

5-3-1 Assignment Chapter 1

Questions

1. What is the main difference between consequential ethics and principle ethics?
2. Why is ethical egoism a dead-end street for Christians?
3. Why do principle ethicists not always agree on moral judgments on issues?
4. Why can ethics not be purely principle-oriented?
5. Today, why is Christian ethics moving away from consequentialism and principle ethics?

Answers

1. Whereas consequentialists believe the results of an action make an action right or wrong, those who practice a principle ethic attest that certain actions are inherently right or wrong and draw from moral sources to distinguish between the two.
2. Ethical egoism runs contrary to *agape* love and self-centeredness is often at the heart of most moral failures.
3. Because they often look to different sources for moral guidance.
4. If ethics are purely principle oriented then both the intention and the character dimension of the moral life will be missed.
5. Neither does justice to the richness of biblical teaching, and both seemed more fixated on moral dilemmas rather than leading to a fuller understanding of the moral life.

Terms

1. Consequentialist Ethics – the ultimate criterion or standard of right and wrong is ends or results; consequences are the foundation of ethics
2. Principle Ethics – moral actions are inherently right or wrong, not dependent on outcomes or other factors; moral principles are drawn from various sources like reason, religion or life experience
3. deontology – an ethical framework that distinguishes between what is good and bad or right and wrong

Summary

In his opening chapter, Hollinger differentiates between the theories of consequentialism and principle ethics, and explains how each seeks to distinguish between what actions are right or wrong. While both theories have had influential philosophers over time, Hollinger concludes that both fail to meet the needs of Christian ethics. Since the world is ever-increasingly complex, secular and pluralistic, there must be a better paradigm to address the ethical issues that influences people today. Hollinger ends this chapter leading into this very thought.