

Ethics

Applied Ethics

Social Ethics

Script Booklet

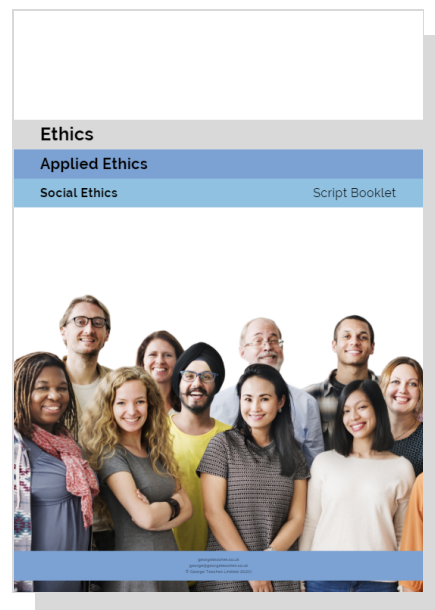


Preface

This script booklet is all about social ethics. It is a series of presentation scripts that survey the important elements of this complex and ever evolving branch of applied ethics, including significant concepts and issues (like sexism, racism, and ableism), the ideas of well-known thinkers (like Martin Luther King Jr and Joni Eareckson Tada), and debates in social ethics. Additionally, it covers the legal, social, and religious perspectives (in Christianity and Judaism) on the various issues arising from social ethics. It is designed to interest, inform, and inspire further independent enquiry among students.

This script booklet follows the presentation available at George Teaches, and is designed for use in conjunction with it. It is accompanied by an information booklet and work booklet, which can be used to support teaching and learning. Additional materials on Martin Luther King Jr and Joni Eareckson Tada can be accessed online, which comprehensively summarise their famous works on social ethics. Throughout this script booklet, interpuncts (•) are used to indicate forward presentation transitions, and presentation images are used to visualise areas the content covers.

I am deeply indebted to my colleagues for the production of this publication, which has been inspired by their desire for more extensive and holistic resources for teaching and learning about ethics. At all times, I have attempted to produce material that covers popular and important content, but is not confined by the straitjacket of any particular curriculum or specification. Consequently, whilst this covers all of the relevant content for social ethics (including social issues) at A Level, it goes far beyond. My earnest hope is that it is capable of helping teachers to both support students of all abilities and challenge the most able to embark upon their own self-directed enquiries. Above all, it is my sincerest wish that it proves beneficial to your teaching, and the learning that you (like me) try to inspire among all your students.



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3

Introduction to Social Ethics

Hi! This lesson is an introduction to social ethics. Unlike other areas of applied ethics (like animal ethics or environmental ethics), social ethics is something of a hotchpotch or mixed bag, and the term itself isn't widely used. In fact, I'm using the term somewhat idiosyncratically myself, which is a posh way of saying "individually" (or, "in my own individual way"). In brief, what I mean by the term "social ethics" is the way that normative ethical theories and fundamental philosophical principles are applied in society. There are, of course, plenty of different theories and principles, but the one of central importance to this topic is the principle of equality, or the idea that similar things (in this case human beings) should be treated similarly. This may seem like an obvious and easily applied principle to you and me, but, as we're about to discover, the principle of equality has been the source of a great deal of controversy since it was first formulated. Anyway, over the course of this lesson we're going to consider some of these issues and much more, including: one, what social ethics is and how it's approached; two, how the approaches work; and three, why social ethics and its approaches are important.

• So, without further ado, what is social ethics and how is it approached? • Well, first we're going to locate it within the field of ethics, which has three major branches: • applied ethics, • meta-ethics, • and normative ethics. • Social ethics is a branch of applied ethics, and is located alongside others like • animal ethics, • business ethics, • and sexual ethics, although there are plenty of others. • What defines applied ethics is its concern with how to put ethical theories into practice in the real world. It's practical! By comparison, meta-ethics and normative ethics are abstract and theoretical. By

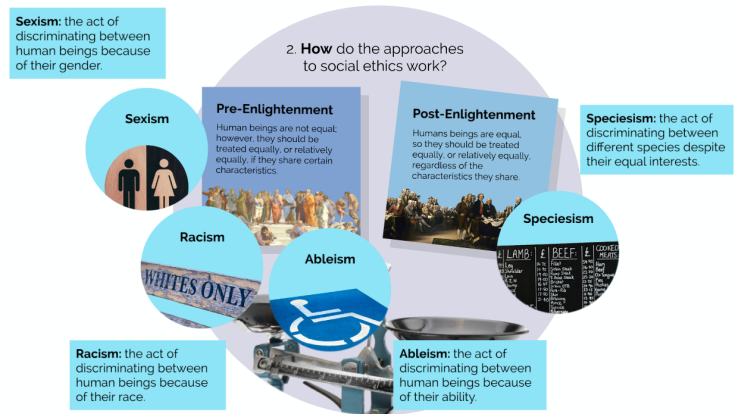
way of very brief explanation, meta-ethics is concerned with investigating whether or not morality even exists, that is to say whether or not the words "right" and "wrong" actually mean anything; assuming they do, normative ethics is concerned with investigating how to decide whether an action is right or wrong (and the different ways of doing this). As we can see, both these branches are deeply theoretical. On the other hand, applied ethics deals with real-world situations: how to treat animals, how to treat customers, how to treat sexual partners, and, of course, how to treat different people in society. • Which brings us nicely to our working definition of social ethics: a branch of applied ethics concerned with the moral status of human beings in society (in other words, their value and rights (if any)) and how we should interact with one another. • Now, the extent to which different people in society have value and rights is largely dictated by a philosophical principle that isn't directly related to social ethics: the principle of equality; • or, as Aristotle put it, the logical need to treat like cases as like (or similar things similarly) unless there is sufficient reason not to. This principle gives rise to three different interpretations of how to administer equality, or treat people equally: • numerical equality (which requires equal treatment of similar people); • proportional equality (which allows different treatment of similar people to achieve equality between them); • and moral equality (which requires equal treatment of different people (in other words, treating all people the same despite their differences)). • The first two interpretations influenced the pre-Enlightenment approach to social ethics, which is the idea that human beings aren't equal, but should be treated the same way if they share certain characteristics, like • gender, • race, • or ability. In practice, this means that all people of one gender, race, or ability level can be treated one way, and people of another gender, race, or ability level can be treated a different way, and the principle of equality can still be satisfied (that is, like cases are treated as like). • When combined with the first two interpretations, the third, moral equality, influenced the post-Enlightenment approach to social ethics; this is the idea that human beings are equal (by virtue of being human), so should all be treated equally (either numerically or proportionally) regardless of characteristics. Truth be told, there's actually still a characteristic in play here that demands the equal treatment of all human beings to satisfy the principle of equality, • but this time it's not gender, race, or ability, it's being human.

