

A Primer on Ethics

# Ethics, pt. 1

# Beginning Work

1. Read Section 1; page 225-227.
2. Read Micah 6:6-8. Write one paragraph on how these verses give a Christian a road map for ethics in their life.

## Micah 6:8

*Mankind, He has told you what is good  
and what it is the Lord requires of you:  
to act justly,  
to love faithfulness,  
and to walk humbly with your God.*

# Ethics

1. The study of right and wrong
2. It proposes a way to think through what life is about
3. Because God is everywhere, an ethical system based on His character will reside in everyone, across all cultures, across all time.

# Ethics

4. Christians see common ethical systems among vastly different cultures as evidence of universal law and a universal law giver.
5. Ethics seeks to answer the question, "How should we live?"







Jean Valjean's life is saved

He later saves a life by his confession.

# Morality and Ethics

5. Morality: A personal system of determining right and wrong based on some standard
6. Ethics is the philosophical study of morality.
7. Morality is the container of right and wrong, ethics is the study of how the container is discovered and used.



2 Categories of Ethics

Ethics, pt. 2

# Beginning Work

1. Read Section 2; page 227-230.
2. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. Write one paragraph on how these verses give an ethical course for living.



There are two main theories of ethics:

Teleological and  
Deontological

## 2 Categories of Ethics

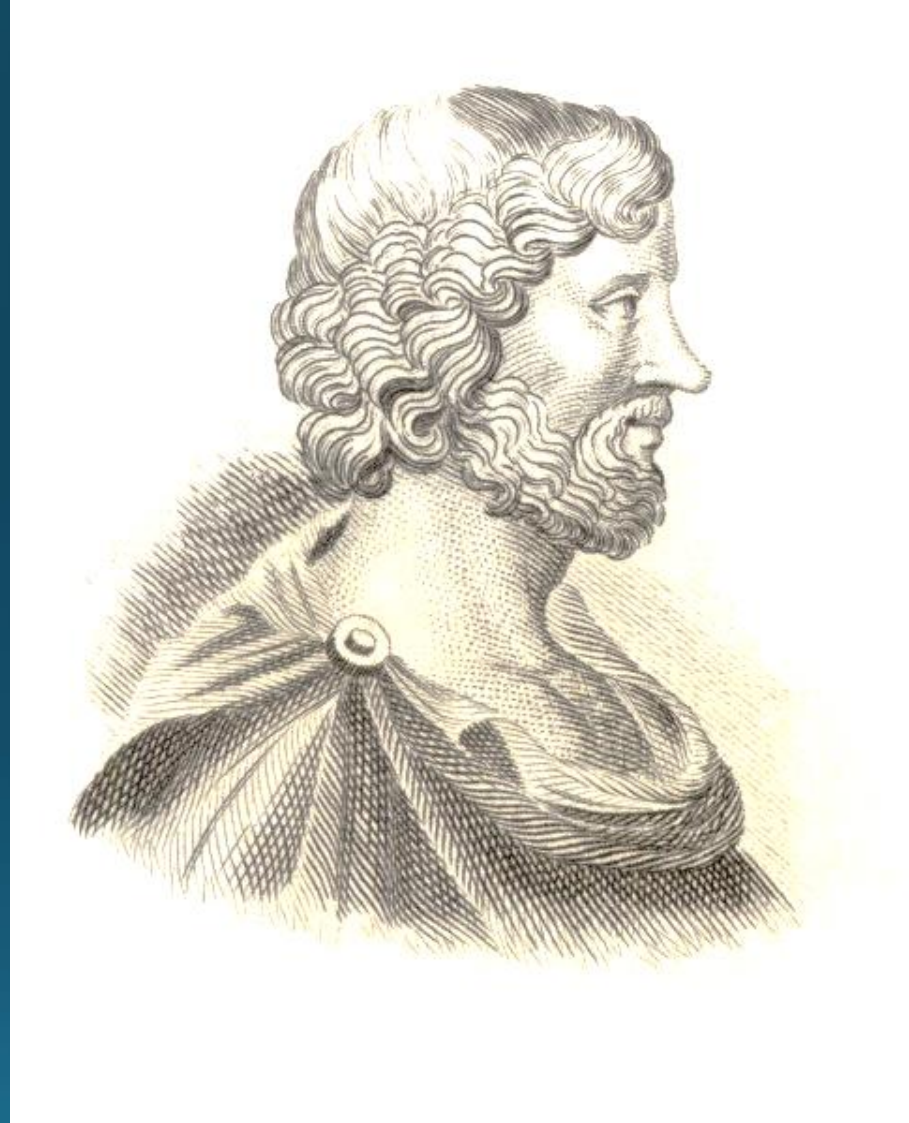
### 1. Teleological theories: (What is the good life?)

