



REDEEMING THE VOICE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN MODERN MEDICINE

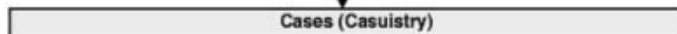
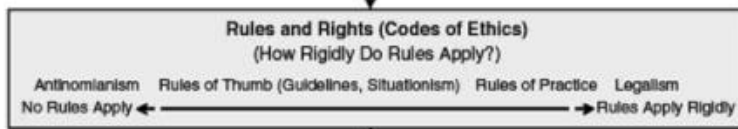
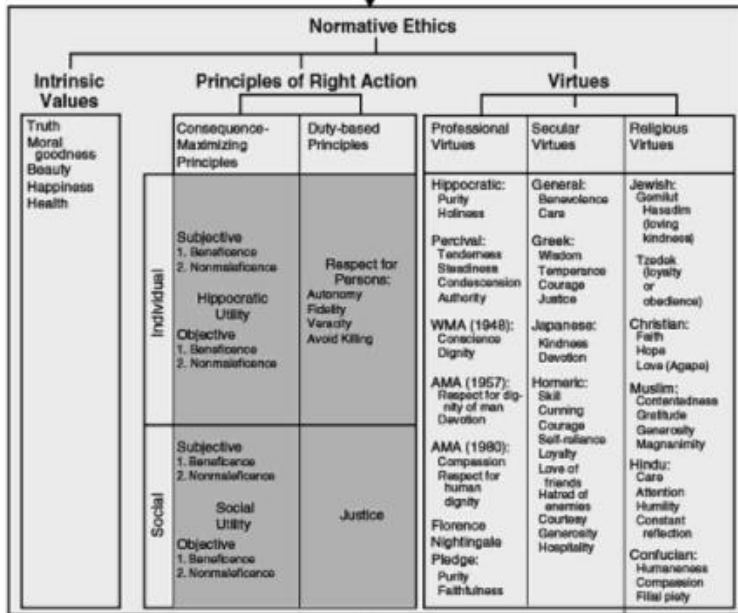
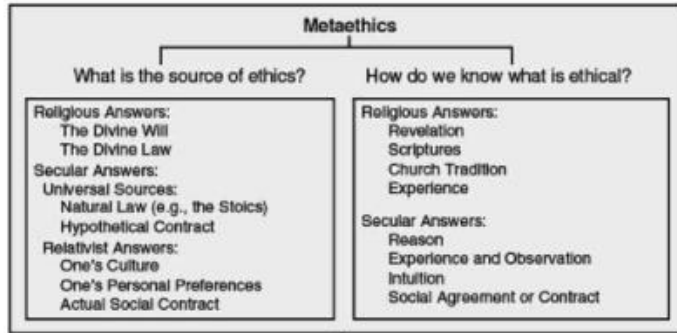
2022 CPFI ANNUAL MEETING

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain the major tenets of various ethical frameworks utilized in medical care.
- Articulate answers to meta-ethical questions that undergird Christian ethics.
- Describe various components of a Christian ethical framework.
- Compare and contrast Christian ethics with other ethical frameworks that have a bearing on modern bioethics.
- Discuss how Christian ethical principles apply to modern healthcare and human subjects research.



ROADMAP FOR TODAY'S SESSION

- Major ethical theories in modern society
- Christian responses to metaethical questions
- Basic framework of Christian Ethics
- Comparison of ethical theories
- Application questions

ORGANIZING ETHICAL THEORIES REVIEW

Reason

- Natural Law
- Kantianism

Relationship

- Utilitarianism
- Virtue Ethics
- Situational Ethics

Tradition

- Divine Command Theory
- Medical Principlism

NATURAL LAW

Moral facts are grounded in the natural order of the universe and the nature of human beings.

“The light of reason is placed by nature [and thus by God] in every man to guide him in his acts.”

Thomas Aquinas

KANTIAN ETHICS

“Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”

Immanuel Kant

UTILITARIANISM

“Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.”

John Stuart Mill

VIRTUE ETHICS

“Once we resist the temptation to abstract ‘situations’ and ‘cases’ from their narrative context, we can begin to appreciate the testimony of many... that in matters of significance involving the ‘hardest choices’ there was no ‘decision’ to be made. Rather, the decision makes itself if we know who we are and what is required of us.”