• So, how do the approaches to social ethics work? Well, we know what they are: • pre-Enlightenment and • post-Enlightenment. Fundamentally, the pre-Enlightenment approach relies on the belief that differences between people based on characteristics like gender, race, and ability are sufficient to justify different treatment of different people despite the fact they're human. This approach justifies famous forms of discrimination, • like sexism (• which

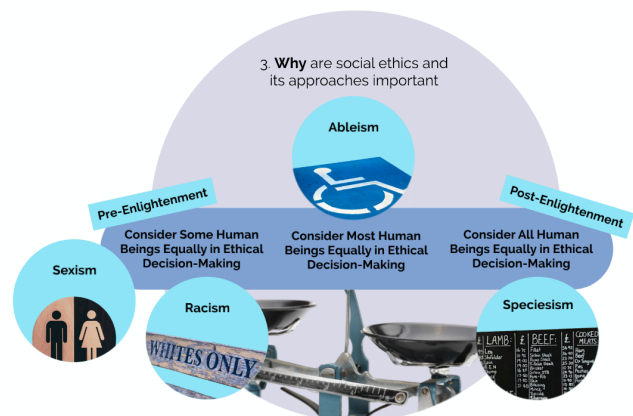


is the act of discriminating between people because of their gender); • racism (• which is the act of discriminating between people because of their race); • and ableism (• which is the act of discriminating between people because of their ability). Now, words like sexism, racism, and ableism are loaded, by which I mean they have a lot of ideas and opinions attached to them. Today, these types of discrimination are widely repudiated as wrong, which raises a big question: why did almost everyone think they were acceptable until the Enlightenment? The answer's

straightforward but sometimes a little difficult to grasp, because it requires radically rethinking how we typically understand equality today. In brief, up until the Enlightenment (albeit with a few notable exceptions), people didn't think of others as fundamentally equal. Instead, they thought of people from the same characteristic-based category as fundamentally equal, like all men (and they were generally considered sufficiently different from all women, so entitled to different rights); or all white people (and they were generally considered sufficiently different from all black people, so entitled to different rights); or all able-bodied people (and, again, they were generally considered sufficiently different from all disabled people, so entitled to different rights). This isn't how many people think today, but back then they ultimately accepted that differences between people based on characteristics were sufficient and significant enough to justify different treatment despite similar species membership (or shared humanity). The Enlightenment changed this, by emphasising a different form of discrimination: • speciesism (• which is the act of discriminating between species despite their equal interests). In brief, ideas about equality changed: being human began to justify equal treatment, and people started to consider sexism, racism, and ableism unacceptable. An important development to be sure, but one that still excluded animals from consideration in ethical decision-making (which precipitated many of the issues that animal ethics attempts to address).



•• This leaves us with only one thing left to contemplate, why social ethics and its approaches are important, • and we're going to use this continuum to help us. On the left, we have one position that's taken in ethical decision-making regarding other people in society: consider some human beings equally in ethical decision-making, which means most people are treated unequally. In the middle we have another position: consider most human beings equally in ethical decision-making, although this means people from particularly small minorities are treated unequally.



And on the right we have our final position: consider all human beings equally in ethical decision-making. • Sexism and • racism involve the unequal treatment of up to half the population of a society despite the shared humanity of all people (in extreme cases, like South Africa under apartheid, more than half the population of a society may be subject to unequal treatment). • And ableism involves the unequal treatment of some members of society. • All three of these types of discrimination, along with many others, are inspired by the pre-Enlightenment approach to social ethics, which is justified by a particular interpretation of the principle of equality (namely, that people with different characteristics are fundamentally dissimilar because of these characteristics, rather than fundamentally similar because of their shared humanity). • On the other hand, speciesism involves the equal treatment of all human beings, • and is inspired by the post-Enlightenment approach to social ethics, which is justified by the belief that all human beings are fundamentally equal because they're human (good for humans, of course, but bad for animals).

•• That brings us to the end of this introduction to social ethics; now you know what it is, how it's approached, and why it's important. As I emphasised at the beginning, it's all about how we interpret the principle of equality, and even though its reinterpretation during the Enlightenment has led to increasingly equal treatment for human beings, there's still a significant hangover from the pre-Enlightenment period, and much of the progress has been slow. So, please go away and ponder this important principle, because how it's interpreted is at the root of almost all the important issues in social ethics. And on that earnest note, goodbye!

Issues in Social Ethics

Hi! This lesson is all about issues in social ethics. Broadly speaking, issues are areas of debate, but in this context the areas of debate are widely acknowledged as problems that need solutions. In other words, in most Western societies, people largely agree that the issues we're going to consider are wrong, where they sometimes disagree is on how to go about righting them. In brief, the way most societies work involves discriminating between groups of people all the time (usually with good reason, like discriminating between adults and children when issuing driving licences). (I'm using the word "discriminate" in the literal sense here, meaning "to distinguish between".)

Nevertheless, this process opens the door to differential treatment, which can pave the way to societies treating some groups more favourably than others (which, of course, leads to the pejorative meaning of "discriminate": "to unfairly distinguish between"). Anyway, this is the sort of thing we're going to be thinking about over the course of this lesson, along with what the key issues are, how they're approached, and what the consequences of these approaches are (in other words, why they're important).

