



BUGEMA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELT 3106: CHRISTIAN ETHICS

A self-instructional undergraduate course module

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Code: RELT 3106

Course Title: CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Credit Unit: 3 (45 Hrs)

Semester: One

Course Duration: 8 weeks (One hour each day for five days a week, 2 hours for presentation of portfolio, and 3 hours for final examination= 45 Hrs)

PREFACE

Welcome to Christian Ethics. This is a foundational discipline that explores the moral principles and values that arise from the character of God, the teachings of Scripture, and the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It seeks to equip believers to discern right from wrong and make decisions that reflect God's will in both personal and public life. In a world marked by rapid social, technological, economic, and cultural changes, Christians are continually confronted with complex ethical questions that require more than human wisdom. This course therefore provides a biblical and theological framework for ethical reasoning, enabling learners to evaluate contemporary moral issues in light of divine revelation and to demonstrate integrity, justice, compassion, and faithful stewardship.

This module is designed to develop students' competence in applying biblical ethical principles to real-life situations encountered in the family, church, workplace, and society. It examines the foundations of Christian ethics, major ethical theories, and contemporary issues. Through critical reflection, case studies, class discussions, and practical application, students will be encouraged to cultivate Christ-like character and moral leadership that positively influences their communities.

COURSE DESCRIPTION, RATIONALE, AND COMPETENCIES

Course Description

This course is a study of the Bible and the philosophical basis for Christian ethics and its relevance for moral and social decision-making. The course is intended to provide students with a discussion that takes into account major ethical alternatives such as antinomianism, situationism, generalism, unqualified absolutism, conflicting absolutism, and graded absolutism. Ethical issues such as Abortion, Euthanasia, Suicide, biomedicine, and homosexuality are discussed. Ultimately, the course aims to prepare servant leaders who embody biblical values and faithfully represent Christ in an increasingly pluralistic and ethically challenging world.

Course Rationale

Pastors serve in an increasingly complex world where rapid technological advancement, globalization, cultural diversity, political polarization, and scientific developments continually raise new ethical questions. Effective ministry therefore requires not only biblical knowledge but also the ability to interpret Scripture responsibly, exercise sound moral judgment, and apply Christian principles to contemporary issues with wisdom, integrity, and compassion. This course addresses that need by grounding students in biblical and theological ethics while fostering critical engagement with current moral challenges.

The course further seeks to cultivate ethical pastors whose decisions reflect the character of Christ and promote justice, human dignity, stewardship, accountability, and servant leadership. By integrating theological reflection with practical application, students are equipped to provide biblically informed guidance in churches, educational institutions, communities, and other professional settings. The course contributes to the holistic formation of Christian

ministers by strengthening moral character, ethical reasoning, and commitment to faithful Christian witness in a pluralistic society.

Course Competence

This program aims to provide students with;

1. Skills to apply biblical and theological principles in analyzing ethical issues and making moral decisions.
2. Ability to integrate Christian ethical values into personal character, ministry, and professional practice.
3. Skill to evaluate contemporary ethical challenges using biblical, theological, and logical reasoning.
4. Ability to demonstrate ethical leadership that reflects integrity, justice, compassion, and servant leadership.
5. Capacity to communicate and defend ethical positions from a biblical worldview with clarity and respect.
6. Ability to promote responsible Christian citizenship by addressing ethical issues within diverse cultural and social contexts.

Course Objectives

The course aim is to provide students with;0741108588

1. Understanding of biblical and theological foundations of Christian ethics.
2. Discussion of the relationship between theology, morality, and ethical decision-making.
3. Knowledge of major Christian ethical theories and approaches.
4. Understanding of biblical principles for addressing contemporary ethical issues.
5. Understanding and application of Christ-like character and moral integrity in personal and professional life.
6. Ethical reasoning through the analysis of practical case studies.
7. Biblically informed ethical guidance in church and society.
8. Understanding of servant leadership that promotes justice, stewardship, human dignity, and social responsibility.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, the learner should be able to;

1. Examine the biblical and theological foundations of Christian ethics.
2. Explain the relationship between theology, morality, and ethical decision-making.
3. Analyze major Christian ethical theories and approaches.
4. Develop biblical principles for addressing contemporary ethical issues.
5. Cultivate Christ-like character and moral integrity in personal and professional life.
6. Strengthen ethical reasoning through the analysis of practical case studies.
7. Equip students to provide biblically informed ethical guidance in church and society.
8. Foster servant leadership that promotes justice, stewardship, human dignity, and social responsibility.

HOW TO USE THIS MODULE

In self-distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the

lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your books or other material, and when to embark on assignments. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points. Each of the study units follows a common format.

The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the unit, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course and getting the best grade. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a readings section.

The purpose of the practicum (**see module 4**) is twofold. First, it will enhance your understanding of the key principles of Christian Ethics; second, it will give you practical experience and skills to address ethical issues in the church and society. Critical thinking skills you will develop during your studies are applicable in pastoral ministry, so you must encounter them during your studies.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, consult your lecturer. Remember that your lecturer's job is to help you understand the procedures and content. If you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your lecturer.

1. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'Course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g., details of your lecturer and the date of the first day of the semester. You need to gather together all this information in one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for the working breach unit.
2. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their coursework. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your lecturer know before it is too late for help.
3. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
4. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit. You will also need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
5. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit, you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
6. Work before the relevant due date (about 4 weeks before the due dates), and get the Assignment File for the next required assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the exam. Submit all assignments no later than the due date.
7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your lecturer.
8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
9. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning

of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide), and arrange your portfolio beginning with the deliverable of the first module to the last.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is designed to test knowledge, ministry judgement, practical skill, ethical responsibility, and reflective integration. All assignments completed during the semester are compiled in a continuous assessment portfolio worth 50% of the course grade. The end-of-semester examination or capstone assignment is worth the remaining 50%.

To complete this course, engage diligently with the study units, reference materials, and community engagement practicum (identify an ethical issue within a community and help the community to make ethical decisions based on Scripture and sound moral principles, and write a report). Each unit contains deliverables designed to test your understanding. Each deliverable assignment from **each module** and the community engagement practicum must be compiled into a portfolio file for formative assessment. The final examination will be done face-to-face on the main Campus. This 8-week course demands dedication and active involvement to harness the knowledge and skills presented fully.

Learning Schedule

The Learning schedule provided outlines the completion of assignments and the practical project. Adhering to this schedule is crucial to ensure that you participate in the learning, do the assignments, and attend to the practicum. Proactive planning and consistent effort will prevent any lag in your progress.

Assessment

The assessment comprises assignments, practical evaluation, and final examination. The assessments require a student to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course. Your engagement and submissions must align with deadlines stated in the Presentation Schedule. The practical assignment plays a pivotal role in your final assessment, emphasizing the importance of your contribution to community development.

Deliverables Assignments and Final Examination

There are 3 Deliverables Assignments (DA) and one practicum report in this course. You will submit all the assignments. You are encouraged to work on all the questions thoroughly. The DA constitute 30% of the final score, and one practicum report constitutes 20% of the final score of the course. You will be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your set books, reading and study units. However, you should demonstrate that you have read and researched more widely than the required minimum.

You should use other references to have a broad viewpoint of the subject and also to give you a deeper understanding of the subject. When you have completed each assignment, write a cover page showing the unit addressed and the date completed, then file it in the portfolio. If, for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, write a note explaining why it was not done on time and how you compensated for the time. The portfolio will be presented face to face at the main Campus (Bugema University) one week before the final examination. Examination will be granted only after the portfolio is successfully presented.

Assessment Plan

Component	Description	Weight
Continuous Assessment Portfolio	Three Module deliverables, Community Engagement Practicum	50%

Component	Description	Weight
End-of-Semester Examination / Capstone Assignment	Integrated application of Christian ethics	50%
Total		100%

University Grading System

Score Range	Letter Grade	Performance Description	Quality Points
80-100%	A	Excellent	5.00
75% – 79.99%	B+	Very Good	4.50
70% – 74.99%	B	Good	4.00
65% – 69.99%	C+	Above Average	3.50
60% - 64.99%	C		3.00
55% – 59.99%	D+	Average	2.50
50% - 54.99%	D	Below Average	2.00
0% - 49.99%	F	Failure	1.00

Study Units

There are three (3) modules of thirteen (13) units and one (1) Practicum. The modules should be studied carefully and diligently to acquire a complete understanding of the content of the course.

MODULE ONE: INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS

- UNIT 1 Definition of Christian Ethics
- UNIT 2 Biblical Foundation of Christian Ethics
- UNIT 3 Relationship Between Theology and Ethics

MODULE TWO: MAJOR ETHICAL SYSTEMS

- UNIT 4 Antinomianism
- UNIT 5 Situationism

UNIT 6	Generalism
UNIT 7	Unqualified Absolutism
UNIT 8	Conflicting Absolutism
UNIT 9	Graded Absolutism

MODULE THREE: ETHICAL ISSUES

UNIT 10	Abortion
UNIT 11	Euthanasia
UNIT 12	Homosexuality
UNIT 13	Reproductive Technologies

MODULE FOUR: ETHICAL ISSUE PRACTICUM

References

- Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Davis, John Jefferson, *Evangelical Ethics: Issues Facing the Church Today*, Third Edition, Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004.
- Messer, Neil, *SCM Study Guide to Christian Ethics*. Chippenham, Great Britain, SCM Press, 2006.
- Mcquilkin, Robertson, *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1989.

