

Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction

By D. Stephen Long

In this *Very Short Introduction* D. Stephen Long examines the sources, history and contemporary theorists involved in the study of Christian ethics. Using examples of specific practical matters such as sex, money, and power, Long argues that Christian ethics are the cultivation of practical wisdom that comes from many diverse sources.

Questions for thought and discussion

- Why might you find Christianity unethical?
- Why might you find ethics unchristian?
- Since 9/11 news reports speak of “sectarian” violence. Do you think religious people are more prone to violence than others? Why are there seldom reports that use the term “national” violence?
- Is the term “Christian” definable? How would you define it?
- Can God be known? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Is the term “ethics” definable? How might you define it?
- I argue in this work that it was appropriate to have the Ten Commandments removed from US public courthouses because those buildings cannot really make sense of them. What do you make of that argument?
- Should Christianity, and other religions, have a role to play in politics?
- Is it possible to make sense of the failures present in Christian history?
- Is it possible to make sense of human failures in history in general?
- Do Nietzsche and Zizek disagree when the former suggests, “If God is dead, everything is permitted,” and the latter stated, “If God is, everything is permitted”? Which one do you think more appropriately characterizes the relation between God and ethics?
- A Jewish rabbi once said, “Any religion that does not tell you what to do with your pots, pans and genitals isn’t worth having.” To what extent would you agree and/or disagree with this statement?
- Does sex have a purpose?
- Should Christians refuse to participate in war?
- If Christians have a loyalty greater than that of the nations in which they are found, can they make good citizens? Should they be elected to public office?

Other books by D. Stephen Long

Speaking of God: Theology, Language and Truth (William B. Eerdmanns, 2009)

Theology and Culture (Cascade Press, 2008)

Calculated Futures: Theology, Ethics and the Politics of Faith with Nancy Fox (Baylor University Press, 2007)

John Wesley’s Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness (Nashville: Kingswood Press, 2005)

The Goodness of God: Theology, Church and the Social Order (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001)

Divine Economy: Theology and the Market, in Radical Orthodoxy Series (London, New York: Routledge Press, 2000)

Further Reading

Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009)

Simon Blackburn, *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press, 2003)

Roger E. Olson, *A-Z of Evangelical Theology* (SCM press, 2005)