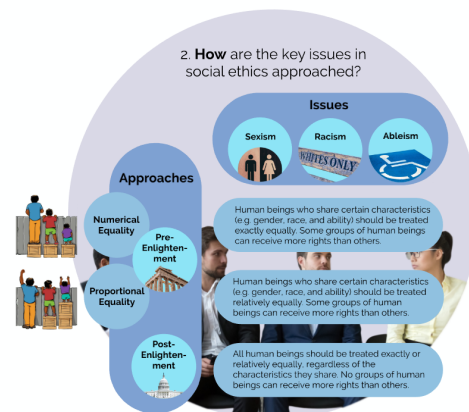
• So, without further ado, what are the key issues in social ethics? There are, of course, quite a few, but we're going to focus on three in particular.

• The first is sexism, which is the issue of discriminating between human beings because of their gender, and providing different treatment on this basis. It's widely accepted as wrong when the differential treatment is disadvantageous to one gender group, and, in Western societies, women have almost always been on the receiving end of it. • Famous examples include women's suffrage, which is the term for women's right to vote.

Historically, this right was denied to women in most Western societies until the twentieth century, which prevented their interests from being properly represented. • Likewise, the gender pay gap continues to disadvantage women today, with men earning more than women in most Western societies (sometimes for doing the same job). • The second issue is racism, which involves discriminating between human beings because of their race, and providing different treatment on this basis. In Western societies, black people have often been victims of racism; however, people from other racial minorities have also been targeted. • Arguably the most famous examples of racism are slavery, which denied black people the right to freedom, • and Jim Crow laws, which were used in the United States to oppress black people after the abolition of slavery. • The third issue is ableism, which involves discriminating between human beings because of their ability, and providing different treatment on this basis. In Western societies, physically or mentally disabled people have almost exclusively been discriminated against because of their conditions. • Most famously, the Nazi regime killed disabled adults and children, a process termed "involuntary euthanasia"; and before you say Nazi Germany is an extreme example, the United States also considered involuntary euthanasia as a response to disability during the twentieth century.

• Our next question is how the key issues in social ethics are approached, and we're going to use a table to help us answer it. • The issues we've just considered are along the top (sexism, racism, and ableism), • and the approaches from the introduction are down the side (pre-Enlightenment, involving either numerical equality or proportional equality, and post-Enlightenment).

• Now, the pre-Enlightenment approach (which is largely derided these days) either involves treating all human beings who share certain characteristics exactly equally, • or treating all human beings who share certain characteristics relatively equally. In both cases though, the most important point is this: people are only entitled to the same treatment as others who share similar characteristics with them (like gender, race, and ability).



• Now, the difference between numerical equality and proportional equality isn't immediately obvious, so we're going to look at a famous American cartoon that's used to visualise the distinction. • This is numerical equality: all three men are trying to peer over a fence to watch a baseball game, and each one gets given a box to stand on (in other words, all three are treated exactly equally). The only problem is that the man on the left doesn't need a box and the man on the right needs more than one. • Hence the need for proportional equality, in which the three men are treated relatively equally: they all want to watch the game of baseball, and are given the number of boxes required to see over the fence based on their individual need. Now, even though proportional equality is arguably a fairer interpretation of the principle of equality than numerical equality, this cartoon remains an illustration of the pre-Enlightenment approach to social ethics because you're only entitled to receive any boxes at all if you're a man (there aren't any women watching this baseball game). In other words, different groups of people have different rights, based entirely on their characteristics; and it's this approach that justified denying all women the right to vote, most black people the right to freedom, and some disabled people the right to life. • On the other hand, the post-Enlightenment approach is inspired by the notion of moral equality, and maintains that everyone should be treated exactly or relatively equally, regardless of the characteristics they share. Importantly, no groups of people can receive more rights than others, so issues like sexism, racism, and ableism shouldn't arise. And yet, in our post-Enlightenment world (some two hundred years after the Enlightenment ended), discrimination based on gender, race, ability, and many other characteristics continues to occur.

• This brings us to our final question: why are the approaches to the key issues in social ethics important? For me, the obvious answer is that these approaches affect what societies look like, and whether or not they're the sorts of places in which, as the Americans put it, everyone gets a fair shake (or the same treatment). And, despite the fact the Enlightenment happened a long time ago, some of its important lessons still don't appear to have been learned. • This is primarily because the pre-Enlightenment approach to social ethics, and the notions of numerical equality and proportional equality, go back to antiquity: it was perfectly natural to Plato, Aristotle, and their contemporaries that you didn't need to treat native Athenians the same as immigrants, or men the same as women, or the so-called "free born" the same as slaves. Of course, there was still debate about how to interpret the principle of equality (does it require exactly equal treatment or relatively equal treatment), but people weren't considered to be one another's equals.

• Despite the spread of Christianity, and the idea that everyone is equal in the eyes of God, the notion of moral equality (that everyone should be treated equally by virtue of being human) had to wait until the Enlightenment. And the image of the Enlightenment I've chosen here is the United States Capitol, because the US was founded during the Enlightenment, influenced by its principles, and articulated the notion of moral equality in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Of course, the United States has conspicuously failed to treat its citizens equally, at least by the standards of other Western societies, • so sexism, • ableism, • and racism have continued to occur there. Consequently, I've placed the Riksdag, or Swedish parliament, to the extreme right (of course, no country is perfect, but Sweden is lauded around the world as a beacon of moral equality) • even if speciesism still occurs there. • Beyond this, there are three other reasons why issues in social ethics and how they're approached are important. • One, they're ubiquitous, they affect a huge number of people. • Two, they're underestimated: the far-reaching consequences of unequal treatment are often ignored. • And three, they're unfair: issues in social ethics like sexism, racism, and ableism reveal that societies must continue to improve their treatment of certain groups of people if they are to satisfy the principle of equality.

• That brings us to the end of our quick survey of important issues in social ethics. Now you know what they are, how they're approached, and why the approaches to them are important. Hopefully it's got you thinking about how different interpretations of the principle of equality and approaches to social ethics have played out in the past, and the horrific effects that have not infrequently come to pass. And hopefully it's got you thinking about how some of these issues continue to blight societies today, and how the hangover of the pre-Enlightenment approach to social ethics has proved particularly difficult to recover from (even for countries like the United States which were founded on its egalitarian principles). And on that contentious note, goodbye!



