

PAUL'S THEOLOGY

Lesson 34

Ethics – Part 2

Sometimes practical jokes are funny. Sometimes they aren't.

When I was a young lawyer, fresh out of law school I had a job at one of the world's largest firms. I went into that job with a good bit of fear and trepidation. It seemed a big step for a 23-year-old boy from Lubbock, Texas.

The "team" I worked for in that firm had one leader that did not seem to particularly like me. We had not interacted much, and the word that had gotten back to me was that he did not care for the fact that I was a Christian. (I should add that he never gave me reason to believe that, it was just the rumor I had heard).

There was another attorney I worked for on that team that was an unbeliever for whom I felt a mission to help find Christ. I worked closely with him, prayed daily for him, and even car pooled with him.

Toward the end of my first year of work, evaluation time came. The process was one where the bosses filled out written evaluations on the underlings. Those evaluations went to a committee who then decided what to do with each employee. I was nervous.

One evening as we were getting on the elevator, my non-believing car pool lawyer told me, "You owe me ... BIG." I asked why, and he told me that when he was alone in the office that had evaluations, he looked at mine. In my folder, there were a number of evaluations including one by the leader that I thought disliked both me and my faith. My car pool lawyer then told me that the recommendation on this evaluation was that I be terminated.

I was crushed internally. My immediate thought was financial ... I had a mortgage, a newborn son, and student loans. What on earth would I do?

The lawyer then smiled, and pulled from his coat pocket the "evaluation." He told me, "I pulled the original from your file... There are enough other evaluations that no one will know this one is missing. Your job is secure, but you owe me."

That was a moment of great ethical questioning on my part. Here was a man I hoped to see come to faith, doing something that I knew was wrong. He stood there looking at me to see what I would say. In an instant, my mind played out the options and implications. I wanted that evaluation to remain missing and never

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see the light of day. I wanted to close my mind to “right” and accept this as someone else’s sin that worked to my benefit. I also knew that my witness to my resurrected Lord would suffer from my acceptance of this “gift.”

Before the elevator opened, by the grace of God, I managed to tell him, “You have to put it back.” He looked at me, then said, “I knew you’d say that. This is my choice, not yours.” I explained that now that I knew about it, it was my responsibility, and he had to put it back.

Three months later, I found out that the whole thing was a practical joke – not a very funny one to me, I might add. The whole event stays in my mind and I have a “Kodak moment” in my memory as I contemplated the price of compromise on right and wrong. I think it was more than a joke, however, I think it was also an ethical test. The lawyer wanted to see if my faith was genuine when matters of personal significance were on the line.

Do you have your own story of confrontation on tough ethical matters? Are you like most of us where you made the right choice sometimes, the wrong one others? Do you ever question afterwards whether you made the ethical and moral choice? Keep these personal experiences in your mind as we continue to consider Paul’s theology on ethics. This is the second of a three part series, so if you have missed part one, please take advantage of the Internet to download and read, listen or watch the lesson.¹

REVIEW OF PART ONE

We came into our study on ethics after working through lessons on how to be holy and how to determine God’s will in our lives. In both of those lessons, we saw Paul’s instructions to “be holy,” to choose the good over the evil, to live in the “fruit of the Spirit” rather than the works of the flesh. Those lessons lead naturally into these lessons on ethics as we ask, “What must I do?” “How do I decide between good and evil?” Because this is a Bible study class on Paul’s theology, we ask these questions looking for biblical answers rather than simply philosophical analysis.²

¹ Downloads are available at www.Biblical-Literacy.com.

² Although the study would be fascinating and worthwhile, we are not looking to define and debate “good” and “evil” from a philosophical perspective. Our consideration of other philosophical paradigms (or systems) is only to help us define the limits and understanding of biblical morality.

The last lesson began this study examining the ethics and morals³ found in the Old Testament. We evaluated Old Testament ethics considering them in the categories of worship ethics, ethics found in the law, and ethics in wisdom teachings. Many of the morals asserted there make great sense and are comfortable to us today. For example, the morality of loving God with all of our heart, soul and might inspires us today as it did the Israelites when Moses delivered the command thousands of years ago (Dt. 6:5). Similarly, we find the instructions to come into worship with good conduct as well as worshipful hearts (Ps. 15 *et al.*) compatible with our goals of conduct today.

