

## Objective

Provide a framework for thinking through ethics and helping others with ethical decisions.

## Definitions: Understanding Ethics

**Simple Definition** - moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity;

**Biblical Definition** – *Philippians 2:15* "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world,"

Examples:

- Medical ethics
- Financial ethics
- End of Life ethics
- Conduct of Business ethics
- Reproductive ethics
- Ethics of Politics

## Three Goals

1. Support and guide decision making through God honoring engagement with people.
2. Use sound biblical principles to inform our decisions.
3. Avoid being swayed by our emotions or current cultural positions.

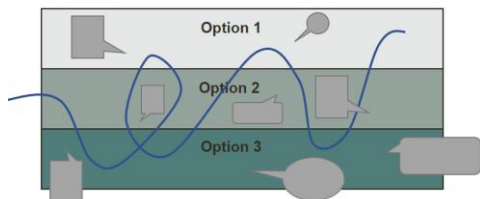
## Beliefs that form up the foundation for Christian based Ethics.

- We have a concern for other people.
  - *Philippians 2:4*
- We respect and understand the Law.
  - *Romans 13: 1*
- We have faith.
- We value all lives.
- We believe in God's sovereignty.
  - We trust God's will and authority.
  - We work within his sovereignty.

## Posture: How we approach ethics

- With a multitude of counselors.
  - Use professional advice (legal, medical, counseling, etc.)
- With uprightness of heart.
  - Honesty
    - *1 Thessalonians 4:12* "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."
  - Truth
  - Integrity
- With the gift of a sound mind.
- With a Spirit directed conscience.
- With an eye towards the journey that ethical decision making requires.

## The Journey of Ethical Decision Making



## Actions to take, in helping people make ethical decisions.

- Understand the question.
- Give support to the dilemma and the related emotions.
- Help them examine motives and biases.
- Seek scripture.
- Review all alternatives, avoiding either-or-thinking. (bad options help clarify good options)
- Assist people in their thought processing. (Avoid making their decision)

## Clarity in Our Role

Know who you are and who you are not.

- **Clarify Roles - Luke 12:13** *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. <sup>14</sup> And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?*
- Don't take on responsibility to make decision for others
- **Encourage them, 2 Timothy 1: 6** *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*
- God will honor a surrendered decision, There may not be a clear choice
- When appropriate refer to others in the church with experience or expertise

## Situations for illustration or future discussion.

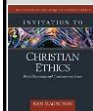
- Accept or donate COVID stimulus payment, did you suffer? Is someone else suffering?
- Business COVID programs, apply regardless of degree of suffering? Even if you suffered but don't need it should you accept? What is it okay to spend it on?
- COVID vaccine, a stem cell line from an aborted fetus was used to test it. Should you take it? Does that make you complicit?
- Church member on life support with no possibility of coming off, comatose, and may be suffering. Is it okay to remove feeding tube, oxygen, meds, ventilator? What if you know they will die as a result of your action? But actual death is from brain damage, cancer, etc. Do you give comfort meds which might hasten death?

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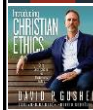
- You have a business partner and he is the financial arm. He will not break the law but is comfortable with loop holes. Are loops holes ethical? Can you stay "unequally yoked"? should you partner with an unbeliever?
- You learn of something illegal and threatening as a result of your role as minister. Is that totally confidential?
- You don't believe the government should restrict churches in any way. Do you comply with local public health regs regarding food service, maximum capacity for fire, order not to assemble?
- Is it okay to donate to or vote for a candidate who supports some positions you feel strongly about but whose behavior or character are in sharp contrast to scripture and Christ's teachings?

## Resources

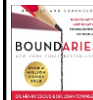
No book is going to see all values correctly but will be helpful in understanding the questions and the thought process.



**Invitation to Christian Ethics: Moral Reasoning and Contemporary Issues (Invitation to Theological Studies)** Hardcover – September 29, 2020  
by [Ken Magnuson](#) (Author)



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