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Unit 1: Definition of Christian Ethics

Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 1.3 Main Content
 - 1.3.1 What is Ethics?
 - 1.3.2. Ethics and Morality

- 1.3.2 Personal and Social Ethics
- 1.3.3 The Meaning of Christian Ethics
- 1.4 Learning Activities
- 1.5 Reference

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. <i>African Christian Ethics</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Pages 1-5 (Introduction to The Study of African Christian Ethics)
Key terms	Ethics, Morality, Personal Ethics, Social Ethics
Biblical anchor	Lev. 11:45; Matt. 5:48, 22:39; Heb. 6:18; and 1 John 4:16



1.0 Introduction

Welcome to Module One. The first unit in this module is the Definition of Christian Ethics. In this unit, we'll dive into the meaning of ethics and other related concepts such as morality, values, and rules. It will also explain what Christian ethics is. This unit builds a foundation for other complex units that follow. It intends to provide a relevant definition of Christian Ethics that resonates with the course, providing a solid foundation to understand ethical principles and practices.



1.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define the general concept of ethics.
2. Relate morality and ethics.
3. Distinguish between values and rules
4. Explain the essence of Christian Ethics



1.3 Main Content

1.3.1. What is Ethics?

Generally, ethics means standards of right and wrong that set what humans ought to do. From a general view, every society has its standard of living, which defines what is out to be done and what should be avoided. From an academic viewpoint, each career has its ethical standards that define its professionalism. For example, nurses ought to wear white dresses. Therefore, it is ethical for nurses to wear white dresses.

1.3.2. Ethics and Morality

The terms “ethics” and “morality” are so closely related that the Encarta Dictionary can define ethics as a “system of moral principles governing the appropriate conduct of an individual or group.” Some people use the terms as if ethics relates to the theoretical study of right and wrong, good and bad, while morality relates to actual behaviour.

The original meanings of the two words “Morality and Ethics” are closely related. Moral or Morality is originally from Latin “mos” meaning custom or usage, while ethics comes from the Greek word, ethos, whose meaning is roughly the same. Thus, the words are used interchangeably, referring to individual conduct. When a distinction is made, “morals” nowadays refers to actual human conduct viewed in terms of right and wrong, good and evil; “ethics” refers to a theoretical overview of morality, a theory or system or code. In this sense, our morality is the concrete human reality that we live out from day to day, while ethics is an academic view gained by taking a step back and analyzing or theorizing about (any) morality.

1.3.3 Personal and Social Ethics

Personal ethics and social ethics are differentiated by personal and societal levels. Personal ethics deals with individuals’ obligations or duties, or in other words, with what is required of them. In the Western world, personal ethics is based on individual preference. These include an individual’s desires, satisfactions, decisions and accomplishments. These individualistic preferences normally take precedence over those of the community. Social ethics, on the other hand, deals with community morality and emphasizes communal values and interpersonal

relationships at the expense of the individual's desires and decisions. In Africa, the focus falls on social ethics rather than personal ethics, for African peoples emphasize the community rather than the individual. Individuals are not neglected, but they are expected to fulfil their roles in a way that fits with the ethos of their society. Within societal ethics, communal morality regulates and controls their conduct. For example, a man may marry not because he wants to, but because his parents want to have grandchildren.

1.3.4 The Meaning of Christian Ethics

In general, ethics concerns human morality. Since humans were created as moral beings, they possess moral obligations in making choices. Christian ethics is a form of the divine-command position. An ethical duty is something we ought to do. It is a divine prescription. In matters of ethical imperatives, humanity ought to abide by God's directives, which are in accord with his unchangeable moral character. That is, God wills what is right in accordance with his own moral attributes. "Be holy, because I am holy," the Lord commanded Israel (Lev. 11:45). "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect: Jesus said to his disciples (Matt. 5:48). "God can't lie" (Heb. 6:18). So, we should not lie either. "God is love" (1 John 4:16), and so Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39). In brief, Christian ethics is based on God's will.



1.4 Learning Activities

Read: Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. African Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Pages 1-5 (Introduction to The Study of African Christian Ethics)



1.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. African Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 2: Biblical Foundation of Christian Ethics

Unit Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 2.3 Main Content
 - 2.3.1 What is the biblical foundation of Christian Ethics?
 - 2.3.2 The Old Testament Foundation
 - 2.3.3 The New Testament Foundation
- 2.4 Learning Activities
- 2.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. African Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Pages 45-64 (Foundation of Christian Ethics)
Key terms	Christian Ethics, Moral Being, Decision-Making, Image of God
Biblical anchor	Gen. 1:26, 29; 2:16, 20, 23-24; Gen. 3; Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 23:17; Pro. 14:12; Gal. 5:19-21; and 2 Tim. 3:16-17



2.1 Introduction

Welcome to Unit 2. The unit introduces students to the moral framework that emerges from Scripture as the basis for Christian conduct, decision-making, and character formation. Christian ethics is not merely a collection of rules and regulations, but a theological reflection on how believers are called to live in relationship with God, fellow human beings, and the created world. This unit examines the ethical teachings found throughout the Old and New Testaments, emphasizing that biblical ethics is grounded in the nature and character of God as revealed in Scripture. Students will explore foundational themes such as covenant, justice, holiness, love, righteousness, stewardship, and obedience, while recognizing the centrality of Christ's life and teachings in shaping Christian moral values.



2.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Analyze the biblical and theological foundations of Christian ethics as presented in both the Old and New Testaments.
2. Apply biblical ethical principles to contemporary moral and social issues.
3. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate Christian moral decisions in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Decalogue, and apostolic instruction.



2.3 Main Content

2.3.1 What is the biblical foundation of Christian Ethics?

Every day, people are faced with decisions that test their values, beliefs, and character. Questions about honesty, justice, forgiveness, loyalty, and responsibility arise in homes, schools, churches, workplaces, and society at large. Christians believe that moral decisions should not be guided merely by culture, emotions, or personal opinion, but by the teachings and principles found in the Word of God. This unit invites students to explore how the Bible provides a foundation for ethical living by revealing God's character, His commandments, and His expectations for humanity. Through studying biblical teachings and practical moral issues, students will discover how Christian ethics shapes responsible behavior and faithful discipleship in today's world.

2.3.2 The Old Testament Foundation

Scripture explicitly affirms that humans are moral beings who were created in the image of God. Cairus Aecio elaborates that the original state of man includes God's image in man, sexuality in its original state, and original unity of humanity. He also states that the image of God in man can be well understood from the divine intention of the creation of man recorded in Genesis 1:26. This intention focuses on the roles as God's representative over lower creation. Along with the concept of the image of God, man was created in moral uprightness, which describes innocence. This concept, according to Cairus, needed development, for man required instructions that would develop his moral maturity. Moral development required human to

make good choices as revealed by the test of the tree of knowledge (Gen 2:16). Other ethical standards given by God at creation are care for the environment; to have dominion over all created animals, birds, and fish (Gen 1:26), diet; what human ought to eat (Gen 1:29; 2:20), marriage; monogamous marriage, and heterosexual relationship (Gen 2:23-24).

After the fall (Gen 3), humanity injected into the human race a virulent poison through disobedience. All life dilemmas, injustice, and immorality were the results of human-determined independence from God. God aimed to save humanity from result of sin by initiating a covenant relationship. The covenant required human obedience and submission to all God's directives. Norman Gulley informs that the change of humans enforced the covenant renewal from time to time with individuals or with the nation. The covenant, which typically describes God's serving relationship, is ethical by itself. It gives directions and standards of life for those who enter into this relationship, which is the plan for the restoration of humanity to the original plan. Gulley rightly said God inaugurated the covenant and invited humans to trust Him, depend on him, and enjoy freedom and life to the full. In this setting, God requires human willingness to do his will and to allow Him to be their God. Therefore, humans' morality is based on doing God's will. The Decalogue is categorical on moral requirements that humans ought to observe.

In connection to this, the Prophets also directed their message towards ethical concerns. These include injustice and exploitation of the weak, idolatry, adultery, and witchcraft. Some of the verses that reveal ethical concern are as follows;

1. "You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:35-36)
2. "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, and none of the sons of Israel shall be a cult prostitute" (Deuteronomy 23:17)
3. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Proverbs 14:12).
4. "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).
5. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6)
6. "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them when I saw it" (Ezekiel 16:49-50).

The verses speak of good behavior of which human ought to possess; these include love of the poor, justice, faithfulness in business transactions, and moral uprightness from observing the Decalogue. They also condemn injustice, greed, prostitution, self-knowledge, and homicide.

2.3.3 The New Testament Foundation

Being a New Testament revealed, ethical concern is more explicit. Jesus expounded moral standards in His Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes speak of a moral standard for humans (Matt 2:1-12). In the beatitudes, Jesus promoted humility, obedience, peace, faithfulness, and righteousness. He also expounded the Decalogue more practically. For instance, he explained that hating a brother is equated with being madder (Matt 5:22)

Other verses that speak about ethical concerns include;

1. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
2. "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12)

3. “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8)

These verses encourage moral decisions for humanity. It is categorical that humans ought to think morally as they make decisions. Whatever is good, honorable, just, and pure are the standards to be reached by all. Scripture summarizes morality in the golden rule, which asserts that whatever you wish that others would do to you, do the same to them (Matthew 7:12)

Apart from these standards, Scripture also condemns sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, and orgies. In other words, these actions are considered as immoral behaviors.