Martin Luther King Jr on Racism

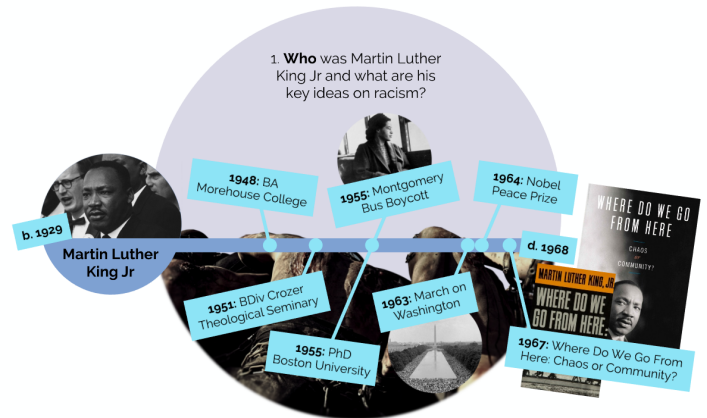
Hi! This lesson is an investigation into Martin Luther King Jr's key ideas on racism, which is one of the most significant issues in social ethics. They may be ideas you already know about, because Martin Luther King Jr's words and actions remain incredibly famous; but, even if you know a lot about him, there may still be one or two things that surprise you. Like the fact he championed the War on Poverty as a civil rights issue, even though, back in the 1960s, the vast majority of America's poor were white. In brief, Martin Luther King Jr's ideas form a strong argument in support of mass nonviolent protest as the best means of eradicating racism, and they provide a plan for transforming the lives of ordinary citizens in the United States and around the world regardless of their race.

•• So, without further ado, who was Martin Luther King Jr and what are his key ideas? •• Well, he was born in 1929 in the United States, and attended Ebenezer Baptist Church from an early age, where his father was the pastor. Owing to the Second World War, Morehouse College lowered its age of admission; • this allowed him to graduate with a BA in sociology at the age of 19, • before following in his father's footsteps and earning a BDiv from Crozer Theological Seminary in 1951. 1955 was an important year for Martin Luther King Jr, • because he received his PhD from Boston University, • and

successfully led the Montgomery bus boycott against racial segregation on public buses. This protest lasted over a year, and transformed him into a national figure; he used this fame to found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organisation he led for the rest of his life. The next decade involved nonviolent protest against racial discrimination across the Southern United States, • culminating in the March on Washington (where he delivered his famous speech, "I Have a Dream") • and his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. • In 1967, he wrote about these experiences in *Where Do We Go From Here*, • which was reissued in 2010. • It was the last book he wrote before his assassination in 1968. • So, what are Martin Luther King Jr's key ideas on racism? Well, there are three important ones that we're going to look at now. • First, the idea that racism is deeply ingrained, largely because of the legacy of slavery. • Second, the idea that racism is imperilled, as long as good people resist it through nonviolent protest. • Third, the idea that racism is interconnected with a number of other social issues, especially economic exploitation and poverty. According to Martin Luther King Jr, if poverty can be eradicated, then racism will go with it.

•• So, how do Martin Luther King Jr's key ideas work? • Well, in order to answer that question, we're going to dive into *Where Do We Go From Here*, • which was reissued in a new edition in 2010. •••• First, Martin Luther King Jr identified a split personality at work in the founding of the United States: on the one hand, professing democratic ideals, and on the other hand, practising slavery (and later, segregation). • It's this split personality that makes racism so deep-rooted. •• And it's this deep-rooted nature that leads to white backlashes against any progress

that gets made, • because white Americans have historic preconceptions about black Americans • that are based on the rationalisation of slavery. Martin Luther King Jr provides examples elsewhere, pointing at the support that businesses, universities and even churches all gave to slavery with convoluted arguments to justify it. •• He argued that racism is a "congenital deformity" (or, genetic disease), which has been inherited from the Founding Fathers. • This fact, Martin Luther King Jr argued, means that racism is accepted by many white Americans. ••• In fact, this acceptance undermines the idea that the dominant ideology of the United States is freedom and equality rather than racism and discrimination. ••• In brief, racism is so ingrained in the United States, because it was instituted and protected from the very birth of the American nation. •• Despite the deep-rooted nature of racism, Martin Luther