Teleological theories judge actions as right or wrong by their end results.

- Example: abortion will lead to a better life in the future
- Example: Divorce will help spouses end a difficult marriage

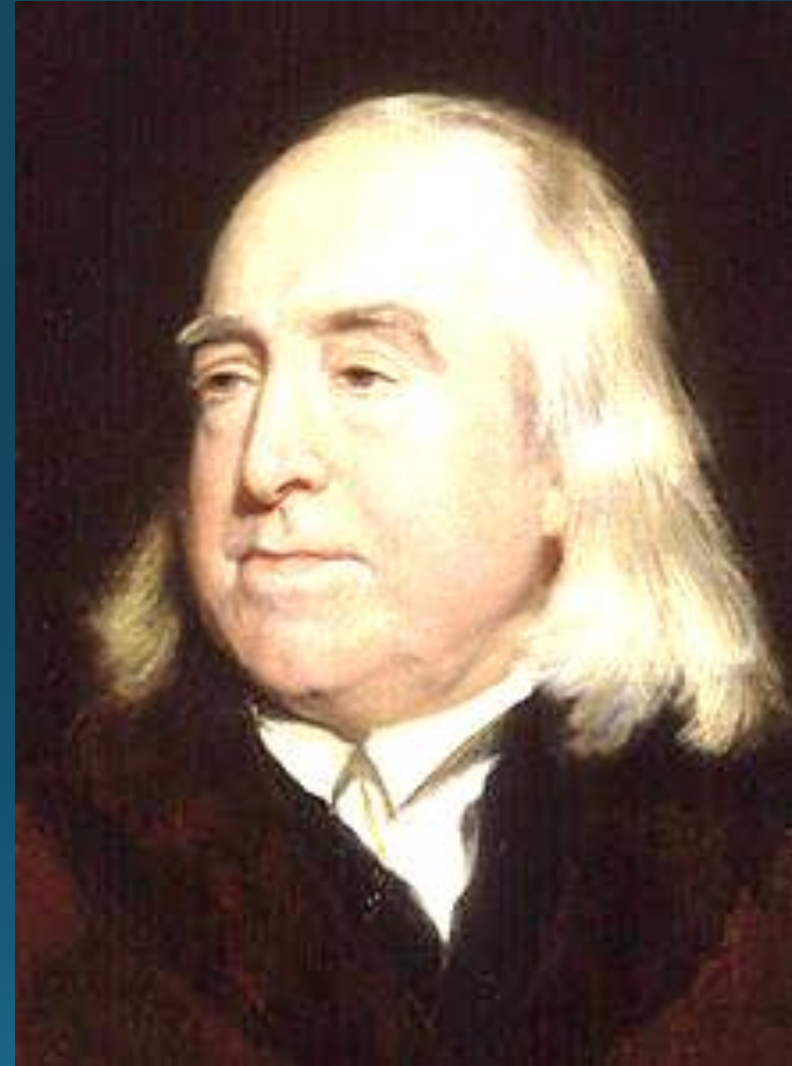
# Aristippus: Hedonism

Human being  
should  
maximize their  
own personal  
pleasure

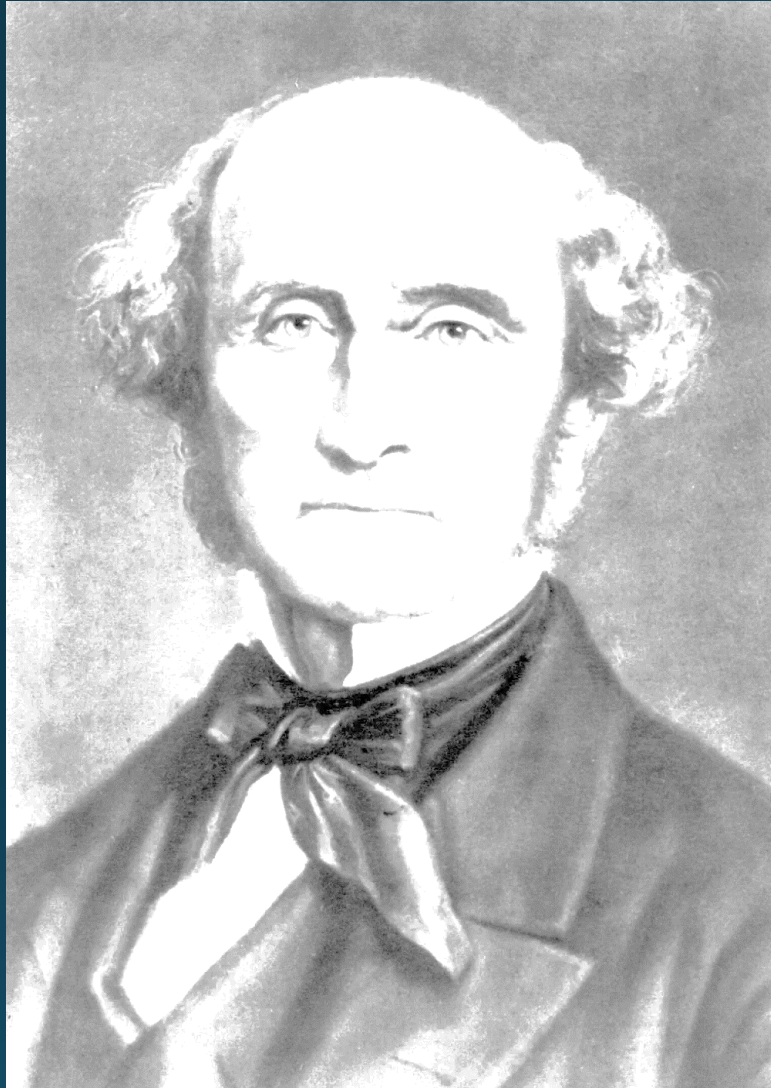


# Jeremy Bentham: Utilitarianism

What is ethical  
is to pursue the  
greatest good  
for the greatest  
number of  
people







## John Stuart Mill: Ethical Libertarianism

People live  
best when  
they have  
liberty but  
agree not to  
harm others



# John Dewey: Pragmatism

Since truth is  
whatever works,  
morality is  
whatever is  
useful to society





# Jean-Paul Sartre: Existentialism

Since we create  
our own meaning,  
we ought to do  
whatever helps us  
become our most  
authentic selves.

“The ends justify the means.”

## 2 Categories of Ethics

2. Deontological theories: (What ought we to do?) We ought to do what is right because it is the right thing to do. It rests on the belief that there is absolute truth.

- Example: Jean Valjean confessing to his guilt
- Example: Returning money you found

# Immanuel Kant: Transcendental Idealism

Our duty as  
humans is to  
figure out what is  
good without  
qualification and  
then pursue it.





# Rene Descartes: Rationalism

God has made us  
as thinking  
beings, so we  
must use our  
reasoning ability  
to live virtuously



“The means are more  
important than the ends.”



Secularist Ethics  
Ethics, pt. 3

# Beginning Work

1. Reread the charts on page 228-229 detailing teleological and deontological theories.
2. Complete the worksheet in your packet.
3. Read each case study on the sheet and list which philosophy is used in each case study.

# Beginning Work

1. Read section 3 in Chapter 10 (pg. 230-234)
2. Write the quote from Max Hocutt on page 230.
3. Write one paragraph on the following: What is the logical result of man making the rules? What is the logical result of God making the rules?

# Secularism

1. The fundamental question of ethics is, "Who makes the rules? God or man?"
2. The theistic answer is that God makes the rules.
3. The secular answer is that men make the rules.

# Secularism

4. Secular ethics will either be moral relativism or utilitarianism.
5. Moral relativism is the belief that morality is defined by the individual or culture.
6. Utilitarianism is the belief that is that what is ethical is the pursuit of the greatest good for the greatest number of people.



"Greed is good"  
Why would this be an example of hedonism?