Stanley Hauerwas

SITUATIONAL ETHICS

“...all laws and rules and principles and ideals and norms, are only contingent, only valid if they happen to serve love.”

Joseph Fletcher

DIVINE COMMAND THEORY

Morality is dependent upon God's direction alone and moral obligation consists in obedience to God's commands.

MEDICAL PRINCIPALISM (BASED ON THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH)

Beneficence

- Acting in the best interest of patients

Nonmaleficence

- Acting to avoid harm

Justice

- Fostering equitable access to all legal healthcare services

Autonomy

- Honoring the right of a competent patient to make his or her own medical decisions

WHAT IS “CHRISTIAN
ETHICS?”

EPISTEMOLOGY AND WORLDVIEW

- **Worldview** – “A mental map that tells us how to navigate our world effectively.” ~Nancy Pearcey
- **Epistemology** – Discipline concerned with what we can know and how we can know it

META-ETHICAL
QUESTIONS AND
CHRISTIAN
ETHICS

What is the source of ethics
from a Christian Worldview?

How do Christians know
what is ethical?

SPECIAL REVELATION VERSUS GENERAL REVELATION

Special Revelation

- God's communication to his people of his nature, character, and particular plan for redemption of mankind
- God's Word (i.e., the Bible) is:
 - Inspired
 - Infallible
 - Authoritative
 - Clear
 - Necessary
 - Sufficient

General Revelation

- Moral knowledge obtained through reason and observation of the natural order
- Related to intuition, conscience, and common sense
- Enough to condemn us in our sins, but not to show us the means for our redemption (Romans 1-2)

Christian Ethics interprets general revelation through special revelation.

BUILDING ON SHAKY GROUND

Reason

- Natural Law
- Kantianism

Relationship

- Utilitarianism
- Virtue Ethics
- Situational Ethics

Tradition

- Divine Command Theory
- Medical Principlism



“But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Matthew 7:26-27



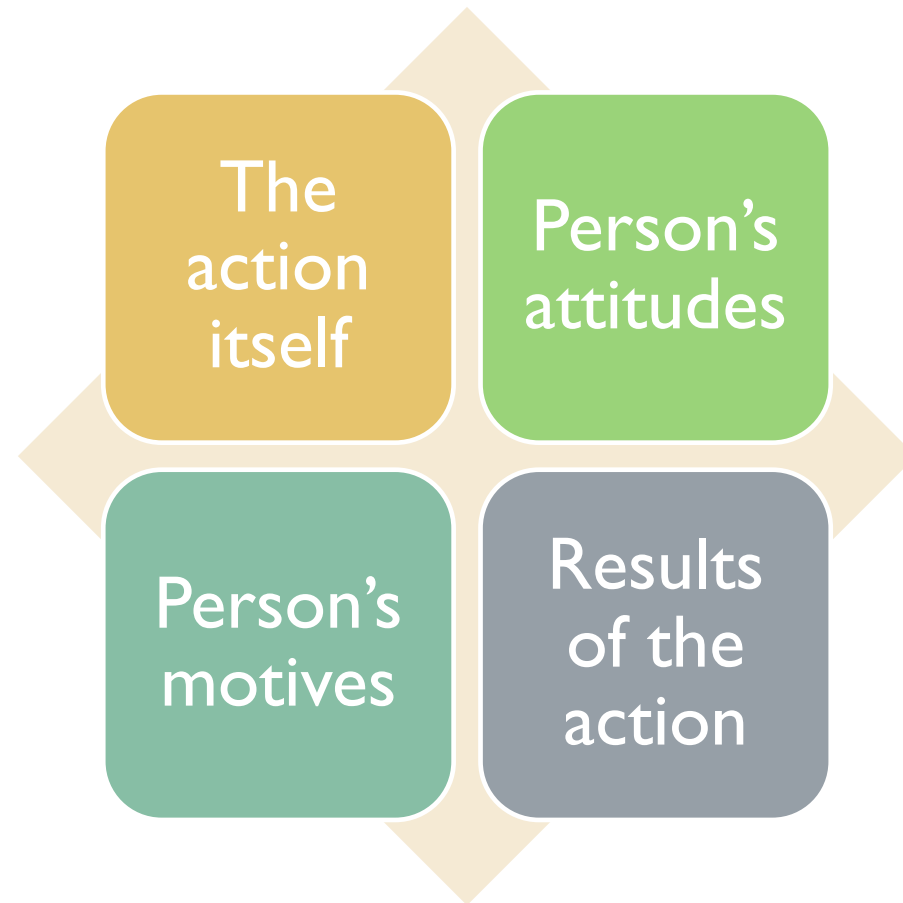
CORE IDEAS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS



