring the Question of How a Biblical Ethic of Worship Shapes One’s View of Sex and Sexuality” *Southeastern Theological Review*, Vol. 7, No.1 Summer 2016, 43-62. (19 pages).
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58485b63440243698143794a/t/58a1d5772e69cf7248f17c50/1487000952078/STR+Issue+7%2C1-Liederbach.pdf>

Platt, David. *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, revised and updated. Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-1414390383. Selections: (205 pages)

Course Requirements

1. **Reading:** You are to master the content of the assigned text chapters and articles. You must read all of the assigned reading. You will submit a report indicating the percentage of assigned reading you completed on the final day of the course.
2. **Two Evangelism Interviews:** You are responsible to conduct two live interviews (either face to face or over the phone- not via text, email, chat room, etc) using the attached questionnaire. One is to be done before you come to the first day of class and one to be done after the last day of class lecture. Your interview must be conducted with a non-Christian or someone you have a FIRM suspicion is not a Christian. Upon completion of the interview you must turn in the interview form as well as a one page (max), double spaced and typed summary of your experience along with the filled out interview form. The summary should highlight what you noticed and/or experience that related to the worldview and ethics.
3. **Integrated Ethics Position Statements (Scriptures and Issues Project):** You are responsible to create a document that contains a two-page max (single-spaced) summary of your position on each of the following 4 (Four) Issues:
 - Homosexuality
 - Abortion
 - Divorce
 - Global Warming and the Environment

Format: You must follow the following outline or your grade will be docked considerably.

- a. Each topic will be two page (max) single-spaced **10-point Times New Roman** font
- b. Each page has your name in the header in the upper right hand side of the paper.
- c. Each page has the page number centered on the bottom of the page in the footer.
- d. Each page has the topic (ex. Abortion) as the title of that page. The title is to be centered at the top of the page and printed in **BOLD CAPITALS**.
- e. Each new topic must begin on a new page.

Format of Each Position Statement:

Each Topic **MUST** have the following 3 sections. Use the Roman Numeral Headings exactly as they appear below to mark out each section of your position statement

I. The Problem

This includes a 1-2 paragraph discussion identifying why this is an important issue for Christians to address as well as indicating possible alternative proposals or positions Christians may claim as legitimate.

II. What are the Relevant Sources of Authority that inform your position?

A. Write out at least 4 (four) passages of Scriptures that are relevant to the issue. If the passage is a long one you can give the reference and summarize why it’s important.

B. Cite the 4 (four) of the most influential authors you can find from contemporary ethics sources. These sources must be listed (bibliographic entry) in this section and used in the position statement section with a properly formatted footnote.

III. Position Statement

A. This section integrates the Scripture, ethics sources, and your prayerful consideration together into a brief statement expressing why you hold the position you do. Use appropriately formatted footnotes.

**** Do not go over in length. 2 pages per Issue is the MAX

**** You will turn in a 9-page document (including the Title Page) stapled and in the order of issues listed above

Reading Assignments & Due Dates

Date Due	Topic	Reading Assignment	What is Due?
Monday 2/25 Morning	<i>Intro to Ethics: Ethics as Worship</i>	Liederbach – <i>Chasing Infinity</i>	DUE: Interview #1
Monday 2/25 Afternoon	<i>Intro to Ethics: Moral Vertigo</i>		
Tuesday, 2/26 Morning	<i>Ethical Methodology: Worldviews</i>	Platt 1	
Tuesday 2/26 Afternoon	<i>Ethical Methodology: Sources of Authority</i>		
Wed. 2/27 Morning	<i>Sexual Ethics 1</i>	Liederbach – What is Sexy Platt-6, 7 Allberry, Is God Anti-Gay	
Wed. 2/27 Afternoon	<i>Sexual Ethics 2</i>		
Thursday 2/28 Morning	<i>Ethics of Life and Death 1</i>	Platt 2,3	
Thursday 2/28 Afternoon	<i>Ethics of Life and Death 2</i>		
Friday 3/1 Morning	<i>Social Ethics 1</i>	Platt 5,8, 9	DUE: Reading Report, Scriptures and Issues Project
Friday 3/1	<i>Social Ethics 2</i>		
Friday 3/8			DUE: Interview #2

Course Grade

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Reading Report	10%	(due at the beginning of class, Friday, 3/1)
Evangelism Interviews	40%	(#1 due at the beginning of class, Monday 2/25 and #2 due one week after class, Monday 3/8).
Scriptures & Issues Project	50%	(due at the beginning of class, Friday, 3/1)