But just as many of the morals make sense today, there are those that seem out of place, if not just plain wrong. God's instructions to the Israelites to kill by stoning the two men who were gathering sticks on the Sabbath does not seem right (Num. 16). Even worse, God's command that the Israelites were to kill all in the town of Ai, including the women and children, seems inconsistent with the God of love and compassion we read about in the New Testament (Josh. 8).

We also looked at some challenging situations asking whether right and wrong were fixed, or whether they were determined by the situation. Referencing the book *Situation Ethics* by Joseph Fletcher, we began assessing whether or not the end justifies the means. We considered the Biblical account of Rahab the harlot lying about hiding the Jewish spies and afterwards being listed as one of the great Old Testament examples of faith (Josh. 2; Heb. 11:31). We discussed a similar challenging ethic where the midwives lied to Pharaoh about the birthing of male Hebrews being blessed by God for their actions (Ex. 1).

Following this discussion we considered some questions that people have struggled with since at least the second century:

- Did God change? Was the God who said to kill the people of Ai the same God that said to turn the other cheek?
- Is there a difference between right and wrong pre-Calvary and post-Calvary? In the Old Testament people were to keep their oaths (Lev. 19:12) while Jesus taught people not to take an oath (Mt. 5:33-37).
- Do we simply follow God's commands or do some of them differ based on culture? For example, in 1 Timothy 2:9 Paul expressed his desire that

³ "Ethics" comes from the Greek word for "habit" or "custom" (*ethos* εθος). "Morals" comes from the Latin equivalent also meaning "habit" or "custom" (*mos*). Scholars generally use them interchangeably, although some scholars have tried to force a differentiation. We use them interchangeably referencing one's set of values and principles for decision making in life. These terms are, to a great degree, interchangeable with/related to the concept of "good" as opposed to "evil."

women should not braid their hair nor wear pearls or costly attire. Is that for us today?

In partial response to those questions, we started offering a perspective on ethics that considers the various passages together with our own experience. Our goal is to find a perspective that offers a consistent lens through which we can see and make sense of the difficult passages as well as seeming inconsistencies in morality. In this lesson we will flesh out this perspective more fully. Then we will follow-up next week integrating the ethics lesson from Paul, with a view toward how Paul fits the premises we will bring forward from the first two lessons.

A CONSISTENT VIEW OF ETHICS

As we set forward our views, we should start by clarifying three presuppositions to our model. These are positions we do not try to prove; rather we accept them as true. (Proof of these positions should come from another class with a different purpose!)

1. God himself does not change in his character or being.⁴ He is immutable (the theological word for unchanging!).
2. When properly understood, Scripture accurately gives us the instructions of God to his people, both in the Old and New Testaments.
3. Apart from the illumination of God, man's thinking in matters spiritual and ethical is darkened. Man has limited capacity to fathom the matters of God apart from the working of the Holy Spirit.

With those presuppositions in place, let us first set out our view of biblical ethics:

There are moral absolutes that find their source and meaning in the essence of our moral God. While these absolutes are real and exist, in the practical daily life in the fallen world, these absolutes can take different forms in different situations and cultures, and the absolutes are not always purely expressible in every circumstance. (I.e., sometimes we must try to find the best in a bad situation.)

⁴ Readers who want to read about this in more depth are encouraged to read our lessons in church history where we probed the Apostolic Fathers as they attempted to understand and explain how God was immutable. (See especially the lessons on Constantine Part 2, Athanasius, The Cappadocian Fathers, and Ambrose.) Similarly, lesson from earlier in our Paul series on the nature of Christ probed this issue confronting passages like Phil. 2:5-11 where Paul wrote of Christ emptying himself.

As we progress through this lesson, we will first try to explain our view directly. We will then distinguish the view from other ethical approaches and systems of thought. In closing, we will then put some “take home” insight into this lesson.