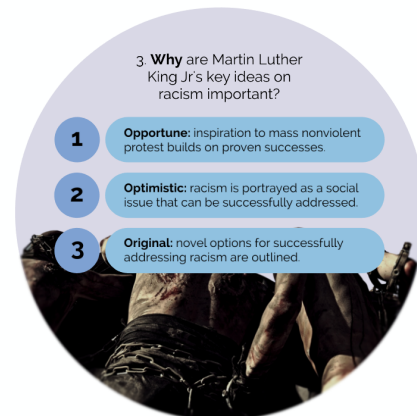


King Jr's second key idea is that racism is imperilled (as long as good people are prepared to do something about it). •• The fourth of five challenges that black Americans face is just this, to do something about racial discrimination; specifically, to unite around powerful action programmes (which is code for nonviolent protest). • This is a challenge, because racism will not remain imperilled if good people do nothing; • quite the contrary, the evil of racism will only be eradicated by the daily assault of the "battering rams of justice". ••• Moving on, Martin Luther King Jr argued that racists use all the time they have available to them to frustrate equality, • whilst most black Americans and their allies wait passively for progress. •• He argued that this approach is inadequate, • along with the idea that making ethical appeals alone will bring about racial equality. • According to Martin Luther King Jr, pressure, in the form of nonviolent protest, is essential if the campaign to eradicate racism is to be successful. ••• This is the message that he repeatedly reiterates, • together with the injunction that black Americans must assume the primary responsibility for exerting this pressure. ••• So, here we have the fundamentally optimistic idea that racism is imperilled, and Martin Luther King Jr was clear on this matter: unlike the Black Power movement, which he charged with defeatism, he claimed that racial equality would eventually become reality. But, and it's a big "but", there is a catch; according to Martin Luther King Jr, powerful forms of nonviolent protest are required to eradicate racism, just like the forms he used in mass boycotts and marches from Montgomery to Mississippi. •• His third and final key idea is outlined here, where he argues that racism is interconnected with economic exploitation and poverty, and that directly tackling these problems (even though they affect more white Americans than black Americans) will effectively eradicate racism. •• He stated that a myriad of different civil rights programmes were proposed during the first half of the twentieth century, • but argued that only one, which targets poverty, merited close examination in *Where Do We Go From Here*. ••• Up until the 1960s, he argued, poverty was understood as a combination of multiple evils, including low levels of education, limited employment opportunities, and dysfunctional family life, •• and that poverty could be effectively eradicated by tackling each of these evils in turn. •• But this approach is undermined by its uncoordinated nature, because it requires so many different interventions; •• consequently, it has never satisfied the needs of the poor, • because it doesn't tackle poverty head on. • According to Martin Luther King Jr, the simplest option is a guaranteed income (or universal wage), paid to all citizens by the state with the aim of lifting everyone out of poverty (a programme he wanted to see extended around the world). ••• It's in this section that we can see the germ of a very big idea: yes, racism is ingrained; yes, it is imperilled (as long as good people resist it through nonviolent protest); but what should they be protesting for? Here, Martin Luther King Jr claimed that good people should campaign for the eradication of poverty, because it is so interconnected with racism (among other things); that is where we should go from here.

•• This brings us to why Martin Luther King Jr's key ideas on racism are important, and I've got three suggestions. • First, they're opportune, or at least they were; when he wrote, his ideas about racism and the power of nonviolent protest had already been demonstrated around the world (most famously in India by Mahatma Gandhi). • Second, they're optimistic. Whilst we haven't looked at what Martin Luther King Jr had to say about the Black Power movement, it isn't complimentary. He believed they were resigned to a future in which black Americans had more power but were still

essentially segregated from their white neighbours. Martin Luther King Jr didn't share this view; he looked forward to a more positive vision of American integration and full racial equality. • Third, they're original: the link that Martin Luther King Jr identified between poverty and racism wasn't widely acknowledged in the 1960s, and his support for a guaranteed income paid by the state to every citizen was both streaks ahead of its time and an incredibly novel solution to tackling the social issues that allow racism to persist.

•• That brings us to the end of this investigation into Martin Luther King Jr, and the last work he published during his lifetime. I find it a really enlightening read, because whilst it's primarily focused on revealing the reasons for the racism that black Americans face, and providing constructive responses to it, it simultaneously looks beyond the Civil Rights Movement to an even more pervasive inequality: that between rich and poor. Martin Luther King Jr was on the money when he pin-pointed the interconnection between poverty and discrimination (racial or otherwise), and he raised big questions about how a just society should spend its resources. Of course, you don't have to agree, but it would seem better to spend money on the poor rather than war. And on that political note, goodbye!



Joni Eareckson Tada on Ableism

Hi! This lesson is an investigation into Joni Eareckson Tada's key ideas on ableism, which involves discriminating between human beings because of their ability, and providing different treatment on this basis. You may already know about her, because she's an incredibly famous inspirational speaker; but, even if you do, there could still be one or two things about her attitude to ableism that surprise you. In brief, Joni Eareckson Tada's ideas form a strong argument against ableism; however, not so much because it's ethically wrong (although doubtless she thinks it is), but because it stems from ignorant cultural biases, and because disability can provide opportunities. Before we go any further though, a word of caution: not everyone agrees with Joni Eareckson Tada, because her key ideas are heavily influenced by her Christian faith. But, even if you don't necessarily accept the religious beliefs behind her opinions, I hope you will at least agree with me that she's an amazing and inspiring human being.

•• So, without further ado, who is Joni Eareckson Tada and what are her key ideas? •• Well, she was born in 1949 in the United States, • and arguably the defining moment of her life occurred in 1967, when she had a diving accident at the age of 17. This left her paralysed from the shoulders down, something she struggled to come to terms with over several years of punishing physical and occupational therapy, which was designed to provide her with as much independence as possible. In her occupational therapy, Joni Eareckson Tada was taught how to draw and paint

with her mouth; • and, in 1974, her extraordinary artwork was featured on The Today Show with Barbara Walters. • This event inspired her to document her experiences in *Joni: An Unforgettable Story*, the bestseller originally published in 1976. This work covered her rehabilitation and the evolution of her Christian faith, • which led her to establish *Joni and Friends* in 1979 (her ministry to the disabled). This ministry has been incredibly successful, and includes a number of practical initiatives to support disabled people, • such as the International Disability Center (which opened its doors in 1997), • and *Wheels for the World* (which had delivered over 100,000 reconditioned wheelchairs to less economically developed countries by 2014, and is continuing to provide disabled people with greater independence). • So, what are Joni Eareckson Tada's key ideas on ableism? Well, they're not always obvious, because her work is autobiographical rather than academic, but we're going to pick out three that shine through in *Joni: An Unforgettable Story*. • First, the idea that ableism is, sadly, part of mainstream culture in most societies. • Second, the idea that ableism is exacerbated by its ability to hide in plain sight (in various different ways). • Third, the idea that ableism is presumptuous; it's based on incorrect assumptions about the quality of life that disabled people experience, ones that Joni Eareckson Tada's life story expose in all their intellectual laziness.

