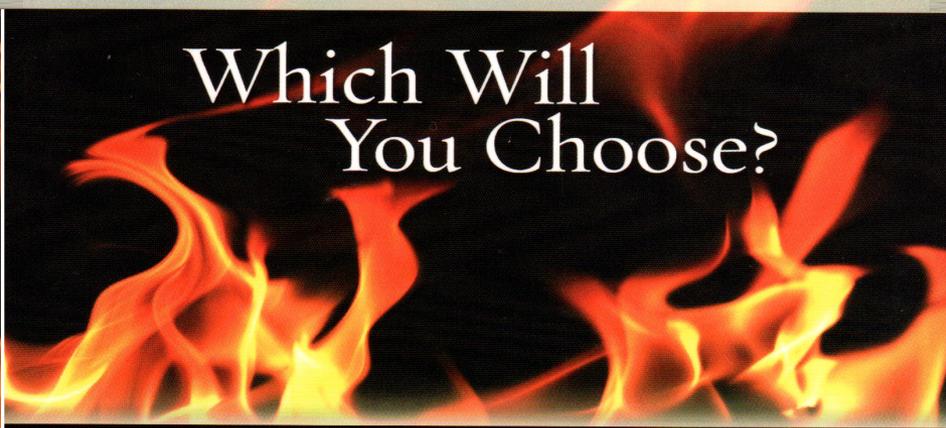


CHRISTIANITY

or

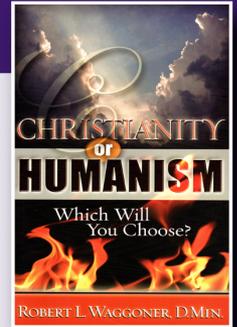
**HUMANISM**



Which Will  
You Choose?

ROBERT L. WAGGONER, D.MIN.

# CHRISTIANITY vs HUMANISM



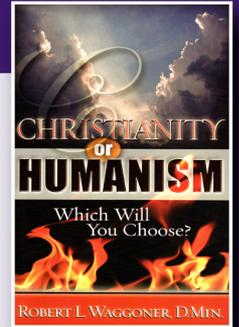
**Everyone has a personal *worldview*.**

- A *biblical* worldview is where God's word is allowed to be the foundation of everything we think, say, and do.

**A *Secular Humanist* worldview is described by its adherents as:**

- A method of critical inquiry which opposes theism, religion, and other "nonsensical and false claims".
- A philosophy of life, an ethical, political, and social framework for a better and more just world in which individuals can flourish and be happy.

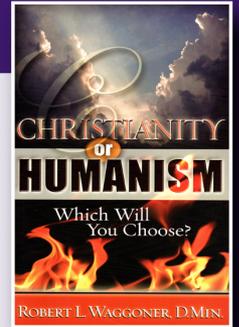
# IN A HUMANIST WORLDVIEW



**Every thought, action, and word spoken is framed from the viewpoint that:**

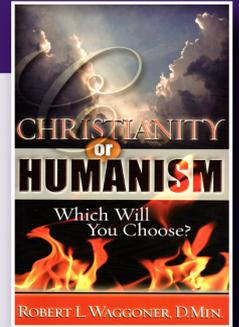
- There is only the physical. Nature/matter is self-existing, i.e. is eternal.
- Only that which can be proven by experimentation (scientific method) is true.
- There is no revelation from God. Humans develop and define their own ethics or morality based on what *they* consider is in their best interests.
- There is no spirit; no God; no human soul; no life after death.
- The life we have now is “all and enough” and should be lived to experience its full potential.

# Lesson Learning Objectives

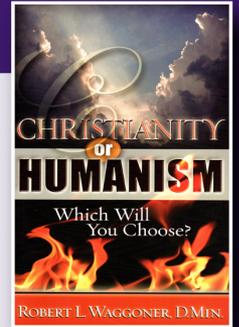


- To understand the philosophical bases of the ethics of Humanism.
- To understand the consequences of the ethics of Humanism and contrast that with the consequences of absolute ethics that are based on the New Testament.

# Major Terms



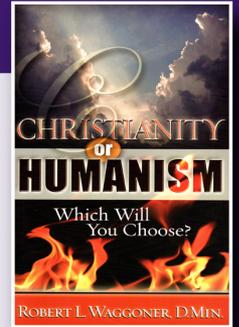
- **Morals** (The character of being in accord with the principles or standards of right conduct).
- **Ethics** (The philosophical study of morality. The word is commonly used interchangeably with “morality” to mean the subject matter of this study. It is used more narrowly to mean moral principles of a particular tradition, group, or individual).



