

PRACTICAL —RELIGIOUS— ETHICS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A GROWING SOCIETY WITH CREEPING MORALE

RIGHT

CHOICE

MORALS CONFLICT

VALUES

DILEMNA

CONSCIENCE

RELATIVISM

WRONG

ABSOLUTIVISM

COMPLIANCE



Adelowo Felix Adetunji Ph.D

About the Book

This piece of work, written from Christian perspective, came as a result of the author's years of teaching experiences in ethics and other related courses. It is aimed at discovering the relationship between religious beliefs and morality. From this angle, the book addresses the following among others:

1. How religious faith and belief system affect one's approach to moral issues.
2. The nature of sin, how it affects human moral judgement and one's relationship with God.
3. How the conscience functions in relation to individual's moral life.
4. The acclaimed roles of the society in shaping human moral conduct.
5. The necessities of suspending human law for higher and divine laws in conflicting moral obligations.
6. Various ethical options from which moral decisions are made.

Going through the book shall equip and enable the user to:

1. Use a critical approach to the Bible in moral reflection.
2. Make decisions not on the basis of mere human reasoning, personal preferences, and feelings, but rather with a sense of obligation towards God and his words.
3. Testify/Demonstrate that facts arising from bible-based principles are indispensable in making sound moral decision. In the same vein, that analogies from such principles should be made in issues where biblical teachings not explicit.

The book is a great treasure for everyone who, through faith in Jesus, desires practical Christianity. The copies were, therefore, sent out with earnest prayer to challenge, transform, and spur every user to righteousness for the exaltation of our nation – Proverbs 14:34.

About The Author



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In the University, he has served in various committees and held positions including the University Pastor, Head of Department for Religious Studies and currently, the Director for Ellen G. White Research Centre. For many years, he has taught many courses in his fields at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He has many articles and other publications to his credit. Married to *Esther*, the home is blessed with three growing adults namely: *Oluwatofunmi*, *Oluwadetan*, *Oluwanipinmi*; a daughter-in-law, *Oyinloluwa* and a grandchild, *Foluwasewa*.

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PREFACE

Our society is in shambles today, not because we lack enough people with academic qualifications – in fact we have more than enough. We are in a great mess of all sorts not because we not religious – in fact, many take that to the extremes. The major problem is that intelligence plus mere religiosity minus good moral amount to corruptions in diverse forms and degrees. Speaking from the perspective of a business man, Warren Buffett CEO of Berkshire Hathaway says, “In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. If you don’t have the first, the other two will kill you... It takes 20 years to build a reputation, and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.” In the same vein, Ted Engstrom wrote as follows:

The World Needs Men (and Women) ...

- Who cannot be bought
- Whose word is their bond
- Who put character above wealth
- Who possess opinions and a will
- Who are larger than their vocations
- Who do not hesitate to take chances
- Who will not lose their individuality in a crowd
- Who will be as honest in small things as in great things
- Who will make no compromise with wrong
- Whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires
- Who will not say they do it “because everybody else do it,”
- Who are true to their friends through good report and evil report, in adversity as well as in prosperity
- Who do not believe that shrewdness, cunning and hardheadedness are the best qualities for winning success.
- Who are not ashamed or afraid to stand for the truth when it is unpopular
- Who say “No” with emphasis, although the rest of the world is saying “Yes”.

Looking at the situation of the world, a Veteran Christian author, Ellen G. White Exclaimed thus:

The World Needs True and Honest Men - The greatest want of the world is the want of men--men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature--the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.

General Introduction and Case Study

Consider these scenarios:

(A.) You embarked on a journey from your home state to another state you have never visited. You are to board two different vehicles before reaching your desired destination. After traveling for few hours, you got to a community from where to take another vehicle to your final destination. As you are getting out of the first vehicle to move to the next bus stop, you discovered that the wallet containing all your money was nowhere to be found. Confused, perplexed, stranded and dumfounded in a strange land. You were in these conditions, but kept on moving on a dusty busy road toward the bus stop. Suddenly, you sighted another wallet along your path and no one seemed to pay attention as you tried to slow down beside the attractive object.

- What would you do?
- Why would you do that?
- How did you arrive at that decision?

(B.) It has been part of your plan with the one you are engaged with to settle down in marriage after your Youth Service. Your desire not to be a liability to each other and your parents made you to familiarize yourself with a Newspaper vendor who frequently allows you to browse through some paper in search of job opportunities. You have come across some vacancies, written some applications and attended some interviews. Your experiences are similar to that of

your future partner – “No success story”. Both of you are not getting younger and pressure from your parents, friends, and ‘well wishers’ are becoming embarrassing. You are finally yielding to a suggestion that, fixing a day for your wedding can strengthen your faith in God for job provision. Few weeks to the ‘date of faith’, you were invited for an interview. What you saw on the day for the interview was no different from the previous ones – a large crowd for very few available vacancies. An interview panel member of opposite sex called you aside with a word of assurance and guarantee for employment on the condition that you pay back in cash and ‘kind’ on? assumption. You have a lot to consider and your benefactor must leave and join other panel members.

- What would you do?
- Why would you do that?
- How did you arrive at that decision?

SECTION A

RELIGION AS A PHENOMENON

Etymology of Religion

There are various views as regard the historical development of the term religion. Two of such are considered here.

1. Cicero, a Latin scholar linked the term with the Latin word *relegere* or *religio*. Breaking the Latin word into:

“*re*” which means “again” and “*lego*” *which means “read”*. Bringing the two together, to mean “read over/again” or "consider carefully/diligently".

The idea is possibly to reflect the ritualistic nature of religions.

2. Apart from Cicero’s idea, modern scholars like Tom Harpur and Joseph Cambell also presented similar idea about the derivation of the term religion. In their own view, the two Latin words are:

“*re*” which means “again” and “*ligae/ligare*” *which means “to tie or bind”*.

When the two are brought together you have “to tie or bind again”. This may suggest the power of religion to restore - as in relationship between man and God.

Definitions of Religion

One major problem confronting scholars in the definition of religion is lack of consensus as to a definition that is generally accepted. This is because, each group of scholars approaches the issue from its own field of study or discipline. This results into countless number of definitions that further compounded the challenge. Putting all together again, it has been discovered that a particular definition is either too vague or ambiguous that it includes almost any and everything or too narrow that it excludes many belief systems that many people considered religious. In connection with the challenge of its definition, Patrick H. McNamara declared: "Try to define religion and you invite an argument."

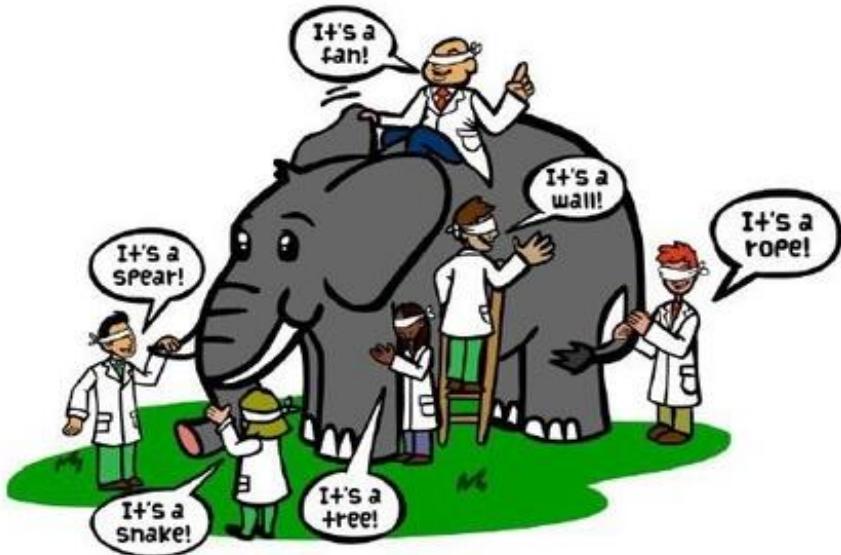
Samples of Definitions of Religion

- E.B. Tylor (Anthropologist) - Religion is “a belief in spiritual beings”

- Emile Durkheim (Sociologist) – Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices which are related to sacred things and unite the adherents into a moral community/church.
- Emmanuel Kant (Philosopher) - Religion is “the recognition of all duties as divine commands”
- James Frazer (Anthropologist) - Religion is "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of Nature and of human life."
- Alfred North Whitehead - "Religion is what an individual does with his solitariness."
- Harriet Martineau - "Religion is the belief in an ever-living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding moral relations with mankind."
- Sigmund Freud (Psychologist) - "Religion is comparable to childhood neurosis."
- Karl Marx - "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... a protest against real suffering... it is the opium of the people..."
- Paul Tillich - "Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of life."
- Spiro - "An institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings."
- J. Miltion Yinger - "Religion is a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problem of human life."
- Swidler – Religion is "an explanation of the meaning of life and how to live accordingly."
- R. Forrester Church - Religion is "our human response to being alive and having to die"

From this perspective, the challenge of defining religion can be likened with the story of six beggars who described an elephant by the part held by each. See the illustration below.

Definition of Religion: An Illustration



Traits of religions

In an attempt to proffer solution to the academic challenge of defining religion, *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* lists the following traits of religions as a way of defining the term:

- Belief in supernatural beings (gods).
- A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
- Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
- A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods.
- Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), ... in the presence of sacred objects /during the practice of ritual that are linked with the gods.
- Prayer and other forms of communication with gods.
- A world view, or a general picture of the world as a whole and the place of the individual therein i.e. how the individual fits into it.
- A more or less total organization of one's life based on the world view.
- A social group bound together by the above.

In his attempt to resolve another possible challenge and make the ideas generally accepted, a scholar, Mircea Eliade, opined that the concept of “supernatural beings” be replaced with “the sacred” as some religions have no link with the supernatural.

Origin of Religion

Religion is believed to be as old as man himself. History has it that anthropologists discovered some ancient graves with food and relics supposedly meant to be used by the deceased in the next world. This is not unrelated to the belief, especially among the African that when one dies, he/she only relocates to another world (of Spirit). In such spiritual ream, the departed one (such as the aged) has the opportunity not only to relate but also to oversee the affairs of the living relations. In the relationship, the living can in turn appease the departed through sacrifice. In connection with accurate account, it is an undisputable fact that no one has such details of how the first religion came to be. This, partly, may be due to the inability of the early generations to read, write, and keep records. There is no doubt that by the time literacy was developed, many religions had been in existence for thousands of years and the details of its developments could not be documented. Consider the following dates for some world religions.

Important Historical Dates on the Origin of Religion:

- c. 2000 BC: Time of Abraham, the patriarch of Israel.
- c. 1200 BC: Time of Moses, the Hebrew leader of the Exodus.
- c. 1100 - 500 BC: Hindus compile their holy texts, the Vedas.
- c. 563 - 483 BC: Time of Buddha, founder of Buddhism.
- c. 551 - 479 BC: Time of Confucius, founder of Confucianism.
- c. 200 BC: The Hindu book, *Bhagavad Gita*, is written.
- c. 2 to 4 BC - 32 AD: Time of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and founder of Christianity.
- c. 32 AD: The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- c. 40 - 90 AD: The New Testament is written by the followers of Jesus Christ.
- c. 570 - 632 AD: Time of Muhammad, who records the Qur'an as the basis of Islam.

The Theories of the Origin of Religion

In spite of the uncertainty of the origin of religion, scholars have postulated some theories with the attempt to examine the origin of religion. Generally speaking, the issue can be approached from two distinct ways namely:

1. **The means by which it originated (history) – HOW?** This has to do with the historical aspect of the origin that is, how it all began at the onset; and
2. **The reason behind the origin (function) – WHY?** Here, the origin is usually formulated as being a need, which religion continually arises to fulfil for example, for food, health, security or justice. These needs may be for individuals or the entire society. Let us consider some of the theories.

Mythological Theory of the Origin of Religion

This is considered to be one of the earliest theory of the origin of religion. Here, the origin of religion was linked with the gods and goddesses. As a result of such beliefs, adherents started building temples and shrines for the gods. Sacrifices were also made to the gods for protecting and blessings the people.

Theological Theory of the Origin of Religion

The essential ingredient in (Christian) theology is faith in God. This is because, the Bible does not make an attempt to explain or defend the existence of God – Gen. 1:1. This God, who cannot be discovered by searching, reveals himself to humans in the following ways:

*General Revelation – God revealed Himself to all through nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20) and through conscience (Rom. 2:14, 15).

*Special Revelation – Adam and Eve enjoyed direct communication with God until the entrance of sin (Gen. 3:8ff). After the fall of man, God spoke through the prophets (Isa. 1:10-31; Jer. 2:1ff) and also revealed Himself through Jesus - John 1:1-18; Heb. 1:1-3.

Anthropological Theory of the Origin of Religion

Edward Tylor (1832-1917) was an anthropologist. According to him, it originated as a result of the effort of the primitives to give explanation to dreams and visions. To them, dreaming of the dead with moving body implies that soul can give life. The personification of the soul gave rise

to gods inhabiting and controlling all phenomena (animism). Religion arose from the combination of the peoples' observation, inference, and generalization.

Another anthropologist, Sir James Frazer, propounded an evolutionary theory of human intellectual development in his popular book, *The Golden Bought* in 1922. According to the scholar, the development began from magic to religion and finally to science. The inability of magic to fully meet the need of man gave rise to religion. After some time, man discovered that religion could not also meet all his desires, he then turn to the discovery of science.

To many scholars, Frazer's postulation is questionable for many reasons. For instance, it is evident that both magic and religion coexist in many cultures of the world. According to Dopamu, it is not a matter of evolution from the magic to religion to science but parallel evolutionary stream, each influenced by the other but subject to its own laws of development. Even today, when science have conquered the world, magic, religion, and science, are still dominant factors in many societies, particularly in Africa. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, for example, magic, medicine, religion and science have survived today, playing different roles and adapting themselves to the new situations.

Another anthropologist, **James Frazer (1854-1941)** linked the origin of religion with the failure of magic in offering a satisfactory explanation to how the world operates. At a point in time, the power that controls the world was ascribed to the gods rather than the direct manipulation as evidenced in the magical laws of nature. That is, appealing to the powers of gods rather than coercion of magic. To Frazer, magic gave way to religion which shall also be overtaken later by science.

Sociological Theory of the Origin of Religion

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) was a sociologist who opined that religion originated not really to serve a need but rather by accident. According to him, it originated accidentally. It happened as extra ordinary power was experienced when members of clan came together. The power, was not ascribed to themselves collectively rather to be possessed by something external. This was later represented by totemic emblem. They adhered to the symbol as the object of worship.

Psychological Theory of the Origin of Religion

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was a famous neurologist and the father of psychoanalysis. The scholar presented a scenario wherein primitive sons killed their fathers for opposing their inordinate sexual desires. After the action against their fathers, they began feel guilty. To get rid of the feeling of guilt, they came up with Totems that were later worshiped as gods. Obedience to the gods were linked to their fathers who are now deified. Note that Freud was able to address both the historical and recurrent origins of religion. According to the scholar, religion arises to satisfy the need to relieve guilt”.

The Functional Theory of Religion

Early scholars of religion like E. B. Tylor, Emile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud among others, were preoccupied with the search for the origin of religion. The assumption then was that, such discovery would go a long way in explaining its meaning and development in history. At a point in time, propounded theories of origin became of least importance and speculative. This notwithstanding, the scholars were confronted with the question of persistence. That is, for Durkheim, why do human beings persist in taking symbolic representations literally? and for Freud, why do human beings persist in believing what is in fact an illusion? The clear answer in each of these is that, religion persists because it functions to fulfill basic needs in human beings.

Also, in the field of comparative religion, the same shift was experienced. The effort on the historical origin of various religions in the nineteenth century was redirected in the twentieth century toward the basic question of what functions religion has in human society. That is, attention was shifted from mere theological argument to examining the idea that in spite of diversities in cultural content of religion in different societies, there could exist impressive similarities in basic functions involving the culturally prescribed solutions of human social and psychological problems and the ways of expressing and re-affirming the central values of a society. Subsequent questions that arose from the ideology were: Are there social and psychological problems (that) one solved by religious beliefs and practices? If yes, how? How far does religious system go in expressing, codifying, and affirming the central values of a

society as to maintaining the social fabric of that society? The attempted resolution of these questions form the fundamental idea in the functional orientation of religion.

Primarily, functionalism is a theory of social sciences but later became popular in religious studies. The theory won the attention of scholars because it appears to be practically measurable. The slogan then was, religion is what religion does. From this angle, much contribution had been made by the theory in the studies of religion. With special interest in the analyses of functions of social and cultural phenomena, functionalism asserts that every item and activity in a system serve specific functions which should be the basis for their explanation in the system. Function in this respect centres primarily on the objective consequence of an activity or phenomenon for the system of which it is a part. In the secondary but equally important sense, it is seen in terms of interrelatedness as applied in mathematics where x as a function of y connotes that x varies in direct proportion to variation in y . The idea in this second meaning implies that, all phenomena in the system are considered, at least initially, as being relevant to the system's persistence. It is then but a small move to the postulate that all phenomena in a system are interrelated and that a change in one aspect will have implications for all others and for the system as a whole.

A philosopher from England, by the name Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), rendered the first full explanation to the idea of function and functional orientation in sociology. In it, he compared societies with organisms and on this basis reinstates the earlier stated principles of interrelatedness and all the usefulness of all the items in the functioning of a system as a whole. As an evolutionist, he opines that societies are progressive but become less dependent on religious thought and practice as they advance. For A. R. Radcliff-Brown, the simple explanation for the theory is that, the functional method of interpretation rests on the assumption that a culture is an integrated system. In the life of a given community each element of the culture plays a specific part, or has a specific function. The function of a ritual or ceremonial is to express and thereby maintain sentiments that are necessary for social cohesion.

In summary, the basic thesis of the theory is that religion functions to fulfill certain needs in the society and the individual. It is of great importance in unifying, integrating, maintaining or reducing anxiety in the social or personal system.ⁱ Although the theory is very popular, it is

essential to point it out that it stirred up arguments among scholars. Let us consider the views of some of these scholars.

In tracing the history of functional concept of religion, the role of scholars such as Numa-denys Fustel de Coulanges in its development should not be overlooked. His idea was the brain behind that of one of his pupil, Emile Durkheim, who in turn influenced many other popular scholars in the field. The French sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), disagreed with the aspect of Spencer's view of a (modern) society devoid of religion. According to Durkheim, sociologist should work with two basic explanatory concepts; function and cause. *Function* has to do with the general need of the societal organism which a social phenomenon served, while *cause* referred to those features of society which move directly facilitated a phenomenon.