Explanation

“Who will show us some *good*?” The Psalmist poses this question and then in response gives the request, “Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!” (Ps. 4:6). When we want to see “good” our vision must turn to God. For God is the source; he is the essence; he is the meaning of “good.”⁵

Christ pointed to this when the rich young man came to Christ asking his ethical question, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus responded, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good” (Mt. 19:16-17). As Mark and Luke explained the story, Jesus was telling the man, “No one is good except God alone” (Mk 10:18; Lk 18:19).

John Paul II said it well; “Only God can answer the question about what is good, because he is the Good itself.”⁶ We should note that John Paul capitalizes the second word “Good” because he is personalizing the concept to the person of God.

Plato (427-346 BC) wrote of a dialogue between Socrates and a man at court named Euthyphro. The dialogue centers on the question of what is holy. Euthyphro tried multiple times (unsuccessfully we should add) to define “holy” or right behavior to Socrates. Each effort proved futile as Socrates challenged the logic of Euthyphro.⁷ At one point, Socrates asked whether “holy” is what the gods are or whether the gods are holy because holiness is virtuous. In other words, does “holiness” or “good” exist as its own form, and the gods (or in our discussion,

⁵ This is the thrust of John Paul II’s encyclical, *Veritatis splendor*. As John Paul pointed out when trying to decide what is “good” we should look first to Christ for:

The light of God’s face shines in all its beauty on the countenance of Jesus Christ, “the image of the invisible God (*Col* 1:15), the “reflection of God’s glory” (*Heb* 1:3), “full of grace and truth (*Jn* 1:14). Christ is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (*Jn* 14:6). Consequently the decisive answer to every one of man’s questions, his religious and moral questions in particular, is given by Jesus Christ, or rather is Jesus Christ himself.”

⁶ *Veritatis splendor* at 9.

⁷ We agree with those scholars who see this dialogue more about *how to think* than truly trying to define the form or idea of what “holy” is. (See, e.g., the introduction to *Euthyphro* in the Loeb Classical Library edition; Vol. 36 at 4-5.) As such, it is fascinating to see Socrates expose Euthyphro’s attempts to define holiness first by using anecdotal evidence, second by assuming cause and effect, then by confusing subset and categories, etc. The book is a short read and heartedly recommended!

God) embrace(s) it or do we define “good” by showing it as a trait or inherent characteristic of God.

The biblical answer is first and foremost, God is “good” in the sense that good is our term for his inherent morality. God did not opt to embrace a form of good. Scripture points us to God to understand “good”, not to some objective form outside of God. All good things come from the unchanging God (Jms 1:17) and “every thing created by God is good” (1 Tim. 4:4).⁸

God’s goodness, however, is not always so evident in this world. We can certainly see in the world elements of what we term “good” but they are diminished versions of the true pure “good” that is God. Similarly we see great beauty in the world, yet the beauty does not equal the beauty of God or even the Eden he made before the fall of man. After the fall, the beauty of the world is marred, just as the goodness of man.

We contend that the fall has an even deeper repercussion on the practice and idea of goodness and ethics. Prior to the fall, man had great freedom, limited only in assessing right and wrong. God gave mankind unlimited access to all things, save the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). Man was not to have the fruits of determining and defining good and evil. That fruit and work belonged only to God.

Yet man chose to cross the boundary and neither man nor the world have ever been the same! We now live in a world under a curse, which follows Satan rather than God (Eph. 2:1-3). This breakdown of the world has given us a less than pure place for the will of God and the goodness of God to find display. We pray for God’s will to come to earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10) because the earth is not what it was made to be!

In this world, then, we have limitations on pure expressions of God’s “good” both in the world itself as well as in the hearts, minds and lives of man. This means that we sometimes are forced to try and determine which course of action better reflects God’s pure goodness, in a world where his pure goodness is not always an option.

⁸ That said, there is a sense in which “good” can be seen as an objective category. We can consider in this sense the truth of mathematics, of 2 plus 2 equaling 4. The unchanging and consistent God exists in his/a reality. The universe manifests God’s aspects of this reality, albeit in a fallen form. (We are not here denying God’s transcendence, and saying God exists only in our reality). So if God puts 2 apples next to 2 more apples, there would be 4 apples. We can say that God is the logic and consistency that is summed up in this math, but the math has truth and consistency in itself. So for us, “good” has its source and definition in God, yet it can be contemplated and somewhat understood in the universe God created.