## Major Terms

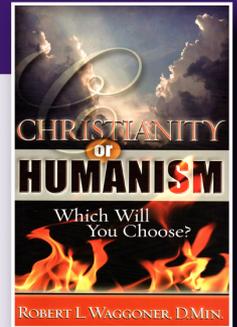
- Ethics and morals relate to “right” and “wrong” conduct. While they are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different:
  - ethics refer to rules provided by an external source, e.g., codes of conduct in workplaces or principles in religions.
  - Morals refer to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong.

# Major Terms



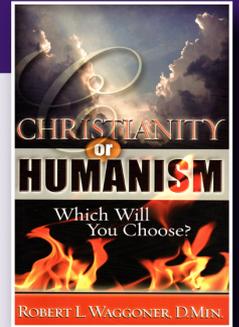
- **Situation Ethics** (the doctrine of flexibility in the application of moral laws according to circumstances).
- **Relativism** (the philosophical position that all points of view are equally valid and that all truth is relative to the individual).
- **Absolutism** (Moral Absolutism is the ethical belief that there are absolute standards against which moral questions can be judged, and that certain actions are right or wrong, regardless of the context of the act).

# Humanistic Ethics



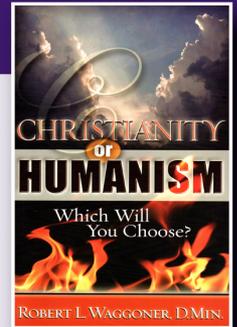
- For Humanists “moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is *antonymous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has importance because we create and develop our futures” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Third).

# Humanistic Ethics



- “Traditional moral codes...fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow.”
- “We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction.” (Humanist Manifesto II)
- Humanist ethics is determined by individual and collective human experience, by reason, and by human intelligence.

# Humanistic Ethics

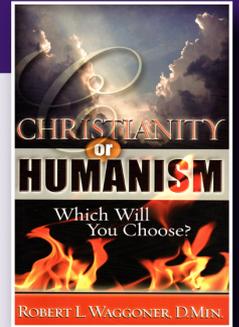


**Humanists determine ethical standards by reason and intelligence.**

**“For secular humanists, ethical conduct is, or should be judged by critical reason, and their goal is to develop autonomous and responsible individuals, capable of making their own choices in life based upon an understanding of human behavior.”**

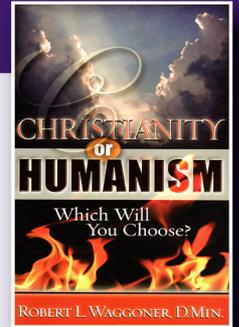
**- *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 4.**

# Humanism Ethics Quotes



- “Humanism is an ethical process through which we all can move, above and beyond the divisive particulars, heroic personalities, dogmatic creeds, and ritual customs of past religions or their mere negation” (Humanist Manifesto II, p. 15).

# Humanistic Ethics



## **Humanist ethics must conform to whatever brings happiness.**

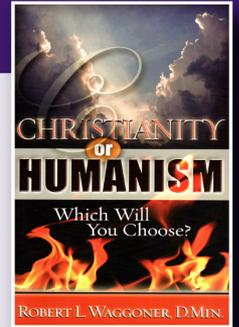
“Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes of humanism.”

*(Humanist Manifesto II, Third).*

Since happiness relates not only to individuals, but also to groups, it has social importance. Humanist “philosophers have emphasized the need to cultivate an appreciation for the requirements of social justice and for an individual’s obligations and responsibilities toward others.”

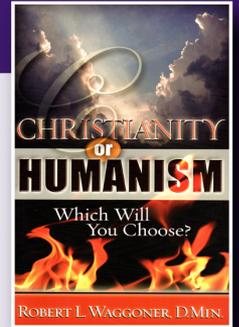
*(A Secular Humanist Declaration, 4).*

# Humanism Ethics Quotes



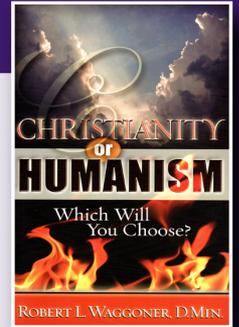
- “As secular humanists we believe in the central importance of the value of human happiness here and now. We are opposed to Absolutist morality, yet we maintain that objective standards emerge, and ethical values and principles may be discovered in the course of ethical deliberation” (Paul Kurtz, *Free Inquiry* 1.1).