2.4 Learning Activities

Watch the video below on the biblical foundation of Christian Ethics

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeSFm_uHy5s



2.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. African Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 3: Relationship Between Theology and Ethics

Unit Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 3.3 Main Content
 - 3.3.1 Relationship Between Theology and Ethics
 - 3.3.2 What Does Theological Reflection Offer to Ethics and Ethical Issues?
- 3.4 Learning Activities
- 3.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. African Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Pages 45-64 (Foundation of Christian Ethics)
Key terms	Ethics, Theology, Scripture, Theology Proper
Biblical anchor	Isa.55:9; 2Tim 3:16-17



3.1 Introduction

Human beings often separate what they believe from how they live, yet Christianity teaches that faith and conduct are deeply connected. Theology helps Christians understand who God is, what He has revealed in Scripture, and what He expects from humanity, while ethics focuses on how those beliefs shape moral behavior and daily decisions. This unit introduces students to the close relationship between theology and ethics by exploring how Christian beliefs influence attitudes, values, and actions. Students will discover that ethical living is not independent from theology, but grows out of a proper understanding of God's character, Christ's teachings, and the mission of the Christian life. Through this study, learners will appreciate that right belief should lead to right conduct in both personal and community life.



3.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the relationship between theological beliefs and ethical behavior in the Christian life, showing how doctrine shapes moral decision-making.
2. Analyze how key theological themes such as the nature of God, creation, and redemption influence Christian ethical principles and practices.
3. Apply theological understanding to evaluate and respond to contemporary moral issues in personal, ecclesial, and social contexts.



3.3 Main Content

3.3.1 Relationship Between Theology and Ethics

Theology is the study of God, and Ethics has to do with behavior. Millard Erickson proposes steps in doing theology, of which one of them must be life-related, addressing truth to life experiences. This step asserts that theology ends in the lives of people, in how people respond to teachings found in Scripture. Alister McGrath rightly said, "Good doctrine makes good ethics, and such doctrine seeks to preserve Christian distinctiveness." This, though, expresses that theology produces moral deeds. Therefore, theology and Ethics have taken shape alongside each other, and when there is a good theology, one can expect a good ethic. The Bible tells that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Good morals result from the theological basics. Pauline theology reveals that morals are written in the human heart. Everyone is witnessed by one's conscience, and no one will be excused for immoral behavior. "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them. On this ground, theology and ethics go hand in hand, and when it is separated, ethics becomes human-centered. According to Karl Barth, human-centered ethics shifts the motive behind ethics from glorifying to human glorification.

3.3.2 What Does Theological Reflection Offer to Ethics and Ethical Issues?

God is the author of morals, and He created humans as free and moral beings. After creation, He gave the created being the divine law, which was to develop moral maturity. Thus, humans were created to be good and act in accordance with the original intent of creation. Therefore, the divine law is the ultimate way of doing good.

Theology proper informs that God is omniscient, which means His wisdom surpasses human understanding. Scripture tells, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways” (Isaiah 55:9). Thus, theology imparts to human ethics that makes God a subject. The Decalogue stands as the core value of human ethics. Thus, ethics and ethical issues should focus on the will of God, the author of morals.



3.4 Learning Activities

Self-Assessment Question. Critically discuss the relationship between theology and ethics, demonstrating how Christian doctrinal beliefs shape moral decision-making in contemporary personal and social contexts.



3.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. African Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

MODULE ONE DELIVERABLES

1. A report on the biblical foundation of Christian ethics from the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeSFm_uHy5s (File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables).
2. Critically discuss the relationship between theology and ethics, demonstrating how Christian doctrinal beliefs shape moral decision-making in contemporary personal and social contexts.

MODULE 2: MAJOR ETHICAL SYSTEMS

Unit 4: Antinomianism

Unit Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 4.3 Main Content
 - 4.3.1 Definition
 - 4.3.2 Models of Antinomianism
 - 4.3.3 Basic Beliefs of Antinomians and their implications
 - 4.3.4 The Implication of Antinomianism to Contemporary Christians
- 4.4 Learning Activities
- 4.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (Pages 22-34)
Key terms	Antinomianism, emotivism, nihilism
Biblical anchor	Isa.55:9; 2Tim 3:16-17



4.1 Introduction

In Christian theological discourse, the question of how believers relate to God's law has generated significant reflection and debate throughout church history. One of the most enduring tensions is found in the concept of antinomianism. This raises important questions about the nature of salvation, the role of obedience, and the relationship between faith and ethical responsibility. In this unit, students will be introduced to antinomianism as both a historical and theological issue, exploring how it emerged in different Christian contexts and why it continues to challenge interpretations of grace and moral conduct. The study invites learners to critically examine whether the antinomianism option is appropriate for Christians.



4.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define and explain the concept of antinomianism.
2. Analyse the theological arguments for and against antinomianism with reference to key biblical texts on law, grace, and obedience.
3. Evaluate the ethical implications of antinomianism for Christian living, particularly in relation to moral responsibility and discipleship.



4.3 Main Content

4.3.1 Definition

Antinomianism is built on three words;

1. "Anti," which means "Against."
2. A Greek word "Nomos," which means "Law."
3. "Ism," which means "Situation."

When these words are put together, they form the terminology "Antinomianism," which means "against/instead of law." It is a situation that holds that there are no binding moral laws, that everything is relative.

4.3.2 Models of Antinomianism

Though Antinomianism has a long history from the ancient world to the modern world, this presentation focuses on the contemporary model. The contemporary world contributes to a lawless morality. Two elements of antinomianism that stand out are **emotivism** and **nihilism**.

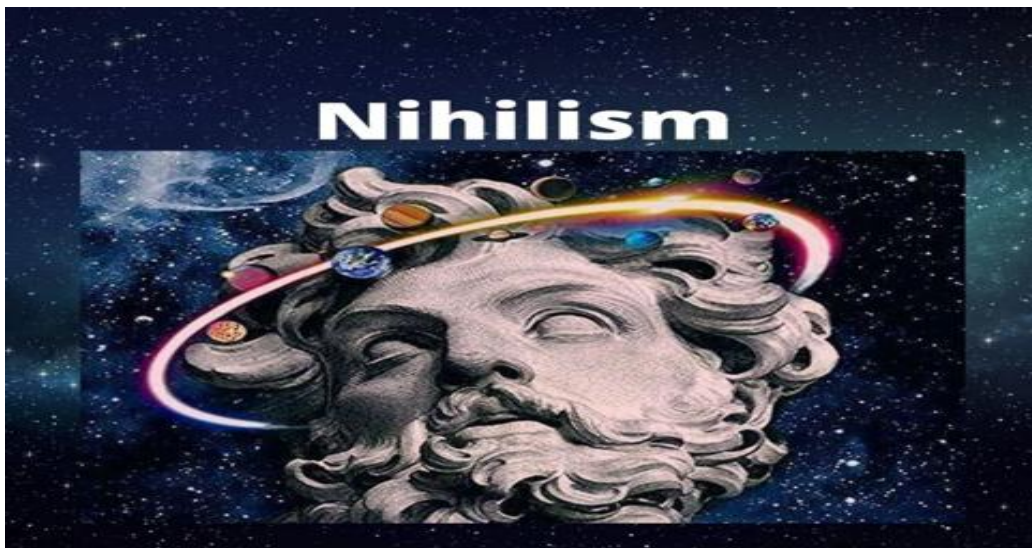
Emotivism

A. J. Ayer (d. 1989) argued that all ethical statements are emotive. That is, they really only express our feelings. Thus, statements like "Thou shalt not kill" really mean "I dislike killing" or "I feel killing is wrong." In this case, ethical statements are merely objections of our subjective feelings. There are no divine imperatives. Everything is relative to one's individual feelings. Hence, there are no objective moral laws that are binding on all persons everywhere. It depends on how one feels, thus, it advocates a view that it is "right to be wrong."



Nihilism (nothingness situation)

Famous German atheist Friedrich Nietzsche (d. 1900) said, “God is dead, and we have killed him.” For Nietzsche, the death of God meant not only the death of God-given values but also the need for humans to create their own values. In doing so, he argued, we must go “beyond good and evil.” Since there is no God to will what is good, we must will our own good. Nihilism suggests that there are no eternal values because God does not exist. Therefore, one is free to will anything, including nothingness.



4.3.3 Basic Beliefs of Antinomians and their Implications

i. There Are No God-Given Moral Laws

Antinomians are either theoretical or practical atheists because they do not believe that any moral principles have divine approval.

ii. There Are No Objective Moral Laws

Most antinomians do not deny that persons can choose to live by some moral standards. Whatever moral laws there may be, are relative to individuals who choose to live by them. There are no objective moral laws binding on all human beings.

iii. There Are No Timeless Moral Laws

Antinomians are also opposed to any timeless moral laws, whether they derive from God or are just there. Whatever moral laws there may be are temporal, not eternal. Humankind is

literally without any abiding laws. Morals are simply behaviors, and they change from place to place as well as from time to time.

4.3.4 The Implication of Antinomianism to Contemporary Christians

i. Erroneous Human Rights Claims

Claims such as “I am a man, but I feel to be a woman” are enhanced by “Emotivism” in homosexual rights, etc.

ii. Independent lifestyle

Since God is absent in the minds of Nihilists, they are forced to formulate their own values. They claim to live on their own values and that nobody is supposed to be in charge of their decisions. These may choose to eat anything they please, smoke, walk naked, and do all evils as long as they believe that they are not accountable to anyone.

iii. The Decline of Moral Values in the Church and in the Society

Church members choose what pleases them and by so doing God’s moral standards are regarded as outdated and ignored.