# Situation Ethics

1. The belief that the morality of an action is determined by the unique situation of that action.
2. Example: Lifeboat ethics



ALFRED  
HITCHCOCK'S PRODUCTION OF

# Lifeboat

JOHN  
STEINBECK

TALLULAH  
BANKHEAD

STARRING  
BENDIX SLEZAK ANDERSON HODIAK HULL ANGEL CRONYN LEE

# Scientism

1. Science is the primary guide for forming a workable ethical outlook.
2. This leads to a view that scientific people are more intelligent and therefore more moral. We can trust them to do what is right.
3. Scientism has not always led to moral behavior

Marxism

# Ethics, pt. 4

# Beginning Work

1. Read section 10.4 (pages 234-236). Write the quote by Karl Marx at the top of page 235. Then read James 1:17 on the following slide.
2. Write one paragraph on how this verse refutes Marxism and the quote by Karl Marx.

# Beginning Work

James 1:17 CEV

*Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created all the lights in the heavens. He is always the same and never makes dark shadows by changing.*

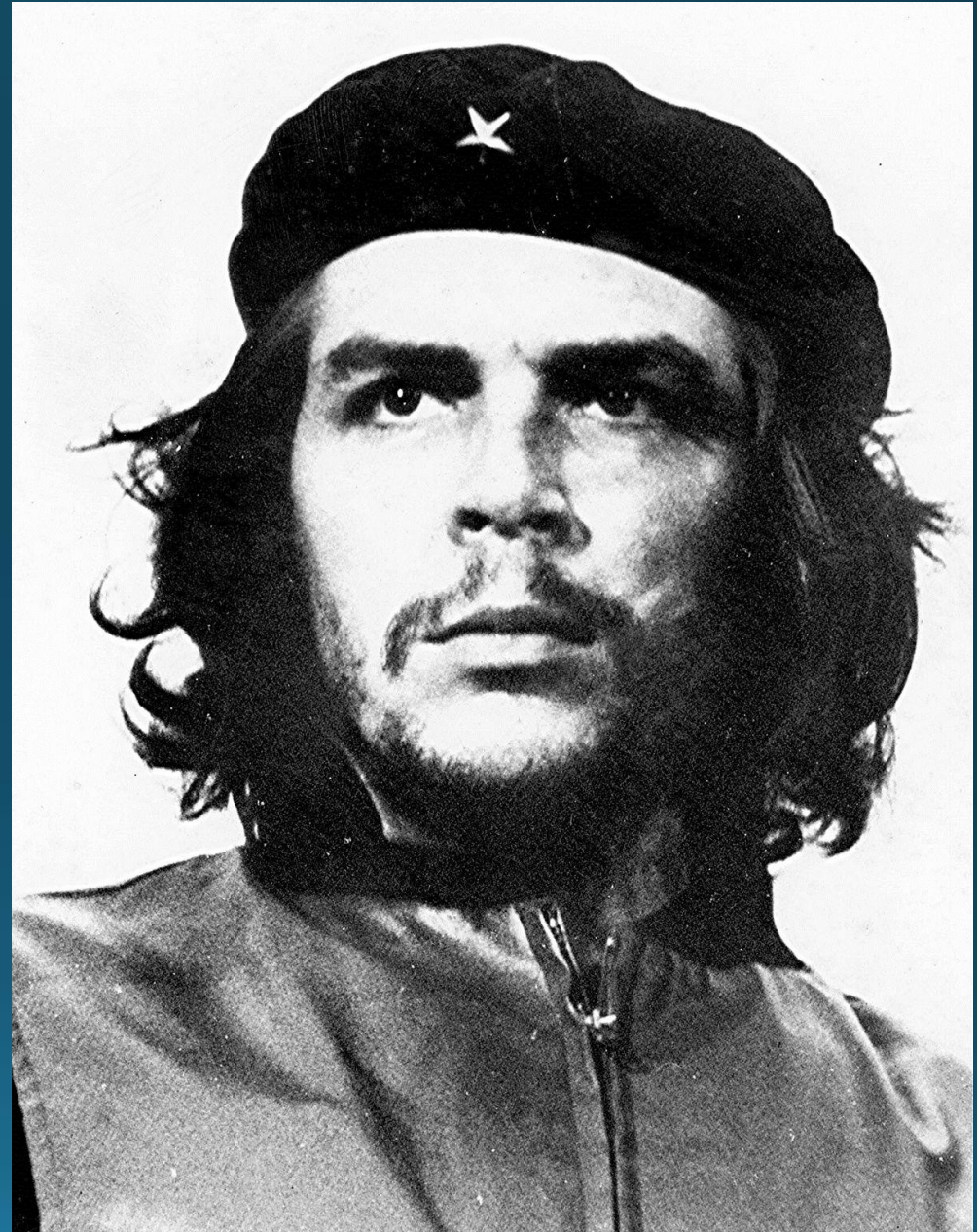
# Marxism and Ethics

1. Everything capitalist is immoral. Therefore, everything done to oppose it is moral
2. The Marxism ethic is teleological. The ends justify the means.
3. Hatred is good as long as it is directed toward the property owners.
4. The only morality that Communists recognize is that which furthers their interests.



# Che Guevara

Fidel Castro's  
right hand  
man in Cuba's  
Marxist  
revolution.





# The reality of Che Guevara

*The cult of Ernesto "Che" Guevara is an episode in the moral callousness of our time. Che was a totalitarian; he achieved nothing but disaster. Che presided over the first firing squad in Cuba. He founded Cuba's labor camp system.*

*- Paul Berman*

# Incarnation

*The biblical view is incarnation: enter into the brokenness of the oppressed. Care personally, walk alongside, bring change through the power of redemption.*

New Spirituality

# Ethics, pt. 5

# Beginning Work

1. Read section 10.5 (pages 236-239) Write the quote by the Dalai Lama at the bottom of page 237.
2. Write one paragraph on how this quote is similar to Christianity and how it is different from Christianity.

# New Spirituality and Ethics

1. In NS, only one ethical absolute is possible.