# Humanism Ethics Quotes



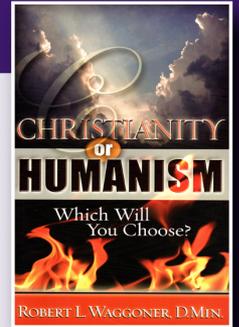
- “We base our ethical decisions and ideals upon human needs and concerns as opposed to the alleged needs and concerns of supposed deities or other transcendent entities or powers... We practice our ethics in a living context rather than an ideal one. Though ethics are ideals, ideals can only serve as guidelines in actual situations. This is why we oppose absolutist moral systems that attempt to rigidly apply ideal moral values as if the world were itself ideal” (Frederick Edwords, *The Humanist* 44:1).

# Humanism Ethics Quotes



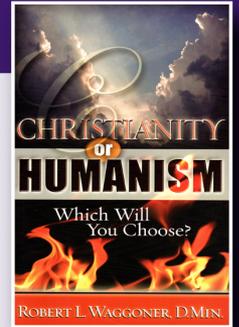
- “For Humanism no human acts are good or bad in or of themselves. Whether the act is good or bad is to be judged by its consequences for the individual and society...Humanist ethics draws its guiding principles from human experience and tests them in human experience” (Corliss Lamont).

# Humanistic Ethics



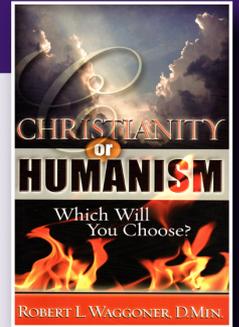
- Humanist ethics is pluralistic, that is, it has no single standard by which each person must determine his or her morality.
- This means that conflicting ethical standards may exist in societies that practice Humanist ethics.

# Humanistic Ethics



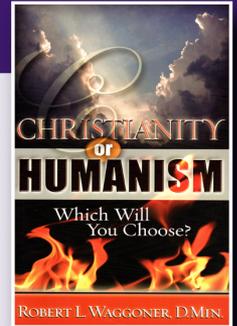
- Humanist ethics, being determined by individual preferences, has no ultimate foundation for law in society.
- The basis for law is whatever the community thinks is right. Whatever prevailing community standard is most powerful becomes the ethical basis for judging individual human behavior under the law.

# Humanistic Ethics



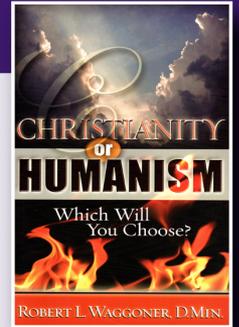
- Humanist morality does not recognize the existence of sin because there is no standard of righteousness beyond humanity that may be violated.
- Implications:
  - They suppress the truth (Romans 1:18).
  - Vain thinking, foolish hearts darkened (Romans 1:21).
  - God gave them up (Romans 1:24, 26, 28).

# Outcomes



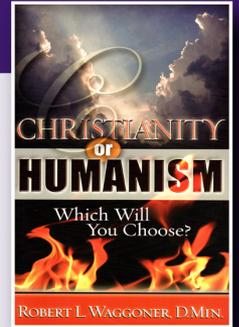
- “The ethical values of humanism are a grave threat to a society based on Christian ethical values. If fully implemented, the ethical values of humanism would completely destroy a society whose conduct is governed by Christian ethics. If the taking of God’s name in vain, the tell of falsehoods, the practice of adultery, or even the act of murder by abortion, euthanasia, or suicide is judged by an individual’s reasoning as necessary for his happiness, then, to fulfill his human heeds and desires or to solve some human problem, such conduct is considered ethical by humanists.”

# The Battle For The Mind



- Dr. Tim LaHaye in his book *The Battle For The Mind*:
  - Our present society is in a state of moral decay, not because the majority of Americans love degeneracy, but because the influence of humanism has been greater on our culture than the influence of Christianity” (189).