4.3 Learning Activities

Watch the video on the definition of antinomianism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAE7YbkJn0A>



4.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 5: Situationism

Unit Structure

- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 5.3. Main Content
 - 5.3.1 The Essence of Situationism
 - 5.3.2 Evaluation of Situationism
 - 5.3.3 Implication of Situationism
- 5.4 Learning Activities
- 5.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (Pages 35-50)
Key terms	Situation, Moral Judgment, lawless relativism, legalistic absolutism
Biblical anchor	Rom. 13:8; John 13:35; 1John. 4:7-8



5.1 Introduction

In everyday life, people often encounter situations where moral decisions are not simple or straightforward. Circumstances such as war, poverty, family conflict, or threats to human life may lead individuals to question whether moral rules should always be followed without exception. Situationism emerged as an ethical approach that argues that the morality of an action depends primarily on the context and the most loving outcome rather than on fixed laws or absolute principles. This unit introduces students to the concept of situation ethics, especially as developed by Joseph Fletcher, and explores its emphasis on love as the supreme moral norm. Through examining practical ethical dilemmas, students will critically reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of situationism and consider whether moral decisions should be guided by universal biblical principles or by the demands of particular situations.



5.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define situationism and explain its major principles, particularly the role of love and context in moral decision-making.
2. Analyze the contributions of Joseph Fletcher and other proponents of situation ethics in relation to Christian ethical thought.
3. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of situationism from biblical, theological, and practical perspectives.



5.3 Main Content

5.3.1 The Essence of Situationism

This model was developed by American Anglican theologian Joseph F. Fletcher. The model opines that moral decision-making is contextual or dependent on a set of circumstances. It holds that moral judgments must be made within the context of a situation that surrounds a moral problem. The framework for moral decision-making is grounded in acting most lovingly, to maximize harmony and reduce disagreement, or to enhance human existence. Situational ethics stands between two opposite moral principles. **Absolutism** (the view that there are fixed universal moral principles that have binding authority in all circumstances). **Relativism** (the view that there are no fixed moral principles at all). Contrary to what the word situationism might seem to imply, it is not a completely normless ethic. According to one of its most vigorous proponents, Joseph Fletcher, author of *Situation Ethics*, situationism is located between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism. The antinomians have no laws, the legalists have laws for everything, and Fletcher's situationism has only one law. Fletcher's position is neither a lawless relativism, which says there is no law for anything, nor a legalistic absolutism, which has laws for everything. Rather, he contends that there is one law for everything, the law of love. The situationist comes into every ethical battle armed with but one moral weapon—love. This

ethical concern asserts that “Only the command to love is categorically good.” this means other commands are “hypothetical.” The main principle of situationism is “do this if it is loving”

For example;

We are obliged to tell the truth, only if the situation calls for it. The only ethical imperative one has is “Act responsibly in love.” This view asserts that everything is relative to the situation in which one finds oneself. There are no moral principles that apply to all people at all times we should avoid words such as “never”, “always”, “perfect”, and “complete.”

Only one thing is intrinsically good; namely, love: nothing else at all. This view asserts that something is good because God wills it so. Nothing is good in and for itself. It is good only if it helps people and bad if it hurts people. Nothing is good in and for itself. It is good only if it helps people and bad if it hurts people. For situationists, there are no universal laws held by all men everywhere at all times, no consensus of all men.



5.3.2 Evaluation of Situationism

It is also true that there are dilemmas in making moral decisions such as abortion which require critical analysis and contextual circumstances. Apart from these positives, situation ethics forgets that there are absolute principles that have binding authority in all circumstances. These include Idolatry, and other moral laws in the Decalogue

5.3.3 Implication of Situationism

It contributes to antinomianism. For situationists, everything is relative to the situation in which one finds oneself. There are no moral principles that apply to all people at all times. Situationism also justifies sin under love umbrella (patriotic prostitution, sacrificial suicide, merciful murder², altruistic adultery, acceptable abortion).



5.4 Learning Activities

Read “Situationism” (pages 35- 50) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.



5.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 6: Generalism

Unit Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 6.3 Main Content
 - 6.3.1 The Essence of Generalism
 - 6.3.2 Core Tenets of Generalism
 - 6.3.3 Critique
- 6.4 Learning Activities
- 6.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 52- 56)
Key terms	Protection of Life, Compassion, Justice
Biblical anchor	Prov. 14:12; Rom. 6:1-2



6.1 Introduction

Generalism in ethics recognizes that moral decision-making often involves broad principles that guide human behavior while still allowing thoughtful judgment in particular circumstances. Unlike ethical systems that depend entirely on unchanging rules, generalism seeks a balanced approach by emphasizing commonly accepted moral values such as justice, honesty, responsibility, and respect for human dignity. This unit introduces students to the concept of generalism ethics as an ethical perspective that values moral principles without ignoring the complexity of real-life experiences.



6.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define generalism and explain its role in ethical theory and moral decision-making.
2. Analyse how general moral principles guide ethical behaviour within personal, social, and Christian contexts.
3. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of generalism in addressing complex contemporary ethical issues.



6.3 Main Content

6.3.1 The Essence of Generalism

Generalism is an ethical approach emphasizing general moral principles rather than strict, universal rules. It is a form of teleological ethics—focused on outcomes. Sometimes called “situation ethics” because it balances between legalism and antinomianism. This approach is associated with Joseph Fletcher (1905–1991), who developed situationism after his study. Generalism was developed as a middle ground between absolutism (e.g., Augustine, Aquinas) and relativism

Illustration

A school has a general rule that all students **must always** tell the truth. One day, a student hides a classmate who is being violently bullied by older students. When the bullies ask where the classmate is hiding, the student chooses not to reveal the location in order to protect the victim from harm.

Generalists would argue that while truthfulness is an important moral principle, ethical decisions must also consider other broad principles such as **protection of life, compassion, and justice**. In this situation, the student applies general moral values wisely rather **than following one rule in a rigid and absolute manner**. Generalists apply this concept to biblical rules and principles.



6.3.2 Core Tenets of Generalism

General Principles: Within this principle, generalists argue that there are no absolute moral rules. Moral guidance comes from general rules, but exceptions are possible.

Context Matters: Generalists argue that ethical decisions must consider specific circumstances.

Flexibility: Rules are not binding in all situations; they are guidelines.

Love / Human Good as Goal: The ultimate moral aim is promoting human well-being.

Examples

Rule: “Do not lie.”

Generalist view: Usually true, but lying might be justified if it protects life.

Rule: “Do not kill.”

Generalist view: Valid in general, but can justified for self defense

6.3.3 Critique

Subjectivity: Risk of individuals bending principles to justify wrongdoing.

Lack of Clarity: No firm rules—may lead to moral confusion.

Slippery Slope: Opens way toward relativism or pure situation ethics.

Weak Authority: Undermines the binding nature of divine commands.



6.4 Learning Activities

Read “Generalism” (pages 52- 56) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.



6.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 7: Unqualified Absolutism

Unit Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 7.3 Main Content
 - 7.3.1 The Essence of Unqualified Absolutism
 - 7.3.2 Evaluation of Unqualified Absolutism
- 7.4 Learning Activities
- 7.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 66- 82)
Key terms	Laying, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Moral Character
Biblical anchor	Matt. 23:23; Heb.13:8; Psalm 5:6; Jos. 2; Exo. 1; Heb 11:31

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7.1 Introduction

Unqualified absolutism is an ethical option which maintains that moral norms derived from divine revelation are universally binding without exception. Introducing this spectrum of ethical options invites careful study of how Christians have historically understood moral obligation, the role of Scripture in ethical reasoning, and the challenges of applying timeless principles within changing human contexts.



7.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain and critically analyse unqualified absolutism as an ethical option within Christian moral thought, including its basis in divine revelation and moral law.
2. Evaluate the role of Scripture and moral principles in guiding ethical reasoning within different contextual and situational challenges in Christian life and ministry.



7.3 Main Content

7.3.1 The Essence of Unqualified Absolutism

This view argues that all moral precepts are always absolute. Therefore, for any situation, one ought to do/not to do. All moral conflicts are only apparent. It is always possible to do right, or to avoid doing something that is wrong. Some supporters of this ethical model include Immanuel Kant, John Murray, and Charles Hodge. Biblical supports that have been used in defense of this model are Matthew 23:23 and Hebrews 13:8, whereby the former teaches that humans ought to observe all precepts of the law and the latter teaches that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, that which he says is wrong is always wrong. One important question regarding this model is whether or not one should ever lie to save a life; the unqualified absolutists answer “No”

In the case of laying St Augustine defends this model by numerous passages from the Bible. Psalm 5:6: ‘You destroy those who tell lies; bloodshed and deceitful men the Lord abhors.’ Augustine concludes that since eternal life is lost by lying, a lie should not be told for the preservation of the temporal life of another. In short, why lose eternal life to save a temporal life?

How did Augustine view the issue of lies in the Bible?

The Hebrew midwives lied to Pharaoh, and yet God apparently blessed them for it (Exod. 1). Rahab’s lie saved the Jewish spies (Josh. 2), and she is commended for her faith in the hall of fame found in the Letter to the Hebrews (11:31). Augustine argues that God blessed these women for their mercy but did not condone their impiety. God did not praise them because they lied but because they were merciful to the people of God. So it was not their deception that was rewarded, but their kindness. God blessed despite their lie, not because of it. For Immanuel Kant, moral duties by their nature admit no exceptions, since any exception to a moral law would indicate

that it was not truly a rule. Kant believed that moral laws, like Newton's law of gravitation, have no exceptions. God does not tolerate the breaking of any of his laws, whether ethical or natural. The universe runs according to universal law.

Those who uphold this model use the following premises for justification

1. God's unchanging character is the basis of moral absolutes.
2. God has expressed his unchanging moral character in his law.
3. God cannot contradict himself.
4. Hence, no two absolute moral laws can really conflict.
5. All moral conflicts are only apparent, not real.

This model concludes that;

- Moral duties are intrinsic, not extrinsic, and whatever is intrinsically good cannot be evil.
- It is as absurd to call an intrinsically good act evil as it is to call light darkness.
- Only what is neither good nor bad in itself but dependent on something else for its goodness or evil can be called evil at one time and good at another.
- Intrinsically good actions are not like this; they are always good in and of themselves. Since telling the truth is an intrinsic good and a lie is an intrinsic evil, it follows that there can never be a good lie.

