

# Introduction to Situation Ethics

1. **What** is situation ethics?
2. **How** does situation ethics work?
3. **Why** is situation ethics important?

## 1. **What** is situation ethics?

The field of ethics has three branches: normative ethics, meta-ethics, and applied ethics; situation ethics is located in the first of them, and is one of several different normative ethical theories. Additionally, it is a teleological ethical theory, which means its adherents are concerned with the consequences of actions rather than the actions themselves. To understand situation ethics, it is necessary to understand where it is located in the field of ethics. Write definitions for "normative ethics" and "situation ethics".

### Normative Ethics

### Situation Ethics

## 2. **How** does situation ethics work?

Situation ethics works similarly to rule utilitarianism because it requires moral agents to follow agreed rules unless the circumstances of a specific situation mean that breaking a rule will likely lead to a more loving outcome. However, it differs from rule utilitarianism because situation ethicists pursue actions that are likely to produce the most loving results (i.e. the most agape) instead of those they figure will create the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Write a definition for "agape".

### Agape

Situation ethics attempts to avoid the pitfalls and problems of two ethical traditions: legalism and antinomianism. Although these two terms can be applied in different ways depending on the context, in Christianity, legalism is widely understood as the belief that salvation requires adherence to the Old Testament's moral laws. Contrastingly, antinomianism is the belief that salvation does not require such adherence because it has already been freely given through Jesus's death. Make a note of the difference between legalism and antinomianism.

## Legalism and Antinomianism

### Legalism

### Antinomianism

In some unusual or unpredictable situations, legalism can lead to evil or unloving outcomes. However, the apparently undirected antinomian approach to ethical decision-making is also problematic because it expects moral action to be guided by the Holy Spirit's inner working. Situation ethics attempts to resolve the conflict between legalism and antinomianism by promoting ethical decision-making that respects established rules but allows room for manoeuvre in particular situations. Make a note about how situation ethics works.

## How Situation Ethics Works

### 3. **Why** is situation ethics important?

Situation ethics is an important normative ethical theory for various reasons, including the fact that it is Christian, consequentialist, and contextual. It has been particularly influential in liberal Christian churches. Make a note of three reasons why situation ethics is important.

## Why Situation Ethics Is Important

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