•• So, how do Joni Eareckson Tada's key ideas work? • Well, in order to answer that question, we're going to have a look at her inspiring autobiography, *Joni: An Unforgettable Story*, • which was reissued in a 25 year anniversary edition in 2001. ••• First, she relays a conversation with her longtime friend and fellow Christian, Steve Estes, ••• in which he reminds her of the value that God places on her during a conversation a couple of years after her diving accident, • before telling her that he thinks she's hung up on her self-image, or the way she sees herself. • Joni Eareckson Tada doesn't know what he means, • but he tells her that she's always putting herself down. •• Something she reluctantly acknowledges to be true, because she's always comparing herself to healthy attractive people who aren't confined to wheelchairs. • Steve Estes tells her not to allow society to determine her value, because it sets unattainable standards (even for people who aren't disabled). •• Instead, he tells her to forget



about what other people say or think and focus on meeting God's standard, which is the only one that matters;

- something that she acknowledges. ... So, here we have the idea that ableism is part of mainstream culture, because the agreed standard for self-worth doesn't include disability. In other words, most societies don't value disability, which means that disabled people who judge themselves by this standard may erode their self-esteem.
- ... Joni Eareckson Tada's second key idea is that ableism is insidious; sometimes in an overt albeit behind closed doors way, and other times in a more subtle fashion. • Here, she draws our attention to an incident of horrific abuse involving one of her nurses, who was angry and bitter despite the fact she wasn't living with a disability. • She relays that the nurse was obscene, insensitive and demeaning, • and didn't really see her disabled patients as people. • On one occasion Joni Eareckson Tada challenged the nurse, who was being typically unpleasant, • which caused the nurse to snap, • spin her in her Stryker frame (which is a specially adapted bed for paralysed people), and seriously injure her arm. • Even though Joni Eareckson Tada couldn't feel the injury, she was distraught, • but the nurse simply walked off • leaving her shaken and afraid. • In another passage, and on a more mundane level, she relays more subtle forms of ableism, • like being given a wide berth when in her wheelchair, • which she found confusing and frustrating, • to being stared at, • and openly pitied (• something she didn't like at all). • Even among friends and acquaintances, Joni Eareckson Tada sometimes had to modify her behaviour, • by being removed from her wheelchair and propped up on an ottoman to put people at ease. ... Here we can see examples of ableism hiding in plain sight: among those (some of them medical professionals) who don't treat disabled people with dignity, and those who are uncomfortable with disability or betray the fact they look down on it with words that appear to be compassionate (like, "Oh, you poor, dear, brave, brave girl.") • Joni Eareckson Tada's third and final key idea is articulated here, and it's a much more uplifting one: disability is no impediment to leading an amazing life. • Here, she relays a telephone call from The Today Show (which, at the time, was a huge deal in the United States) asking her to appear. • She can barely believe it, • but she accepts • which takes her to New York where she's prepped for the show. • She wasn't nervous, and relays that her faith supported her, • and, whilst she didn't know what she'd be asked, she was entirely comfortable. • So begins the introduction to the show, where the cameras pan over some of her art (drawn and painted by mouth), • and then the interview begins, • which is a positive experience. After Joni Eareckson Tada has said everything she wanted to say, the show moves on; but it's afterwards that the excitement really begins. • She meets a senator's wife, • who promises to keep in touch, • and her best friend wonders at what an amazing opportunity she's had. • It turns out the president of PaperMate saw the show, which leads to several national exhibitions, • in Chicago and elsewhere. • When she returns home she finds a flood of requests for interviews, • exhibitions, and articles. • She attributes this opportunity to God; but, whoever was responsible, ... it reveals tremendous and incorrect assumptions about the quality of life that disabled people can enjoy: Joni Eareckson Tada shows that living with a disability can be happy, purposeful, and full of opportunity,

•• This brings us to why Joni Eareckson Tada's key ideas on ableism are important, and I've got three suggestions for you. • First, they're impelling, they have a motivational and emotional power; her anecdotes of firsthand experience of ableism encourage us all to treat disabled people considerably better than many of us do. In obvious ways, like not abusing them, but in subtle ways, too: like not pitying them. • Second, they're inspiring. Joni Eareckson Tada frames disability as a potential opportunity; in fact, no doubt facilitated by her faith, she even confesses to perceiving her paralysis as a God-given blessing that prevented her from drifting through life without ever committing to her faith or finding her purpose. • Third, they're introspective. Whilst her responses to ableism might not be academic or built on extensive philosophical arguments, they're drawn from extraordinary personal experiences and deep reflection, which is surely as solid a foundation as any.

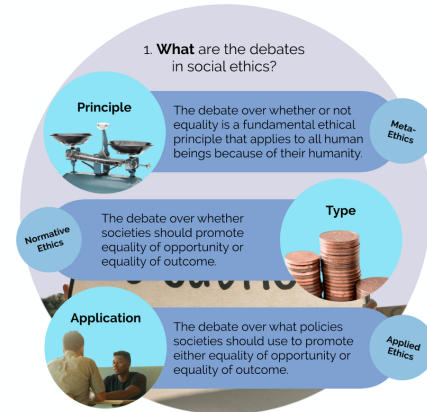


•• That brings us to the end of this investigation into Joni Eareckson Tada, and her autobiographical work on accepting disability, living with disabled people, and Christian faith. Although I'm not religious, I find Joni: An Unforgettable Story a really moving read. My mother and I were discussing it the other day, and she remembers the shocking opening pages verbatim despite reading it over a decade ago. It's an amazing account of an amazing life, which was only really beginning when it was written back in the 1970s. I'd encourage anyone, of any faith or none, to listen carefully to what it has to say about both disability and religion. And on that motivational note, goodbye!

Debates in Social Ethics

Hi! This lesson is all about debates in social ethics; and, because social ethics is so hotly debated and equality is such a contested concept, these debates are wide-ranging and complex. They also address issues that are a lot deeper than the ones we've already looked at, like sexism, racism, and ableism. Basically, they're the big areas of discussion and disagreement that we need to resolve about our underlying beliefs and values before we can consistently and rationally approach these specific social issues. As we'll discover, these are the debates that can help us decide whether we have a traditional approach to social ethics, underpinned by pre-Enlightenment beliefs, a progressive approach, underpinned by post-Enlightenment beliefs, or something completely different. So they're important, and fundamental to everything we've already covered in social ethics. Anyway, over the course of this lesson we're going to explore what the debates in social ethics are, how they work, and why they're important.

