

Gray Matters

pt. 2 – Building Blocks

MBC September 28, 2014 – Pastor Barry R. Mulligan

CREATING AN ETHICAL GRID (THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT)

Maintaining a **Scriptural** Basis

- Study of Old Testament in light of the New Testament

Understanding of our **Own** Context

Recognition of the **Existing** Authority/Laws

Reflecting the **Character** of God

Paying Attention to **Conscience**

³*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.* ⁴*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* ⁵*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*
Philippians 2:3-5

Christian Ethics are Duty-Centered (deontological) IS IT RIGHT?

3 General Subcategories:

UNQUALIFIED ABSOLUTISM – the view that there are many moral absolutes that never actually conflict; all alleged conflicts are only apparent, not real. Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues & Options, Geisler, Norman L., p. 411

1. God's moral law is absolute
2. God's providence can be trusted
3. There is always a way to avoid sinning
4. God cannot contradict himself
5. Therefore, no two absolute moral laws can really conflict – all moral conflicts are only apparent, not real

NOTE: while all three Christian ethical positions would agree with most of these points, (THIS LAST POINT MAKES THE FINAL TWO INCOMPATIBLE WITH UNQUALIFIED ABSOLUTISM)

CONFLICTING ABSOLUTISM – the belief that went to duties conflict, we are morally responsible to both. God's law can never be broken without guilt. In such cases, therefore, one must simply do the lesser evil, confess that sin, and ask for God's forgiveness. Geisler, p. 83

1. God's moral law is absolute
2. Moral conflicts are unavoidable
3. Our duty is to the lesser evil
4. Forgiveness is available

GRADED ABSOLUTISM – the belief that when two or more universal ethical norms come into unavoidable conflict, our non-culpable duty is to follow the higher one. Geisler, p. 408

1. God's moral law is absolute
2. Moral conflicts are unavoidable
3. There are higher & lower moral laws
4. No guilt is assigned for the unavoidable