

# TH604: Christian Ethics: OA

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Choosing the Good, Chapter 2

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## Questions

1. What is character or virtue ethics?
2. What is the central question for virtue ethics?
3. What is one major emphasis of virtue ethics that distinguishes it from principle ethics?
4. What is Aristotle's Golden Mean?
5. Describe care orientation.

## Answers

1. A character approach emphasizes not merely a list of virtues but virtue itself as a configuration of various habits clustered within a given person. It is from within the inner and distinctive core of a person from which their moral discernment emerges (46).
2. What ought we to be?
3. A person is not judged for what they do but rather who they are.
4. He states that virtue is the same distance between cowardice and foolhardiness.
5. Rather than focus on justice, it draws attention to problems of detachment or abandonment and holds the ideal of attention and responding to need (50).

## Terms

- **Virtue** - Habits deemed desirable.
- **Telos of life** - Happiness as the natural end according to Aristotle.
- **States of character** - Particular state of excellence understood as a mean between two extremes.

## Summary

Virtue ethics is appropriate for Christians to use as part of the foundation for moral arguments, but only when coupled with Scripture to form a solid foundation and sound perspective. It is shortsighted in its emphasis of character over action. For example, Galatians 5:22-23 says "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Both must be considered while acknowledging that both flows out of a heart that is or is not surrendered to God. Also, any Christian ethic must account for God as the final authority and head of any community.