Consider for example the issue posed to a general in war. A general might have to choose between sending troops into battle, knowing it will cost a number of lives, or not sending the troops knowing that other lives will likely be lost as a result. The general has to make a decision between two options neither of which reflects God's perfect goodness. Preserving the sanctity of all life is not always the luxury of a general in war. So a measuring or weighing takes place.

We see that God's provision for humanity has found a similar variance because of the fall. In Matthew 19, we are told of some Pharisees coming to test Jesus. Their test involved teachings on divorce. The Pharisees asked if it was lawful to divorce for any cause. Jesus went back in time to creation, long before the Law was given to Moses. At creation, God's pure will, the pure morality of the situation was clear:

He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Mt. 19:5).

Jesus then admonishes, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mt. 19:6).

The Pharisees then pointed to the law of Moses asking, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" Jesus' explanation shows the way God's pure goodness was modified in the giving of the law as it tried to give governing guidelines to fallen people:

Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. (Mt. 19:8).

The effect of the fall on mankind's ability to live in God's pure goodness is not only flawed in the area of marriage. In its purest sense, it is flawed everywhere. This is the sense Paul gives as he quotes the Psalmist:

None is righteous, no not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. (Rom. 3:10-12; Ps14:1-3, 53:1-3).

We might think in terms of an everyday sense of cleanliness. As a trait, I like to wash my hands with soap and water before I eat. It is a habit, even a personal ethic of mine! Yet when I find myself working in the mountains of Guatemala among some impoverished people who do not have clean water or the facilities where I might wash up, I am forced to eat with less than purely clean hands. This does not mean my ethic or habit is changed. Nor have I changed my own essence. It means that in those circumstances, in that time and place, my personal ethic of

hygiene will take a different form than hand washing. Instead I might try to brush dirt off my hands. I might even use dirty water to get off some of the greater grime.

In similar fashion, we find that God's pure goodness is never fully found among fallen man. His expressions of that pureness might seem frightening and even appalling at times, and yet, most times we have God giving us directions in line with the washing in Guatemala. As we are unable to do the perfect, we do the best option for our current circumstances.

In this light we should consider the examples of morality in the Old and New Testament. We have examples that truly reflect God's purity (some would put the injunction to kill all that are impure in this category⁹). We also have examples of God giving the people "less than pure" rules, laws and instructions so that they could better grow and live in anticipation of the ultimate arrival of the Messiah. We would consider here the laws on divorce Jesus spoke of, as well as the laws on diet, etc.

As God's children, the challenge is never to see these rules simply as arbitrary laws dispensed by God in his magisterial role. Rather we try to understand how these rules reflect the nature of God and his will for us in this fallen world. So we see in the Old Testament, first and foremost ethics that are statements about God framed in the context of this fallen world and the civilizations in which God spoke:

[Old Testament] ethics is in the first place a statement about God – who He is, how He acts, what He values.¹⁰

Distinctions

We can better understand this teaching if we contrast our moral view with several others. As we do so, we remind all that these subjects are complicated and not easily reduced to a lesson of this size. So in an effort to reduce the material down, we always do some measure of disservice to the differing viewpoints. Interested readers are urged to seek out more data to better understand the various layers of thought and understanding.

⁹ This is the sense in which I have co-opted a certain answer to the question, "How are you doing?" Frequently, my response is, "Better than I deserve!" For certainly God's pureness demands my destruction just as much as it did the people in the days of Noah, or the Canaanites in Ai.

¹⁰ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Eerdmans 1982) Vol. 2 at 167.

Relativism

Moral relativism is typically understood as the belief that there are no real moral absolutes. Relativists believe that the morality or ethic of a people or society varies relative to any number of factors. Moral judgments, then, are usually seen as restricted to that particular culture and people. It is frequently asserted that the absence of any universal good is the reason that virtue and right versus wrong differ among people.¹¹

An important distinction needs to be made between relativism and the morality we set out in this paper. While both recognize certain fluctuations may occur in differing cultures and times, relativism does not recognize the objective absolute moral truth that we find in God. Having an absolute good in God, gives the ethical charge of trying to see that good brought forth. Although the manifestation might vary (as for example, Paul being a Jew to Jews but a Greek to Greeks) still the absolute is there.