7.3.2 Evaluation of Unqualified Absolutism

There are positive and negative elements in this ethical model.

Positive elements include the recognition of the unchanging nature of God, emphasis of rule over result, trust in God's providence, and the demands that there is always a way not to sin.

Scripture informs that Jesus was repeatedly put into situations which seemed to be dilemmas, and he always found a way out.

A negative element of this ethical model is that it does not take into account the scope of the will of God.

Several major premises make up the unqualified absolutist's position; they include the following:

1. God's unchanging character is the basis of moral absolutes.
2. God has expressed his unchanging moral character in his law.
3. God cannot contradict himself.
4. Hence, no two absolute moral laws can really conflict.
5. All moral conflicts are only apparent, not real.



7.4 Learning Activities

Read "Unqualified Absolutism" (pages 66- 80) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.



7.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 8: Conflicting Absolutism

Unit Structure

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 8.3 Main Content
 - 8.3.1 The Essence of Conflicting Absolutism
 - 8.3.2 Evaluation of Conflicting Absolutism
- 8.4 Learning Activities
- 8.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 83- 95)
Key terms	Lesser Evil, Greater Evil, Human Wisdom
Biblical anchor	Lev. 5:11; Matt. 12:3-4; Luke 14:1-6; 1 Cor. 11:1-2;



8.1 Introduction

In Christian ethical reflection, the attempt to maintain moral certainty grounded in divine revelation sometimes generates internal tensions when multiple absolute claims appear to compete within concrete moral situations. This dynamic is often discussed under the theme of **conflicting absolutism**, where two or more binding moral duties—each understood as universally valid—seem to require mutually exclusive actions in a given context. The unit invites careful examination of how such conflicts are framed, whether they are genuine or apparent, and how Christian thinkers seek to remain faithful to Scripture while navigating moral complexity in lived experience. It also raises foundational questions about the coherence of absolute moral norms when applied to the ambiguities of human life.



8.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Critically explain the theoretical foundations of conflicting absolutism and its claim that moral absolutes may at times come into unavoidable conflict within ethical decision-making.
2. Evaluate ethical dilemmas using the framework of conflicting absolutism, demonstrating the ability to justify moral choices when two or more absolute moral principles appear to be in tension.



8.3 Main Content

8.3.1 The Essence of Conflicting Absolutism

This view argues that there are moral dilemmas and conflicts. In these cases, one should do the lesser evil. However, the lesser evil is still wrong even though one may be doing what is humanly right. Doing what fulfills the highest rule in a situation could be excusable if the actor did not precipitate the moral conflict through antecedent evil acts. But it may still be wrong in that it does not fulfill every moral rule which applies to the situation. Hence, tragic moral choices exist. Those who support this view include Martin Luther, Helmut Thielicke, J. I. Packer, and J. W. Montgomery. Conflicting absolutism came from Greek philosophy and was adopted in Reformation thinking, and finds expression in both modern existential and popular thought. The model is commonly known by the statement “I did the lesser of two evils.” It can even be called the lesser-evil view.

8.3.2 Evaluation of Conflicting Absolutism

This model focuses on rescuing the situation that seems to require human wisdom. Bible never separates lesser evil and greater evil. All wrongdoing remains sinful before God, and every deed will be brought into judgment (Ecc. 12:14). Scripture informs that when Uzzah, out of goodwill stretched his hand to rescue the Ark from falling, the Lord killed him on the spot.

The model implicitly falls into process theology that reduces God to continues leaner. This means God did not consider moral dilemmas and therefore left it to humans who would use human wisdom to decide what should be done and what should be avoided. This model destroys God's integrity and wisdom. Humans can trust God because His precepts and moral laws hang on His nature.

Human wisdom has limitations and may perceive moral dilemmas and conflict, but God has thousands of ways of what is perceived as dilemmas in human wisdom. Isa. 55:9 states, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." In this case, humans should not rush to commit what is perceived as a lesser evil, but should always seek God's wisdom, who would provide a way for any difficult situation.



8.4 Learning Activities

Read "Conflicting Absolutism" (page 83-90) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.



8.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 9: Graded Absolutism

Unit Structure

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 9.3 Main Content
 - 9.3.1 The Essence of Graded Absolutism
 - 9.3.2 Objection to Graded Absolutism
- 9.4 Learning Activities
- 9.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 97- 110)
Key terms	Greater Sin, Greatest Commandment, Subjectivism
Biblical anchor	Matt. 23:23; 22:36; 1 Cor 13:13; John 15:13



9.1 Introduction

In the study of Christian ethics, moral reasoning often moves beyond simple rule-keeping into the tension-filled world of real-life moral complexity. One important approach that seeks to address such complexity is graded absolutism, which maintains that while all moral laws are grounded in divine authority, they are not all of equal weight. This perspective suggests that when moral duties appear to conflict, the believer is called to discern which command carries greater moral significance and to act accordingly, without denying the validity of the lesser duty. In this way, graded absolutism provides a structured way of thinking ethically in situations where obedience to one moral obligation may require the suspension of another, while still affirming the absolute nature of God's moral law.



9.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the principles of graded absolutism, particularly the hierarchy of moral obligations within Christian ethical reasoning.
2. Apply the framework of graded absolutism to ethical dilemmas, demonstrating the ability to prioritize higher moral duties when moral conflicts arise.



9.3 Main Content

9.3.1 The Essence of Graded Absolutism

Graded Absolutism is built on the argument that not all moral laws are of equal weight. Jesus spoke of the "weightier" matters of the law (Matt. 23:23 RSV) and of the "least" (5:19) and the "greatest" commandment (22:36). He told Pilate that Judas had committed the "greater sin" (John 19:11). Despite a rather widespread evangelical distaste for a hierarchy of sins (and virtues), the Bible does speak of the "greatest" virtue (1 Cor 13:13) and even of "greater" acts of a given virtue (John 15:13). The common myth that all sins are equal is often based on erroneous interpretations of James 2:10, which does not speak of the equality of all sins but rather of the unity of the law: "Whoever ... fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (RSV). It does not say that the transgressor is equally guilty of all, nor that all infractions bring equal guilt (cf. 3:1). However, it is true that any violation of the law brings some guilt.

Like most Reformed traditions, the roots of graded absolutism can be traced to Augustine of Hippo (d. 430). Although he defends the unqualified absolutist position on the issue of lying (see chap. 5), at times Augustine's answers to conflicting situations are similar to those of graded absolutism. For example, both views hold that there is a hierarchy of virtue, that moral duties sometimes conflict, and that we are not culpable for obeying the higher duty. Like graded absolutists, Augustine believes there is a hierarchy of sins, some being worse than others.' Since Augustine's ethic is centered in love, he sees an ordered priority in the things we are to love. God is certainly to be loved more than humans, and humans more than things? Thus, there is a pyramid of value with God on the top, persons in the middle, and things on the bottom. In harmony with graded absolutists, Augustine believes that it is the greater good, not the lesser

evil, to follow the higher moral duty in conflicting situations. For example, Abraham and Samson are commended for their willingness to kill at God's command. When two moral duties clash, the believer is exempt from the lower duty by virtue of obedience to the higher. In this sense, Augustine is a precursor to the graded absolutist.

9.3.2 Objections to Graded Absolutism

Like all other views, graded absolutism is subject to evaluation, both positive and negative. A number of objections have been raised against this kind of graded absolutism, and a brief discussion of each is now in order.

According to Norman Geisler, several analyses come out.

How Does Graded Absolutism Differ from Situationism?

First, Joseph Fletcher's situationism does not hold that there are any absolutes with substantive content; graded absolutism does. According to graded absolutism, the universal commands of Scripture such as the prohibitions against blasphemy, idolatry, adultery, murder, lying, and so forth are absolute, and these are binding on all people at all times and all places. Second, graded absolutism holds that there are more absolutes than one. Fletcher believes in one and only one absolute, and that absolute is formal and empty. Third, Fletcher believes that the situation determines what one should do in a given case; graded absolutism holds that situational factors only help one to discover what God has determined that we should do. The situation does not fill an empty absolute with content and thereby determine what one should do. Rather, the situational factors merely help one discover which command of God is applicable to that particular case.

Do Graded Absolutism and Situationism Agree in Practice?

This question suggests that the two views differ only in theory but not in practice. This criticism, however, is unfounded. First, even if the two views agreed on given courses of action, nevertheless the reasons for that accord would be quite different. Hence, the similarities are only accidental and not essential. Fletcher concludes that something is right or wrong because the "existential particularities" of the situation determine it. Graded absolutism, on the other hand, concludes that something is right or wrong because God has declared it so. Second, there are numerous and significant differences in conclusion between situationism and graded absolutism. For example, in contrast to Fletcher, graded absolutism does not approve of mate-swapping, adultery to get out of prison, blasphemy, abortion of unwanted babies, harlotry to teach maturity, premarital intercourse, or a host of other sins. In belief, whether in principle or practice, any relation to situationism is purely coincidental. Indeed, the same accidental similarities could be drawn between most other views and situationism.

Is Graded Absolutism a Form of Subjectivism?

Doesn't each person have to decide for oneself what is the greatest good? And doesn't this amount to subjectivism? In response, two things should be recognized. First, if someone makes up one's own hierarchy of values based on one's own subjective choices, then this is subjectivism. But this is emphatically not what Christian graded absolutism holds. Second, in graded absolutism, Christians do not decide for themselves what the ethical priorities are. God establishes the pyramid of values in accordance with his own nature. These are recorded in Scripture, and hence they are no more subjective than anything else revealed in Scripture. The priority of values is objective and determined by God; the only subjective factor is our understanding and acceptance of God's values. But this is a limitation shared by the other Christian views as well.

