

TH604: Christian Ethics: OA

Spring 2023

Choosing the Good, Chapter 1

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Questions

1. What did consequentialist Ayn Rand believe?
2. What's at the heart of most moral failures?
3. What's one major tenant of ethical egoism that is a foundation principle of the American Dream?
4. What is lacking from Norman Geisler's views?
5. Name a historical dilemma of principle ethics?

Answers

1. Society functions best when people pursue their own self-interest.
2. Self-centeredness espoused by ethical egoism.
3. Capitalism as shared by Adam Smith is a guiding economic principle for this country with personal pleasure at its core.
4. He disagrees that Scripture can inform us which norms are weightier. His principles are ends to themselves and lack a sound frame.
5. Citizens had to decide whether or not to turn in Jews in Nazi Germany when the gestapo questioned them.

Terms

- **Ethical egoism** - moderate rational ethic which has personal pleasure as its highest good.
- **Consequentialist ethics** - An ethics with consequences or results as the criteria for right or wrong.
- **Principle ethics** - actions are driven by rules and obligations versus what is morally right.

Summary

In this week's reading, we seek to understand Christian ethics and morality. We explore two major philosophical branches of ethics juxtaposed by the Christian worldview - Consequentialist and principle ethics. Justice, goodness, virtue, and right from a philosophical standpoint is problematic and does not suffice as enumerated in the chapter. For example, following rules or principles based upon what humanity thinks is good, or following one's pleasure, without God has no foundation in truth, and therefore cannot help the reader understand morality.