Durkheim rejected the idea that closely relates function to ends or purposes. In his opinion, there is no mysterious final cause of societal patterns or change and that one should not think of function as having to do with the intentions lying behind the establishment of institutions. (On the latter point, Durkheim argued that social phenomena do not generally exist for the useful results, which they produced.)

From this background, Durkheim concluded that the primary function of religion is to distinguish the sacred from the profane. To him, religion is related to the former and it is very important in the provision of freedom for individuals from unchecked desire, in highlighting the moral character of the collectivity, and in binding individuals together within the latter (he) simply emphasized the positive, integrative functions of religion.

Of great importance also are the works of social anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski and Arthur Radcliffe-Brown. In their efforts, they sought to redirect anthropological inquiry away from speculative evolutionism toward more analytically rigorous fieldwork. This they did by making use of functional orientation in the study of primitive societies including their religious aspects thereof. For the anthropologist from Poland, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), the idea of functionalism is based on two assertions: first that any particular society is a unique, functioning whole, and second, that the social arrangements and cultural forms obtaining in a society have functional significance in relation to the psychological needs of individuals. (A

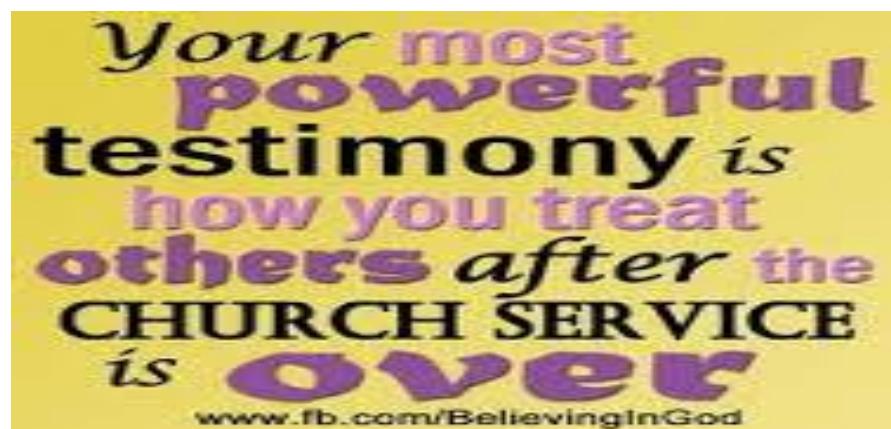
close observation from the foregoing reveals that), in spite of his interest in the functional interrelatedness of social institutions and practices, Malinowski saw their most fundamental functional significance on their meeting the psychological needs of individuals.

In his own approach, his British fellow scholar Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) consciously followed the Durkheimian claim. He sought for a systematic science of society, involving comparative analysis of the structural patterns of societies in respect to both their overall cohesiveness and to the functional requirement of societies as systematic wholes. Another important figure in the development of this concept was an American scholar, Talcott Parsons (1902-1978), who gained popularity in the 1950s as the most prolific analyst of religion. According to a source, Parsons was also recognized as the functionalist *par excellence* among other anthropologists and sociologists of the twentieth century. Strongly influenced by, but not limited to, the works of Durkheim, the scholar agrees with Durkheim that religion is a universal feature of human life. However, he differs from Durkheim's reductionist claim in which the latter reduces religion to society. As far as Parsons is concerned, religion is the pivotal aspect of the realm of cultural values, beliefs and symbols.

From the above discussion, it is important to say that though scholars disagree on the issue of the functional theory, yet all endorse some versions of Radcliffe-Brown's description of functionalism as the most adequate theory for the study of religion. The ideology attempts to explain why religious institutions and beliefs come into existence, and why and how religion functions and persist, and shows what role religion plays in an integrated social system

Some Functions of Religions

- i. Religions provide answers to questions and ultimate issues that cannot be easily explained e.g. man's origin, purpose of life, and his final destination.
- ii. Religions bring comfort in the time of crises.
- iii. Religions provide codes of conduct by prescribing and proscribing specific actions.
- iv. Religions promote social solidarity through common beliefs and practices.
- v. Religions bring about sharp division in the society.



Pertinent Question

- Of what use is your religion?

Consider James 1:26-27

- If anyone thinks he is religious, without controlling his tongue but deceiving his heart, his religion is useless.
- Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world.(HCSB)

Selected Quotes on Religion

❖ By Ellen Gould White

1. Priests and rulers became fixed in a rut of ceremonialism. They were satisfied with a legal religion, and it was impossible for them to give to others the living truths of heaven. {AA 15.1}
2. His (Paul's) conversation, his influence, his refusal to yield to self-gratification, must show that his religion was not a profession merely, but a daily, living connection with God. {AA 314.2}

3. A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ. {AA 317.1}
4. ... religion does not consist in rites and ceremonies, creeds and theories. If it did, the natural man could understand it by investigation, as he understands worldly things. ... religion is a practical, saving energy, a principle wholly from God, a personal experience of God's renewing power upon the soul. {AA 451.3}
5. Angels delight in a home where God reigns supreme and the children are taught to reverence religion, the Bible, and their Creator. ... {AH 27.3}

Other Quotes on Religion

1. "Anyone who thinks sitting in church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car." - — **Garrison Keillor**
2. "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." - **C.S. Lewis**
3. "The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us." - — **C.S. Lewis**
4. "Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart." - — **Mahatma Gandhi**
5. "Hate the sin, love the sinner." - — **Mahatma Gandhi**
6. "A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the walls of his cell." - **C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain**
7. "Knock, And He'll open the door Vanish, And He'll make you shine like the sun Fall, And He'll raise you to the heavens Become nothing, And He'll turn you into everything." - **Jalal Ad-Din Rumi**

8. "Science and religion are not at odds. Science is simply too young to understand." — **Dan Brown, Angels & Demons**
9. "My concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right." — **Abraham Lincoln**
10. "All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen." — **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
11. "He died not for men, but for each man. If each man had been the only man made, He would have done no less." — **C.S. Lewis**
12. Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither. - **C. S. Lewis**
13. .To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing. - **Martin Luther**
14. Prayer is aligning ourselves with the purposes of God. - **E. Stanley Jones**
15. We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties. - **Oswald Chambers**
16. I would rather live my life as if there is a God and die to find out there isn't, than live as if there isn't and to die to find out that there is. - Albert Camus

SECTION B

THE CONCEPT OF FAITH



Faith from Various Perspectives

How will you respond to each of these questions?

- What is your faith?
- Where is your faith?
- What is faith?

From an on-line dictionary, faith is defined as:

- Confidence or trust in a person or thing: faith in another's ability.
- Belief that is not based on proof: He had faith that the hypothesis would be substantiated by fact.
- Belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion
- Belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit, etc.: to be of the same faith with someone concerning honesty.
- A system of religious belief: the Christian faith; the Jewish faith.

Faith from Christian Perspective

- Although there is a link between our faith and moral life, Christian faith also teaches that **God** is not only a **lawgiver** and **judge** but also a **gracious God**.
- In the Bible, “faith is the truthful human response to God’s self-revelation via His words and His actions.

In Christianity, faith supersedes reason – ref. Heb. 11:1. -True faith focuses on God and His will rather than man’s will; -by implication, it **trusts** in God, **believes** in His promises and **acts** on His word in spite of human desires;-it allows God’s word to mold the thoughts and live.

Saving faith requires 3 things:

*Conviction - ...that God exists (Heb.11:6)

+ James 2:19 says that demons believe in God’s existence.

*Trust/dependence - One must trust/depend on God as the source of salvation.

*Obedience - faith that does not obey God’s revealed will, does not bring salvation (James 2:14-26).

Faith and Human Behaviour

To speak of faith and ethics with clarity, there is the need to understand the meaning of each. In this discussion, Robert Traer examines the word faith from New Testament perspective. In Christ’s interaction with his disciple and message to the Church, faith was one of the central themes. In passages like Matt: 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Mark4: 40, Christ challenged his disciples of possessing ‘little faith’ and in Luke 17:5; they asked the Master Jesus to increase their faith. The word faith and other related terms like believe and belief may have different meanings in different contexts. In connection with the use of faith in John 3:16, Traer makes the following analysis:

John 3:16 says this about faith: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not perish but have eternal life." (Revised English Bible) Most of us are more familiar with the translation: "For God so loved the world that

he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." This translation uses the English verb "believe in" to render the Greek verb *pisteuo* that means "to have faith." The Revised English Bible uses the noun "faith" for the Greek noun *pistis* to translate this passage, because today the verb "believe" may be understood to mean "belief" rather than "faith."

We may misunderstand John 3:16, if we think that having certain beliefs about Jesus is what really matters. It is not belief, but faith — trusting in Jesus and in the kingdom of God — that is saving. The word "belief" appears only once in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (2 Th. 2:13), but the word "faith" occurs more than 200 times. Moreover, the gospel of John, which does not contain the Greek noun for faith, uses the Greek verb for faith more than 90 times.

The English translation for the Greek verb for faith is "believe in," rather than "believe that," which means to have a belief or to hold a certain point of view. The difference is crucial. Belief is a state of the mind, whereas faith is an act of trust. Belief is about thinking. Faith is a matter of character. (**Robert Traer**).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that a type of faith in which one places his/her trust in God is that which links an infinite human with God who has no limitation. The fact is true for an individual as well as a cooperative body.

*Review the stories of the following Heroes of faith in the book of Hebrews chapter 11:

1. Noah – v.7
2. Abraham – vs. 8-12; 17-19.
3. Joseph – v. 22
4. Moses – vs. 23-28
5. Israelites – vs. 29-30



* Do you notice how the faith/trust of these individuals and groups of people affected their behavior/actions?

Consider the following Bible Texts:

Hebrews 4:2

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard [it].(KJV)

Hebrews 10:38-39

Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.(KJV)



Selected Quotes on Faith

Consider the following quotes on faith and note their implications:

❖ Ellen Gould White on Faith

1. The faith that works by love and purifies the soul could find no place for union with the religion of the Pharisees, made up of ceremonies and the injunctions of men. {AA 15.1}
2. Under the Holy Spirit's working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. {AA 50.1}
3. Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. {AA 56.1}
4. Let truth telling be held with no loose hand or uncertain grasp. Let it become a part of the life. Playing fast and loose with truth, and dissembling to suit one's own selfish plans, means shipwreck of faith. {AA 76.1}
5. The disciples were but humble men, without wealth, ...Without earthly honor or recognition, they were heroes of faith. From their lips came words of divine eloquence that shook the world. {AA 77.1}
6. A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian.... {AA 317.1}
7. Those who defer obedience till every uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.--Gospel Workers, p. 262. {ChS 110.1}

❖ Other Selected Quotes on Faith

1. *"Beginnings are usually scary and endings are usually sad, but it's everything in between that makes it all worth living." - Sandra Bullock in "Hope Floats"*
2. *God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, or sun without rain, but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way. If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. - unknown*
3. *Faith is believing in something when common sense tells you not to. - From the movie, "Miracle On 34th Street"*
4. *Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase. - Martin Luther King, Jr.*
5. *Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it isn't there. You can't see the future, yet you know it will come; you can't see the air, yet you continue to breathe. - Claire London*
6. *"I don't pray for God to take my problems away, I pray only for God to give me the strength to go through them." - Jose Lozano*

SECTION C

ETHICS AND MORALITY

The word Ethics was formed by Aristotle in 400 B.C. It was derived from the Greek word *ethos* which originally meant a location or a place where people lived together. Later it came to mean custom, temperament, character, and ways of thinking or behaving. It is also related to the word etiquette which means a code of good moral or behaviour that is practiced for the good of others. Its technical **definitions** include:

1. A code or set of principles by which men live
2. The normative science of conduct
3. The study of the norm of human behaviour
4. The science of the ideal human character and of ideal end of human action.
5. The study of the rightness or wrongness of any human course of action
6. A branch of philosophy which deals with the morality of human action
7. The philosophical examination of concept such as good and bad, virtue and vice.



Practically speaking, ethics has to do with the evaluation of consciously and purposefully planned human conducts and with rules and obligations that relate to it. It puts into consideration factors that makes a behavior good or bad for individuals or communities. It should be noted that an action may be **right** and not be **good**. This is because, the former implies conformity with an acceptable standard. On the other hand, goodness has to do with the quality which goes beyond

mere conformity with a given standard. Goodness considers, for example, the **motive** behind the action. Motive, in this context, refers to the combination of **desire** (that the actor is aware of certain goals that are necessary for self-fulfillment) and **intention** (the anticipated result) which propelled the actor. Ethics is therefore, a human oriented term because moral conduct is centered on human whose action can be adjudged right or wrong.

Ethics as a Science

Broadly speaking, science means a systematic study of anything in accordance with a given principle. In the narrow sense of the term, it is limited to empirical sciences like physics, chemistry, and biology. In the case of ethics, it is a normative science and unlike the empirical sciences that describe, normative science prescribes. The former deal with how things are and the way they behave while the latter deal with the way things ought to be or behave. In relation to humans, it deals with how they ought to behave. Empirical sciences deal with facts while ethics as normative science deals with value (how things ought to be).

Note the Differences between Facts and Value - Facts can be considered to be the reality of an event, occurrence, or act that has taken place. On the other hand, value has to do with quality possessed by an act that gives it a worth or desirability. In essence, fact tells how things are, while evaluations are judgment about how things ideally are or ought to be.

Ethics – an Aspect of Philosophy

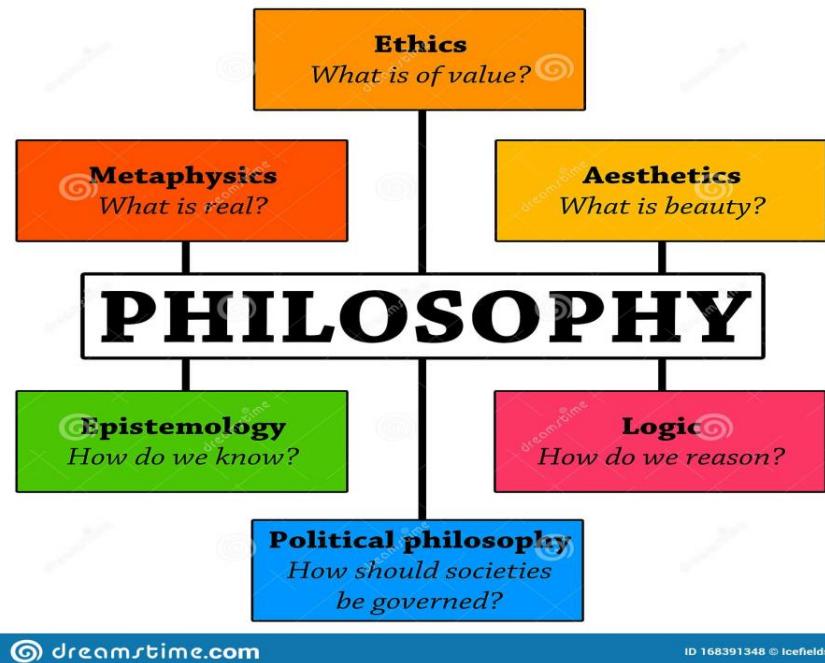
Ethics, the study of morality, is an aspect of philosophy. Other components include epistemology which studies knowledge and metaphysics, the study of nature of reality. Philosophers divide ethical theories into the following three groups:

Meta Ethics - This deal with the meanings of moral terms such as good and bad (or evil), right and wrong, propriety and impropriety, duties and rights, obligations and claims, and justice and injustice. The use of these moral terms has bearing on the objects to which they are attached. The analysis and logic of these moral terms are called, metaethics.

Normative ethics - This refers to the moral norms or principles with which we justify behavior or value as being moral or immoral. It prescribes/studies moral behaviour and thus dealing with,

what ought to be done rather than what is done. It should be noted that conducts are judged permissible or otherwise on the basis of these principles, value, and norms.

Applied ethics – It applies normative ethics to specific controversial moral issues e.g. Abortion, euthanasia, etc.



The Relationship between Ethics and Morality

From *ethos*, Aristotle derived the adjective *ethieos* (ethical) to mean a definite class of human virtues especially praise-worthy character traits such as courage and moderation. He also developed the noun form *ethica* (ethics) to mean a discipline which could study morality as a special phenomenon.

On the other hand, Cicero made use of *mores*, the Latin word for ethics. It literally means customs, behavior, inner nature, law, regulation, fashion and styles of clothing. Like Aristotle, he developed the adjective form, *moralis* and the noun *moralitas*. Note that both the Greek word *ethica* and the Latin word *moralitas* – ethics and morality – have to do with a field of study. Scholars then concluded that the former should retain its original meaning while the latter

becomes the subject matter. That is to say, ethics is the discipline which studies morality and morality is the set of judgment people make in connection with what is right or wrong and good or bad. It should also be noted that the two words are sometimes used interchangeably. Consider the table below:

Scholar	Lang	word	adj	Noun
Aristotle	Grk	ethos	ethieos	Ethica (ethics)
Cicero	Latin	mores	moralis	Moralitas(morality)

Essence of Morality

In every normal human being, there is always a question of how one should act or behave. The desire, which is an in-built in humans, shapes one's reasoning and ideology. To some scholars, it originates from human conscience or the sense of right and wrong and forms the basis for moral standard. Sequel to this idea of what is right or wrong, is the creation of moral boundaries. Morality is therefore determined by what serves as one's moral reference point. Putting it in another way, a source explains further that "Fluctuations in moral interpretation are the source of the differentiation between the ideals of one individual and another." To respond to the question of what constitutes moral action, we must what is moral and its relation to humanity (created by God). This is illustrated as follows by a Cambridge Journal source.

- Imaging a radio station (something transcendent/God) which broadcasts a signal (morality) to radios (people) worldwide. Now imagine yourself as a radio; you have speakers (your actions), a receiver or antenna (conscience), and a tuner (free will). Every radio on Earth can pick up this signal with their antenna (if they choose to tune in). Your choice to, or to not, tune into morality is solely up to you. As with all radio broadcasts, there can be interference with the signal by obstacles (unhealthy spiritual environment) or thick walls (social barriers). This results in fuzzy or unclear sound (different "standards" of morality). If your signal is unclear, you have the option of moving to a more open location and picking up a clearer signal. This is a simple analogy, but a clear one. Because morality is a constant signal, the standard is constant for everyone.*

It is apparent from the above that what is moral is that which is done in line with the divine dictates and in agreement with ‘good’ conscience.