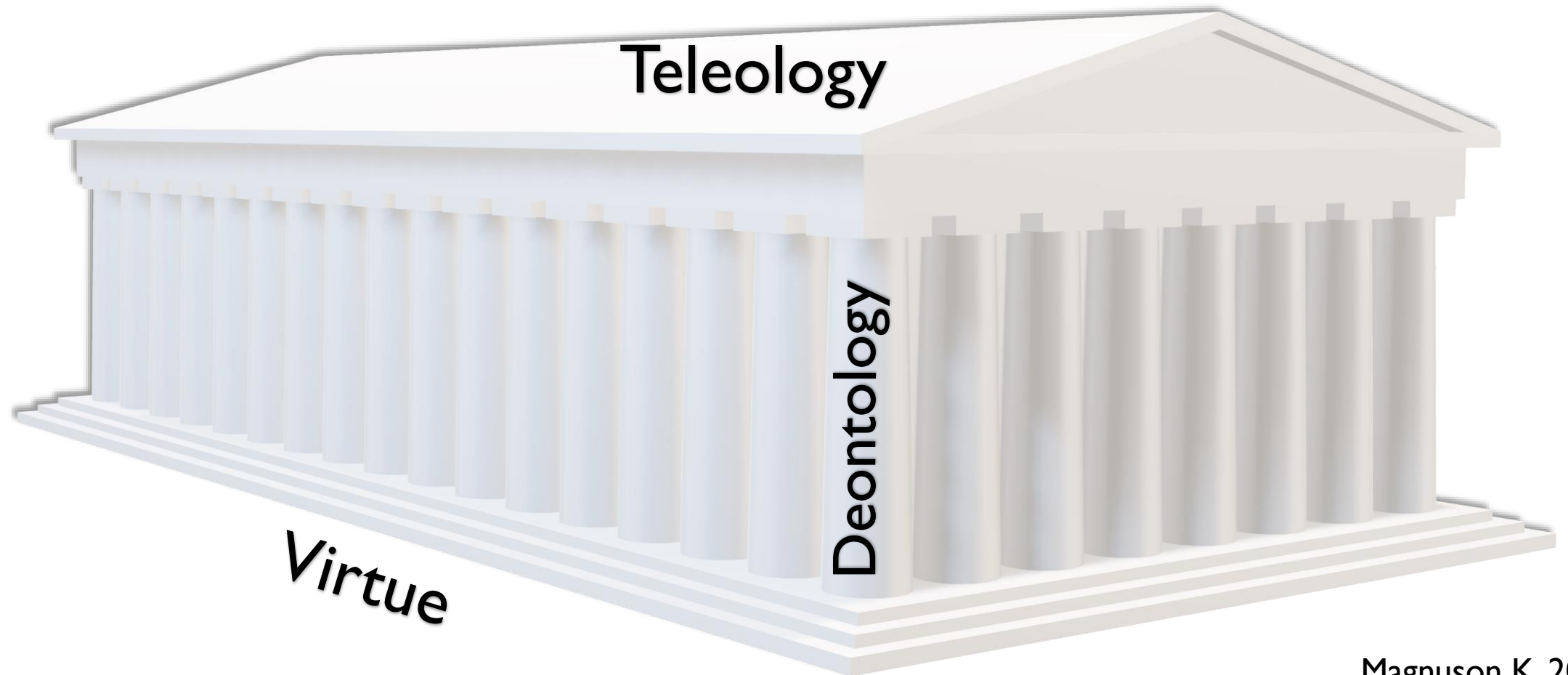
IS CHRISTIAN ETHICS
DEONTOLOGICAL OR
CONSEQUENTIAL IN
NATURE?

