

# Week 7 Notes

## Romans 1:18

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**. 19 For what can **be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them**. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. **21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him**, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 **Claiming to be wise, they became fools**, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

## Subjective Morality pg. 157

- Ethical subjectivism refers to an approach to morality that treats ethical norms as determined by the subject (Individual, community, governments, society, or culture).

## Objective Morality

- There is an **objective morality for everyone** that **does not change and is not** determined by an individual, community, or society but instead is objectively true for everyone.

## Ask 3 Questions

- What is the **overarching principle**?
- What is the **highest moral authority** in that system?
- Is that authority **subject to change**?

## Hedonism pg. 161

- A person should arrange life in such a manner as to get as much pleasure as possible.

- Epicurus recognized, however, that some pleasures were risky and therefore he believed that some moderation should be applied in the pursuit of pleasure. A person should maximize good and safe pleasures while minimizing dangerous ones.

### **Social Contract pg. 170**

- **Pg. 171** Rather than thinking of morality as an **indicator of some transcendent ethical code** that everyone is obligated to live out, these philosophers say morality arose merely out of the practical need to get along with others. (*Not transcendent*)  
As mentioned above, nobody wants to be killed, raped, robbed, or deceived. Morality, therefore, is not a mandate imposed by God or gods, but rather a human invention for the purpose of making one's existence less painful and more enjoyable.
  - **Francis Schaffer** "Here is a simple but profound rule: *if there are no absolutes by which to judge society, then society is absolute.*"

### **Utilitarianism**

- **Pg. 179** Societal results rather than personal results were the standard by which an action should be judged. ...An action that brought the most happiness to the most people was 'moral' and what tended to most diminish the happiness of the most people was considered 'immoral.' Thus, utilitarianism considers the societal utility of an action to be what is most important in determining ethical behavior.

### **The Divine-Command Theory**

- **Pg. 199** The Divine-Command theory maintains that morality does not originate with human beings, but with a divine being or beings.

### **The Euthyphro problem pg. 200**

- In Plato's Euthyphro, Socrates asks Euthyphro (a) whether a particular act is considered 'good' because the gods command it, or (b) do the gods command a particular act because it is 'good.'
- What if Euthyphro chooses (a) as the correct answer? Socrates will claim that this makes the 'good' arbitrary and relative because the gods are known to disagree.
- What if Euthyphro chooses (b) as the correct answers? It would mean that the gods were not the source of 'good' but only recognized the 'good' by some independent

(and more authoritative) standard. **And we should be looking for that higher standard to evaluate our ethical dilemmas.**

The ironic thing about the **Euthyphro problem** is that it works great against the **atheist (agnostic)**.

- **All the other theories of ethics**, besides the Divine Command Theory, say either **culture** or **society** or **individual** is the **ultimate standard of authority**.
- If there is no God, then there can't be a higher authority than man.
- **This presents a problem.**
  - Is (a) something good because culture, society, or an individual commands that it is 'good,' or (b) Does the culture, society or individual command it because it is 'good?'
    - **If (a)**, then morality becomes arbitrary (subjective) because, as we have learned, societies (and even individuals) change their opinions.
      - Example
        - Slavery
    - **If (b)**, then morality is not determined by society - it is determined by an outside source other than the culture, society or individual. **And we should be looking for that higher standard to evaluate our ethical dilemmas.**

### Moral Relativism pg. 210

- **Seven fatal flaws of Moral Relativism. (Pg. 211-213)**
  1. *Relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
    - If you believe morality is a matter of personal (or cultural) definition, then you surrender the possibility of making moral judgments about other's (or other culture's) actions, no matter how offensive they are to your intuitive sense of right or wrong.
  2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*

- Evil is usually one of the most common arguments against the existence of God. But if all morality is relative, there is not real evil to complain about.
  - All other ethical systems – are subjective and relativistic.
  - **Therefore**, before they can argue against the Christian about evil – they have to borrow from the Christian worldview to make sense of the word “evil.”
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
    - No external standard that exists by which we can determine what actions should be celebrated or condemned.
  4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
    - What is unjust to one person might be perfectly just to someone else. “Who are you to judge?”
  5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
    - Improving morality implies moving from bad behaviors to good behavior. If all morality is relative, however, there is no improvement, just change.
  6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
    - A meaningful ethical dialogue can be held only when moral principles are seen as universal action guides. Relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence.
  7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*
    - The relativist's promotion of the obligation of tolerance is self-refuting. A person need only reply, “just because you value tolerance does not mean I should. Do not impose your values on me.” Relativists violate their own principle of tolerance when they do not tolerate the views of those whose morality is nonrelativistic. They only tolerate those who hold their ethical viewpoint. They are, therefore, just as intolerant as any objectivist appears to be.