# Comparison



## *Biblical Theism*

Ethics, morals and values are absolute, constant, and fixed in scripture by God

**2 Timothy 3:15-17**

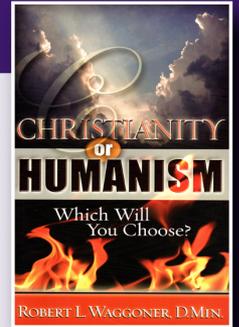
**2 Peter 1:3.**

## *Secular Humanism*

Humanists “affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological and ideological sanction.”

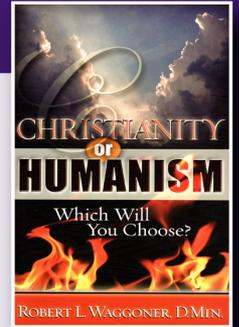
*(Humanist Manifesto II, Third)*

# Moral Absolutes



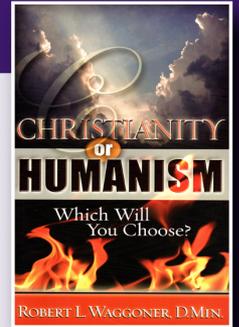
- Without absolutes, morals as morals cease to exist, and Humanistic man starting from himself has failed to find the absolute. But because the God of the Bible is there. real morals exist. Within this framework I can say one action is right and another wrong, without talking nonsense (**Francis Schaeffer**).

# Right and Wrong



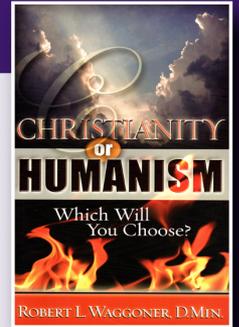
- Right and wrong are determined in relation to the will of God. Those things the Scriptures identify as sin are always wrong regardless of the circumstances.
- There are explicit statements in the-Bible which identify some things that are always right and some things that are always wrong.

# Sin



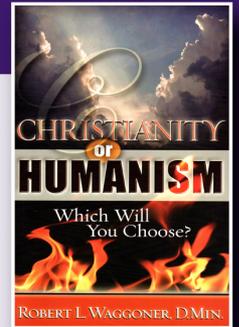
- There is such a thing as sin. “for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). ” All unrighteousness is sin” (5:17).
- Paul wrote two extensive lists of practices that will keep people from inheriting the kingdom of Heaven (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; cf. Rom 1:18-32).

# 1 Corinthians 6:13-20



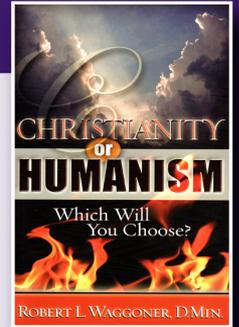
- God's Word explicitly opposes immorality:
  - 1 Our bodies are not for fornication, but for the Lord.
  - 2 Our bodies will be raised to eternal glory.
  - 3 Our bodies are members of Christ and must not be joined in the act of fornication.
  - 4 One who commits fornication sins against his own body.
  - 5 Our bodies have been bought with a price and must be used to glorify God.

# Right and Wrong



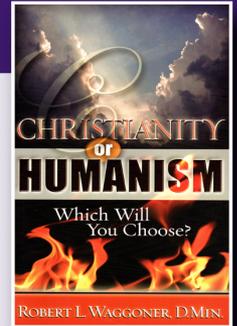
- The Bible specifies some things as always wrong and some things as always right. To the Ephesian saints Paul wrote a long list of things one should "put off" and things one should "put on" (Eph. 4:22-32).
- Contrariwise, there is no law against certain virtues: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal 5:22-23).

# Illustrations



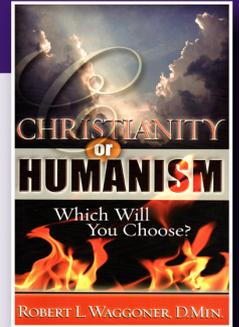
- Man always becomes morally corrupt when he abandons God and His standard.
- The time of the Israelite Judges well illustrates this truth: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).
- Paul's detailed description of the Gentiles' desertion of God and His guidance is also illustrative (Romans 1:18-32).