In this sense we see the teachings of Jesus on the law. Jesus cited Old Testament commandments as the rules for living, but did so showing the need to go to the higher and purer “good” than the letter of the law. So the law was seen as, not simply a minimum standard, but rather the pathway toward greater moral and spiritual good. In this sense we read Jesus saying:

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.”
But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful
intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Mt.
5:27-28).

Jesus was not rewriting an inconsistent law; he was explaining the greater truth behind the law. Ethics involve motives, thoughts, and not simply actions.

It is this path of striving to find and live by God’s best, the universal objective good, that sets apart our Christian ethic from that of relativism.

Skepticism

Moral skepticism dates back to biblical times in the world of Greek thought, at least. This is the view that there is no moral knowledge. The idea behind this is that man can never really know or discover any moral truth, leaving the individual free to live as he chooses, without any real frame of reference to right or wrong. This manifests itself in a more pragmatic life than a moral life. The issues of ethics are really issues of “what works?” “How do I best get by today?” It may be

¹¹ See the good discussion in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* available online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-relativism/>.

“What makes me happy?” (“Hedonism”) or simply “How do I get what I want?” (Pragmatism).

For some this can make morals a statistical game. Morals can become whatever most people are doing. If most people accept something as right, in that situation, it can be right.

This position can also be one that sets man as machine. In B.F. Skinner fashion (*Beyond Freedom and Dignity*) this position can see man as ultimately just a result of genetics and environment with no real choices and, hence, no real ethic.

Our Christian ethic teaches differently. There is moral truth and, while man may not always *fully* understand it, man can truly understand it. Aquinas took the teachings of Augustine and systematized them as he sought to explain the “natural law” that God has put into every human.¹² Capturing Paul’s thought in Romans 1:20ff that God’s divine nature has been clearly perceivable in the created world, Aquinas went to great lengths to discuss good and evil, and how it should effect our living. We will see next week that Paul not only sets out the natural law, but also teaches the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and confirming God’s will and ethic.

Situation Ethics

If we return to the teachings of Joseph Fletcher from last week, we recall his belief that the end justifies the means. For Fletcher, people should act to achieve the results of agape love. Stealing, cheating, even killing, might ultimately be justified if the result is good (as defined by agape love).

This is a bit of a tricky contrast to make without going into greater detail to understand how Fletcher views the world. To some extent, this idea can be consistent with some of the things we have set out in this lesson, and yet the distinctions are really important and quite profound.

Fletcher assumes that man has the ability to discern the end result mandated by agape love; we do not so assume. For our Christian ethic set out in this lesson, we consider that God’s character, his moral good, *is the end and the result* we seek. It is not enough to acknowledge that we seek only God’s agape love for everyone. As limited humans we do not understand all of God’s mysteries and ways. We can, however, see the need to find God’s character and morality in the life of the church and the believer.

¹² See our lessons on Aquinas and Augustine in our church history series available for download in audio or written form at www.Biblical-Literacy.com.

Conscience

Your conscience -- that voice within you -- is it a reliable indicator of right and wrong? Do we have a reliable indicator that can rightly justify us or condemn us when we make a choice? Can the conscience be our Supreme Court that hands out the true and precise decision on morals and ethics?

The conscience must never be confused with the Spirit of God. The conscience plays a role in helping us understand right/wrong/and morality (Rom. 2:15). But it is not the infallible guide. Paul warned Timothy of this as he spoke of those departing from the faith “whose consciences are seared” (1 Tim. 4:2). In writing to Titus Paul referenced those who are “defiled and unbelieving” emphasizing that “both their minds and their consciences are defiled” (Tit. 1:15).

That the conscience is not the ultimate authority for good and evil makes sense on the micro/personal level. But it makes even more sense when we remove it from the person and consider it on a macro/societal level. On a societal level, should people live by their conscience, by what feels right and gives them inner peace, we would have much the same result as that of the relativist. There is no constant and consistent right and wrong. It will vary person to person, house to house, and town to town.