DOES VIRTUE PLAY A ROLE?

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF ACTIONS ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS



BUILDING A CHRISTIAN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK



VIRTUES DEFINED BY GOODNESS

- Moral goodness is defined by God.
- This goodness is communicated through revelation from God.
- Special revelation (i.e. God's Word) flows from the character of God, which does not change (Hebrews 13:8).
- Therefore, moral goodness does not change.
- Christian virtues align with moral goodness and do not change.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD'S CHARACTER

Communicable Attributes

- Knowledge
- Truthfulness
- Wisdom
- Goodness
- Love
- Mercy
- Holiness
- Peace
- Righteousness

Non-communicable Attributes

- Independence
- Unchangeableness
- Eternal
- Omnipresence
- Unity

VIRTUES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

Galatians 5:22-23

DUTIES AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Love for Others

Love for God



MORAL DUTIES IN SCRIPTURE



Positive Duties

- Show honor.
- Pursue peace.
- Perform good works.
- Bless those who persecute you.



Negative Duties

- Have no other gods.
- Do not take the name of the Lord in vain.
- Do not murder.
- Do not steal.

TELEOLOGICAL REALITIES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Doctrine

Doxology

Discipleship

TELEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

- *telos* (Gr.) – end, goal, outcome

“So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the
glory of God.”

1 Cor 10:31

- How is consequentialism related (but different from) teleology?

WHAT IS THE AIM (OR END) OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS?

Q. What is the chief end of man?

A. To glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

“God is most satisfied in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”

Desiring God Ministries

TELEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

“...that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Colossians 1:9-10

SUMMING IT UP

“The nature and character of God [virtue] is the source from which God’s commands are given [deontology]... God’s purposes or ends [teleology] flow from his character and are indicated by his commands.”

“...a person’s character [virtue] provides the foundation for keeping God’s commands [deontology], which work together to fulfill the purposes [teleology] for which human beings are created.”

Ken Magnuson

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY CHRISTIAN ETHICS?

- Move from instinctive to informed ethical convictions
- Change from imprecise to accurate ethical convictions
- Change from unbiblical to biblical ethical convictions
- Prepare for real-life situations
- Prepare to make wise ethical decisions about new matters later
- Grow in maturity and holiness



ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- Obedience to God brings numerous blessings and promotes human flourishing.
- Christian ethics is essential for proclamation of the gospel.
- The Bible may not directly answer every ethical question, but it does have something to say about it.
- Beware of proof-texting. We want to be whole-Bible readers in our ethical approach.



HOW ARE CHRISTIAN
ETHICS VIEWED BY OUR
BROADER MODERN
SOCIETY AND MEDICAL
COMMUNITY?





SHOULD CHRISTIAN
ETHICS HAVE A
“VOICE” IN
MODERN
MEDICINE?

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

- Name and explain one of the major tenets of medical principlism.
- What is the source of ethics from a Christian worldview?
- How does deontology relate to teleology according to Christian ethics?
- Compare Christian ethics with at least one other ethical framework discussed today.
- Share a time when you were faced with an ethical dilemma in the practice of pharmacy. How did (or would) a Christian ethical framework help you determine the right actions in that case?

SUMMARY

- Christian ethics is a framework through the whole Bible teaches us about which acts, attitudes, and virtues receive God's approval.
- Christian ethics is based solidly on revelation, specifically the Bible.
- Duties, virtues, and teleological realities are necessary parts of a Christian ethical framework.
- Other ethical frameworks have value, but none provides a holistic approach to ethical decision making like Christian ethics.

ADDITIONAL READING

- Feinberg JS, Feinberg PD. (2010). *Ethics for a Brave New World*. 2nd ed. Crossway.
- Grudem W. (2018). *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning*. Crossway.
- Magnuson K. (2020). *Invitation to Christian Ethics: Moral Reasoning and Contemporary Issues*. Kregel Academic.
- Sullivan DM, Anderson DC, Cole JW. (2021). *Ethics in Pharmacy Practice: A Practical Guide*. Springer Nature.