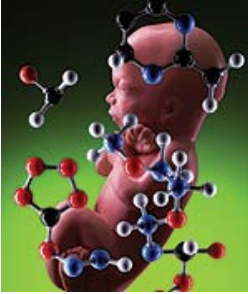
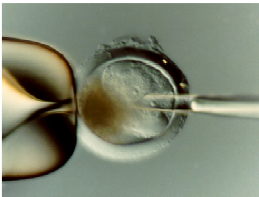


Justice Series Bioethics

Matthew 22:34-40; 23:23 *When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together in the same place. And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test Him: "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments..." "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy, and faith. These things should have been done without neglecting the others.*



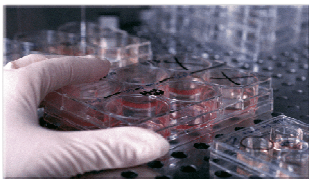
Scientific advances have given us tremendous tools with which we may secure better and longer lives. However with that power has also come many challenges. Modern medicine has brought us many controversial issues that the Ransomed must consider and to which we must give an appropriate response. Issues dealing with



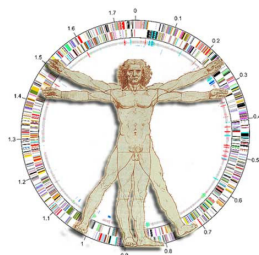
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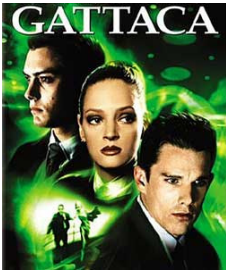
cloning



stem cell research



human genetics



eugenics



abortion and



euthanasia are matters of almost daily conversation now. Most of us will be faced with decisions that will include one of these matters.



For instance, what do you do when your loved one is dying and in pain? If you give them sufficient pain relief, it may depress their systems to the point where they die. Is that euthanasia? Are you to speed their death or alleviate their pain? Many of us with elderly loved ones will have to give an answer.

The bioethical controversy is too rife with complex ideas and too big to deal with in any one given sermon. What we need is a moral code – a moral plan to guide us through the tangled forest of ethical issues. My goal today is to provide you with that code. I want to present to you some overall governing principles that will hopefully help you deal with whatever particular problem you may end up facing.

The overarching moral law for the following principles stems partially from today's text. Whatever we do, whether we are dealing with the terminally ill, the childless couple or the unwanted pregnancy, we must make sure that we are conforming to the following.

These are the four principles that govern God's moral law:

1. Love (of God and of neighbor)
2. Justice
3. Mercy
4. Faith

In order to conform to the governing principles as expressed in our moral law we must use the following conceptual tools. Let's look at seven ethical concepts we can use in our decision-making processes.

1. Sanctity of life (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-2; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9)

The human soul was created in God's image. To sin against the human soul is thus to act treasonously toward God who created it in His image and continues to own it.

- Genesis 1:26-27 HCSB Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the animals, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.
- Genesis 5:1-2 HCSB These are the family records of the descendants of Adam. On the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God; 2 He created them male and female. When they were created, He blessed them and called them man.
- Genesis 9:6 HCSB Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His image.
- 1 Corinthians 11:7 HCSB A man, in fact, should not cover his head, because he is God's image and glory, but woman is man's glory.
- James 3:9 HCSB With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in God's likeness.

2. Patient autonomy

This application stems from the principle of "sanctity of life" we just examined. In practice this means that people should have the right to accept or refuse treatment, or to allow the natural course of events to take place. It is important to remember that one's respect for autonomy must not contradict our moral law and the sanctity of life. We must not allow our desire to uphold autonomy to compel us to assist in another's wrongdoing. For instance "patient autonomy" does not permit us to assist in their suicide.

3. Nonmalificence (do no harm; Romans 12:9)

We should do no harm to a person in our care. This does not mean that we never do anything that our loved one considers unpleasant, but that we seek their good in every decision. This stems from the Ransomed's very understanding of love.

- Romans 12:9 HCSB Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good.