# General Bible Principles



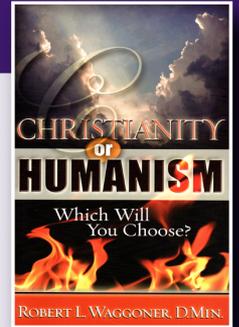
- In some cases, right and wrong must be determined by the application of general Biblical principles. God has not given detailed commands that specify all possible situations, but he has given principles that will enable us to distinguish good from evil.
- Hebrews 5:12-14
- Note: (1) "Milk" (the simpler truths) belongs to babes. (2) "Strong meat" (more complex truths) belongs to the mature. (3) This maturity comes as one applies God's Word to various situations in order to discern good and evil.

# No Specifics?



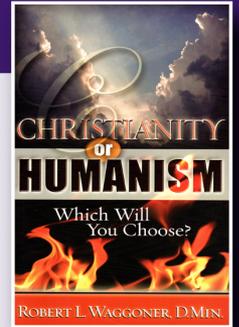
- What does one do when faced with a situation concerning which there is no explicit statement from God that gives specific directions concerning right or wrong?
- One should remember some general principles stated in God's Word.

# Principles



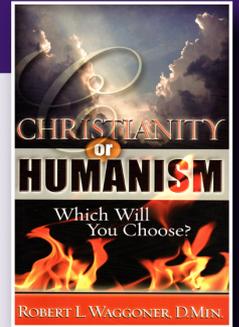
- "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).
- "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor 14:26).
- "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col 3:17).

# Principles



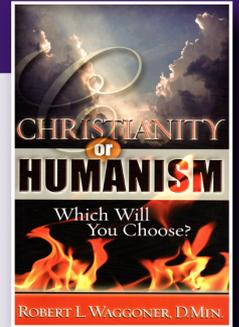
- One must-use his God-given senses to apply these principles to that particular situation , and thereby discern good and evil:
  - Can it-be done to God's glory?
  - Will it edify others or me?
  - Can it be done with the Lord's approval and by His authority?
- **See Handout**

# Two Options



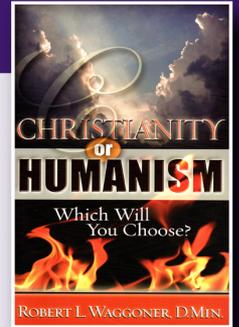
- *Theocentric*: Centered in an eternal source of goodness, namely, God.
- “To do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).
- All that God created was good (Gen 1:31). All that He does, commands, and approves is good (Ps 119:39, 68).
- The good therefore, is what God is, and what He has commanded results from what He is and is likewise good.

# Two Options



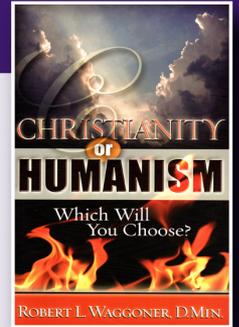
- *Anthropocentric*: Grounded in the mind of man – a creature who has naturally evolved from inanimate forces.
- If morality is man-authored, hence, man-centered, it is utterly impossible to argue for any system of ethics to which one could consistently urge his fellows to subscribe.
- Rather billions of ethical systems would exist – as many as there are people-each frequently at variance with the others, yet, oddly, each equally valid.