Grading Scale

94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
84-89	B
82-83	B-
80-81	C+
74-79	C
72-73	C-
65-71	D
0-65	F

Bring This Report With You on Friday 3/1

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Thursday 2/28 Afternoon	<i>Ethics of Life and Death 2</i>		
Friday 3/1 Morning	<i>Social Ethics 1</i>	Platt 5,8, 9	DUE: Reading Report, Scriptures and Issues Project
Friday 3/1	<i>Social Ethics 2</i>		
Friday 3/8			DUE: Interview #2

I completed _____ % of the required readings

Signature _____

IBS ETHICS INTERVIEW: TOLERANCE & MORALITY

Hi, my name is _____ and I am taking classes at the Institute of Bible Studies. I am taking a class with **DR. LIEDERBACH** called "**CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW & ETHICS**", and one of our course requirements is to conduct an interview concerning some course-related issues. The questions are primarily related to ethical issues and your opinion of Christianity. Would you be willing to take about 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire with me?

1. General:

A. Date & time _____

B. Name of interviewee _____ (first name is sufficient)

2. Are you now or have you ever been active in a church or religious organization? **YES / NO**

A. If so, which one? _____

B. How often do you attend? _____

3. Do you think human beings are basically good in nature or basically sinful (evil)? Why?

4. What do you think is the biggest problem of humanity today?

Economics	Sin	Intolerance	Environment	Racism
Politics	Religion	Poverty	Lack of Educ.	War
Terrorism	None	Other: _____		

A. Why?

5. What, in your opinion, is the biggest ethical (moral) issue facing our country today?

Abortion	Homosexuality	Pornography	International Conflicts
Euthanasia	Suicide	Industrial Waste	Human Rights
Animal Rights	Organ Donation	Gambling	Divorce
Drug Abuse	Genetic Engineering	Sexual Promiscuity	Capital Punishment
Other?			

6. In your opinion, do moral absolutes actually exist (i.e., are there moral laws that apply all the time in all circumstances, in all places)? **YES / NO / UNSURE**

A. If so, then ...

1) Where do they come from? _____

2) What will be the reward for keeping such absolutes? _____

B. If not, in your opinion what is the moral basis for any morality in society (i.e., if nothing is absolute, on what authority can we justify enforcing laws)?

7. If asked to explain your philosophy of life, would your answer be:

DEFINITE / VAGUE / NONE

8. To what extent could you honestly say you live according to your philosophy of life?

ALL THE TIME / MOST OF THE TIME / SOME OF THE TIME / SELDOM / NONE

9. Does your philosophy of life include a solution for the problems identified in Questions #4&5?

A. If you have no philosophy of life, then what solution do you have for the problem identified in Question #3?

***“The last 2 questions are a little more in depth and turn more toward Christian ideas
about the foundation for morality and ethical living”***

10. According to the Bible, Christianity rests on four central truths that form the foundation for its opinions on matters of morality and ethics. *I'd like us to read through **all four of these truths** together and then go back and get your opinion on each of them individually* (i.e. whether you agree, disagree, or are unsure).

A. God loves you and has created you to have a personal relationship with Him. (John 3:16, John 10:10b)

AGREE / DISAGREE

1) Why? _____

a) *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).*

b) *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10b).*

B. The Bible asserts that the basis for moral and ethical problems is the reality that human beings are sinful. That is, all of us have made choices to disregard God's perfect rules. The penalty for sin is separation from God and eternal death. On their own efforts humans are unable to overcome this separation. (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23)

AGREE / DISAGREE

1) Why? _____

a) *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).*

b) *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

C. Jesus Christ is God's only solution for each person's sin. Through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead Jesus paid the penalty each of us deserve for our sin. Through faith in Him alone you can have a relationship with God and forgiveness for sin. (Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, John 14:6)

AGREE / DISAGREE

1) Why? _____

a) *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).*

b) *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).*

c) *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6).*

D. Each person must individually make an informed, act-of-the-will decision to place his or her faith in Jesus Christ (receive Him as Savior and Lord). It is only then that a person can know and experience God's love and forgiveness and have a proper basis for moral and ethical living. (John 1:12, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 10:9)

AGREE / DISAGREE

1) Why? _____

a) *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).*

b) *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

c) *That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).*

11. If you agreed with all of question 10, have you ever made a personal, act-of-the-will decision to place your faith in Christ?

A. If so, when? _____

B. If not, what holds you back?

C. If you disagreed with any of question 10, what (if anything) would it take to convince you on that point?