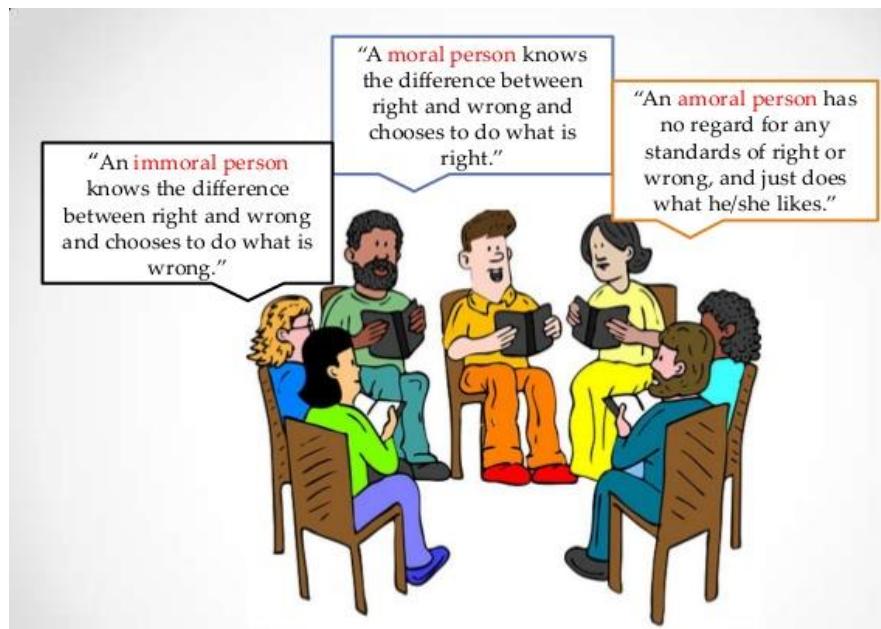
Moral Terms - Moral, Nonmoral, Immoral, and Amoral

In the study of ethics, clear understanding of certain terms are very important. Metaethics is the aspect of ethics that looks into that. In this respect, we shall consider moral, nonmoral, immoral, and amoral. It is very important to know that there is no agreement among scholars as regards the use of these terms.

*Nonmoral actions or events are the types where there is no possibility of helping or harming either yourself or another person. For instance the decision to eat plantain or pawpaw, wear tie of a given colour, using a particular writing material, and etc. are usually considered to be nonmoral issues. Although, actions or events in this category may sometimes have moral implications. Also in a general sense, scientific facts are also classified as nonmoral.

*Immoral actions or events are such actions with the possibility of harming either yourself or another person. It involves a violation of moral principles and it is so regarded when carried out by one who is subject to moral laws or has the sense right and wrong. Such actions or events are considered to be wrong, bad, sinful or evil in relation to the moral principles. Those in this category, include but not limited to, lying, stealing, sexual impropriety, cheating, robbery, and other vices.

*Amoral actions or events are those with no moral values that is, value-free. Actors in this category exhibit indifference to and lack feelings for moral concepts. Examples of such who are not subject to moral law or considered not to be morally responsible include a little child, mentally derailed persons, animals, and etc. Consider the following for clarification: A baby that



messed on the mother's occasional wear; A mad person walking about stark naked; and A mouse that feeds on your loaf of bread. Each of these lacks moral rationality or consciousness.

*Moral actions or events are those with positive moral values – virtuous or praise worthy actions that positively affect yourself or other persons. For instance, a normal human being is regarded as a moral being because he/she is subject to the moral law and can be morally held responsible for his/her actions. Such may attract commendation or condemnation; blame or

praise; as well as reward or punishment. Simply put, when an actor who is subject to the moral principle acts in conformity to the principle, the action is qualified as moral. Examples in this category include loyalty, transparency, chastity, and other similar virtues.

Ethics and Some Disciplines

As earlier stated, ethics is a science that concerns itself with the study of human conduct, his behavior and action in relation to morality. The discipline is therefore related to other sciences that have to do with human nature and life. Some of such sciences are hereby considered.

1. ***Ethics and Economics*** – As a discipline, Economics has to do with labour, wages, productivity, and how wealth is distributed. Ethics is needed in creating harmony in the business process and subsequently in the society. For instance, justice, fairness, love and similar moral norms are needed to guide human relations in various economic activities.
2. ***Ethics and Logic*** – Logic is defined as the science of correct thinking and one who thinks right will act rightly. The relationship is glaring since correct thought leads to correct behavior and ethics is concerned with good behavior in relation to morality.
3. ***Ethics, Sociology & cultural Anthropology*** – Like Psychology, they describe the functions of a society/culture; possible results of a social/cultural behavior or arrangement; and how to bring about desired changes.
4. ***Ethics and Political Science*** – This combines many disciplines, including ethics. Generally speaking, politicians are goal oriented and sometimes become desperate in achieving the goals. No wonder, many nations are facing hardship today in the hands of greedy political leaders. It is however, the duty of ethics to prescribe how best to achieve a desired goal.
5. ***Ethics and Psychology*** – The two disciplines are concerned with human nature and behavior. However, while Ethics is concerned with the prescription of human behavior, psychology describes what an average person will do, what may be responsible, and possible result and how to change. In other word, psychology only studies how the person behaves with no consideration to its morality.
6. ***Ethics and Sociology*** – Sociology deals with humans in relation to his/her fellow in the community. Since a person's behavior affects the life of his/her fellow individual in the society, it follows that moral principles are necessary to control human behavior for an orderly society.

7. ***Ethics and Law*** – Like ethics, it also prescribes and proscribes certain human actions in the society. In spite of the similarity, there exist many differences. For example, ethics has a wider scope than law for it is a discipline under ethics and qualified by the latter. For instance, ethics can qualify a law as oppressive, discriminative, bias, and etc. Ethics can therefore determine whether or not a law should be obeyed – a law that contradicts moral deserves no obedience. Law may also differ from one region/community to another, but fundamental moral principles can be said to be universally the same. Again, because ethics generally stems from personal conviction, internal disposition and freedom of choice, it needs no external enforcement like the law.

- Morality is concerned with what is right and wrong.
 - A **moral** act – an act considered to be right
 - An **immoral** act – an act considered to be wrong
 - An **amoral** – an act that shows no understanding of right or wrong
 - A **non-moral** act – an act not concerned with right or wrong
 - A **non-moral judgement** – a view or opinion that is nothing to do with right or wrong.

Morality

From the perspective of Christian ethics and the Moral Law, the Bible tends to show that both external and internal enforcements are needed. For instance, Joshua was encouraged to keep God's commandment (Joshua 1:7-9). This is comparable with words of exaltations from a preacher and can be considered external. The Bible also records that the Law of God is written in our hearts – Ps. 40:8; Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10, 11. This provides an internal enforcement for the Law. From this perspective, the internal should be seen as primary and the external as secondary.

Selected Quotes on Morality

1. “The Seven Social Sins are:
 - a. Wealth without work.
 - b. Pleasure without conscience.
 - c. Knowledge without character.
 - d. Commerce without morality.
 - e. Science without humanity.
 - f. Worship without sacrifice.
 - g. Politics without principle.

From a sermon given by Frederick Lewis Donaldson in Westminster Abbey, London, on March 20, 1925.” — Frederick Lewis Donaldson *tags: character, commerce, conscience,

2. “It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit.”
— Noël Coward, Blithe Spirit *tags: deceit, honesty, hypocrisy, morality, shock,
3. “The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.” — Dante Alighieri *tags: afterlife, attributed-no-source, hell, morality, neutrality
4. “Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one.”
— Marcus Aurelius, Meditations *tags: integrity, morality
5. Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.” — Oprah Winfrey *tags: anonymity, integrity, morality
6. “In a word, I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be right, as I had been too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong.” — Charles Dickens, Great Expectations *tags: cowardice, morality, pip
7. “To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”
— Theodore Roosevelt *tags: character, education, morality

8. “Right is right even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it.”
— Augustine of Hippo *tags: morality, right-and-wrong
9. “Respect for ourselves guides our morals; respect for others guides our manners”
— Laurence Sterne *tags: manners, morality, morals, respect

The Relationship between Ethics and Religion

Ethics deals with relationship between fellow human, thus dealing with the horizontal dimension of human experiences. On the other hand, religion focuses human in relation to God that is the vertical dimension of human experiences. There are two views as per their relationship. To some people, morality is independent of religion, rather, it is a product of the society. Ethics results from common sense and conscience is nothing than a notion implanted by the society. It is on these grounds that we have many in our society who are morally sound without any religious affiliation – irreligious morality.

For another school of thought, religion gave birth to ethics. To this view, God created man in his own image and morality is this image in man. Conscience, in its original condition, was implanted not by the society but by God. It is in this connection that God’s moral law is written in our hearts – Jer. 31:31-34 of. Rom. 1:18-32, 2:14,15; 2cor. 1:12; 1Tim. 4:12. Immoral religion may not be denied, but it falls short of God’s approval.

The following four ways have been identified as ways by which religion relate with morality:

1. Religion and Moral Norms – Nearly all religious traditions have specified moral principles that proscribe or prescribe manner of behavior for their adherents. For Christians, such include the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20: 1-17) and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). In such normative teachings, there is no clear distinction between what is moral and what is religious. In this respect, God has no decried in mere religious rituals that is devoid of godly behavior. Consider His declaration as echoed by Prophet Amos:

I hate, I despise your feasts! I can't stand the stench of your solemn assemblies. Even if you offer Me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept [them]; I will have no regard for your fellowship offerings of fattened cattle. Take away from Me the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice flow like water, and righteousness, like an unfailing stream.(Amos 5:21-24,HCSB)

As far as God is concerned, immoral religion is an aberration and abomination before Him.

2. Legitimization of the Moral Norms – In addition to identification of moral norms, religion also lend credence to the norms by tracing them to a divine source. There is no doubt that good morals positively contribute to human welfare, it is an undisputable fact that maintaining good behavior calls for great sacrifice and self denial. Justifying good behavior on the sole basis of social welfare and approval may not sustain the moral requirements for a long time. At the same time, if moral norms are justified only in terms of subjective human reasoning and interpretation, there would be confusion and conflicts. The fact that morality is ultimately traced to God and thereby placed beyond human control resolved many possible challenges.

3. Proportionality of Moral Retribution – Religion does not only reveal the divine as the ultimate source of the moral norms, but also affirms that rewards and punishments are proportional to moral conducts. It is not uncommon in our society to see the righteous languishing in jail, while ardent criminals freely roam the streets. Examples of corrupt individuals that are prospering and gaining upper hands in most of their endeavors abound, while the faithful and honest citizens struggle to make ends meet. Religion, in most cases, reveals that divine agencies will ultimately repay everyone in his/her own coins. In theistic religions, the final ‘pay-back’ will be in terms of heaven or hell in the great beyond without ruling out the possibility of same in here and now. Consider the following bible passages:

Tell the righteous that it will go well [for them], for they will eat the fruit of their deeds.
Woe to the wicked--[it will go] badly [for them], for what they have done will be done to them.(Isaiah 3:10-11, HCSB)

He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is

holy, let him be made holy still. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to



render to each man according as his work is. (Revelation 22:11-12, ASV)

"Your words against Me are harsh," says the LORD. Yet you ask: "What have we spoken against You?" You have said: "It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by keeping His requirements and walking mournfully before the LORD of Hosts? So now we consider the arrogant to be fortunate. Not only do those who commit wickedness prosper, they even test God and escape." At that time those who feared the LORD spoke to one another. The LORD took notice and listened. So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared Yahweh and had high regard for His name. "They will be Mine," says the LORD of Hosts, "a special possession on the day I am preparing. I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him. So you will again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. (Malachi 3:13-18, HCSB)

4. A Come-Back Rout – Religion does not only affirm moral retribution, but also provides a way for the penitent to return and be reconciled. A source puts it thus: "... religions also provide

means for easing guilt and the moral despair arising from a sense of inevitable punishment... God is usually portrayed not only as just, but as merciful and the resources of mercy are said to be outweigh those of justice." (? Smith, 1995). From biblical perspective, God's love, mercy, and justice are demonstrated in Christ's sacrificial death. Consider the following Bible texts:

For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.(John 3:16, HCSB)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.(1 John 1:9,KJV)

For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23, KJV)

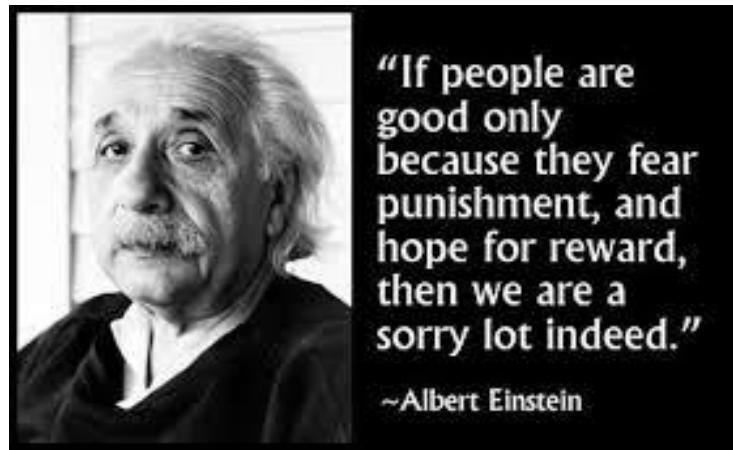
Selected Quotes on Religion and Morality

Consider the following quotes on religion and morality and consider their implications:

Ellen Gould White on Religion and Morality

1. These monstrous doctrines are essentially the same as the later teaching of popular educators and theologians--that there is no unchangeable divine law as the standard of right, but that the standard of morality is indicated by society itself, and has constantly been subject to change. All these ideas are inspired by the same master spirit--by him who, even among the sinless inhabitants of heaven, began his work of seeking to break down the righteous restraints of the law of God. {GC 261.2}
2. In all the deportment of one who possesses true love, the grace of God will be shown. Modesty, simplicity, sincerity, morality, and religion will characterize every step toward an alliance in marriage. {AH 50.5}
3. Men who are doing God's work, and who have Christ abiding in their hearts, will not lower the standard of morality, but will ever seek to elevate it. {AH 335.2}

4. The most valuable rules for social and family intercourse are to be found in the Bible. There is not only the best and purest standard of morality but the most valuable code of politeness.



{AH 423.3}

5. Morality cannot be separated from religion. Not all conservative tradition received from educated persons and from the writings of outstanding people of the past are a safe guide for us in these last days, for the great struggle before us is such as the world has never seen. . . . {CTr 124.3} Christ Triumphant 1999}

6. If morality and religion are to live in a school, it must be through a knowledge of God's word. {CE 38.2} Christian Education}

7. Everywhere are seen wrecks of humanity, broken-down family altars, ruined homes. There is a strange abandonment of principle, the standard of morality is lowered, and the earth is fast becoming a Sodom. --Gospel Workers, pp. 125, 126. (1915) {Ev 678.1}

8. All must learn the lesson of what power there is in a good character. There is no training we need so much now as the preparing of young men and women to have moral rectitude and to cleanse their souls of every spot and stain of moral defilement. The standard of morality and holiness is trailing in the dust. . . . {HP 196.4} In Heavenly Places, 1967}

Other Selected Quotes on Religion and Morality

1. Without religion, I believe that learning does real mischief to the morals and principles of mankind. *David Ramsay .Speech to the Assembly at Charlestown

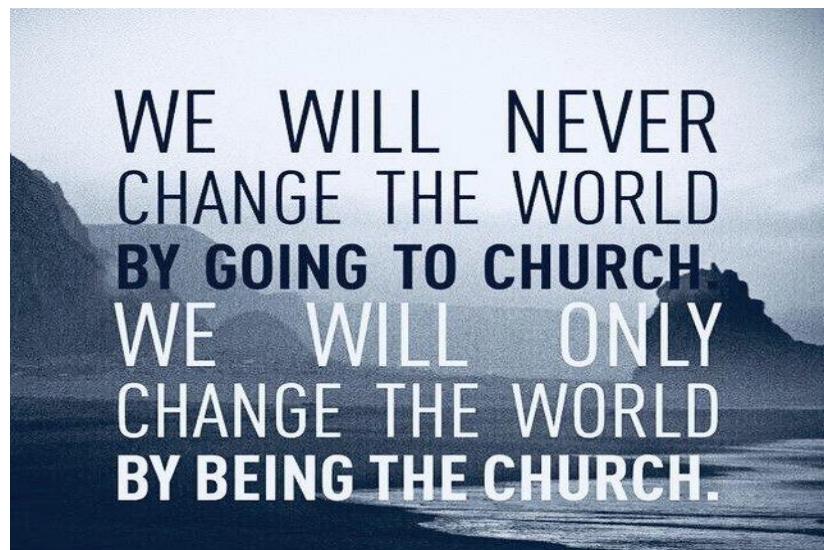
Categories: Equality, Religion and Morality, Virtue *Date: 1778

2. Religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness.

Benjamin Franklin to Thomas Paine *Categories: Religion and Morality *Date: Unknown

3. The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next. Continue therefore to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts. *George Washington Farewell Address *Categories: Religion and Morality

Date: September 19, 1796



4. Nothing has a greater tendency to lessen the reverence which mankind ought to have for the Supreme Being, than a careless repetition of his name upon every trifling occasion . . . To prevent this profanation, such passages are selected from scripture, as contain some important precepts of morality and religion, in which that sacred name is seldom mentioned. Let sacred things be appropriated to sacred purposes.

Benjamin Franklin *Categories: Human Nature, Religion and Morality, Virtue *Date: December 13, 1757

5. If Men are so wicked as we now see them with Religion what would they be if without it?

John Adams Letter to Benjamin Rush *Categories: Character, Religion and Morality, Virtue

Date: Unknown

6. The Bible contains the most profound philosophy, the most perfect morality, and the most refined policy, that ever was conceived upon earth.

John Witherspoon Letter on Jurisprudence *Categories: Character, Religion and Morality, Virtue

Date: Unknown

7. What can be done by law to make the people of any state more virtuous? If... virtue and piety are inseparably connected, then to promote true religion is the best and most effectual way of making a virtuous and regular people. Love to God, and love to man, is the substance of religion; when these prevail, civil laws will have little to do.

James Madison Letter to Frederick Schaeffer *Categories: Religion and Morality, Religious

Liberty *Date: December 3, 1821

8. I cannot however help repeating Piety, because I think it indispensable. Religion in a Family is at once its brightest Ornament & its best Security.

John Adams .*Categories: Family, Religion and Morality *Date: Unknown

9. The foundation of national morality must be laid in private families.

Benjamin Franklin Information to Those who would Remove to America

Categories: Americans / American Character, Religion and Morality, Religious Liberty, Work

Date: September, 1782

10. Religion is the only solid basis of good morals; therefore education should teach the precepts of religion and the duties of man towards God.