# Observations



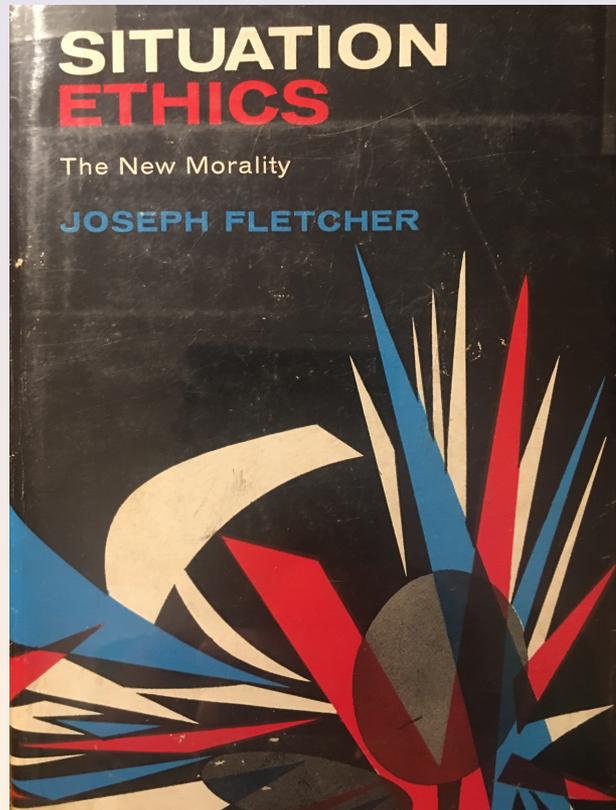
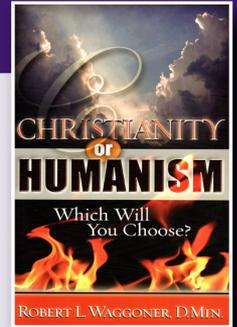
- 1. Human moral responsibility is based upon the fact that God is our creator and that we have been made in His image (Ps 100:3; Gen 1:26).
- 2. Since morality is grounded in the unchanging nature of God (Mal 3:6; 1 Pet 1:15), it is absolute – not cultural, not relative, not situational.
- 3. God’s will for human behavior is not a matter of subjective speculation which every man figures out for himself; rather Jehovah has spoken (Heb 1:1), and His Mind is made now in objective, biblical revelation (2 Tim 3:16-17).

# It All Depends...



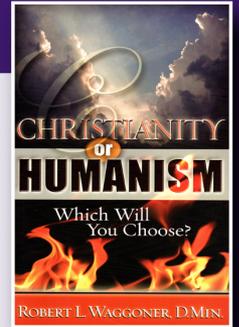
See Handout

# Situation Ethics Defined



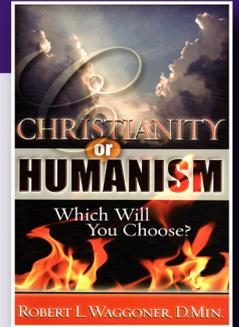
Definition: *"...the position that every significant moral decision has to be taken 'in the light of the circumstances'"*

# Situation Ethics



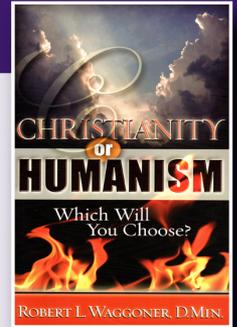
Situational Ethics, according to Fletcher's model, states that decision-making should be based upon the circumstances of a particular situation, and not upon fixed Law. The only absolute is Love. Love should be the motive behind every decision. As long as Love is your intention, the end justifies the means.

# Situation Ethics: It all Depends



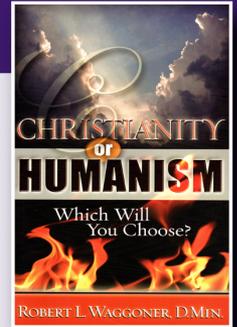
- “It all depends on the situation .... In some situations unmarried love could be infinitely more moral than married unlove. Lying could be more Christian than telling the truth. Stealing could be better than respecting private property. No action is good or right in itself. It depends on whether it hurts or helps people. whether or not it serves love's purpose-- understanding love to be personal concern--in the situation”(Joseph Fletcher *Moral Responsibility*)

# Situation Ethics Weaknesses



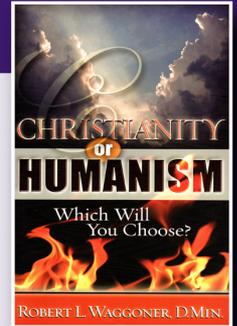
- It is not possible to determine the consequences of actions- how do we know the result will be the most loving for all concerned?
- To say no rules apply and yet to also say the only rule is love is a contradiction.
- Most ethical dilemmas offer an obvious course of action without resorting to Situationism.
- The theory justifies adultery, murder, and even genocide in the interests of love. Fletcher is guilty of calling good, what is in reality, evil.

# Situation Ethics Weaknesses



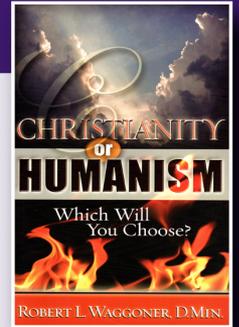
- Law and love are seen as mutually exclusive; Paul writes that love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10).
- Situationism assumes a sort of infallible omniscience that is always able to predict what the most loving course of action is.
- The ideology assumes that love is some sort of ambiguous, no-rule essence that is a cure-all for moral problems. At its extreme situationism is not substantially different from nihilism, for as Joseph Fletcher confesses: 'For the situationist there are no rules- none at all.'

