

1. What are three ways in which virtue ethics differ from consequentialism and principle ethics?
2. What is Aristotle's "golden mean"?
3. In response to what did Carol Gilligan develop the "care orientation"?
4. According to Aristotle and Alasdair MacIntyre, what is the *telos*, or ultimate aim, of humanity?
5. According to Stanley Hauerwas, what is the foundation for ethics?

Answers:

1. Three ways in which virtue ethics differ from consequentialism and principle ethics are its emphasis on character, stories and narratives, and community.
2. Aristotle's "golden mean" refers to the theory that virtue is always a mean between an excess and defect, except in the case of justice, which is complete in and of itself.
3. Carol Gilligan developed the "care orientation" as a response to the perceived rational notions of justice to the exclusion of relational components, as evidenced by Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development stages.
4. According to Aristotle and MacIntyre, the *telos* of humanity is *eudaimonia*, or the state of blessedness, happiness, and well-being.
5. Stanley Hauerwas averts defining a clear foundation of ethics, but instead claims that the life of Jesus, embodied by the church throughout history, is itself a social ethic.

Terms

1. Virtue ethics - a reactionary approach to consequentialism and principle ethics which instead emphasizes virtue and character as the primary measure of the moral good, rather than actions per se.
2. Virtue - may either refer to positive habits, or otherwise the sum of desirable habits within a person.
3. Character - one's inner convictions and dispositions, or core essence, from which actions and moral choice flows.

Summary

The concept of virtue ethics itself reaches as far back as Aristotle, the fourth-century philosopher, who developed the idea of virtues as products of habit, which result in character and by extension, morals. Carol Gilligan introduced yet another dimension of virtue ethics in introducing "care orientation," which incorporates such elements as context, relationship, and care, rather than merely intellectual concepts of truth and justice. Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas introduce the elements of communal narrative and specifically as regards the latter, the church as the grounds for determining the moral good. Ultimately, virtue ethics are not mutually exclusive with, but rather complementary to consequentialism and principle ethics, containing both positive and negative aspects.