Alexis de Tocqueville Democracy in America *Categories: America, Religion and Morality

Date: 1835

11. The happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend on piety, religion, and morality.

Thomas Paine The Age of Reason *Categories: God, Religion and Morality *Date: 1794

12. It is a fool only, and not the philosopher, nor even the prudent man, that will live as if there were no God... Were a man impressed as fully and strongly as he ought to be with the belief of a God, his moral life would be regulated by the force of belief; he would stand in awe of God and of himself, and would not do the thing that could not be concealed from either.

George Washington Farewell Address *Categories: Foreign Policy, Religion and Morality
Date: October 19, 1796

13. Politics and morality are inseparable. And as morality's foundation is religion, religion and politics are necessarily related. We need religion as a guide. We need it because we are imperfect, and our government needs the church, because only those humble enough to admit they're sinners can bring to democracy the tolerance it requires in order to survive.

Ronald Reagan "Goals for the Future" radio address to the nation. Camp David, Maryland.
Categories: Government, Religion and Morality *Date: August 25, 1984

14. I know now what I'm about to say will be very controversial, but I also believe that God's greatest gift is human life and that we have a sacred duty to protect the innocent human life of an unborn child. Now I realize that this view is not shared by all. But out of all the debate on this subject has come one undisputed fact, and this, out of the debate, has been the uncertainty of when life begins. And I just happen to believe that simple morality dictates that unless and until someone can prove the unborn human is not alive, we must give it the benefit of the doubt and assume it is. And thus it should be entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Ronald Reagan Address to the Meeting of the INternational Association of the Chiefs of Police
Categories: Human Nature, Religion and Morality *Date: September 28, 1981
westillholdthesetruths.org/quotes/category/religion-and-morality 22/6/16

Conscience and Morality

One aspect of humans that differentiates them from other creatures is the ability to attach values to his/her actions. That is, he is able to tell if his/her action is good or bad, right or wrong, kind or wicked, and so on. Animals, for example, behave according to their natural instincts unless they are ‘trained’ to do otherwise – they lack real sense of morality. Unlike the animals, humans are moral beings for they possess moral consciousness. This consciousness is made possible through an internal moral witness called, conscience. From biblical point of view, it is asserted that God created man in His own image (Gen.1:27) and that one aspects of God’s image in man is morality. It can therefore be said that originally, human conscience is designed to guide aright. The situation was, however, affected by the fall of man resulting into a departure from that which is perfectly right. Being infected by sin, it can be said that the conscience of a ‘natural’ person is not perfectly reliable. The Bible puts it this way:

For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so. Those whose lives are in the flesh are unable to please God.(Romans 8:7-8, HCSB)



In spite of the fall, man is not totally devoid of the moral awareness or the promptings of the conscience. In the light of this, the Bible declares that God’s law is written in human hearts. By this divine act, even those who have no knowledge of the law can respond to what is right and

wrong. It is in this regard that the Bible, in Romans 2:14-16, presents the universal existence of conscience. Although common to all humans, the way it works may differ from one person to another. This is so because it can, like an alarm, be ‘reset’ or ‘reprogrammed’ and thereby influence how and when it ‘rings’. When it thus further derailed from its fallen state, – due to habitual departure from right behavior - it aligns with that which the possessors accept to be right. When one morally derails, the misdeed may be dismissed, denied, distorted, or dealt with. The option(s) chosen from time to time will surely impart the conscience – positively or negatively. Also because it has been established that human mind can be affected by various cultural elements, it means that what one person conscientiously approves may be condemned by another. It is from this perspective that the Bible speaks of the following categories of conscience:

- *A good conscience – 1Timothy 1:5
- *A clear conscience – 1Timothy 3:9
- *A weak conscience – 1 Corinthians 8:12
- *A sheared conscience - 1Timothy 4:2
- *A corrupted conscience - Titus 1:15
- *An evil conscience – Hebrews 10:22

A moral standard based on the morally fallen human philosophy and perverted judgment cannot produce reliable conscience. For a conscience to functionally meet divine approval, it must be nurtured by the TRUTH of His word. In this direction the Bible declares:

All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] *profitable* for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction* in *righteousness*: That the man of God may be *perfect*, thoroughly *furnished* unto all *good works*. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, KJV'. Emphases are mine.)

It may not be safe; therefore, that one behaves in a particular way with an untroubled conscience. Remember, the quality of a conscience determines how it will function.

Examine the word for conscience from some African languages:

S/N	Language	Word for Conscience	Literal/descriptive Meaning
1.	Yoruba	a.Ifá-aya	The oracle of the heart
2.	Yoruba	b.Eri okan	The witness/testimony of the heart
3.	Igbo (Nigeria)	akó na uche	Behaviour and knowledge
4.	Akan (Ghan)	a. A – honim	Self knowledge
5.		b.Tiboa	Moral sense
6.	Urhobo	Ewen Obowen	Your heart
7.	Obolowo	Okikere	Premeditative thinking
8.	Igbinuki (Edo, Nig.)	Obi	In Your heart
9.	Okpameri (Nig.)	Okon	That which judges
10.	Eleme (Rivers, Nig.)	Mpio	Something that pricks

It is apparent in most of the above descriptive names that conscience has to do with morality. If different tribal groups share such common idea, it is easier to link conscience with God (religion) rather than society.

Selected Quotes on Conscience

Below, is a list of quotes on conscience. Examine some of them and consider their applications.

Ellen G. White on Conscience

1. The man who is bound in the chains of ... infatuation is too often deaf to the voice of reason and conscience; neither argument nor entreaty can lead him to see the folly of his course. {AH 51.1}
2. Exaggeration becomes habit, and blunt falsehoods come to be told with but little conviction or reproof of conscience. {AH 313.3}
- 3.... those who have placed themselves without reserve on the side of Christ will stand firmly by that which reason and conscience tell them is right. {AH 464.2}

4. Some who profess to be followers of Christ, know that they are sinning against God, and ruining their health, yet they are slaves to their own corrupt passions. They feel a guilty conscience, and have less and less inclination to approach God in secret prayer. They may keep up the form of religion, yet be destitute of the grace of God in the heart...{ApM 25.2}\ An Appeal to Mothers -1864
5. Many ... destroy their own comfort, injure their health, and violate a good conscience, because they will not cease to do wrong. ...{ApM 27.1}
6. If worldly schemes are successful, there is an inclination to continue in a line that deadens conscience, and prevents a correct estimate as to what constitutes real excellence of character. When circumstances favor this development, growth will be seen in a direction prohibited by the word of God. {CSA 22.4} A Call to stand Apart (2002)
7. Inward peace and a conscience void of offense toward God will quicken and invigorate the intellect, like dew distilled upon the tender plants.... {CG 353.1}
8. Too often professedly Christian mothers sacrifice principle to their desire to follow the multitude who make fashion their god. Conscience protests, but they are not brave enough to take a decided stand against the wrong. {CG 434.3}

Other Selected Quotes on Conscience

1. "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right."
— Martin Luther King Jr., A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches
tags: conscience, politics, right
2. "If all the world hated you and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved of you and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends."
— Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre
tags: conscience, innocence

3. “Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority share in it.”
— Leo Tolstoy, A Confession

tags: conscience, majority, right-and-wrong, truth, wrong

4.“Your conscience is the measure of the honesty of your selfishness. Listen to it carefully.”

— Richard Bach, Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah

tags: conscience, encouragement, inspiration, life, morality, selfishness, wisdom

5. “A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner: Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time. When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied, The one I feed the most.”

— George Bernard Shaw

tags: conscience, good-and-evil, humanity, native-americans, self-determination

6 “Betrayal is common for men with no conscience.”

— Toba Beta, My Ancestor Was an Ancient Astronaut *tags: betrayal, conscience

7.“Through pride we are ever deceiving ourselves. But deep down below the surface of the average conscience a still, small voice says to us, something is out of tune. ”

— C.G. Jung *tags: conscience, pride, psychology, self, superego

8. “Conscience is the inner voice that warns us somebody may be looking.”

— H.L. Mencken, A Mencken Chrestomathy *tags: conscience, definitions, ethics, humor, inner-voice

9.“Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.” — John Milton, Areopagitica *tags: argument, conscience, freedom, freedom-of-speech, liberty

10.“[T]he infliction of cruelty with a good conscience is a delight to moralists. That is why they invented Hell.” — Bertrand Russell, Sceptical Essays *tags: conscience, cruelty, dishonesty, double-standards, hell, morality

11. “The only tyrant I accept in this world is the 'still small voice' within me. And even though I have to face the prospect of being a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority.”
— Mahatma Gandhi, The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work, and Ideas *tags: conscience, courage, majority, minority, truth

12. “The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.”
— Gaylord Nelson *tags: conscience, earth-day, future, gary-nelson, generations, heard, not, sacrifice, thanks, today, willingness, words

13.“Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.”
— George Washington, Rules of Civility And Other Writings & Speeches *tags: conscience

14. “I have a different idea of elegance. I don't dress like a fop, it's true, but my moral grooming is impeccable. I never appear in public with a soiled conscience, a tarnished honor, threadbare scruples, or an insult that I haven't washed away. I'm always immaculately clean, adorned with independence and frankness. I may not cut a stylish figure, but I hold my soul erect. I wear my deeds as ribbons, my wit is sharper than the finest mustache, and when I walk among men I make truths ring like spurs.”
— Edmond Rostand, Cyrano de Bergerac *tags: conscience, elegance, honour, morality, wit

15. "Since then your sere Majesty and your Lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed. Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen." (*Reply to the Diet of Worms*, April 18, 1521)" — Martin Luther, Luther's Works, 33: Career of the Reformer III *tags: belief, christian, conscience, freedom-of-religion, freedom-of-thought, organized-religion, reformation, religion, steadfastness, truth

16.. "No guilt is forgotten so long as the conscience still knows of it."
— Stefan Zweig, Beware of Pity *tags: beware-of-pity, conscience, guilt, stefan-zweig

17. "The torture of a bad conscience is the hell of a living soul."
— John Calvin *tags: conscience, soul, torture

18. "Atticus, you must be wrong."

"How's that?"

"Well, most folks seem to think they're right and you're wrong. . ."

"They're certainly entitled to think that, and they're entitled to full respect for their opinions," said Atticus, "but before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience."

— Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird *tags: conscience, integrity

19. “It is neither right nor safe to go against my conscience.”

— Martin Luther *tags: conscience

20. “The immature conscience is not its own master. It simply parrots the decisions of others. It does not make judgments of its own; it merely conforms to the judgments of others. That is not real freedom, and it makes true love impossible, for if we are to love truly and freely, we must be able to give something that is truly our own to another. If our heart does not belong to us, asks Merton, how can we give it to another?”

— Jon Katz *tags: conscience, judgement, love, true

Moral Implications of Common Slogans

We live in a jet age in which the world and those in it are moving very fast – no time to be wasted. It therefore becomes necessary for messages/counsels to be skillfully packed in short statements for effective delivery for the fast-moving audience. The issue here, does not exclude ethical views as they also come to us in brief statements which Wilkens termed “Bumper Stickers.” Stressing the need to get beyond “Bumper Sticker” ethics the scholar says,

It should not take much reflection to conclude that we need to be careful about staking the important ethical decision in our lives on a “bumper stickers.” The problem is not that any advice that can be delivered in a small amount of space is necessarily wrong. The problem is that the ideas expressed in these bite-size pronouncements have broader implications.* (Wilkens, pp. 11, 12)



Wilkens sheds more light on the issue that a short statement on a Bumper Sticker is connected with another idea which may not be available to us on the sticker. It follows then that why the statement may appear good at a glance, the philosophy on which it is built may be wrong. It is therefore dangerous to commit oneself to a brief statement (Bumper Stickers) without considering the totality of its assumptions and implications. *(p.13). Have you ever come across T-Shirts with inscriptions such as, “just do it”; “I can do all things ...”; etc. Let us examine the moral implications in each of the following popular slogans:

- If you cannot beat them, join them
- Heaven helps those who help themselves
- If you are in Rome, do like the Romans do
- Majority carry the vote
- Too Connected to be Frustrated
- Follow me to Sunday School
- My Year of Divine Up-liftment
- Don't Get Mad, Get a Lawyer
- You Can't Please the World, just Please the One Who Made it
- Use What you Have to Get What You Want

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

From Today, Everyone in Singapore Will Go for Green
When We Think Green, The Possibilities are Endless
Every Little Thing You Do Counts
Please Act Today for All Our Tomorrows
Please Don't Shatter Our Peace and Quiet
When You Litter, People Look at You Differently
Every Little Effort Counts in Keeping Our Neighbourhood
Clean and Pleasant
Clean and Green: That's the Way We Like It
Don't Throw Away My Future. Recycle Me
Don't Throw Away Our Future. Recycle Us
We Care We're OK

Can you think of more.....?

SECTION D

NORMS FOR HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Normally, human a moral action does not arise from a vacuum rather; references are made to specific moral principles for guidance. For instance, children normally depend on the authority of their parents believing that they are always right. However, as they advance in age, they tend to differ in some issues having discovered that the parents are not always right. Such discoveries make them to realize that parental authority could not be taken as the standard for morality. Beyond the early age, principles may be developed through personal experiences, societal norms, religious beliefs, considerations for others, sentiments, conscience, and etc. The rightness or otherwise of an action is based on the moral principles standized by one or some of the aforementioned options. Differences in opinions in a given case usually arise from differences in what serve as moral reference points for an individual in such a case. Let us consider some of these options in detail.

1. *Social Custom* - To some, whatever is approved by the society is right and whatever is condemned by it is wrong. History, however, had shown us that certain things that are approved by the social custom may be morally wrong. Examples are, Slavery, destruct of the twins, human sacrifices etc. This means that social customs should not be blindly accepted as a moral standard.
2. *The Law* - Law has also been described as a means through which the wrong could be distinguished from the right. It is also used to determine one's moral uprightness or otherwise depending on how one relates to it. That is to say, one may be law-abiding or a law-breaker. From this perspective, what the law prescribes is right and that which it proscribes is wrong. These notwithstanding, laws are not always right for some may be oppressive, unjust, bias, to mention but a few. On this basis, certain laws can be criticized and rejected. From this angle, it is evident that the law could not be generally accepted as the standard for morality.
3. *Revelation* - In the religious settings, it is not uncommon to have people who claim to receive revelations from God. There are as many revelations as there are religious bodies. For example Christians frowns at Polygamy as a sin while in Islam it is considered a revealed will of God. The conflict is made plain when we remember that both are quoting from their revealed Holy Books. Such conflicting moral standards make it imperative for thorough clarification of some acclaimed revelations before settling for a moral standard.

4. *Right Reason* – Philosopher like Thomas Aquinas has concluded that right reason is the moral standard. That is to say whatever conforms to right reason is morality right and whatever opposes to it is morally wrong. However, intelligent arguments could be presented against or for many actions that are believed to have been taken on the basis of right reasons. Considering Euthanasia as an example, it should be noted that each side of the argument claim to have good reasons for its position.

5. *Universalizability* –The idea here was developed by a moral philosopher called, Immanuel Kant. According to him, for an action to be considered morally good, it should be desirable and all men_in similar situations should perform similar acts. This should be the basis for considering an act as being right or wrong. If otherwise, it is morally wrong. That is to say, an act is wrong if it cannot be honestly willed as universal law. An example is, cheating in an exam to have a desired grade.

6. *Intuition* - There is a school of philosophy called the intuitionist who opines that intuition should be the basis for morality. An aspect of the school – moral sense school – claims that we all possess moral senses which guide us in distinguishing the right from the wrong actions just as the sense of taste distinguishes the sweet from the bitter object. According to the ideologists, knowledge of the goodness and badness of an action comes to us by intuition. It is, however, difficult to know which intuition is right or wrong since different people, by the so-called intuition, could hold opposing views on a given action e.g., contraception.

If the subscribers to each of these options how do we know the standard by which morality is measured? What is the source of moral standard? In relation to this question, scholars have postulated some theories.

Positions/Theories on Moral Standard

1. *Objective Position* - To be objective suggests freedom from any form of biases – call to mind, the differences between objective and subjective examination questions. Here, the notion is that

moral standards are beyond human intervention or interference. The position is further divided into two namely: Supernatural and Natural positions respectively.

- a. In Supernatural Theory, the idea is that morality originated from supernatural being or God. It is believed that God is good and has defined what is right/wrong through the revelations. The way an individual relates to such revelations shows his/her loyalty or otherwise to God – the ultimate source of the revelations.
- b. Natural Theory posits that morality stems out of nature which is in turn governed by natural laws. What is moral is that which is in harmony with those natural laws. That is to say, anything that is done in agreement with nature is good and vice-versa.

*Critics of natural theory however point it out that the so-called natural laws only describe how material object will behave under a given situation, while morality on the other hand prescribes. Take for example the scientific law that ‘like poles repel and opposite poles repel’. If this is extended to human gender, heterosexual relationship is naturally okay and it is on this ground that homosexual relationship is condemned. Morality, does not only condemn homosexuality, but goes a step further to qualify or prescribe what forms of heterosexual relationship is acceptable. Read Gen. 2:25; Ex. 20:14; Lev. 18:1ff; 1Cor.6:18; 7:1-5.

2. *Subjective Position* - Subjective position is of the opinion that values and qualities are assigned by conscious beings like man. In other word, morality stems from within human beings. That it, beings such as humans set standard for what is right or wrong. *The question is, can plants and animals also assign values? Yes! They can also show in their own ways what is good or bad.

3. *Combined Position* - This opines that although they place values on many things, values are not solely dependent on human. This is not unconnected to the fact that human fallen intellect alone cannot reliably proffer solutions to the complex issues of values. There is therefore, the need for the combination of the above two positions/theories. Let us bear in mind that there are moral issues that are not specifically stated in, for example the Bible, but require reasoning from

cause to effect or inference. Take for example smoking, watching blue films, and etc. The reason may be because such vices were not in practice when the Bible was written.

Scholars are of the opinion that variables such as: what is valued; the valuer; and the context in which valuing takes place should be put into consideration in the application of combined position. It is also necessary to note that such evaluation must be guided by an authority that is higher than man – God, through his revealed principles.