Our children may not enjoy being disciplined, but it is what is best for them. Our elderly loved ones may not want to go to a nursing home, but it might be what is actually best for them. A burn patient may not enjoy having the old tissue removed but it is what is best. However, we must not abuse our children, we must not relegate our elderly to a nursing home simply for convenience' sake, and we may not unnecessarily inflict pain.

The Bible expresses nonmaleficence as an ethic of reciprocity or what is commonly known as "the golden rule."

- Leviticus 19:18 HCSB Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.
- Leviticus 19:33-34 HCSB "When a foreigner lives with you in your land, you must not oppress him. 34 You must regard the foreigner who lives with you as the native-born among you. You are to love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.
- Matthew 7:12 HCSB Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them--this is the Law and the Prophets.
- Matthew 22:39 HCSB The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.
- Luke 6:31 HCSB Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.
- Luke 10:27 HCSB He answered: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

This principle is so fundamental that every major religion includes it in its moral law.

- “What you do not wish upon yourself, extend not to others.” – Confucius (c. 551-479 BC)
- “This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you.” – Mahabharata 5:15:17 (c. 500 BC)
- “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man.” – Hillel (c. 50 BC – AD 10)
- “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” – Muhammad (c. AD 571-632) Hadith 13 of al-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith.

4. Beneficence (do positive good; Luke 10:30-37)

Beneficence is the act of helping others. A compassionate person performs acts of charity, kindness, and mercy; comes to the aid of the injured, the sick, and the dying; and relieves suffering.

Beneficence is perfectly illustrated in Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan

- Luke 10:30-37 HCSB Jesus took up the question and said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. 34 He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.' 36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 "The one who showed mercy to him," he said. Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

5. Justice (Exodus 23:3; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; 1 Corinthians 3:8; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Timothy 5:21; James 2:1)

The principle of justice means that we cannot deny a person help simply because of their social status. We may not withhold care because we do not agree with their morals. All humans are to be treated equally because they bear the imprint of the Spirit of God on their souls.

- Exodus 23:3 HCSB Do not show favoritism to a poor person in his lawsuit.
- Acts 10:34 HCSB Then Peter began to speak: "In truth, I understand that God doesn't show favoritism,
- Romans 2:11 HCSB There is no favoritism with God.
- 1 Corinthians 3:8 HCSB Now the one who plants and the one who waters are equal, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
- Ephesians 6:9 HCSB And masters, treat them the same way, without threatening them, because you know that both their and your Master is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.
- Colossians 3:25 HCSB For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.
- 1 Timothy 5:21 HCSB I solemnly charge you, before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of favoritism.
- James 2:1 HCSB My brothers, hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ without showing favoritism.

Justice and impartiality does not contradict our belief in capital punishment. Romans 12:9 not only includes clinging to the good, but abhorring that which is evil. We must actively oppose that which is evil in individuals and in society. We must seek the positive good of the most people we can. If an individual is causing harm to society, we must protect others from them. This may

include a lengthy prison sentence or even death. As long as all people are subject to the same standards, that too is impartial justice.

6. Trust (Proverbs 23:23; 16:2, 6)

As it is in any relationship trust is essential to the care giver/receiver relationship.

- Proverbs 23:23 HCSB Buy--and do not sell--truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding.
- Proverbs 16:6 HCSB Wickedness is atoned for by loyalty and faithfulness, and one turns from evil by the fear of the LORD.

We must respect the doctor-patient relationship, and be patient advocates. We must ensure the person's privacy, ensure that if at all possible they give informed consent. We must be trustworthy and truthful with the person. Remember!

- Proverbs 16:2 HCSB All a man's ways seem right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the motives.

7. Virtuous character Ephesians 6:11-17)

A person who has not worked at inculcating these principles into their daily mental habits will not suddenly be able to make moral choices at a critical time. We must be diligent in developing a virtuous character and exhibit moral integrity so that we will be able to stand on the evil day.

- Ephesians 6:11-17 HCSB Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. 12 For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. 13 This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.