2. You attain higher consciousness by having complete freedom to act in harmony with our own understanding of the truth.
3. To New Spiritualists, ethics is something that happens inside a person, not the result of divine commands.

# New Spirituality and Christianity

- **New Spirituality**

- Refrain from the 10 non-virtuous actions
- We will continue a cycle of reincarnation to save ourselves
- You are the truth and it is inseparable from who you are.

- **Christianity**

- Follow God's commands
- Christ will save us and give us new life and eternity with God
- Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus." (John 14:6)

# New Spirituality and Karma

1. Karma: the belief that good is returned to those who do good, and evil is returned to those who do evil.
2. Yet, when there is no standard of right and wrong (only what you believe internally) who is to say what is good and evil?



Dalai Lama  
Spiritual leader of  
Buddhism



# New Spirituality and Ethics

1. New Spirituality says that you are the truth and it is inseparable from who you are.
2. Christianity tells us that Jesus is the “way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus.” (John 14:6)

Postmodernism and Islam

# Ethics, pt. 6

# Beginning Work

1. Read section 10.6 (pages 239-241)
2. Write Philippians 4:8 on your paper and the quote by Adam Phillips on the top of pg. 241.
3. Write one paragraph on how this verse and this quote cannot both be true.

# Traditional ways to ethics

- Secularism, Marxism

- Modern reason is the way to find ethics
- Teleological theories
- Find truth on your own ability and act on it

- Christianity, Islam

- Revelation is the key to ethics
- Deontological theories
- Discover truth from God's revelation and act on it

# Postmodernism

- You cannot rely on revelation and/ or modern reasoning
- “Universal moral principles must be eradicated; reverence for individual and cultural uniqueness must be inculcated.” -Adam Phillips

# Postmodernism

- Cultural relativism: truth and morals are relative to one's community
- The overall postmodern mind-set does not allow anyone to be "right" on any issue, including ethics



# Islam

- Divine command theory: the belief that right and wrong are determined by God's standards
- There is no division of law and ethics; the Islamic law is ethical by definition