Moral Standard from Christian Perspective

As stated earlier, Christian ethics is the prescription of how Christian's ought to behave on the basis of the Bible. It is the combination of philosophy and theology and in blending the two, one must bear in mind the warning to

Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.
(Colossians 2:8, HCSB)

This implies that the Bible should be used as a guide for understanding ethics and not the other way round. God's character as revealed in the Bible is the ultimate standard for morality. There cannot be a proper understanding of ethics in the light of the Bible without the acceptance of God's existence. Its principles should be used for evaluating social scientific and technological issues. According to some scholars, Christian ethics has a two-fold standard of conduct and these are:

- 1. Jesus, that is, His exemplary life. Concerning Him the Bible declares,

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. [John 14:6]

- 2. The Word of God.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. [2 Tim. 3:16-17]

Christian ethics differs from all other ethical systems; take for example, philosophical ethics. While the latter are based on such things as pleasure, law, science, etc, the former are based on right and wrong in the light of the Bible. In addressing life issues, philosophy draws conclusions on the bases of fallen human intellect while Christian ethics makes the Bible its bases. It should be noted that Biblical morality is based on love, the source of which is God himself. It is this regard, that Christ summarized the whole law into two: love for God and love one's neighbours (Mark 12:29-31). It is also necessary to point out here that four different types of love have been identified by the Greek-speaking world and they are:

1. *Eros* – This refers to erotic or sexual desire rooted in physical appearance. It is an intense, overmastering, and a self-seeking type of love that blocks the sense of reasoning to achieve its goal. Compare the experience of Tamar in the hands of Amnon in 2Sam. 13:1-22.
2. *Philia* – This is a steadfast and affectionate type of love that binds two people together in facing the realities of life. It persists when passion disappears. This can be likened to the friendship between David and Jonathan in 1Sam.18:1-4; 20:1ff.
3. *Storge* – This is the type of love that binds family members together. It unites spouses, binds them with their children and at the same time connects the siblings together. Sex is out of this type of love. *Can you think of a family with that type of love in the Bible?
4. *Agape* – This is used to describe God's type of love for humanity. It is a divine, unconditional love that is extended to the unloving and unlovable. It is a selfless love that is demonstrated with no attached string. Read John 3:16

It is important to note that since God is love personified, it takes experiential knowledge of him for any human to truly demonstrate this unique type of love. Read 1John 4:7-21.

Why Do We Study Christian Ethics?

We study Christian ethics because:

- on daily basis, people make moral and ethical decisions;
- the light of the scriptures is needed by all people in solving our daily problems and making right decisions.
- it enhances personal spiritual growth by providing the standard by which a believer can measure his/her own spiritual growth and development;
- the teachings of Jesus are both ethical and theological; and
- every decision is made on the basis of a given ethic, that is, a standard or norm. Here, the Bible provides such a standard or norm.

Consider this text in relation to the Israelites,

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.
[Judges 17:6]

This, unfortunately, is the standard of ethics for many people today.

*STUDY THE LIST OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES IN APPENDIX 2.

Characteristics of Christian Ethics

The following points characterized and therefore differentiate Christian ethics from other forms of ethics.

1. *It is based on God's will*--- what God wills is that which is in accordance with his unchanging moral attributes are divinely prescribed and are imperative for Christians. Consider the following:

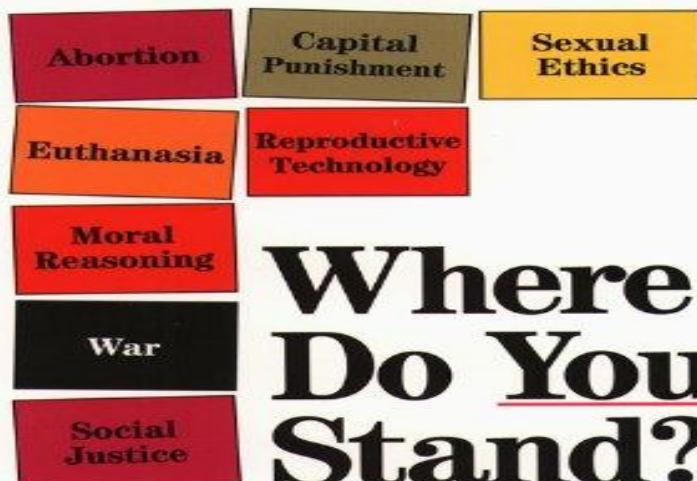
Lev. 11:45 – Be holy for God is holy

Matt 5:48 – Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect

Heb 6: 18 – God does not lie, so do not

1 John 4:16 and Matt 22:39 – God is love, so love others.

2. *It is absolute* – By nature, God does not change (Matt 3:6; James 1:17) therefore moral obligations that are based on his nature are absolute. Such are binding on all, in space and time. Shedding more light on this Geisler, explained that not everything God wills flows necessarily from his unchanging nature. Some things are merely in accord with his nature but flows free from his will. He illustrates that God's command which forbade Adam and Eve from eating a specific fruit in Gen. 2:16-17 is no longer binding on us today as it was based on his will – not prescribed for all in times and places. In contrast, the command not to murder is ever binding on all. Read Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Romance 13:9.
3. *It is based on God's Revelation* – Divine revelation is the basis for human ethical responsibilities. God has revealed himself especially through the scripture (Rom 2:18; 3:2), and generally through nature (Rom 1:19-20; 2:12-15; ps. 19:1-6). Although, one may decide to disregard God as authoritative source of morality, such decisions does not exonerate anyone from the moral duty (Rom 2:14-15).
4. *It is prescriptive* – That which is prescribed by a righteous God is prescriptive. God is the Giver of the moral law and the Legislator behind the moral legislation. By its nature, Christian ethics prescribes rather than describing morality. That is, it tells what ought to be not what is – as what is may not be what ought to or should be. Geisler states that “Christians do not find their ethical duties in the standard of Christians, but in the standard for Christians – the Bible. According to the scholar, “... what people actually do is not the basis for what they ought to do. If it were, then people ought to lie, cheat, steal, and murder since these things are done all the time.”
5. It is deontological – Broadly speaking, ethical system can be grouped into two, namely: a duty-centered ethics (deontological) ethics and an end/result-centred (teleological) ethics. Christian ethics is deontological in nature.



Where Do You Stand?

**Eight Moral Issues Confronting
Today's Christians**

Gregory C. Higgins

SECTION E

ETHICAL THEORIES

Do you ever wonder why arguments or controversies sometimes ensue in meetings? Why do people vehemently defend diverse opinions on a given moral issue? How come that a group of people approves what the opposing group disapproves? The reason is that different people subscribe to different moral theories. It is like wearing different moral lenses resulting into differences in moral perceptions, images, interpretations, and opinions. These moral options for moral opinions can be discussed under various groupings. Here, we are dealing with Deontology and Teleology; & Relativism/ Antinomianism and Absolutism. Scholars observed that these options revolve round the *validity of law or rule* as a guide for human moral actions.

Deontological Theories

Deontology as a term was derived from a Greek word **deon** which means obligation or duty. That is, something you feel should be done because it is your moral/legal responsibility. The theories focus on actions and rules irrespective of the results or consequences. In this ideology, an action is right or wrong whether the result is negative or positive. In this regard, the following has been identified as the **fundamental duties of man**:

Fidelity – the duty to keep promises.

2. *Reparation* – the duty to compensate others when we harm them.

3. *Gratitude* – the duty to thank and show appreciation to those who help us.

4. *Justice* – the duty to recognize merit.

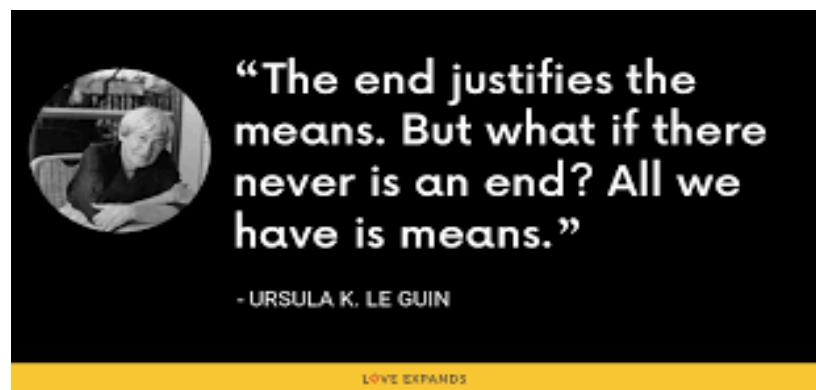
5. *Beneficence* – the duty to improve the conditions of others.

6. *Self-improvement* – the duty to improve one's virtue and intelligence.

7. *Non-malfeasance* – the duty not to injure others.

Teleological Theories

The term teleology was derived from a Greek word ***teleos*** meaning ‘end’ or ‘purpose’. The ideology is also called consequentialist ethics. The belief here is that an action is considered right or wrong on the basis of its result or consequences.



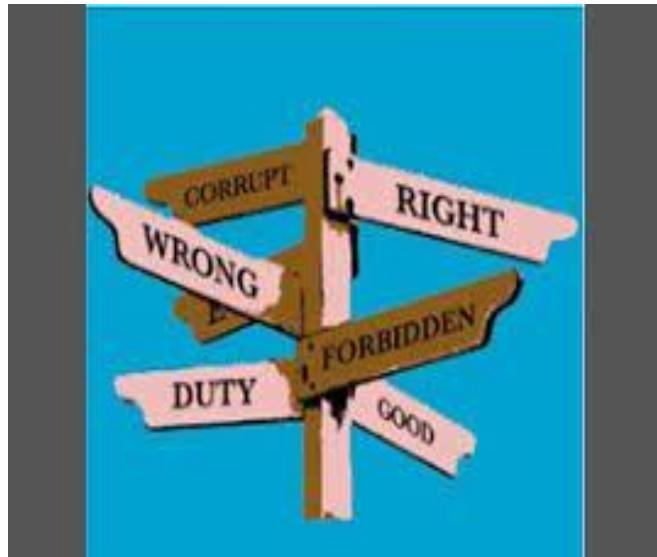
These two ethical views differ as shown in the table below:

Deontological Ethics	Teleological Ethics
*Rule determines the result.	+Result determines the rule.
*Rule is the basis of the act.	+Result is the basis of the act.
*Rule is good regardless of result.	+Rule is good because of result.
*Result is always calculated within the rules.	+Result is sometimes used to break rules.

Other Detailed Moral Options

Before we consider other forms of moral theories, there is the need to consider the terms *relativism* and *absolutism*. The term relativism opines that values are relative to time, place, person, and situation. This suggests that no particular value can cut across all cultures or people.

Cultural Relativism in the light of this opines that value attached to a specific action is relative to a given cultural unit. Consider the following examples:



*A common practice in many cultures is for a man to marry many wives. In Tibet (Central Asia) the opposite is the case as a woman is encouraged to have many husbands.

*Among the Eskimo, of the Arctic region, a deformed child is allowed to die through exposure.

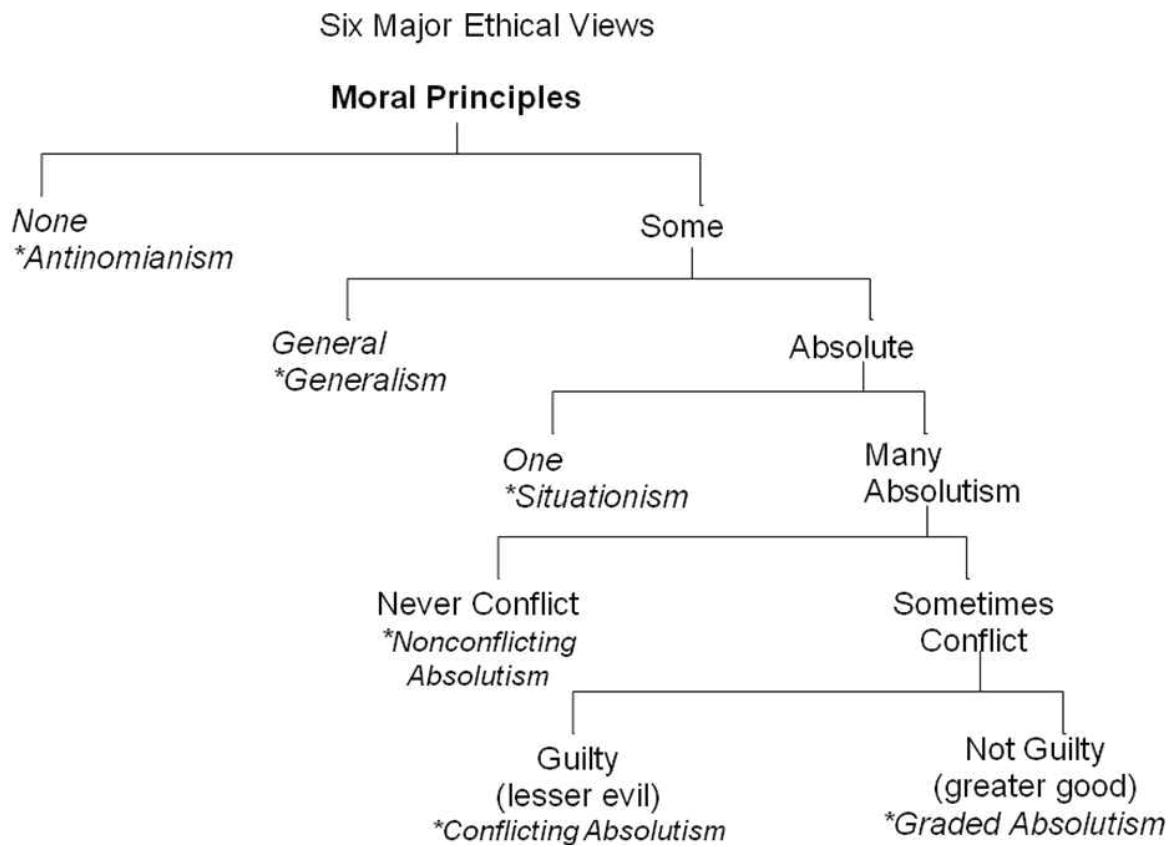
*In Fiji Islands, killing an aged parent does not constitute an immoral act.

*In North-central part of Nigeria, there is an alleged tribal practice where a friend is expected to release his wife to pass a night with his visiting friend.

This suggests that what is morally right in a particular culture may be condemned in another culture and as such, there is no universal ethical standard by which all cultures should be judged. Diversity in cultural practices, make the proponents of the ideology conclude that morality is culturally determined. From that point of view, they assert that moral conviction or the so-called conscience is nothing but cultural by-product.

On the other hand, absolutism may mean something that is perfect in quality or complete; that which cannot be limited by restrictions or exception; undoubtable, unquestionable and unconditional. In this connection, it is believed that there are moral absolutes from absolute Being (God) that are applicable irrespective of time, personality, or place.

Let us have these moral positions at the back of our minds as we consider the following six basic ethical views.



Considering these six basic ethical views, Russell K. Tardos explained how each option responds to the question bordering on the validity of moral principles. According to the scholar, antinomianism holds that there exist no objective moral laws. For generalism, there are generally, rather than absolutely, binding moral laws – can be broken when necessary. Situationism posits that there is only one moral absolute. Unqualified absolutism's view is that

moral laws are absolute with no real moral conflicts. Conflicting absolutism holds that there are moral conflicts in law and one is excused when he does the lesser evil. As far as graded absolutism is concerned, God does not hold it against us by obeying the higher law at the expense of the lower law in the face of moral conflicts.

Another scholar, Norman L. Geisler, follows similar approach in dealing with the above six basic ethical views. In his opinion, options like relativism, situationism, and generalism are studied not because they agree with Christian ethics, but because they are also common in our society and are posing challenges.

Relativism/Non-absolutism/Antinomianism

As the names suggest, Antinomianism or Relativism posits that there is no moral binding law rather, they are relative to various factors. The following are some of such factors that determine what is right or wrong.

1. *Processism* – Things are changing from time to time just as water in a flowing river is never static. Since things are dynamic, it is not realistic to think of a static and never changing moral law.

** For Consideration: +If everything is changing, there would be no way to measure or know the change. Something must remain constant in order to measure the acclaimed changes.

2. *Hedonism* - The term is derived from a Greek word, *hedone* which means pleasure. In this ideology, pleasure is considered to be the essence of good/life and pain is of evil. Pleasure is the basis for determining value; hence what is morally good is that which gives pleasure and that which gives pain is evil. Since what gives a person pleasure may give another person pain, moral value should be relatively determined. That is, what a person considers to be evil may be regarded as morally good.

** For Consideration: Not all pleasure are good and not all pains are bad/evil. Good should not be equated with pleasure as the latter may depend on events while the former (a value) may not.

3. *Skepticism* – There are sides to every issue so, there should be no firm judgment on any issue. As far as skepticism is concerned, conclusion cannot be drawn on any matter since a question can be argued to a deadlock. In other word, no ethical matter should be considered morally right or wrong.

** For Consideration: +Skeptics should also be skeptical about their own ideology. If all judgments on issues are to be suspended, the same should be applicable to skepticism. However, some things in life are obvious and should not be doubted. A good example is the fact that one cannot be skeptical about or deny his/her own existence.

4. *Intentionalism* – From the point of view of this ideology, an act is right or wrong on the basis of the actor's intention. In other word, it is the intention and not the act itself that should be judged. An apparently wrong action should be adjudged right if the intention of the actor is right and the other way round. For example, hospitality is virtuous, but if it is done with the aim of say, raping or duping, it should be considered wrong. Again, breaking into another person's house is wrong, but when it is done to save someone from a fire incident, it is praise worthy.

** For Consideration: Bad intentions are always bad whether or not the result to bad actions. If a good intention is carried out by a bad action, it becomes bad. Consider Hitler's intention that resulted to the holocaust! How do assess the issue of taking the life of a feeble child to relieve the parents of the economic burden?

5. *Voluntarism* – What is right is traceable to God's will. In the light of this ideology, the proponent opined that it is the fact that 'God wills something that makes such thing right and not that God wills it because it is right'. It follows then that what God wills today and thus considered to be morally right, becomes wrong tomorrow if not will by God tomorrow. So, in the face of such 'unpredictability' rightness or wrongness cannot be determined by an absolute rather relative moral law. Although, Christians who subscribed to this ideology opined that God's will on basic moral issues, there is no assurance of an unchanged moral.

** For Consideration: +Voluntarism tends to portray God as arbitrary, unpredictable and inconsistent. Again, an action should not be considered good mainly on the basis of a will, but the will itself must be good.

6. *Nominalism* – No universal forms, values or properties but only exist in human minds not in reality. To Nominalists, the real world is that of individual. For example, there are individual acts of justice (and that differ from one to another) however, there is nothing to be called justice in a universal sense.