In What Sense Is Graded Absolutism an Absolutism?

If obedience to lower commands is sometimes unnecessary, then in what sense is it proper to call this view an absolutism? In response to this question, two things should be observed. To begin with, there are three ways in which graded absolutism involves absolutes. First, it is absolute in its source. All norms are based in the absoluteness of God. God does not change, and principles based on his nature are likewise unchanging. Furthermore, each particular command is absolute in its sphere. Each moral law is absolute as such. It is only when there is a conflict between two of them that appeal must be made to the higher in order to resolve the conflict. Finally, it is absolute in its order of priority. The very gradation of values by which the conflicts are resolved is absolute. For example, it is absolutely established by God that in an unavoidable conflict between God and parent, one must put God first.

Second, there surely is a sense in which graded absolutism is not an unqualified absolutism. Graded absolutism may be called qualified absolutism or contextual absolutism, as some do call it. However, it is still proper to designate it as a form of absolutism because it does maintain, in contrast to situationism, that moral laws are absolute in their source, in their sphere as such, and in their order of priority.

If God Is One, How Can There Be Many Moral Laws?

If God is one in essence, then how can there be many moral laws based on his nature? The response is quite simple: God is one in nature, but he has many moral attributes. Each absolute moral law is traceable to one of God's unchangeable moral attributes. Each of these is absolute insofar as it reflects his nature, but there are many of them. Just as the many radii of a circle are based in and spring out of the one center, even so God's many moral characteristics are rooted in his one essence. For example, God is unchanging love, and he is also immutably holy. Love and holiness are two different moral attributes, but they are both true of God's one essence. Just as a rock has many attributes (like round, solid, and gray) but yet is one, so also God is one with many attributes.



9.4 Learning Activities

Watch the video on graded absolutism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkviHh4XfeQ&t=63s>



9.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

MODULE TWO DELIVERABLES

1. A report from the video on the meaning of Antinomianism
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAE7YbkJn0A> (File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables).
2. Read report “Situationism” (pages 35- 50) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

MODULE 3: ETHICAL ISSUES

Unit 10: Abortion

Unit Structure

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 10.3 Main Content
- 10.4 Learning Activities
- 10.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 131- 150)
Key terms	Sanctity of life, Emergence of life, Quality of life, Life over privacy Combination of rights, Privacy over right to life.
Biblical anchor	Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:7; Ps. 139:16; 51:5



10.1 Introduction

Among the most debated ethical issues in both society and the Christian community today is the subject of abortion. Advances in medicine, changing social values, economic pressures, and personal freedoms have intensified discussions surrounding the beginning of human life and the moral responsibility attached to it. Within Christian ethics, abortion is not merely a medical or legal matter, but also a theological and moral concern that touches on the sanctity of life, human dignity, divine creation, personal autonomy, compassion, justice, and pastoral care. As believers seek to respond faithfully to difficult situations involving pregnancy, suffering, fear, and moral conflict, the study of abortion invites thoughtful reflection on Scripture, ethical principles, and the value of human life in relation to God's purposes.



10.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the biblical, theological, and ethical perspectives surrounding abortion within the context of Christian moral teaching.
2. Evaluate contemporary issues and ethical dilemmas related to abortion by applying scriptural principles, moral reasoning, and pastoral sensitivity.



10.3 Main Content

Life and Death Issue

Of all the moral issues, the most pressing are those involving life and death. And of the life-and-death issues, the one that involves the taking of the most lives is abortion. So we will begin our discussion by examining when, if ever, it is right to terminate a life in the womb. There are three basic positions on abortion, and they all center around the question of the human status of the unborn. Those who believe the unborn are subhuman favor abortion on demand. On the other hand, those who hold that the unborn are fully human are against all forms of abortion as such. And those who argue that the unborn is a potential human favor abortion in specified circumstances.

Status of unborn	Fully human	Potentially human	Subhuman
Abortion	Never	Sometimes	Any Time
Basis	Sanctity of life	Emergence of life	Quality of life
Mother's Right	Life over privacy	Combination of rights	Privacy over right to life



10.4 Learning Activities

Read “Abortion” (page 131-157) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.



10.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 11: Euthanasia

Unit Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 11.3 Main Content
 - 11.3.1 Essence of Euthanasia
 - 11.3.2 Defining Death and Euthanasia
 - 11.3.3 The Bible and Euthanasia
 - 11.3.4 A Christian Response to Euthanasia
- 11.4 Learning Activities
- 11.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 161- 175)
Key terms	Compassion, Autonomy, Involuntary Euthanasia, Active Euthanasia
Biblical anchor	Job 3:20–21; Judg 9:54; 1 Sam 31:4; Mark 15:23, 36



11.1 Introduction

In a world marked by chronic illness, unbearable pain, aging, and advancing medical technology, questions surrounding the right to die and the preservation of human dignity have become increasingly significant. Euthanasia raises difficult concerns about suffering, compassion, autonomy, the sanctity of life, and the authority of God over life and death. Within Christian ethics, the discussion goes beyond legal or medical considerations to include theological convictions about human value, stewardship of life, hope in suffering, and pastoral responsibility toward the dying and their families. This unit invites learners to thoughtfully examine euthanasia through biblical teachings, ethical reasoning, and contemporary societal debates.



11.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the biblical, theological, and ethical perspectives concerning euthanasia and the sanctity of human life.
2. Assess contemporary debates and moral dilemmas related to euthanasia by applying biblical principles of sanctity of life



11.3 Main Content

11.3.1 Essence of Euthanasia

The word “euthanasia” comes from two Greek words, one of which means “good” or “well” and the other of which means “death.” Thus, discussion of euthanasia is literally discussion of how to have a good death and avoid uselessly prolonging the dying process. Modern medical technologies and techniques have enabled people to live longer and better lives, and can affect almost miraculous cures, but they have also complicated the process of dying. Infants that would once have died soon after birth can now be kept alive. Those who are suffering from ravaging diseases and are in terminal, painful or humiliating conditions can be kept alive for many months or even years. For example, Chantal Seire, a woman who had an exceedingly painful facial tumour that had eaten away her face and robbed her of the senses of sight, taste and smell, appealed to a French court to be allowed to end her suffering with doctor-assisted suicide. Her appeal was denied, but her death by suicide in March 2008 reignited debate about the ethics of euthanasia or mercy killing. Euthanasia raises several ethical questions, some of which are similar to those relating to abortion. The supreme question is whether euthanasia is ever morally justifiable or whether life should always be preserved in all circumstances. This question has to be answered not only by medical professionals but also by patients, their relatives and even by the entire community.

11.3.2 Defining Death and Euthanasia

At one time there would have been no problem in knowing when someone was dead: it was when their heart stopped beating and they stopped breathing. But things are no longer this

simple, especially in the West. Patients can be hooked up to artificial respirators which pump air into their lungs to keep them breathing. Those whose kidneys have failed can be kept alive by dialysis. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques can restore heartbeat and maintain blood flow after the heart has stopped. Unconscious patients who would once have died can now be kept alive for a long time. The fact that a body can now be kept functioning by machines has complicated the definition of death. It is no longer enough to say that death occurs when someone's heart and lungs fail. Now death is defined by doctors as "1) Irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions 2) irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem." Some are pushing to have death defined as the absence of brain activity in the region of the brain known as the neocortex, that is, the area responsible for sensory perception, spatial reasoning, conscious thought and language. There is no need to go into any long discussion of these various definitions of death because our concern is not so much with the technicalities involved as with some very practical decisions that reflect our values and beliefs relating to death. For example, who makes the decision about when to end life? Should it be the one suffering, in which case we have voluntary euthanasia, or should the decision be made by those caring for the sufferer, in which case we have **involuntary euthanasia**? A famous case of involuntary euthanasia was when Terry Schiavo's husband decided to withdraw her feeding tubes after she had been in a vegetative state for fifteen years. Withdrawing the tubes was an action that can also be described as active euthanasia, in which someone deliberately performs an action that causes the person's death. Other examples of **active euthanasia** would be giving someone an overdose of medication or smothering or shooting them. **Passive euthanasia**, on the other hand, simply requires that someone does nothing (**that is, does not give medical treatment**), allowing the patient to die naturally. Finally, we can also distinguish between direct euthanasia and indirect euthanasia. In direct euthanasia, the person who wants to die takes the action that will cause his or her death, such as deliberately swallowing an overdose of medication or pulling out a breathing tube. In indirect euthanasia, somebody else carries out the act, as when a caregiver injects a patient with a lethal dose of morphine. A question would be, is euthanasia acceptable? What are the biblical principles on these issues?



11.3.3 The Bible and Euthanasia

The Bible does not address the question of euthanasia directly. Nevertheless, it understands the desire for death. Job expressed it well in his lament: “Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come” (Job 3:20–21). Some incidents recorded in the Bible might be taken as examples of euthanasia in that individuals requested someone to kill them. For both Abimelech (Judg 9:54) and Saul (1 Sam 31:4) death was immanent and neither wanted to die in disgrace and humiliation. Others ended their own lives (Samson – Judg 16:29–30; Saul’s armour bearer – 1 Sam 31:5; Ahithophel – 2 Sam 17:23; Zimri – 1 Kgs 16:18). Most commentators identify all these cases as suicides rather than as examples of mercy killing as it is understood in contemporary debate. They were “desperate acts by deeply troubled individuals who went against the will of God.” The Bible regards such suicide as self-murder, a contradiction of the commandment “you shall not murder” (Exod 20:13). The Bible also understands the desire of family members, patients and even health care professionals to end someone’s suffering. Psalm 31:6 is not talking about killing someone when it states “Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish”, but it does reflect a clear desire to relieve suffering. Even the Romans allowed criminals about to be crucified a special drug to reduce their suffering. It was for this reason that Jesus was given a cup of wine mixed with myrrh, which he initially refused (Mark 15:23). Later, however, just before his death, he accepted a drink of vinegar (Mark 15:36).

