Lesson 1.   The Case for Ethics

Resources: Geisler, Norman L. (2010) <u>Christian Ethics</u>. USA: Baker Academic.

Chambers, O. (1947) <u>Biblical Ethics</u>. Hants UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

Foundational Truths

- Ethics deals with what is _____ _____ .
- Christian ethics deals with what is morally _____ _____ _____ for a _____.
- Ministerial ethics deals with what is morally right and wrong for the _____ .

I.   Christian Ethics is(are)

a. Based on _____
   i. It is a form of the _____
   ii. God wills what is right according to his moral attributes
   iii. Leviticus 11:45 For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God<u>: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.</u>
   iv. Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore <u>perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.</u>
   v. 1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.
   vi. Since God is holy, we are commanded to be holy. Since God is love, we are commanded to love.

b. _____
   i. Moral Commands that flow from God's Nature are absolute. That is, they are always binding everywhere on everyone.

      ii. Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

     iii. James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

     iv. Commands that flow from God's will are binding but not absolute. They must be obeyed because God prescribed them, but he did not prescribe them for all people, times, and places. An example of this would be the Jews restriction on eating pork.

c. Based on _____ _____

      i. Rom 1:19-20 (General)

     ii. Rom 2:12-15 (General)

    iii. Rom 2:18 (Special)

    iv. Rom 3:2 (Special)

     v. Ps 19 (General and Special)

d. _____

      i. Descriptive language tells what is done

     ii. Prescriptive language speaks of what ought to be done

    iii. Describing human behavior is the task of sociology

    iv. Prescribing human behavior is the province of morality

     v. Moral obligation is prescribed by a moral God…It is prescriptive.

e. _____

      i. Two types of ethical systems: Deontological and Teleological

     ii. Deontological ethics are duty centered

    iii. Teleological ethics are end centered

"Someone tries to rescue a drowning person but fails. According to Teleological ethic, this was not a good act because it did not have good results. Since the results determine the goodness of the act, then it follows that the attempted rescue was not a good act.

Yet a more sophisticated form of teleological (utilitarian) ethic might argue that the attempt was good, even though it failed, because it had a good effect on society. People heard about it and were encouraged to help rescue others in the future. But even here the attempted act of rescue that failed was not good in itself. Rather, it would have been good if and only if it had brought some good results, either for the drowning person or for someone else. By contrast, the Christian ethic is deontological and insists that even some acts that fail are good. Christians believe, for example, that it is better to have loved and to have lost than not to have loved at all. Christians believe that the cross was not a failure simply because only some will be saved. It was sufficient for all even if it is efficient only for those who believe". (Christian Ethics: Geisler p. 17)

"Strictly speaking, there is no disobedience possible to an imperative law, the only alternative being destruction. In this sense the moral law is not imperative, because it can be disobeyed, and immediate destruction does not follow. And yet the moral law never alters, however much men disobey it; it can be violated, but it never alters. Remember, at the back of all human morality stands God". (Chambers, O: Biblical Ethics)

II. Code of ethics as outlined at NAE.org

a. Pursue _____
   i. In personal character
   ii. In personal care
   iii. In preaching and teaching

b. Be _____
   i. In leadership
   ii. With information

        iii. With resources

c. Seek _____
        i. Sexual purity
        ii. Spiritual information
        iii. In theology
        iv. Professional practice

d. Embrace _____
        i. In finances
        ii. In ministry responsibilities

e. Facilitate _____
        i. With staff
        ii. With members
        iii. With community
        iv. Prior congregation…Don't recruit members of other churches