** For Consideration: +For Nominalism to deny universal value is to deny the fact that some acts are universally adjudged good. Also, God's moral laws that represent his righteous character possess such universal qualities.

7. *Existentialism* – SOren Kierkegaard, who was regarded as the father of this ideology posited that man's highest duty goes beyond moral law. According to this great thinker, Abraham's response to God's request for the sacrifice of his son (Gen. 22) was a leap of faith. The latter came to play because his 'obedience' contradicted the moral law that forbids killing (Ex.20:13). No justification for outdoing the moral law than what the scholar termed 'a leap of faith'. Though an acclaimed Christian thinker, SOren's line of thought leaned toward and charted a route for antinomianism. The idea was taken further by Jean-Paul Sartre who argued that ethical acts are meaningless as there is no difference between 'being and nothingness'. He concluded that it amounts to the same thing whether one gets drunk alone or is a leader of nations.

** For Consideration: +Absolute and unchecked freedom will result to confusion. Law is therefore needed to give freedom a structure – that someone's freedom will not hinder another's. Again, an action that is freely carried out cannot be without justification.

8. *Evolutionism* – The idea which was popularized by Charles Darwin was further developed and extended by scholars such as Herbert Spencer, T.H. Huxley and Julian Huxley. The major belief of this ideology is that whatever supports the process of evolution is good and anything that disturbs the process is evil. In the light of this, Julian Huxley presents the following principles of evolutionary ethics:

- i. It is right to realize ever-new possibilities in evolution;
- ii. It is right to respect human individuality and to encourage its fullest development; and
- iii. It is right to construct a mechanism for further social evolution.

It was Adolf Hitler's belief that Aryan, a superior stock was produced by evolution and should be preserved. This should be achieved at the expense of the inferior breeds - Jews and non-Aryans. It was on this basis of the survival of the fittest, that the lives of twelve million of the latter were sacrificed.

** For Consideration: Development should not only be desired, but must be a good one. The basis for determining what hinders or promotes development should be known and measured by non-evolutionary process. It is similar to that of processism.

9. *Emotivism* – The belief of this philosophical reasoning is that ethical statements are rooted in emotions which, in the sense are subjective. That is to say, what we approve or condemn only reflect our feelings, nothing more and nothing less. For instance, to say ‘stealing is bad’ means, you dislike it or feel that way. This notion rules out any divine imperative or objective moral law binding in every time and space.

** For Consideration: Some things are really wrong irrespective of the emotion of the actors. Feeling may be determined by events and it is dangerous to fully rely on such to determine what is right or wrong.

8. *Nihilism* – The idea of the German atheist, Friedrich Nietzsche is that God is dead along with all values that can be considered objective. This implies that there exists no divine-sanctioned value hence; man has the freedom to set up his own values or standards. He opined that since there is no God to will what is good, humans should will their own good. To Nietzsche, it is better to will nothingness than not to will at all. According to Geisler, it is from the wiliness of nothing that the term nihilism emanates - nothingness-ism. Think of the statement from the Bible that '*When there was no king in Israel, everyone did as he saw fit*' – Judges 17:6.

** For Consideration: Nihilism is self-destructive. To negate all value judgment is to condemn its own ideology too.

Basic Beliefs of Antinomianism

1. No god-given moral laws or moral principles with divine sanction. To the ideology, it wrong to think of or link any law with God and make people believe that divine sanction await those who live in defiant of such law.
2. To an antinomian, all moral laws are subjective to those who enact the laws. This presupposes that different people will come up with different laws even on similar moral issues base on their own judgment. As a result of this, it is apparent that lack of objectivity implies that moral laws are relative and not absolute.
3. No moral law should be considered to possess eternal value, rather it is temporal. This is so as a particular moral should be applicable to people only for a given period and not considered as having timeless application.
4. Antinomianism objects to a common idea that many (public) laws have their origin in God's moral laws – the ten commandments of Exodus 20. The belief in such a link, lead to the notion that disobedient to civil laws is ultimately disobedient to God's laws. As far as antinomians are concerned, there is no law against laws and no law is based on any so-called divine law.



Positive Contributions of Antinomianism

1. *Individual Moral Responsibility* - The ideology emphasizes individual moral responsibility. To antinomianism, no reference can be made to God as the ultimate source of morality thereby giving man the reason for his moral action. Even in a crowd, a person is morally responsible for his/her own action without a hiding place.
2. *The Role of Emotion* – It asserts that not all “though shalt not” or “You ought not” are commanded by God, rather some moral instructions are ‘coloured’ with human feelings.
3. *Personal Relation* – Ethics, in the real sense of it, focuses on humans. It should be noted that they are not the means rather the ends and focus of morality. People are of more value than mere moral prescriptions. This is reflected in Christ’s statement in connection with Sabbath and man in Mark 2:27.
4. *Limited Dimension of Ethics* – Basically, Antinomians opine that principles of ethics are absolute, but human understanding of those principles is relative. They point out that human changing understanding of the unchanging moral law. Read 1 Cor. 13:12 in connection with human partial knowledge.

Situation Ethics

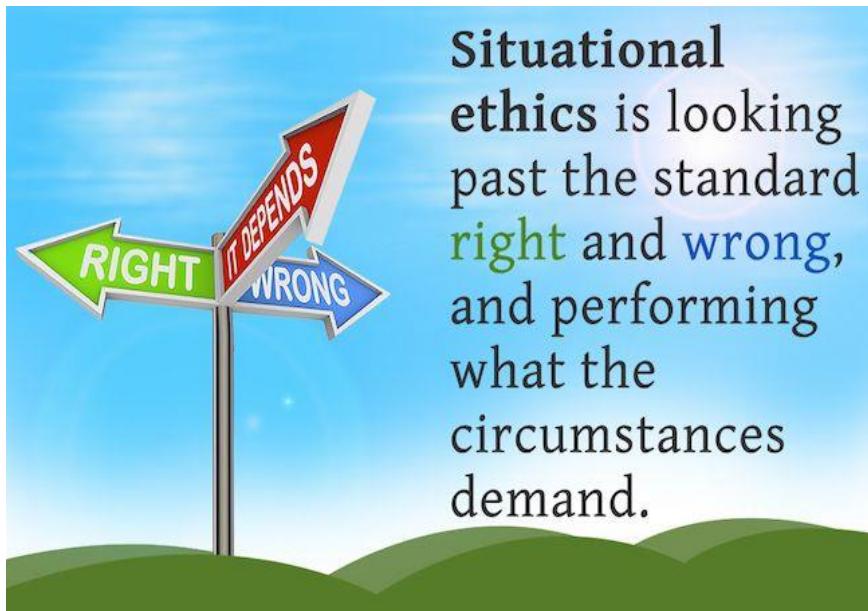
Situation ethics was popularized by an America Professor, Joseph Fletcher (1905-1991). According him, it is an alternative to two extreme ethical positions: Legalism/Absolutism which promotes law above love and Antinomianism which advocates for lawlessness. In other word, antinomianism claims to have no law for anything; absolutism has law for everything while situationism has only one law for everything. To Fletcher, absolutism approaches every situation with preconceived and predetermined rules. On the other hand, the antinomians believe in spontaneous moral decision with no fixed moral principles. To a situationist, the command to love is the only good command; any other command is hypothetical - to be obeyed if only it promotes love.

Scholars have identified two types of situationism namely: secular and religious. The former is based on self-love/self interest while the latter is based on the love for others. The latter is our focus here. As earlier mentioned, the ideology is considered here not because it is strictly biblical, but because it is becoming popular in practice, even among Christians. The moral position of situationism is that what is good or bad is determined by the prevailing situation. Love is the only absolute law and what is loving in a particular situation is the right thing to do.

To some scholars, the relevance of this ideology is made apparent when one closely considers the following questions: In a world like ours where sin has become the order of the day, how possible is it to do that which can be regarded as the perfect will of God? Would there be no time when, due to unavoidable moral conflict, when one may have to choose the lesser of two evils? Are there outlined principles in the bible that can guide in resolving such moral conflicts? To such scholars, application of situation ethics is considered as the way out of the moral dilemma. Since the approach recognizes only one absolute, which is love, there can be no conflict between two or more absolutes.

In whatever situation one finds him/herself, doing what is most loving is the only obligation with which one is confronted. No other ethical standard should displace an act of love. Joseph Fletcher, the one who popularized situation ethics, opined that rules or moral codes are of little or no use in the ideology. He went further that Christian situation ethics reduces love from a statutory system of rules to the love canon alone. To him, universal rules and principles are treated as love's servants and subordinates to be quickly kicked out of the house if they forget their place and try to take over.

One major problem in this ideology is how to discern what is loving. It is apparent that apart from the abiding norms of the divine revelation, the moral agent is left to the vagaries of personal preference and the constant changing spirit of the age to discern the loving thing. Davis sheds more light on the nature of man from biblical perspective when he says, the bible clearly indicates that human beings who possess sinful and fallen natures, cannot be left to their own devices to discern the will of God, the ability to rationalize selfish desires in the name of high sounding principle is all too real. Without mincing word, Jesus also taught that true love for God is demonstrated in keeping his commandments (John 14:21).



Situational ethics is looking past the standard **right** and **wrong**, and performing what the circumstances demand.

The Six Basic Propositions for Situation Ethics

1. Love is the ruling norm for Christians – love replaces the law. The latter should be jettisoned if it hampered the former. That which needs to be followed is not love of the law rather the law of love. To Fletcher, it is the agape (sacrificial) love and not erotic or philia love that is called for here. The ideology encourages a person to tell a lie, if that is what love requires.
2. Only the end justifies the means. This does not mean that any end justifies any means; rather a loving end justifies any means. By implication, an act has no meaning without its foreseeable result. For instance, stealing a murderer's gun to disallow him from taking innocent lives; Lying to a mad person to calm him/her down for treatment. It should be noted that the value of love as norm, is not affected by the notion that some may irresponsibly abused the Situationists' theory of love.

3. The command to love is the only intrinsically good command – others are valid only if they would serve love in a given situation. Nothing but only love is inherently good. Something is good only if it helps persons and if it harms, it's bad. The value of an act is determined in relation to person and not in isolation. Humans should give and receive love because only persons, not things, have value. The image of God in man is love.

4. Love and justice are identical – justice is love equally distributed. It is giving to everyone his/her due and that due is love. It is not love and justice as if they are complementary; Not love or justice as if to chose one; Not love versus justice as if they are in opposition.

5. Love wills the neighbor's good whether you like him or not. The type of love required here, according to Fletcher, is agape. This type of love is not reciprocal and therefore different from all other forms of love. In *eros*, the desire is the cause of love while in agape, love is the cause of desire. Comparing the three types of love Geisler explains that erotic love is egoistic; *philia* type of love is mutualistic; while agape is altruistic (selfless).

*Consider the command, “love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal. 5:14) cf. John 13:34; 15:9.

6. Love-based moral decisions are made as demanded by the prevailing situation and not prescriptively (in advance). In other word, love-based decisions are made according to situations and not prescriptively- A course of action is not predetermined, rather one should wait until the situation arises. However, a situationist generally believes that loving acts should be done, for God's sake to one's neighbor. In situationism, love is absolute, but its application is relative to situations. Geisler, p. 51

How do you determine what is loving in each of these examples?

- A mother of two in a refugees' camp away from her family members
- A would-be murderer and his victim
- A victim of rape calling for abortion
- A close friend with a last-chance warning caught stealing
- Patriotic prostitution - in order to capture an enemy
- Sacrificial suicide - to better family economy

Motive, Conduct, and Situation Ethics

Is having a sincere motive enough? Would having a right motive justify wrong conduct? For example, should stealing to feed a starving family or mercy killing for economic reason be approved? No, sincerity of motive is not enough. Having a sincere motive and committing wrong conduct is sometimes referred to as situation ethics. Our standard should be: Never do a wrong to make a right. Three basic parts of moral action or conduct:

- a) The motive of an action;
- b) The act itself; and,
- c) The consequences of that action.

Note that conduct is ethically right when it is the outcome of a good motive carried out by right means and results in biblically acceptable consequences.

Merits of Situation Ethics:

- Should be credited for setting a moral standard in a world that tends to destroy all moral standards.
- Also for promoting love for others in a self-centered world.

Weaknesses of Situation Ethics:

- Its idea of love is vague. Compare its nature with that of agape presented above.
- It wars against God's law. God's law reflects his love for us and challenges us to love our fellow humans – Mark 12:29-31; John 14:23, 24. *STUDY THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DECALOGUE IN APPENDIX 1.
- It overlooks the sinful nature of man and its consequences in making sound moral judgments. Man's heart is deceitful and wicked – Jer. 17:9, 10.

Generalism

The premises of the ideology include the belief that there are some ethical rules. Those rules are however, not absolute rather generally binding. The Generalists also holds the idea that there are exceptions to laws - can be broken if they will serve good purposes.

Consider the truthfulness of the following general expressions:

-A true Christians cannot be a successful Politician in Nigeria.

-Africans are dark in complexion.

-Men are bold and can withstand life crises.

-Nigerians are dubious.

Utilitarianism is a good example of Generalism it holds the following ideas among others:

- Moral actions which bring *greatest good for the greatest number of people is good*. That is, morality of an action is determined by its *usefulness*.
- An act is judged not by its intrinsic and universal values but its *results*
- What is absolute to the theory is not the rule but the result – i.e. *no absolute norm but absolute end/result* - by which every act is judged

The proponents of this idea

1. **Jeremy Bentham's Quantitative Utilitarianism** – The scholar based his idea on ancient hedonism (pleasure-centered). He opined that pain and pleasure are chosen by nature to govern humanity; hence they determine what ought to be done. In this respect, an act is good to the extent that it promotes human welfare and the reverse if the opposite. To measure the relative amount of the two elements, for individuals and groups, Bentham developed what he termed, Hedonistic Calculus.

Hedonistic Calculus consists of factors that determine the values of pain as well as pleasure and are as follows:

- a) Intensity – The pleasure with the highest degree of pleasure should be chosen..
- b) Duration – Pleasure that would last for longest period of time should be chosen.
- c) Certainty – Highly probable pleasure should be given consideration over the less probable ones.
- d) Propinquity – Pleasure that is nearer and not comparatively far away in future should be considered.
- e) Fecundity – Pleasure with the chances of producing further pleasure should be preferred than those are unproductive/unfruitful.
- f) Purity – Pleasure with the chances of not mixing with pain should receive better recognition.
- g) *Extent – This is applicable to groups of people and so the number of persons to be benefited should be considered.

To have the total amount of good for an act for a group, one must sum up how much more pleasure than pain it gives to each person in the group. The sum of pleasure over pain is the amount of general good tendency for the act. Bentham agreed that the process of this complex calculation cannot be strictly followed in all issues. He also realized later that the term ‘happiness’ or ‘felicity’ could serve better than ‘pleasure’ in his presentation.

2. **John Stuart Mill’s Qualitative Absolutism** - Developing a modification of his predecessors’ idea, J.S. Mill posited that pleasure differs not only in quantity (as in physical sense), but also in quality (psychological perspective). To him, the highest quality of pleasure for the greatest number of people should be chosen over and above the one below it in quality. Mill explained that one cannot always calculate the results of his actions; hence the need for norms and rules to serve as guiding principles. Those moral rules might have been developed on the basis of what had produced valuable results for people over a period of time. However, as good as those principles and rules are, they should not be regarded as universal or without exception. Exception should be recognized and the limit defined. The scholar focused on rule rather than act and applied the hedonistic calculus qualitatively.

Some Values of Generalism

*It Acknowledges the Need for Norms – The ideology sees the need for norms as means for attaining the desired ends. The long-range result of human action cannot be determined without recognized norms.

*It Provides a Way of Resolving Conflicting Norms – To Generalists, moral laws are only binding in a general sense and can be broken when necessary. They believe, that lie should be told when doing so saves lives. Generalism has no absolute norms, rather absolute end. It posits that conflicts in moral principles are not absolute and should be resolved with possible exceptions. The ideology holds the notion that there are exceptional cases that justify breaking general laws.

*The Idea of “Unbreakable” Norms – Some Generalists opined that there are some rules that should never be broken – unless there exists conflict of norms. Examples of such laws are: Those that are geared toward saving lives; keeping promises; etc.

*Relatively simple to apply – All one need to do is just to weigh the results and choose the best.

**Needs no appeal to divine revelations/laws unlike those in universal absolutism.

*The applications are familiar in our daily non-moral decisions e.g. your choices in supermarket/boutique, choice of a quality and time-saving program in spite of apparent high cost.

Some Weaknesses of Generalism

**The End Justify the Means* - The end does not justify the means for the means must justify themselves. The goodness of an action should be considered as well as the means through which the goal is achieved. Consider Hitler's goal of preserving a perfect race and his way of achieving it – taking the lives of a million Jews. Also read Prov. 14:12 and Rom. 6:1.

**No Universal Norms* – Generalists do not recognize any rule or as possessing universal intrinsic value. To them, no act is intrinsically good.

**Utilitarian act has no value unless the result is positive or good.* For instance, an attempt to rescue a drowning person is useless, if at the end the goal is not realized. An attempt to do away with an unwanted new born baby is commended, if the baby was finally picked up by a state Governor where the mother dropped it and cared for the baby in the state house.

**No Absolute Norms* – Absolute norms are necessary to resolve conflicts that would arise from general conflicting norms. Since they claim that the norms are not absolute, they must be relative to something that is not relative. There must be a norm which should be observed always in order to judge relative ones.

**How is the End Determined?* – The Generalists must answer this question. It is important to know that the end by which value is determined is unknown to humans and therefore cannot be predicted. Again, the question of whether to measure the “greatest good” quantitatively or qualitatively brings more complications. In the same vein, giving consideration to the greatest number of people suggests a disregard to the rights of the minority.

**Lack of Ethical Norms* – The ‘end’ that generalism focused on cannot be judged to be good or bad in absence of ethical standards by which they are measured. If all actions are determined by the ‘end’, then it serves as the norm - by implication, absolute norm.

Universal Absolutism

- The idea in universal absolutism is that there are absolute universal laws.
- There are three forms of universal absolutism namely: unqualified, conflicting, and graded.

1. Unqualified Absolutism

Of the three forms of universal absolutism, this is the most widely accepted view among Christians. It was classically presented by Augustine, defended by great philosopher like Immanuel Kant and upheld by popular theologians like John Murray and Charles Hodge.

