

Study 6A – Ethics & Morality, Evil & Suffering

I. Ethics—What is the Basis of Ethics and Morality?

A. God the Lawmaker and Lawgiver.

1. Read Romans 11:36 and Revelation 4:11. God is the ultimate authority in the universe and has the right to define what is right and wrong—to make laws universally binding upon all mankind. Why, according to these verses, is this so?

2. Read Daniel 4:35-37. What conclusion did the pagan King Nebuchadnezzar come to regarding God’s authority over men and nations, and their accountability to Him?

3. Read Matthew 5:48 and Psalm 19:7. How high is the moral standard to which God holds man accountable? What is the only written standard that qualifies as a guide to show man how He wants us to live?

4. Read Isaiah 33:22 and James 4:12. What three terms are used of God here? What do these verses imply about the ultimate basis of law, morality, and ethics?
1: _____, 2: _____, 3: _____,

5. Read Genesis 18:25. Why is it good for man to know that God is the ultimate source of law and ethics?

B. The law reflects God’s nature and displays His holiness. One intent of the law is to bring man under conviction of sin as he views himself in the light of God’s righteous demands.

1. Read Romans 7:12. Which of God’s attributes, according to this verse, are reflected in God’s law?

2. Read Romans 3:20. What does the apostle Paul say the law gives us?

3. Read Galatians 3:24. What does the law as “schoolmaster” or “guardian” do?

C. Man is unable to earn his salvation by keeping the law perfectly because of his sinful nature.

1. Read James 2:10. Of what does James warn us?

2. Read Romans 3:20. What cannot be gained by obedience to the law?

3. Read Romans 3:24. What is the only means of being justified (declared righteous and therefore acceptable to a holy God)?

D. The moral law (that aspect of God’s law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, that is God’s standard for man’s holiness and right living in His world) is, however, to be obeyed by all men. For believers, obeying this law is an evidence and fruit of salvation, not the means of it.

1. Read Romans 3:31. What effect does Paul say that faith-righteousness has upon our relationship to the law?

2. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. According to these verses, what does and what does not save us? As a result of Christ’s workmanship, what has He created for us to do?

3. Read John 14:15 and 1 John 2:3. What is one way you can tell if you love Jesus Christ and are a true believer?

E. The Moral Law, summarized by the Ten Commandments, is God’s standard for our conduct and for ethics in general.

1. READ Exodus 20:1-17 and the explanation of these commandments as given by the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (a question and answer summary of Bible teaching widely used in early American schools and churches. The whole catechism was published as part of *The New England Primer*. Download the document entitled *The Westminster Shorter Catechism on the Ten Commandments* at: <http://dwerthman.weebly.com/bible-basics-studies.html>).

2. For each of the commandments, write a one of two sentence summary of each commandment in your own words:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) _____

(10) _____

3. Matthew 22:34-40. How does Jesus summarize the whole moral law?
1: _____ and 2: _____.

II. Evil & Suffering —What is the Cause of Evil and Suffering?

A. God Decree and the Existence of Evil.

1. Read Psalm 33:11, Isaiah 14:24 and Ephesians 1:11. According to these verses, why, ultimately, do all things happen as they do?

2. Read Psalm 5:4, James 1:13-14, 1 John 1:5 and Habakkuk 1:13. While we must admit face up to the fact that evil would not exist if God had not decreed it, why according to these verses do we say that God is not the author of sin?

3. Read Daniel 4:35 and Romans 9:22-23; 11:36. According to these verses, could God stop all evil from happening if He decided to? Ultimately speaking, why doesn't He?

B. God's Creation and the Entrance of Sin and Suffering.

1. Read Genesis 1:31-2:3. As created by God, was sin or suffering part of the original world? Why not?

2. Read Deuteronomy 32:3-4, Job 34:10 and Psalm 92:15. Could sin come into the world by God's direct action? Why or why not?

3. Read Genesis 3:1-5, John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8. According to these verses, what is one reason for the source of evil in the world?

4. Read Genesis 3:6-7 and Romans 5:12. According to these verses, what is another reason for the source of evil and suffering in the world?

5. Read 1 John 2:15-17 . According to these verses, what is a third reason for the source of evil and suffering in the world?

6. Read James 1:13-15. Who, according to James, are we NOT to blame for our sin? Why not?

C. A Christian's View of Suffering.

1. Read Genesis 45:5-9; 50:20 and Romans 8:28. While evil and suffering are not in themselves good, what do these verses tell us about God's sovereign, gracious work for His people through evil and suffering?

2. Read Acts 3:13-26. What is the supreme example that God ultimately overrules human sin for his glory and the ultimate good of mankind? Explain.

3. Read Acts 14:22 and Philippians 1:29. Are suffering and trials unusual experiences for Christians? Explain.

4. Read Matthew 5:10-12 and Hebrews 12:5-8. According to these verses, how are we to regard trials and suffering, including persecutions?

5. Read Romans 5:3-5, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and James 1:2-4. List some of the things God accomplishes for the believer through suffering.
