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TH604: Christian Ethics: OA

5-3-1 on Hollinger, Choosing the Good, Ch. 8

QUESTIONS:

1. How should one respond to the complexities of empirical judgments when making ethical decisions?
2. What are some of the examples of empirical judgments in ethics?
3. What is poverty and economic justice?
4. What are the factors that influence empirical judgments?
5. Why are perceptions of reality so important to psychologists?

ANSWERS:

1. Humans tend to respond to the complexities of empirical judgments when making ethical decision in very flawed manners. Depending on the issue at the time and the stimuli and the perception of that individual, will often depend on how we perceive things and that reflects and influences how we make ethical decisions. As Christians, are taught to rely on the truth of God's Word and then allow it be the guiding force, to truth, clarity and integrity. It is imperative to approach each decision with humility and understanding that everything is not always as it appears and our perception is often skewed. So, when responding to the complexities of empirical judgments when making ethical decision should be done very carefully and delicately (p185-186).
2. Some of the examples of Empirical Judgments in Ethics are "Just War," "Environmental Ethics" and "Poverty and Economic Justice" (p175-180).
3. Hollinger speaks of how poverty and economic justice is seen as, poverty is the exploitation of the poor by the wealthy and powerful in the world, the inadequacies of development within a culture or part of the world (be it, lack of education, sufficient infrastructure for a viable community for transportation and communication), and is a result of the worldview, moral systems and lifestyles which is the responsibility of the poor themselves (p179).
4. The factors that influence Empirical Judgments relates to the fallen and frailty of humanity which leads to finite, yet flawed way of thinking and doing. Hollinger gives the example how many can be in the same denomination, believe in the Bible, hold to the same theological beliefs and yet still can have different concepts and perceptions concerning a variety of issues. So, to give proper analyzation one must rely on a number of influences such as, the social more, ideology, one's vested interest and personal disposition (p180-185).

TERMS:

Social Mores: Are the social customs and social codes of behavior that is established by a hierarchal social group that dictate what should be the social norm of that particular society or culture. Although an unwritten rule or law, it is the etiquette, protocol, behavioral norm and social convention (p180-181).

Ideologies: According to Hollinger, ideologies determine which facts will be accepted and how they will be interpreted for the basis of economic or political policy (p181).

Vested Interests: Vested interests are associated with ideologies and influence the values and goals of a situation when making empirical judgments (p183).

SUMMARY:

According to Robert J. Samuelson, who coined the phrase, “psycho facts,” states that it is actually difficult to have hard concrete evidence and see them as real because, there are constant repetitious changes due to how life changes. In other words, even though the underlying conditions aren’t true, we can believe that they are. So, when one is responding to the complexities of empirical judgments when making ethical decisions, they are more situational because our empirical judgments are not totally “true, clear or unbiased.” Because our judgments are often “finite, fallen and influenced by social milieu.” Hollinger states that, for Christians, we have to remember that the scriptures teach us in I Corinthians 13:12, “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known...” Although we see in part, we must trust that some of what we perceive and believe to be true is not misguided, but remember that it is partial and is influenced by what we perceive, the way we perceive, and also from outside stimuli. Christians have the responsibility to see each situation individually and it must be dealt with individually and not generally, because of the issues that stem from it. As Christians, we must seek the truth of God’s Word and be guided by it to lead us to the truth. Hollinger teaches that we must “focus with precision, clarity, integrity and humility” when making empirical judgments in proper ethical decision making.