The basic beliefs of the view include the following:

There are no real moral conflicts therefore, sin is avoidable. There are absolutely binding rules that admit no exception, so lie should not be told even if it is meant to save life. Note that the issue involved is either to permit someone to commit sin or you commit it yourself (ref. a would-be murder)

According to **Saint Augustine**, not all falsifications are lies unless the intention is to deceive. It is not the mere expression, but the intention that should determine the falsity or truth of a statement. For instance, a statement made in a jest or a false statement that intended the hearer to reason and discover the truth should not be regarded as lie. With reference to the cases of the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1 and Rehab in Heb. 11:31, God rewarded the mercy and kindness rather than the lies; He blessed in spite of their lies and not because of the lies. (also Lot/Sodomites and Abraham/Sarah)

Note the following points against lying:

- Do not sin to avoid sin
- Do not sin in order to attain a greater good
- Lying destroys integrity and therefore destroy certainty
- One lie will lead to another for defense/coverage
- Lying has negative effects on Christian faith
- Lying will eventually lead to hell

For Immanuel Kant:

*Moral duties are universal and unconditional. He opposed hypothetical ethics - if you do this, then that will be the result. Rather he upheld categorical (deontological) ethics – One ought to do this and this. Duties disregard consequences.

* What one cannot will as universal should not be done e.g. lying and murder.

*Moral duties admit no exceptions, otherwise it's not truly a rule (cf. Newton's law of gravity)

For John Murray:

*The sanctity of truth should be maintained even in situations that justify lie. This is partly because God's law, which reflects His unchanging character is absolute; and because lying is inconsistent with the consistent character and law of God is always wrong.

*Lying is always wrong, but deception that is intentional is not a lie. e.g. concealing the battle strategies from an enemy in battle.

God's Providence and Unqualified Absolutism:

Unqualified Absolutism believes in God's providence in whereby He intervenes in every apparent moral dilemma by providing a *third alternative*. Consider the example of Daniel in Daniel 1; Sarah and the King Abimelech in Genesis 20; and consider the faith of the three Hebrew boys in Daniel 3:16-18

*The watchword is, "tell the truth and leave the consequences to God."



For class exercise, consider some positive and negative aspects of this ideology

Some Strengths of Unqualified Absolutism

*Its basis is the unchanging nature of God

*It lays more emphasis on rule rather than result

*It encourages trust in God's providence

*It teaches that sin is avoidable

Some Weaknesses of Unqualified Absolutism

1. It has some disputable premises e.g., can lie and mercy that resulted in saving a life be separated? Should intention give positive value to falsehood? Does God promise to always deliver us from moral dilemmas?
2. Absolutism presupposes no exception to law otherwise, it seizes to be universal. The proponents however present many qualifications/exceptions e.g. Augustine exonerates Abraham from an attempted murder of his son because he was obeying God's instruction. He also asserted that there are exceptions to God's command to be submissive to human government.
3. The Issue of Divine Providence – It is not in all moral dilemmas that God intervenes and save the faithful. Note that the Bible records that the Hebrew boys and Daniel were delivered from their respective trouble, but how about Stephen?
4. It promotes legalism - In its attempt to keep the letter of the law, the spirit of the law is disregarded. In spite of the torture, should a kidnapped person be blamed for writing and signing a 'thank you' memo at gun point as a condition for his release?

INTEGRITY
IS DOING THE
RIGHT THING.

EVEN WHEN
NO ONE IS
WATCHING.

C.S. LEWIS

2. Conflicting Absolutism – Lesser-Evil Option

While Unqualified Absolutism denies the reality of moral conflicts, Conflicting Absolutism opines that some moral situations present more than one moral absolutes which give rise to moral conflict. In such situations, one is duty-bound to each of the moral obligations. Since one will be guilty of sin whichever way you turn to. Sins are not of the same weight, so the lesser evil is committed, confess the sin and ask for forgiveness. The inevitable is forgivable. Be bold in such a situation and be strong in your faith in Christ for forgiveness. According to Helmut Thielicke, moral conflicts are not originally part of the world system, but they resulted from complex human decisions rooted in the fall of man. The world is now so complex that it is difficult to totally avoid sinning. The scholar explained that there is no justification for committing the lesser sin.

The Basic beliefs of Conflicting Absolutism

1. God's moral law is absolute
2. Moral conflicts are unavoidable
3. There is the call to do the lesser evil – sins are not of equal weight (John 19:11; Matt. 12:32).
4. Forgiveness is available

The Positive Side of Conflicting Absolutism

*Preservation of moral absolutes

*The realistic recognition of moral conflict

*Linking moral conflicts to the human fallen nature in this imperfect world

*It proffers solution of resolving moral conflict without exception – commit the lesser evil

Some Criticisms against Conflicting Absolutism -

*The notion that one has the moral responsibility to commit lesser evil when in moral conflict, does not sound logical.

*One should not be held guilty for the unavoidable.

3. Graded Absolutism

This is the third category in universal absolutism. The ideology could be traced to Saint Augustine.

Three Major Propositions of Graded Absolutism

a. *Not all moral laws are of equal weight*

e.g.* Jesus spoke of **weightier matters of the law** – Matt. 23:23;

***greatest commandment** - Matt. 22:36;

*breaking any of the moral laws brings guilt/condemnation (James 2:10) but **teachers of the law would receive greater condemnations** (James 3:1).

• Note, both unqualified and conflicting absolutism also agree with this.

b. *There are unavoidable moral conflicts* in which one is not able to attend to both at the same time. Examples include the following:

*Consider the call for **Abraham to sacrifice his son** in Gen. 22 and the divine command not to kill in Ex. 20:13.

* Read about **Jephthal's vow** in Judges 11 and the caution not to fail in fulfilling a vow in Eccl. 5:4.

c. *No guilt is imputed for the unavoidable when the higher law is obeyed* e.g.:

* God approved the **disobedience of the three Hebrew boys** in order to obey God's command in Daniel 3

*Daniel himself faced a similar issue when he obeyed God rather than King Darius in Daniel 6

Looking at the above issues from another angle, and in contrast to the one-absolute ideology of the situation ethics, John Jefferson Davis argues in favor of what he called *contextual absolutism*. Contextual absolutism is similar to what Norman L. Geisler termed graded absolutism. According to the scholar, there are many moral absolutes such as we have in the Decalogue (Exodus 20: 1-17). Contextual absolutism holds that there is always a right course of action which is pleasing to God and devoid of sin in every ethical context. There is no doubt that such action may be costly to the actor, even to the point of suffering and death. Such were the experiences of Daniel and his three friends (Dan 3 and 6). Commenting on the need for such level of commitment to please God in this generation, Davis explains that following the course of action that is well pleasing to God may not always be easy in a sinful and fallen world, but can, by the grace of God, be found and followed even in the most extreme conditions. Such unswerving commitment to discerning and obeying the will of God - including a willingness to 'pay the cost of discipleship' is needed in this generation where believers are all too often tempted by the comforting and compromises of the surrounding culture.

Charles Hodge also agreed that obligation from a higher authority, for instance God, overrides that of a lower such as the government and human. Compare Romans 13:1-7 with Acts 4:13-20; 5:27-29. Analyzing issues where there are moral conflicts between speaking the truth and saving lives may pose some challenges. Consider the following events in relation to this principle: Exodus 1:15-17 – The Hebrew midwives and the case of Rehab in saving the lives of the spies in Joshua, 2:1-7. According to Charles Hodge, "in such cases, one's definition of a lie is crucial. Not every act of deception is the moral equivalent of a lie; a lie involves an intention to deceive

when we are expected and bound to speak the truth. For example, in football or welfare, one is not expected to disclose tactics or battle plans to the opponents.

Rehab's case may be considered as being in the context of war. In this case, her higher duty to protect the lives of the servants of God suspended the *prima facie* duty to tell the truth, and her course of action was acceptable to God. Rahab is cited as an example of faith (James 2:25). Nowhere in scripture is Rahab condemned for her action.

SECTION F

RESOLVING MORAL ISSUES

On a daily basis, we are all confronted with issues that conflict with our beliefs and values. Resolving such issues is not always easy. No wonder we question and agitate for rationale behind a verdict, the fairness of a judgment and the right for a claim. In analyzing a moral issue, it has been noted that getting the facts of the matter is paramount. It is the fact that tells us what *is*. However, as important as getting the fact is, the resolution of a moral issue also requires getting the values. It is in the latter that, in addition to what *is*, we discover what *ought* to be. To discover the values and thereby resolving moral issues, we shall consider both the philosophical approach as well as the biblical methods of discovering God's will.

Philosophical Approach

1. *Utilitarian Approach* – This was built upon the ideas developed in the 19th century by two philosophers namely Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism was developed by the duo to guide legislators in deciding the best law that would be good for the greatest number of people. In analyzing moral issues with this approach, one needs to know the available courses of actions as well as who and how each will be affected. The morally right one is that which would provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

2. *The Right Approach* – Immanuel Kant, was one of the 18th-century philosophers who developed the idea that individual has the right to choose for him/herself. According to Kant and his colleagues, that humans have the dignity to freely choose what they want to do with their lives is one basic quality that differentiates them from mere things. At the same time, there is the moral right to have such a choice respected to interfere with the freedom of choice amounts to manipulation and violates human self-esteem. Other aspects of this basic right, according to the scholars include but not limited to the following:

- The right to the truth: We have a right to be told the truth and to be informed about matters that significantly affect our choices.
- The right of privacy: We have the right to do, believe, and say whatever we choose in our personal lives so long as we do not violate the rights of others.

- The right not to be injured: We have the right not to be harmed or injured unless we freely and knowingly do something to deserve punishment or we freely and knowingly choose to risk such injuries.
- The right to what is agreed: We have a right to what has been promised by those with whom we have freely entered into a contract or agreement.

By implication, the degree to which one's moral right is violated reflects the degree of immorality or wrongfulness of the action.

3. *The Fairness or Justice Approach* – This is rooted in the ethics of Aristotle who opined that "equals should be treated equally and unequals unequally." The issue here is to ensure that everyone is fairly treated without favoritism and discrimination. The former provides undue favor and, in the latter, undue burden.

4. *The Common-Good Approach* – The idea here can be traced back to the works of Philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and more recently, John Rawls. The notion here is that an individual is a member of a society with mutual goals and values. As a result of this, one should go further from the right for self fulfillment and goal to those of the society at large. Self-good should not be at the expense of the common-good.

5. *The Virtue Approach* – This approach is based on the assumption that there exist moral ideals toward which all should strive for human development. A virtuous person, for example, is one that is honest, courageous, compassionate, generous, fair, prudent, and etc. Because such a person consistently lives in accordance with moral principles, he would do things that promote such character traits in him/herself and the community.

The scholars summarize the approaches with the following five questions for resolving moral issues:

- What benefits and what harms will each course of action produce, and which alternative will lead to the best overall consequences?

- What moral rights do the affected parties have, and which course of action best respects those rights?
- Which course of action treats everyone the same, except where there is a morally justifiable reason not to, and does not show favoritism or discrimination?
- Which course of action advances the common good?
- Which course of action develops moral virtues?

From the foregoing, it appears that following the above-mentioned approaches can assist in resolving moral issues.

Biblical Approach to Moral Decisions

A Christian believes that God, not only exists, but has also revealed himself to humanity. He does the latter (revelation) through nature (Psalm 19 and Romans 1); conscience (Romans 2:14-15); the Bible (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16); and above all through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ (John 10:30; Hebrews 1:1-4). God's existence and self-revelation form the basis for Christian moral views. His character, as revealed in the aforementioned media, is the ultimate standard of right and wrong. And even though the Bible was written long before the development of genetic engineering or modern media, it nevertheless provides principles that can be used to evaluate the morality of social, scientific, and technological issues. Biblical morality can be developed from learning to live God's way according to biblical principles. Though the Christian life is much more than a set of rules or principles, these principles do provide moral boundaries for behavior.

To make proper moral choices, one must discern the will of the righteous God for his/her life. In the light of this, scholars have identified some key principles for discovering God's will. Among these are:

1. **Bible Study** - The Bible provides an array of command and guidelines on specific issues. As instructive as the Bible is, it is worrisome to observe doctrinal and theological differences among Christians. One of the factors responsible for this is the fact that different people approach the Bible differently. For example, some scholars read meanings into the Bible (*eisegesis*) while others allow the Bible to provide meanings and be its own interpreter (*exegesis*). Here, the former approach is subjective, while the latter is objective in its approach. It is also necessary to

note that some versions of our English Bible interpret the original works instead of translating them. In the former, meaning is given to a message by the scholar while it is just presented in another language in the latter. To get the best from the Bible, the following are some of the principles identified:

(a) Grammatical-historical Method – This method stresses the need to understand the historical, linguistic/grammatical, socio-political, cultural, and geographical setting of the original word. For instance, what the King James Version of the Bible translates as HELL, are from about four different words (Hebrew/Greek) with diverse meanings. Consider the following:

+**Sheol** is an Old Testament Hebrew word, means grave or pit. Read these Bible passages to see how it is rendered.

Ps. 16:10 cf. 49:15 – ... You will not leave my soul in hell...

Ps. 139:8 – If I make my bed in heaven or in hell you (God) are there.

+**Hades** is the New Testament Greek equivalent of the above and is commonly translated grave or unseen world. It is also translated as “hell” in some Bible versions. e.g.:

Luke 16:23 – In hell the rich man lifted up his eyes ... (a parable)

Rev. 20:12-15 – ... death and hell give up the dead in them for judgment ... to lake of fire.

+**Tartarus** is another New Testament Greek word which means, a dark place. It appears only once and also translated “hell”.

II Peter 2:4 - ... angels that sinned were cast down to hell ...reserved for judgment.

+**Gehenna** This is a transliteration of the Aramaic form of a Hebrew words *ge-ben-hinnom valley of the son of Hinnom*. It was located between West and South-West of Jerusalem around the border between Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 15:8cf. 18:16). It was popular as a site where Israelites worshiped idols and sacrificed their children by fire (2 Kings 23:10). The valley,

afterward, became a site where the people burned rubbish. Some sources also indicate that bodies of criminals that are sometimes dropped in there got burned or gradually eaten up by worms. It was a place of constant burning due to a continuous deposit of garbage by the people of Jerusalem. At a time, the people called it an entrance of hell and finally hell itself due to the activities in the valley. This was how the idea of using Gehenna for hell developed. Consider the following usages in the New Testament:

Matt. 18:9 - ...go to heaven with one eye than to be in hell fire with two eyes.

Rev. 19:20 - ... the beast and false Prophets were cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone

(b.) Examine the whole scriptural teaching on a topic – One common error in our search of the scripture to discover God’s will is lack of wiliness or patience to search for ALL that the Bible has to say on a given topic. As a result of this, many with preconceived ideas sometimes build their teachings on selected few texts. We should allow the Bible to be its own interpreter by comparing texts wherein a clearer one sheds more light on the less clear texts. The biblical injunction in Isa. 28:9, 10 may be applicable here:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine?
[them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts. For precept [must
be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and]
there a little:(KJV).

Let us consider the following Doctrines:

*The State of the Dead

- Read John 14:1-3 and consider the sequence in Christ’s promise noting when to receive the saints to be with him
- Read Matt. 25:31ff; 2 Tim. 4:1; John 5:28, 29; 14:1-4; etc. If the execution of the final judgment is in future (after resurrection) should the reward (heaven) or punishment (hell) be apportioned prejudicially?

-Read Luke 23:39-43 and John 20:16-17 to reconcile Christ's promise to the thief on the cross and his declaration to Mary Magdalene that he has not been to his Father. *Let the comma in the promise be placed after "Today" and note that the promise was indeed made that day, but its fulfillment was to be in future.

*The Bible Day of Rest/Worship – The Seventh (Saturday) or The First (Sunday) day?

- Read for example Gen. 2:1-3; Isa. 58:12-14; Ez. 20:12; Mk. 16:1ff; etc for the seventh day and study the SEVEN New Testament passages about the first day of the week. Note that the issue between Christ and the religious leaders of his days bordered on HOW TO KEEP rather than WHICH DAY KEEP.

(c.) Historical and Literary Context – This method challenges the seeker of biblical truth to put into consideration the time, culture; relationship between words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs of the bible passage to have a correct interpretation.

*The visions to connect Peter and Cornelius

- Acts 10:1-35 - The vision has nothing to do with the literal clean and unclean animals. Verse 28 of the passage reveals the motive behind the vision. Read about his defense before the Brethren in Jerusalem - Acts 11:1-14.

*Commanding God

- Read Isa. 45:5-13 and reflect on verse 11 as rendered by Bible translations such as King James. The context of the passage suggests that the verse should end with a question mark and not a full stop as if it is a statement. Read from New International Version and some other versions for clarification.

(d.) Be submissive to the revealed truth

It is one thing to know God's will and it is another thing to do the revealed will. Intentionally rejecting God's will is dangerous. Romans 1:28 says,

And even as they refused to have God in [their] knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting;(ASV).

Our desire should be to follow the example of Ezra of whom the Bible says,

... Ezra had determined in his heart to study the law of the LORD, obey [it], and teach [its] statutes and ordinances in Israel.(Ezra 7:10, HCSB, emphases are mine)

2. **Prayer** is another way through which we can discover God's will. As common as this may appear to us, the Bible does not leave us unguided but prescribes some directive for effective prayer – that which tallies with God's will. Consider the following Bible texts:

+Matt. 26:39 – According to God's will

+ Phil. 4:6 – anxiety, petition and thanksgiving

+Rom. 8: 26, 27- role of the Holy Spirit

+Luke 11:1-13 – be persistent

+James 4:3 – Wrong motive can hinder prayer

Note that mere information or seeking God's approval after making up our minds on an issue is not a true prayer. Remember to be flexible in God's hands for the answer may be yes, no, or wait.

3. The will of God can also be discerned through **human conscience**. In a general sense, an action or behavior that troubles one's conscience should be avoided. It should, however, be noted that a conscience that would be responsive to the will of God should be nurtured by the truth of God's word. In contrast, a conscience that is accustomed to suppression can become insensitive to right behavior. Note the following in connection with conscience:

*Conscience is a good stop sign but not a green light. A troubled conscience is sufficient justification to refrain, and a guilty conscience is reason enough to stop a particular action or behavior.

*A clear conscience is no justification for proceeding. The Bible teaches that, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). We can easily deceive ourselves into sin.

*Christians should strive to have a good conscience before God and man (Acts 24:16). A troubled conscience is reason to avoid an action, but a clear conscience may not be sufficient justification to proceed.