• So, without further ado, what are the debates in social ethics? Well, before we go any further, there's an important foundational one, without which it's impossible to get anywhere at all. It's the elephant in the room, if you like, that's best acknowledged and dealt with at the outset. • This first really big debate is about the principle of equality, and whether or not it really is a fundamental ethical maxim that applies to all human beings because of their humanity. As we already know, the ancient Greeks didn't think such a principle existed, so human beings weren't entitled to equal treatment under the law, for example; women weren't considered equal to men, slaves weren't considered equal to freemen, and foreign residents weren't considered equal to citizens. We don't have time to put the ancient Greeks right here, but the first big debate in social ethics is all about why human beings are entitled to equal treatment by virtue of their humanity, and why specific characteristics are irrelevant. • If the principle of equality is established, which it invariably is in most modern societies, then the second debate is about the type of equality that society should promote: typically, either equality of opportunity or equality of outcome (or something somewhere in between). • Equality of opportunity is the idea that everyone should be entitled to the same start in life, • whilst equality of outcome is the idea that everyone should reach the end of their life (or some other milestone) with the same amount of stuff. Whilst some countries on Earth have dabbled with the idea of promoting equality of outcome, most modern societies aim to promote equality of opportunity, because this allows people to reap the benefits of their own endeavours (which is generally considered positive). • The third debate is about application, and concerns the specific policies societies should use to promote the type of equality they are trying to achieve. It's worth noting here that the first two debates aren't really in applied ethics, • they're in meta-ethics • and normative ethics. • The third debate though is obviously about application. On the assumption that societies should pursue at least one type of equality, how should they go about doing it?



• Our next question is how the debates in social ethics work, • and we're going to use a diagram to help us answer it. • The first debate we've got is about principle. On the one hand, some people believe that equality is a fundamental ethical maxim that doesn't apply to all human beings because of their humanity. • This, of course, is inspired by the pre-Enlightenment approach to social ethics, which includes the belief that differences between people based on characteristics like gender, race, and ability are sufficient to justify different treatment of different people despite the fact they're human. And it has some pedigree: • for example, Aristotle only believed in • treating like cases alike; and, you guessed it, didn't accept that human beings were like cases based on their humanity alone:

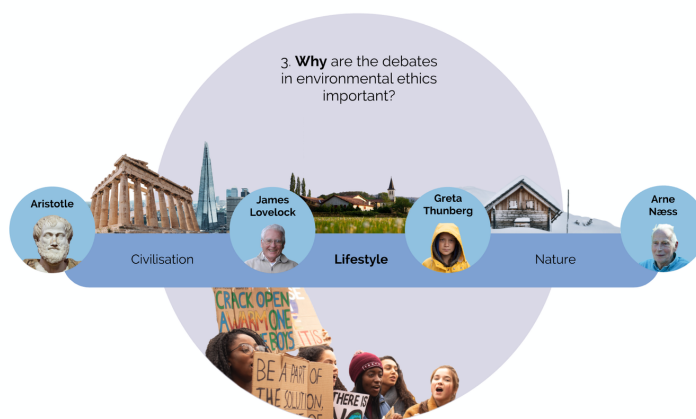


their characteristics mattered! On the other hand, some people believe equality is a fundamental ethical maxim that does apply to all human beings because of their humanity. • This belief is inspired by the post-Enlightenment approach to social ethics, which includes the belief that differences between people based on characteristics are not sufficient to justify different treatment of different people. Even though key thinkers of the Enlightenment are generally credited with widely accepting this belief, to the credit of Christianity, this idea's Western origins can be traced back to Jesus • and Paul the Apostle, who famously said, • "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." In other words, all human beings are equal in the eyes of God. • The second debate is about type. On the assumption that Jesus, Paul the Apostle, and the key thinkers of the Enlightenment are right, what type of equality should be pursued? On the one hand, some people (the majority, actually, in most modern societies) believe we should ensure fairness between human beings by promoting equality of opportunity. The advantage of this is that people's actions matter; you're still incentivised to work hard and make good decisions because you'll reap the rewards, but society provides a level playing field at the outset (or at least attempts to). On the other hand, some people argue that societies should ensure fairness between human beings by promoting equality of outcome. Whilst this seems like a nice idea on the face of things, most people reject it because it doesn't encourage industry and innovation; if you're going to end up with the same lot as your neighbour regardless of how you behave, why bother leading a productive life (or so the argument goes)? • The final debate is about application. Some people think societies should ensure fairness but not implement policies that redress historic inequalities; society should be made more equal, by all means, but not in a way that compensates for historical wrongs. But other people disagree, and think societies should ensure fairness by implementing policies that redress historical inequalities; like positive discrimination (or affirmative action, as it's known in the United States), which requires companies to hire black applicants over white applicants when they are both equally well-qualified (when a strictly fair system would be random at such a point). Remember, the first two debates are really discussions • in meta-ethics • and normative ethics, • but the third debate is firmly in applied ethics; on the assumption that equality is worth promoting, how should we go about it.

•• This brings us to our final question: why are the debates in social ethics important? • For me, the obvious answer is the effect they have on the societies we live in. Those who believe equality isn't a fundamental ethical principle that we should pursue are largely libertarian. • Although typically described as a democracy, classical Athens was a libertarian version of one, with well-protected personal liberties but no problem with inequality between men and women, freemen and slaves, or citizens and foreign residents. • Today, Switzerland is somewhat similar; whilst there are

no true libertarian countries on Earth, it ranks consistently highly on the World Liberty Index, which means citizens enjoy relatively broad economic and personal freedoms that are denied in other countries. In Switzerland, equality of opportunity is pursued, but not with great enthusiasm, which is one of the reasons why it was the last European nation to fully grant women the right to vote (in 1991). However, pursuing equality of outcome is problematic as well. • because countries like Cuba • and North Korea have to employ totalitarian measures to ensure everyone enjoys similar levels of wealth (and most people in more liberal societies wouldn't find life in either of these countries particularly attractive). • Beyond this, there are three other reasons why debates in social ethics are important. • One, they're confusing: many of the key terms and concepts in social ethics are contested, so it takes active debate and engagement to clarify them. • Two, they're consequential: they have consequences for everyone everywhere. • And three, they're counter-intuitive: although greater equality seems like a good thing, it doesn't always lead to greater happiness (or at least that's what defectors from totalitarian countries like Cuba and North Korea suggest).