11.3.4 A Christian Response to Euthanasia

When the Bible does not give specific guidance on an issue, the Christian must be guided by fundamental biblical principles. The first is that every human being, regardless of his or her external conditions, sickness, poverty, or deformity, is created in the image of God (Gen 2:24). No one can be dismissed as worthless. The second principle is that all life is God’s gift. He is the one who decides when to give it and when to take it away, as Job reminds us when he hears of the death of his children: “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away” (Job 1:21). It is arrogant for us to presume to decide when a life should end. Not only is it arrogant, it is also explicitly forbidden. Economic, social, physical or mental reasons cannot be accepted as good grounds for ending someone’s life. Such killing is equivalent to murder, which is condemned in Scripture (Exod 20:13). Millard Erickson summarizes the parallel between euthanasia and murder: It is 1) intentional, 2) premeditated, 3) malicious, 4) contrary to the desire or intention of the victim, and 5) against someone who has done nothing deserving of capital punishment. We are using the wrong yardstick if we think that the value of a human life must be judged only in terms of its usefulness, happiness or productivity. Life is not important because of what it produces but because it exists. Moreover, there is value in suffering and we should not simply try to run away from it. Suffering is to be expected as a consequence of the fall. It will only end when we reach heaven (Rev 21:4). Through suffering, God teaches us many valuable lessons about himself, the world and ourselves. There is much we can learn about loving and caring for one other as well as about dependence on and trust in God (Jas 1:2–4; 1 Pet 1:6–7). The great Apostle Paul himself, when he had some physical ailment, learnt from the Lord’s encouragement, “My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak” (2 Cor 12:9, GNB).

Although we oppose euthanasia, it is also important to realize that there comes a time when we must accept the inevitability of death (Heb 9:27). Technology can never totally eliminate death and suffering. When we have done the best we can to help someone, it is not wrong to allow nature to take its course. We are not required to go to extraordinary lengths to prevent death or prolong suffering.



11.4 Learning Activities

Read “Euthanasia” (pages 145- 152) in the book: Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.



11.5 References

Erickson, Millard J. and Ines E. Bowers, “Euthanasia and Christian Ethics”. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19 (Winter 1976): 16–19.

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 12: Homosexuality

Unit Structure

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

12.3 Main Content

12.3.1 Essence of Homosexuality

12.3.2 Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality

12.3.3 Christian Response to Homosexuals

12.4 Learning Activities

12.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 280-298)
Key terms	Same Sex, Marriage, Sexual Orientation, Psychosexual
Biblical anchor	Gen 1:27; 2:24-25; 19:1–11; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13. Judges 19; Matt.19:4–5; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; 1 Timothy 1:9–10.



12.1 Introduction

In many societies today, homosexuality has become one of the most discussed and emotionally charged ethical issues, raising deep questions about identity, morality, human dignity, freedom, culture, and religious conviction. Within Christian ethics, the subject invites believers to examine Scripture carefully while also responding with compassion, wisdom, and truth in a world marked by diverse perspectives and experiences. This unit introduces students to the ethical, biblical, theological, and pastoral dimensions surrounding homosexuality, encouraging respectful dialogue, critical reflection, and faithful moral reasoning grounded in Christian principles.



12.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the biblical and theological perspectives on homosexuality within the context of Christian ethics.
2. Analyse the ethical, social, and pastoral issues related to homosexuality from a Christian worldview.
3. Demonstrate the ability to engage discussions on homosexuality with biblical conviction, compassion, respect, and moral responsibility.



12.3 Main Content

12.3.1 Essence of Homosexuality

Homosexuality involves sexual attraction to those of the same sex. Homosexuals may be either male or female (with the latter group sometimes referred to as lesbians). It may be constitutional (or static), in which case it is a “predominant and persistent psychosexual attraction towards members of the same sex”. This sexual preference is a fixed reality in the person’s life, even though it may or may not be acted on. Alternatively, homosexuality may be situational (or dynamic). Situational homosexuality tends to occur when someone has a series of homosexual experiences during a specific period, for example, while imprisoned or during a war, but then reverts to heterosexuality when the situation changes. Much of the modern attempt to justify homosexuality is based on the belief that certain people are constitutionally homosexual, possibly even at the genetic level. Various scientific and biological arguments have been advanced in support of this belief. It is argued that such people have not chosen to be homosexuals any more than other people have chosen to be heterosexual. Their sexual orientation is part of their very nature. Another distinction closely related to that between constitutional and situational homosexuality is that between a pervert and an invert. A pervert, like the situational homosexual, is someone who is really heterosexual but occasionally indulges in homosexual acts. In other words, perverts distort their actual sexual orientation when they occasionally engage in homosexual sex. An invert, by contrast, is one who is genuinely homosexual. It is argued that homosexual intercourse by inverts is not a perversion

or distortion because they are acting in accordance with their essential nature. They are constitutional or static homosexuals.



12.3.3 The Bible Perspectives on Homosexuality

Homosexuality has existed for centuries. Plato's Symposium makes it clear that love between men was widely known and accepted among the ancient Greeks. The prohibitions against homosexual relations in the Old Testament also indicate that such relationships were prevalent among the surrounding nations. The first human inhabitants of the world that God created were a man and a woman (Gen 1:27). This first couple set the paradigm for marriage and sexuality, as the narrator of Genesis clearly states: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). This position is endorsed by Jesus in 19:4–5. The relationship between Adam and Eve was clearly sexual, for the very next verse states that "the man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (Gen 2:25). The sexual relationship between a man and a woman is again endorsed in Genesis 4:1, which states that "Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth", where the word "lay" clearly refers to sexual intercourse. One can confidently say that Scripture teaches that heterosexuality is the norm. Homosexuality must thus be a deviation from this norm. In its presentation of homosexuality, Scripture does not discuss whether this condition is innate or situational. What it does do is focus on legislation regarding homosexual acts and incidents of homosexual behaviour. The following are some of the key biblical passages.

Genesis 19:1–11; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13. Judges 19, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; 1 Timothy 1:9–10

12.3.4 Christian Response to Homosexuals

Christians respond to homosexuals and to the homosexual agenda? The first point that must be made is that the church must not abandon the biblical position. Christians must accept that the Scriptures are the final authority in matters of faith and practice and provide the guidelines and qualifications for membership in Christ's church. For example, one cannot call Jesus Lord and also confess that Buddha is Lord because that contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture. In the same way, one cannot approve of same-sex acts when the Bible explicitly condemns them. The Bible must be our yardstick for measuring what is right and wrong. It follows that we cannot

accept same-sex marriage. The scriptural view of marriage is that it is a relationship between a male and a female, and that sex should only take place within marriage. But these days society teaches that sex is purely a biological function, unrelated to marriage, and marriage is assumed to be based solely on love. Thus, it is assumed that as long as two people love and care for each other, it does not matter whether they are both the same sex. We need to work to correct this shallow understanding of marriage. But while we should refuse to condone homosexuality and same-sex marriage, we must be compassionate in our dealings with homosexuals. We do not have to agree with their behaviour or with their argument that it must be accepted, but we should listen to them compassionately and respectfully. Listening does not mean compromising our position. We must also remember that homosexuality is not the only heinous sin in our world. Besides homosexuality, Paul's list of sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 includes sexual immorality, adultery, greed, drunkenness, slander, and fraud. These sins are equally wicked and evil. Yet those who have committed these sins have been accepted into our churches if they turn to Christ and turn away from their evil practices. We should do no less for homosexuals. The church must be willing to extend warm acceptance to those who have changed their ways.



12.4 Learning Activities

Read “Homosexuality” (pages 103- 309) in the book: Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.



12.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Unit 13: Reproductive Technologies

Unit Structure

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

13.3 Main Content

13.3.1 Traditional Solutions to Childlessness

13.3.2 Technological Solutions to Childlessness

13.3.3 Problems with Reproductive Technologies

13.3.4 Christian Response to Reproductive Technologies

13.4 Learning Activities

13.5 References

Estimated study time	3 hours
Core reading	Geisler, Norman L. <i>Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. (pages 180-198)
Key terms	Technology, Artificial Insemination, Sperm, Infertility
Biblical anchor	Gen. 16:2, 12; 25:18; 17:19; 38:10, 38; Deut 25:5–10



13.1 Introduction

Advances in reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF), surrogacy, genetic screening, and embryo preservation have transformed the way human beings understand life, parenthood, and family. While these technologies bring hope to couples struggling with infertility and offer medical solutions to complex reproductive challenges, they also raise profound ethical, moral, legal, and theological questions. Christians and society at large are challenged to reflect on issues such as the sanctity of life, the dignity of human beings, the role of God in creation, parental responsibility, and the limits of scientific intervention. This unit invites learners to thoughtfully examine reproductive technologies from biblical, ethical, and social perspectives to develop informed and compassionate moral judgments.



13.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the meaning and different forms of reproductive technologies, including IVF, artificial insemination, surrogacy, and genetic screening.
2. Analyze the major ethical, social, and theological issues associated with reproductive technologies from a Christian perspective.
3. Evaluate the benefits and challenges of reproductive technologies in relation to human dignity, family values, and the sanctity of life.
4. Apply biblical and sound moral principles in making ethical decisions concerning reproductive technologies within contemporary society.