In this way [following one’s conscience as the moral guide] the inescapable claims of truth disappear, yielding their place to a criterion of sincerity, authenticity and “being at peace with oneself.” Once the idea of a universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason, is lost, inevitably the notion of conscience also changes. Conscience is no longer considered in its primordial reality as an act of a person’s intelligence, the function of which is to apply the universal knowledge of the good in a specific situation and thus to express a judgment about the right conduct to be chosen here and now. Instead there is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly.¹³

Join us in the next lesson for more as we probe ethics from the New Testament and test our unifying theory to see if it makes sense of what we have studied in the Old Testament, and if it gives us insight into the moral choices we face today.

¹³ *Veritatis splendor* at 32.

POINTS FOR HOME

Where does this leave us as we contemplate the next lesson? Hopefully we see and understand that there is an objective good that we see as the character and morality of God Almighty. This “good” serves as a form, as an instruction, as a motivation, and as a direction in the fallen world. The good in its purest form finds expression, however, only in God and most clearly in God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. We see perfection of good in not only the life of Jesus, but also in the death and resurrection work of the Triune God.

As we contemplate the application of God’s goodness and ethic in our lives, we need to exercise caution, for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick” (Jer. 17:9). As such, we must recognize our tendencies to rationalize and justify our desires over and against the truth of God and his character. Tough ethical decisions cry out for prayer, for godly counsel, and clear thinking of a renewed, Holy Spirit infused mind!

Next week our goal is to take the teachings and example of Paul and plug into this model for further understanding and personal help!

1. *“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”* (Lv. 19:2).

“Goodness,” “Holiness,” “right” as opposed to “wrong” – these terms draw their meaning from the character and moral essence of God. God calls us to holiness as creatures made in his image, for he is the holy one. We worship him as worthy because only he is worthy of our devotion and praise. We should seek out his face that reflects “good” and let that goodness guide and direct our lives. The Old Testament benediction is a proper prayer on this, “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you” (Num. 6:24-25).

2. *“Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed...”* (Mt. 19:8).

It is an unfortunate reality that in this fallen world there are times where God’s perfect ethic will not find its full expression. There is a decision that we make, most times subtle, but a decision nonetheless. This decision is a moral valuation or ethical weighting that seeks to find the best expression of God’s absolute good in a fallen world. Consider this in the area of stewardship. If Christ were coming back tomorrow (or even next week!) would we not sell everything we have and use the money to try and reach every last possible soul for the kingdom? Yet though we are to live expecting his return, we still lay up in store for future needs (1 Cor. 16:2).

Let us be more specific. Consider the hypothetical of a corn farmer who has 1,000 ears of corn. The farmer must decide how much of the corn to save for future seed and how much to use to sell or feed the hungry. We know biblically that we are to feed those in need, to care for the poor. Yet there is the competing teaching that we should consider the future and live wisely with an eye toward food for tomorrow (“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways and be wise” Prov. 6:6ff). What do we do?

Consider again the Rahab story from Joshua 2 we discussed last week. Rahab lied about the location of the Hebrew spies in order to save their lives. To give them up would have betrayed them and resulted in their deaths. Rahab chose the lesser of two evils and was lifted up as a hero of faith in Hebrews 11. Similarly the midwives refused to follow Pharaoh’s mandate to kill the Hebrew male newborns. They further “sinned” by lying about it. Yet disobeying the authorities was clearly a better choice than killing innocent babies (Ex. 1).

We make determinations daily about how much of our resource to use for one thing versus another. These are ethical decisions where we are weighing the absolutes of God’s character and prayerfully, with the aid of the Spirit, trying to make the best determination of how to live. Sometimes the decisions are not so subtle. Some have to choose between using resources to save one life or another. May God shine his face upon us so we make all decisions wisely.

3. *“Remembering you in my prayers...”* (Eph. 1:16ff).

Paul prayed for the Ephesians that God the Father would give them a “spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.” We should pray that very same prayer over those we know facing difficult moral situations. We should pray that God’s will might be done on earth as it is in heaven. Choose a person right now that you know is in need of this prayer (it may be yourself!). Pause now. Pray for that person.