# Situation Ethics Weaknesses



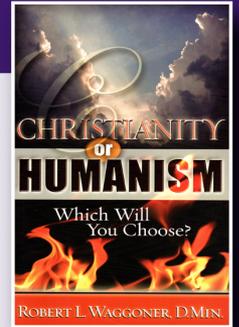
Fletcher's ethic is wrong because it separates God's law from love. We are morally obligated in every situation to do what love demands; however, the real royal law of Christian ethics is that we ought always to do what the God of love demands—not what we think love requires. We are not allowed to define love on our own. As fallen creatures, we routinely mistake our own opinions for what our Creator defines as love. But we dare not do that, for John says, "God is love," and therefore God alone determines what love is (1 John 4:8). If we would fulfill the Lord's command to love, we must look to His law to identify true love.

# The Right Thing To Do



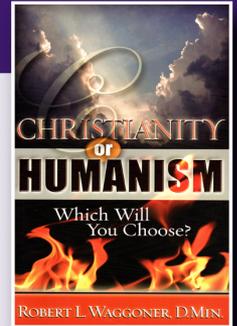
- “The Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes...for our good always” (Deuteronomy 6:24, emp. added; cf. 10:13). God never would ask us to do anything that is harmful to us. He does not restrict us nor exert His authority over us in order to purposely make us unhappy. Quite the opposite! God knows exactly what will make us happy. Compliance with His Word will make a person happy (John 13:17; James 1:25), exalted (James 4:10), righteous (Romans 6:16; 1 John 3:7), and wise (Matthew 24:45-46; 7:24).

# The Right Thing To Do



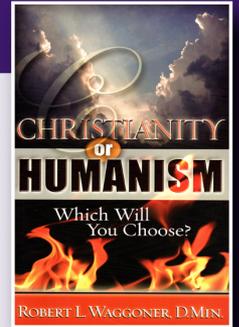
- Those who wish to relieve themselves of restriction will continue to invent ways to circumvent the intent of Scripture. They will continue to “twist” (2 Peter 3:16) and “handle the word of God deceitfully” (2 Corinthians 4:2). They will exert pressure on everyone else to “back off,” “lighten up,” and embrace a more tolerant understanding of ethical conduct. But the “honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15) will “take heed how [he/she] hears” (vs.18).

# The Right Thing To Do



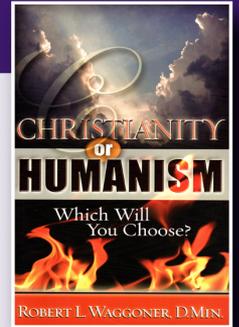
- Vast numbers of people are living life and making decisions based upon their own subjective perceptions and personal feelings. For them, the concepts of right and wrong, truth and error are obscure, blurred, hazy, gray, and complex. What is wrong in one situation may be right and acceptable in another. Satan has done his job well. He has made great strides in American culture in the last half century in his effort to break down biblical values and moral absolutes. He has succeeded in replacing this framework with a tolerant, open, permissive attitude and outlook that refrains from passing judgment on anybody or anything. The “I’m OK, You’re OK” perspective has been embedded firmly into American civilization (Dave Miller).

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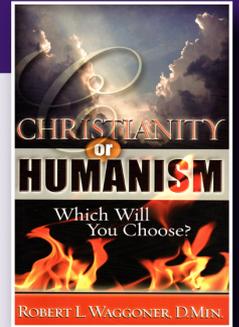
- The good heart is the one who “reads...hears...and keeps those things which are written therein” (Revelation 1:3, emp. added). After all, no matter how negative they may appear to humans, no matter how difficult they may be to obey, they are given “for our good.”
- The Bible simply does not countenance situation ethics. Jesus always admonished people to “keep the commandments” (e.g., Matthew 19:17). He kept God’s commands Himself—perfectly (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26). And He is “the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9).