Consider also the following Bible texts:

Jeremiah 17:9 - heart is deceitful

Job 27:6 – reproach from the conscience

Acts 24:16 - clear conscience before God and man

Rom. 2:15 – conscience bears witness

Rom. 9:1 – link with the Holy Spirit

1 Cor. 4:4 – clear conscience and innocence

1 Cor. 10:23-29 – in relation to others

2 Cor. 1:12 – Conscience testifies

1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3, 1Peter 3:16 - clear conscience

1 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15 - seared and corrupt conscience

4. Sound Godly Counsels – God can also make his will known through counsels from those who have experiential knowledge of God; have regard for his word; and manifest it in their daily life. Study the following Bible texts:

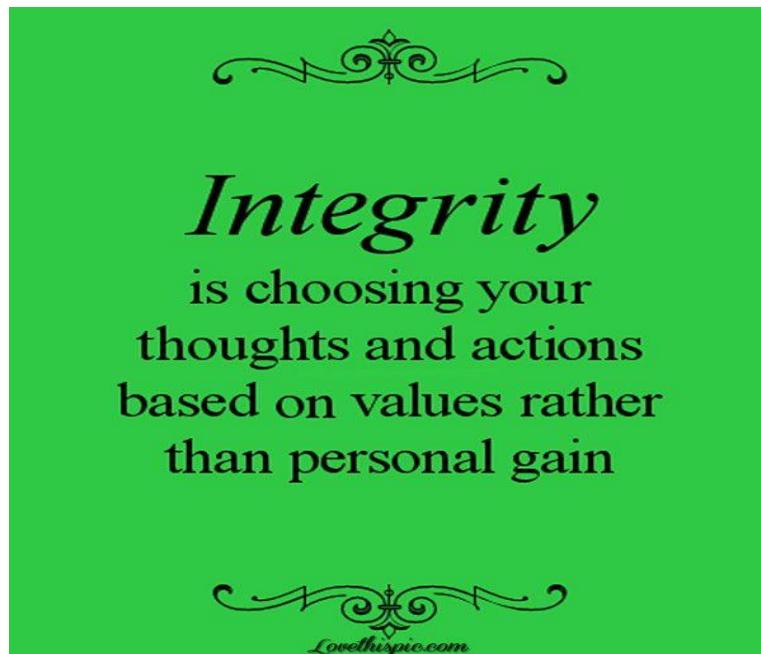
+Matt. 7:15-20 –wolves in sheep clothing can be identified by their fruits

+John 10:11-13 – there are good shepherds, there are hirelings

+Ps. 1:1 – distant yourself from the counsel of the ungodly

+Prov. 11:14 – there is safety in godly counsels

+ Isa. 8:20 – godly counsels will be in agreement with God’s words



+ Jer. 50:6 – even a professed Man of God may offer misleading counsels

Cautions in Areas of Moral Neutrality

The above principles are to be applied where we have “thus saith the Lord”. However, there are gray areas where such clear-cut statements are not available to guild our actions. What can be regarded as moral liberty is such an instance, is not without biblical guidelines. Such principles are spelled out in Romans chapters 14 and 15 where food sacrificed to idols is used as for illustration. The principles can be summarized thus:

1. Avoid judgmental attitude toward one another. In other word, one should not force his/her own opinion on others once there is no biblical mandate – Rom. 14: 3, 4.

2. Each person should make use of the privilege to determine what he/she considers to be right or wrong in issue of this nature. Decision should be based on conviction, but if doubt sets in, there may be need to refrain from such behavior – Rom. 14: 6,8,23.
3. Avoid being an obstacle or stumbling block to a fellow believer by your liberty. One must be sure that the action is not adversely affecting other believers who are aware of your behavior – Rom. 14:13, 14, 22; 15:1.
4. The concerned believer should also put into consideration; the effect(s) of such action on his/her own personal spiritual welfare. Alluding to 1 Cor.6:12 for clarification, Anderson posits that,

Although these morally neutral practices are lawful, they may not be profitable and could actually master (or enslave) a person. There is nothing in the Bible about such things as poor nutrition, addiction to caffeine, or watching lots of television, yet most would agree that such behaviors are not profitable. In fact, they are frequently debilitating to the individual. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that whether "you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Customary/Traditional and Reflective Morality

As discussed under *cultural relativism*, it is obvious that different culture holds with different traditional morality. In this respect one must differentiate between cultural beliefs and truths – as presented in God's word. The fact that a culture holds or approves a particular belief or a practice does not make right. A traditional moral belief must be critically examined in the light of God's word. The outcome of such evaluation is called, reflective morality. It is such outcome that can reflect God's will.

SECTION G

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 – The Moral Principles of the Decalogue

Considering the moral principles as expressed in the Ten Commandments, Russell K. Tardo expatiates thus on the eighth commandment - *Thou shalt not steal.* [Ex. 20:15]. According to the scholar, the principle is two-fold in both the Old and New Testaments namely: Honesty in the acquisition of one's possessions and recognizing others' right to own property. He identified the following as some of the ways by which people violate this commandment without using mask and gun:

- a. By shoplifting;
- b. By substituting prices in stores, i.e., removing store tags and replacing them with lower priced tags);
- c. By using unjust weights and balances in weighing merchandise sold by weight;
- d. By moving landmarks, i.e., boundaries of land;
- e. By gambling, i.e., hoping to gain without having to work or earn it.
- f. By controlling the stock market;
- g. By concealing defects in something you sell, - Consider the following Bible texts:
 - i. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
[Rom. 12:17]
 - ii. *Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.* [2 Cor. 8:21]
- h. By employees loafing on the job; - Consider the following Bible texts:
 - i. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* [2 Thes. 3:10]
 - ii. *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.* [Col. 3:22-25]

- i. By employers not paying proper wages to employees; - Consider the following Bible texts:
 - i. *For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his reward.* [1 Tim. 5:18]
 - ii. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.* [Col. 4:1]
 - iii. *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.* [Prov. 11:24]
- j. By failing to pay debts. - Consider the following Bible texts:
 - i. *Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* [Rom. 13:8]
 - ii. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. [Ps. 37:21]
- k. By cheating on one's income tax. - Consider the following Bible texts:
 - i. *...then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.* [Mat. 22:21]
- l. By cheating on exams at school;
- m. By bargaining a seller to lower a fair price down to a price that is actually below what the item is worth. We should be willing to pay a fair price for what we buy. - Consider the following Bible text:
 - i. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.* [Prov. 20:14]
- n. By buying stolen merchandise;
- o. By businessmen deceitfully selling Grade B merchandise at Grade A prices. - Consider the following Bible texts:
 - i. *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* [Eph. 4:28]
 - ii. *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* [1 Cor. 6:10]

iii. *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*
[Rom. 12:17]

Appendix 2

A List of Christian Virtues

Russell K. Tardo, in his book, Studies in Christian Ethics presents the under listed virtues expected to be developed by believers in Christ as they shine as light, live as God's ambassadors and prepare for Christ's second return :

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|---|--|
| *Appreciativeness [1 Thess. 5:18; Ps. 103:2] | *Hospitality [Heb. 13:1-2; Rom. 12:13] |
| *Attentiveness [Heb. 2:1; Mk. 4:23-24] | *Humility [Eph. 4:2; 1 Pe. 5:5-6; Ja. 4:16; Rom. 12:3] |
| *Attitude [1 Cor. 10:31] | *Impartiality [Rom. 2:11; Ja. 2:1-9] |
| *Availability [Mat. 9:9; 20:27-28; 2 Tim. 4:2; Lu. 9:57-62; 2 Tim. 2:4] | *Industrious [2 Thes. 3:10; 1 Thes. 4:11-12; Eph. 4:28] |
| *Commitment [Ps. 37:5; Lk. 14:26-27; 1 Pe. 4:19] | *Joyfulness [Eph. 5:19; Ja. 1:2-3; 1 Thes. 5:16; Gal. 5:22] |
| *Compassion [1 Pe. 3:8; Jo. 15:13; 1 Jo. 3:16-17] | *Kindness [Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12; Lu. 10:30-37] |
| *Concern [Gal. 6:2; Rom. 15:1-2] | *Knowledge [Phil. 1:9-10; Col. 1:9-10; Jo. 16:13; 2 Pe. 1:3-8] |
| *Confidence [Phil. 4:13; Rom. 4:21] | *Longsuffering [Gal. 5:22; Col. 1:11; 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:2] |
| *Consideration [Phil. 2:3-4] | *Love [Mt. 22:36-40; Gal. 5:6; 1 Cor. 13:4-7] |
| *Consistency [1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Pe. 5:10; Eph. 4:14; Col. 1:23] | *Loyalty [Lu. 14:26; Mt. 6:24; Jo. 15:13] |
| *Contentment [Phil. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:6-9; Lu. 9:58] | *Mannerliness [1 Cor. 13:5] |
| *Cooperativeness [Ps. 133:1; Eph. 4:3; Jo. 6:28-29; 1 Cor. 1:10] | *Moderation [Phil. 4:5] |
| *Courage [Dt. 31:6; 1 Cor. 16:13; Acts 4:29] | *Modesty [1 Tim. 2:9; Titus 2:10] |
| *Courtesy [1 Pe. 3:8] | *Meekness [Mt. 5:5; Eph. 4:2; Ja. 1:21; 3:13] |
| *Decisiveness [Josh. 24:15; Dt. 30:19-20] | Mercy [Mt. 5:7; Lu. 6:36] |
| | *Morality [Mt. 5:28; 1 Tim. 5:2] |

20; Heb. 11:24-25]	*Non-Resistance [Mt. 5:39-44]
*Deference [1 Cor. 10:33; 9:18-22; Rom. 12:16]	*Optimism [Rom. 8:28; Ja. 1:2-3; Phil. 4:8]
*Dependability [1 Tim. 6:20; Pr. 25:19; 2 Cor. 5:19]	*Orderliness [1 Cor. 14:33, 40] *Patience [Heb. 6:12, 15; Ja. 5:8]
*Determination [1 Cor. 2:2; Isa. 50:7; Eze. 3:8-10; Lu. 9:51]	*Peacefulness [Jo. 16:33; Heb. 12:14; Rom. 12:18]
*Diligence [Col. 3:23; Ecc. 9:10; 2 Pe. 3:14; Pr. 21:5]	*Perseverance [Gal. 6:9; Lu. 11:8; Eph. 6:18]
*Discernment [Eze. 44:23; Mal. 3:18; 1 Cor. 2:14-16; Phil. 1:9-11; Heb. 5:14]	*Punctuality [Ecc. 3:1; Pr. 25:19; Eph. 5:16]
*Discretion [Ps. 112:5; Pr. 2:11; 3:21]	*Purity [Mt. 5:8; Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:5]
*Efficiency [Eph. 5:16; Pr. 18:9; 16:20]	*Purposefulness [Pro. 29:18; Mt. 6:33; 7:21; 5:48]
*Endurance [Heb. 12:1-3; 10:35-39; Lu. 8:15; Mt. 24:13]	*Respectfulness [1 Thes. 5:12-13; Rom. 13:7; Eph. 6:1-2, 5]
*Equity [Pr. 1:3; Mt. 7:12]	
*Faith [Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:17; Nahum 1:7; Lu. 18:8]	*Responsibility [2 Cor. 5:9; Rom. 14:12; Eph. 6:5-8]
*Faithfulness [1 Cor. 7:25; 3 Jo. 4-5; Rev. 2:10, 13; 3:8]	*Righteousness [1 Jo. 3:5-10; 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:34]
*Fearlessness [2 Tim. 1:7; Mk. 5:36; Jer. 1:8, 17; 1 Jo. 4:18]	*Self-Control [Gal. 5:23-24; 1 Thes. 5:22; Lu. 9:23]
*Flexibility [Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Pe. 3:15; Jer. 10:23; Pr. 16:9]	*Sincerity [1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 1 Thes. 2:4-10; Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18]
*Forbearance [Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13]	*Sobriety [Titus 2:2, 4, 6; 1 Thes. 5:6, 8;
*Forgiveness [Col. 3:13; Mk. 11:25-26; Mt. 5:44]	1 Pe. 5:8] *Stewardship [1 Cor. 4:1-2; Mt. 25:14-30; Lu. 16:1-12]
*Friendliness [Pr. 18:24; Jo. 15:13-15; Ja. 4:4; 2:23]	*Studioiusness [2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; Acts 17:11-12]
*Generosity [2 Cor. 9:6-7; 1 Tim. 6:17-	

- | | |
|---|--|
| 18; Rom. 12:13; Acts 20:35] | *Submissiveness [Jo. 10:27; Ja. 4:7; 1 |
| *Gentleness [2 Tim. 2:24; Gal. 5:22] | Pe. 2:13; 5:5; Heb. 13:17] |
| *Godliness [1 Tim. 4:7-8; 6:3-6; 2 Pe. 1:6-7] | *Tactfulness [Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-25] |
| *Goodness [Gal. 5:22; 6:10] | *Teachableness [Pr. 29:1; Col. 3:16; Ja. |
| *Holiness [1 Pe. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 7:1; Heb. 12:14; 1 Thes. 3:13] | 1:21-25] *Tenderheartedness [Eph. 4:32; 2 Chron. 34:27-28] |
| *Honesty [Lu. 8:15; Rom. 12:17; 1 Pe. 2:12; 2Cor. 8:21] | *Thankfulness [Col. 3:15, 17; 4:2; Phil. 4:6] |
| | *Truthfulness [Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:9; Acts 5:3; Rev. 21:8] |
| | *Trustworthiness [Mt. 25:46; Pr. 25:19] |
| | *Wisdom [Pr. 3:13; 4:5-7; 10:31] |
| | *Zeal [Jo. 2:17; Rev. 2:4; 3:15-16, 19] |

Appendix 3

Virtues and Vices

Virtues	Vices
Diligent	Lazy
Selfcontrolled	Pleasure seeking
Truthful	Lying
Faithful	Unreliable
Obedient/Submissive	Rebellious
Selfless	Selfish
Courageous	Cowardice
Discerning	Gullible
Generous	Greedy
Fair/Dispassionate	Prejudice
Calm or Gentle	Angry
Patient	Impatient
Punctual	Tardy
Available	Unavailable
Considerate	Inconsiderate
Persevere	Give up
Careful	Reckless
Content	Discontent
Intolerant of sin	Tolerant of sin
Thankful/Grateful	Ungrateful
Orderly	Disorderly
Responsible	Irresponsible
Sincere	Disingenuous
Listens	Inattentive
Hospitable	Hostile

Hopeful		Hopeless
Modest		Indecent
Respectful		Disrespectful
Wholehearted		Halfhearted
Wise		Foolish/Inept
Believing		Unbelieving
Cautious		Careless
Humble		Proud
Sympathetic		Cruel
Gentle		Violent
Compliant/Meek		Complaining
Sexually	Pure	Sexually immoral
Forgiving		Unforgiving
Discreet		Pretentious
Loving		Hating
Contrite		Unpenitent

Appendix 4

Sample Topics for Group Assignment

1. Advertisement, Reality and Morality
2. Child Labour and Abuse
3. Child Training and Abuse
4. Child Training, Labour and Abuse in Nigeria
5. Civility and Civic Right in Nigeria
6. Cohabitation and Trial Marriage
7. Corruption and Contract Award
8. Corruption and Politics in Nigeria
9. Corruption and Power (Electricity) Supply in Nigeria
10. Corruption and Single Treasury Account in Nigeria
11. Crime and Capital Punishment
12. Crime and Law Enforcement Agents in Nigeria
13. Crime, Security and Security Vote in Nigeria
14. Customs Service and border security
15. Democracy and imposition of Candidate in Nigeria
16. Domestic Violence: The Moral Consideration
17. Economic growth and Vandalization
18. Education and Academic Dishonesty in Nigeria
19. Fertility and Surrogate Motherhood
20. Fraud and Baking System in Nigeria
21. Governance, Security and Security Votes
22. Heath, Economy and Imported Items in Nigeria.
23. Home Video and Morality in Nigeria
24. Independence and Moral Accountability
25. Integrity and Political Cross-Carpeting in Nigeria
26. Justice and Judicial System in Nigeria
27. Kidnapping, Kidnappers and Ransom in Nigeria

28. Leadership and Credibility in National Assemblies
29. Leadership and development
30. Leadership, Management and Millennium Development Goal in Nigeria
31. Marriage and Moral Purity : African Traditional Perspective
32. Marriage and Moral Purity : Christian Perspective
33. Marriage and Moral Purity: Islamic Perspective
34. Money Laundering and National Economy
35. Money politics and Democratic Governance
36. Moral Decency and Environmental Care
37. Moral Gesture, Rape and Rapists in Nigeria
38. Moral Qualification and National Honour in Nigeria
39. Morality of War, Christian Perspectives
40. Morality of War, Islamic Perspectives
41. Parenting and Moral Development
42. Party Leadership and Zoning System in Nigeria
43. Politics and Judiciary in Nigeria
44. Politics and the Issue of Godfatherism in Nigeria
45. Prisons, Prisoners and Rehabilitation
46. Privatization and Development
47. Religion and politics in Nigeria
48. Religion and Moral Development , Islamic Perspective
49. Religion and Moral Development, African Traditional Religion Perspective
50. Religion and Moral Development, Christian Perspective
51. Religion and Moral Retribution
52. Religion and Morality in Nigeria
53. Religious Education and Moral Development
54. Security and Money Ritual in Nigeria
55. Tax, Taxation and Tax Evasion in Nigeria
56. The Morality of Birth Control
57. The morality of Time Consciousness in Nigeria

- 58. The Use and Abuse of Drugs
- 59. Widowhood and Cultural Norms in Nigeria
- 60. Women and Politics in Nigeria
- 61. Work Ethics and Civil Service in Nigeria
- 62. Youth and the issue of immorality
- 63. Youth, Beauty and Beautification
- 64. Youth, Crime and Unemployment in Nigeria
- 65. Youth, Peer Pressure and Morality
- 66. Youth, Social Media and Morality
- 67. Youth, Unemployment, and crime

Appendix 5

The List of Materials and Resources Used Books

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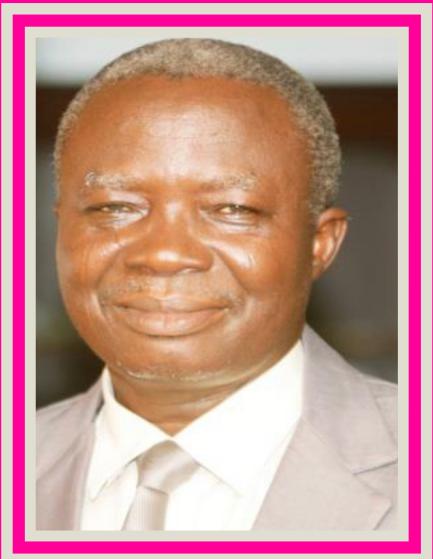
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