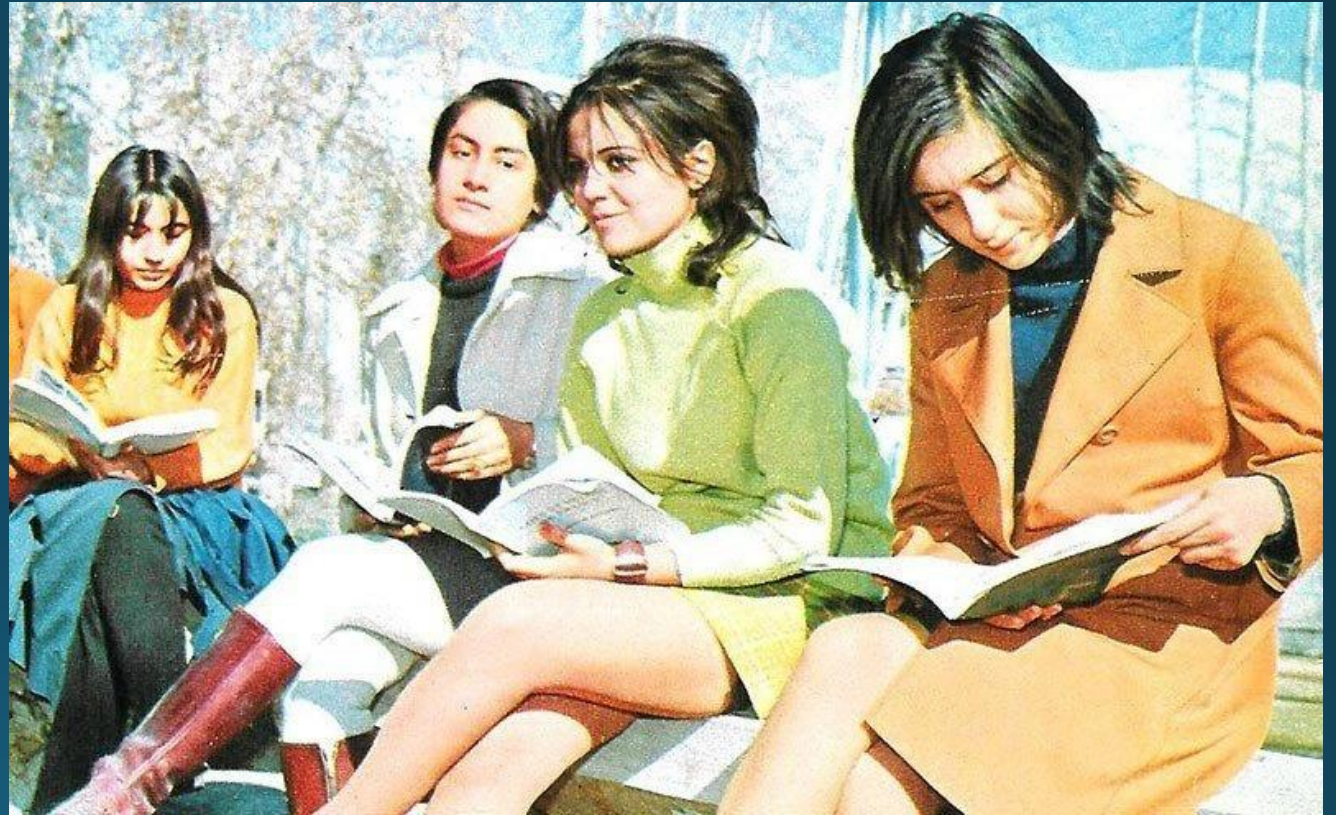
# Ethical Law?

God is not directly knowable

Muslims only know God through Muhammad

“What would Muhammad do?”

Example: laws for women



# Ethical Law?

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Example: laws for women



# Islam

- The only relevant question in Islam is, “What would Muhammad do?”
- God cannot be directly knowable. We can only know God through His decrees given by Muhammad.

Christianity

# Ethics, pt. 7

# Beginning Work

1. Write the quote from W.E.H Lucky on page 245.
2. Write one paragraph on how the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-11 back up this quote.

# Worldview and Ethics

- **Muslims**: morals are the products of God's decree
- **Marxists and Secularists**: morals come from economic or naturalistic philosophy
- **Postmodernists**: morals come from shared community values
- **New Spiritualists**: morals come from individually determined truth



# Christianity

- Morals proceed from God's nature or character
- God has made us in His image to be His stewards on earth
- The task of Christian ethics is to determine what conforms to God's character and what does not

# Luke 10:27

*He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."*

*"You answered correctly," Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live."*

# Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5-7

The apex of Christ's ethical teaching; Jesus is the role model for virtuous living



# Sermon on the Mount

- You have heard that it was said....
- But I say to you.....
- Jesus brought a fuller picture of how we should live to our understanding of ethics

# But I say to you....

- 5:21-22
- 5:27-28
- 5:33-34
- 5:43-44