13.3 Main Content

13.3.1 Traditional Solutions to Childlessness

In a traditional African context, when normal sexual relations between a husband and wife failed to produce offspring (or a son), they would turn to medicine men and women for help. If their interventions failed, they would turn to other options. The husband would often be encouraged to take a second or even a third wife in order to have the desired child or son. We see the same pattern of behaviour in the story of Abraham and Sarah. When Sarah could not conceive and bear a child for Abraham, she told her husband, “Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her” (Gen 16:2). Abraham then had sexual intercourse with Hagar in order to have a child. Scripture does not specifically discuss the ethics of this act, but it can be evaluated in light of its long-term consequences. The jealousies that arose have led to thousands of years of strife in the Middle East (Gen 16:12; 25:18). Moreover, we know that this was not the way in which God had intended Sarah to have a child. He had promised Abraham a son through Sarah, not Hagar, and Sarah’s child would be the child of promise (Gen 17:19). If the couple’s infertility was the fault of the man, the wife might leave him and seek another husband. Or she might take the route described to me by a student pastor. A couple in his church had wanted to have a child for several years. They had sought medical help several times to see if the condition causing the infertility could be reversed. The husband cooperated for a while, but soon he stopped going for further check-ups. The wife, in

frustration, went and slept with another man. She became pregnant, and her husband thought that he was the child's biological father. When it was time to have a naming ceremony for the child in the church, she confessed her adultery to the pastor because her conscience was bothering her. Another traditional approach, subject to strict ritual laws, permitted an impotent man's brother or cousin to have intercourse with his wife in order to give him offspring. This practice is somewhat similar to the institution of levirate marriage in the Old Testament, although there it only happened after the husband had died without an heir. His brother was to impregnate the widow so that the dead brother could have descendants (Deut 25:5–10). This was why Judah told his son Onan, "Lie with your brother's wife and fulfil your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother" (Gen 38:38). Such marriages maintained the property rights and the name of the deceased, and also provided security and status for their widows. By refusing to raise up offspring for his dead brother, Onan displayed a lack of concern for others, and God judged this as so evil that he killed him (Gen 38:10). Another traditional option would be for the husband's brother to give the couple one or more of his children to be raised as their legal children. The impotent man would then be considered the father of these children.

13.3.2 The Technological Solutions to Childlessness

Western technology has greatly extended the range of options open to couples: artificial insemination of a wife with her husband's sperm; artificial insemination of a wife with a donor's sperm; artificial insemination of a woman's ovum by her husband's sperm and then implantation into her own uterus; egg transfer from a donor to a woman's womb before fertilization; embryo transfer from a donor to outside of the uterus, also called ectogenesis; cloning, or nuclear transplantation. Some of these the methods have become so popular that they now seem almost routine. Others are still being perfected. But while these new methods offer couples great hope, they also raise serious moral and ethical dilemmas. That does not mean that they must be rejected out of hand. As Colson reminds us, "While many of the startling strides in biology are frightening if we do not learn how to apply moral restraints, there is never a cause for despair."² We need to look clearly at the pros and cons of these methods rather than simply issuing a blanket condemnation.

13.3.3 Problems with Reproductive Technologies

from infertility and barrenness. But because this is a fallen world, technology can also be used in ways that conflict with God's law and promote unethical behaviour. Some of these ethical problems have already been mentioned above. Other problems are already evident;

- The use of technology rather than the traditional marital union as the means to acquire a baby feed into the transition that has led to sex being regarded as mere recreation
- The dehumanization of the human person in the earliest stages of life can lead to an increase in abortions. Many (though not all) procedures involve producing a number of embryos and then selecting some and discarding others. Couples may move from wanting a child to assuming that they have the right to the exact child they want. If they do not like the sex of the child or are told that their baby has some defect, they may choose to abort it.
- The number of single parents may increase as men and women who do not want to face the challenges of marriage choose to have a child on their own. Homosexual or lesbian partners may choose to have children by artificial insemination. Children born and raised in such situations will never know the divinely ordained institution of marriage in which they are raised by both a man and a woman.

- The definition of human life will become blurred as scientists seek to use embryos, tiny human beings, for scientific experimentation. Many are already being frozen for such purposes.
- The prostituting of reproductive organs will become common as young men sell their sperm and women rent their wombs and sell their eggs for money.

13.3.4 Christian Response to Reproductive Technologies

Some Christians suggest that acceptance of any reproductive technology is the first step on a slippery slope. While we may not agree with the extreme position, we need to be aware that newer techniques like cloning, embryo transfer and gene-splicing will present us with even more acute ethical problems. Mitchell reminds us: The genetic revolution is upon us. What was once thought to be science fiction has rapidly become science fact ... As with every technology, however, genetic science holds both promise and risk. As Neil Postman has warned, “Technology is not a neutral element in the practice of medicine: doctors do not merely use technologies but they are used by them. As some scientists are tempted to play God, the church must not ignore what is going on. If we do, we may find that these technologies will be like a genie that has gotten out of the bottle, used without question or careful moral reflection. We need to stay informed about progress in genetic engineering and human reproduction so that we can contribute to the ethical debate on these issues. What do we say to those who advocate using reproductive technology to clone prominent or highly intelligent human beings, alive or dead? Or to those who see human beings as no more than “a complex of chemicals”?⁹As new reproductive technologies become available in the West, they will increasingly be sought by wealthy African couples, and later by others as the procedures become more routine. How will we counsel church members who may turn to us for advice about whether they should use them to end their childlessness? Our step must be to provide a more holistic and balanced approach to the whole subject of infertility, dismantling myths that prevent couples from having a fulfilled and satisfying marriage in whatever state God has placed them. This will involve education about marriage and about sex.



13.4 Learning Activities

Read “Reproductive Technologies” (page 204-214) in the book: Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.



13.5 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

MODULE THREE DELIVERABLES

1. A reading report on “Abortion” (pages 131- 157) in the book: Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
2. A reading report on “Homosexuality” (pages 103- 309) in the book: Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

MODULE 4: ETHICAL ISSUE PRACTICUM

Unit Structure

1. Introduction
2. Learning Outcomes (LOs)
3. Main Content
4. Learning Activities
5. Practicum Deliverable
6. References



1. Introduction

This module engages students in identifying, analyzing, and responding to a real ethical issue within a community context. Students are supposed to apply biblical principles, ethical theories, and pastoral sensitivity to guide moral reflection and decision-making. The module emphasizes experiential learning, critical reflection, and practical engagement with real-life ethical challenges.



2. Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Identify and describe a real ethical issue within a community context.
2. Analyze the selected ethical issue using biblical, theological, and ethical frameworks.
3. Engage with stakeholders in the community through observation, interviews, or dialogue.
4. Develop and present ethically informed recommendations grounded in Scripture and moral reasoning.



3. Main Content

This module requires students to identify ethical issue within a contemporary community. A needs assessment is the primarily tool that will gather information about critical issues in the community. Data collection methods could be quantitative or qualitative. There are several methods of collecting data for need assessments.

- i. **Questionnaires & Surveys:** Questionnaires are distributed to community members in such a manner as to cover as many members as possible. Surveys can also be conducted digitally through emails, or by phones.
- ii. **One on One Interviews:** Interviews are particularly useful when information is required from key informants in the community. These are community members who are knowledgeable about certain aspects of the community or are experts in their fields, for example traditional leaders, local government chairmen, principals of schools, or police chiefs.
- iii. **Community Meetings:** Community meetings provide a forum a forum that is open to the public. They are formal, planned gatherings that have an agenda and topics for discussion and rules of participation. They are an effective way of gathering wide ranging and diverse views from the community members.
- iv. **Focus Groups:** These are meetings of a specified number of people which focus on particular topics or a few related topics. Focus groups of people can be differentiated by gender, age or occupation. For example, women only focus group, or youth, or farmers. Similar to community meetings, focus groups are planned and have a specific

agenda. However, there is a limited number of participants, although as many focus groups as are needed can be convened.

The need assessment should consider the following;

1. **Consent:** Consent is a fundamental ethical principle that is critical for building trust in community. This process includes informing individuals about the purpose, scope, and potential impact of the proposed activities, as well as respecting their right to make an informed decision about their participation.
2. **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality refers to the protection of sensitive information shared by community members during interventions, assessments, or referrals. Community members have a right to confidentiality when participating in any ethical issue. To ensure confidentiality, students must explain what information will be collected, how it will be used, who it will be shared with, and what their rights and options are. They should also protect and store data. Confidentiality promotes trust, respect, and positive emotional wellbeing, and encourages people to come forward with issues and concerns.



4 Learning Activities

Practicum Step 1: Issue Identification

Students identify an ethical issue within a selected community

Practicum Step 2: Proposal Development

Submission of a brief proposal to the district pastor, outlining the issue, location, and methodology

Practicum Step 4: Field Engagement

Data collection through observation, interviews, and interaction with stakeholders

Practicum Step 5: Ethical Analysis

Application of biblical and ethical frameworks to interpret findings

Practicum Step 6: Intervention/Recommendation

Development of ethical recommendations or awareness strategies

Practicum Step 7: Report Writing

Compilation of a structured practicum report

13.5 Practicum Deliverable

A practicum report (10 Pages) File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other delive



13.6 References

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Portfolio Checklist

Portfolio item	Included	Not yet	N/A	Remarks (Lecturer)
Module One Deliverables	☐	☐	☐	
Module Two Deliverables	☐	☐	☐	
Module Three Deliverables	☐	☐	☐	
Ethical Issue Practicum Report (10 Pages)	☐	☐	☐	