# Contrast



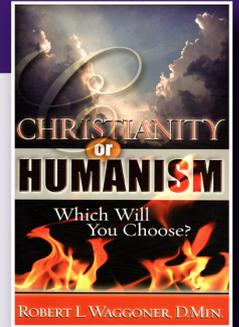
- Christian ethics is absolute, constant, fixed by God, and objective.
- Humanist ethics is relative, situational, autonomous, and subjective.

# Contrast



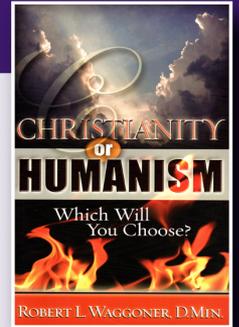
- Christian ethics emphasizes responsibilities because it is based on ethical values of love toward God and man;
- Humanist ethics emphasizes rights because it relates to selfish desires of individuals.

# Contrast



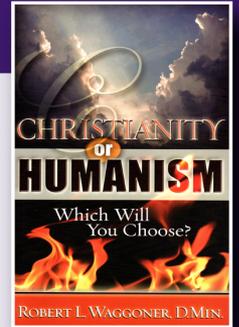
- Christian ethics finds freedom in divine authority;
- Humanist ethics seeks freedom from divine authority.
- Christian ethics expects humanity to learn from God what is true and good;
- Humanist ethics expects everyone to make personal decisions to determine what is true and good.

# Contrast



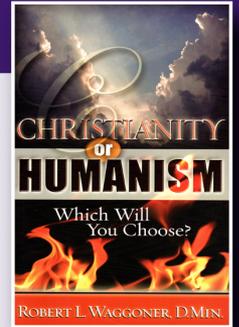
- Christian ethics expects humanity to act according to God's standard of righteousness;
- Humanist ethics expects humanity to act according to personal or prevailing social standards.

# Contrast



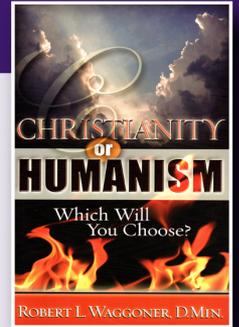
- Christian ethics constitutes a standard of divine "oughtness" by which everyone is judged by their fellow human beings and by God;
- Humanist ethics constitutes personal standards which, when carried to their logical conclusions, may allow tyrants and criminals to absolve themselves, in their own minds, from "all wrong-doing."

# Contrast



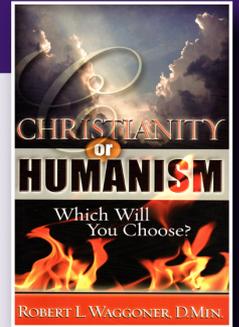
- Christian ethics has an essential purpose to life--to glorify God and to serve fellow human beings. This purpose is grounded in the unchanging character of God.
- On the other hand, Humanist ethics has no essential purpose to life, since human life is thought to result from accidental evolutionary chance. This lack of purpose is grounded in the presumed evolutionary nature of mankind

# Christian Ethics - Superior



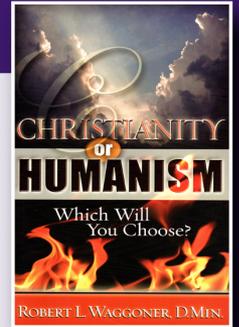
- Christian ethics is inherently harmonious; Humanist ethics produces tensions.
- Christian ethics succeeds as a foundation for building an abiding society; Humanist ethics does not.
- Christian ethics requires personal responsibility toward others; Humanist ethics does not.
- Christian ethics has grounds for establishing truth and goodness; Humanist ethics has no authoritative foundation for establishing truth or goodness.

# Demonstrate Christian Values



- **Demonstrate godly manners, morals, and values**, in both speech and behavior on all occasions with all persons.
- **Be compassionate**, individually and collectively, toward the poor and oppressed. The grace of God must flow through Christians to voluntarily assist the needy, both physically and spiritually.
- **Operate within the law**, unless it conflicts with the word of God.

# Absolutist



- “Christian ethics is firmly absolutist. It is based on the character of an unchanging God “who cannot lie” (Titus 1:2, NEB). It is manifest in God’s law which "cannot be broken”(John 10:35, NIV) and in the person of Jesus Christ who “is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8, NEB) Total relativism, therefore, is no option for a Christian. To be realistic, however, we must acknowledge that we live in a relativistic age. “Absolutism” is for most an archaic and untenable concept” (Norman Geisler).