•• That brings us to the end of our discussion of the debates in social issues. Now you know what they are, how they work, and why they're important. In many ways, we've revisited much of the material we've already covered, but we've tried to go a little bit further. Ultimately, I've endeavoured to reveal the real underpinnings of all the debates in social ethics; in other words, the fundamentals behind some of the more specific social issues. And they're debates that you should engage in, because they're important to what life looks like wherever you live. So even if you're not that interested in whether or not equality is a fundamental ethical maxim, you should at least have a brief think about it. And on that searching note, goodbye!



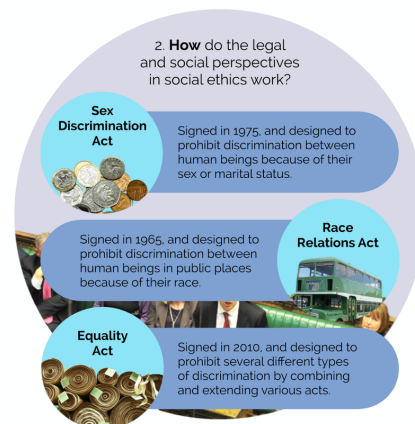
Legal and Social Perspectives in Social Ethics

Hi! This lesson is all about legal and social perspectives in social ethics, which means it's about the different viewpoints held by the British legal system (although there are analogues in other countries) and the people of the United Kingdom. Of course, these perspectives aren't homogeneous, by which I mean there's a lot of variety within them. Nevertheless, there are enough similarities to engage in meaningful discussion. Generally, politicians are increasingly responsive to public opinion, a phenomenon that's become so extreme that it's sometimes referred to as "populism". Obviously, this doesn't mean that politicians bow to every public demand, but, since the Second World War, most British politicians have attempted to deliver the public agenda. Knowing this, people have successfully mobilised around the United Kingdom in response to social issues that affect them, and these movements have driven change to a previously unheard of degree. Anyway, over the course of this lesson we're going to explore exactly what the legal and social perspectives are, how they work, and why they're important.

• So, without further ado, what are the legal and social perspectives in social ethics? Well, we're going to split them up. • The legal perspective is the attitude towards the principle of equality adopted by the national legal system and its representatives. • Whilst the social perspective is the attitude towards the principle of equality adopted by the people. Now, successive British governments have often appeared reactive rather than proactive in the campaign to promote equality, because it's frequently taken protest movements to move the needle (or, more plainly speaking, to affect social change). However, whether in response to public pressure or not, British governments have been successful in passing a number of important laws that have increasingly protected the principle of equality and prohibited discrimination. These include • the Sex Discrimination Act, • the Race Relations Act, • and the aptly named Equality Act. All three of these have had a profound effect on social issues, and the Equality Act in particular is widely considered to be a major success story. Of course, the Parliament of the United Kingdom remains relatively traditional in its law making activities, perhaps because of its socioeconomic composition (it's stale, male, and pale, as some commentators put it, or dominated by old, rich, white men). Nevertheless, the number of laws passed to address social issues shows that it's capable of acting decisively when demanded. On the other hand, social perspectives appear more progressive, because they're often actively advanced by young people from diverse backgrounds with varied values. Whilst the views espoused by organisers of actions like • the Ford sewing machinists strike, • the George Floyd protests, • and the disability rights protests weren't representative of everyone at the time, their broad compositions suggested that they were probably relatively widely held.



• Our next question is how the legal and social perspectives in social ethics work. In other words, what's behind them. • The Sex Discrimination Act was enacted in 1975, and was designed to prohibit discrimination between human beings because of their sex or marital status. It built upon the Equal Pay Act of 1970, which guaranteed equal pay for equal work, but also ensured that women (especially married women of childbearing age) had access to the same employment, training, and educational opportunities as men, and protected them from sexual harassment. It's worth noting that it was repealed in 2010, because the Equality Act contains all the same protections. • The Race Relations Act was enacted in 1965, and designed to prohibit discrimination between human beings in public places because of race. It was the first item of British legislation to address the social issue of racism. It was tabled in response to the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963, in which black Bristolians stopped riding on the distinctive green buses of the Bristol Omnibus



Company because of its discriminatory policies. The Race Relations Act wasn't considered particularly effective, but it was amended and updated until its provisions were eventually incorporated into the Equality Act. • Now, the Equality Act itself was enacted in 2010, and brought together a huge amount of anti-discrimination law in one place. It protects people in the United Kingdom against discrimination based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. As such, it's an incredibly important piece of legislation, and ensures that most people in the United Kingdom receive equal treatment. These examples show how the British legal system and its legislators perceive social ethics. Generally, acts are only passed in response to public pressure, as seen with the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act; however, very occasionally, lawmakers come together to proactively improve the application of the principle of equality, as with the Equality Act. • On the other hand, the social perspective is the more progressive side of the same coin. Important manifestations of the social perspective include, • the Ford sewing machinists strike of 1968, which successfully pressured Ford Dagenham into paying women the same wage as men; • the George Floyd protests, which applied enough pressure to initiate nationwide work on eliminating subtle forms of institutional racism and implicit stereotyping; • and the disability protests of the early 1990s, which eventually paved the way for the equal treatment of disabled people. Of course, the social perspectives illustrated here are not representative of everyone (in fact, there were notable counter campaigns in response to the George Floyd protests); however, the diversity of the protesters and their values, and the number of people involved, is a strong indicator of the silent support that their sentiments likely shared throughout large swathes of the population. In the United Kingdom, the social perspective on social ethics has generally driven the legal perspective; broadly speaking, popular progressive protest movements have gathered support and applied enough pressure on successive British governments to bring about legal change.

•• This brings us to our final question: why are the legal and social perspectives in social ethics important? • For me, these perspectives have the biggest impact on actual change: some achieve this on a large-scale, others on a small-scale. For example, • the Equality Act effected significant change; • according to British journalist and writer, Polly Toynbee, "Its possible ramifications are mind-bogglingly immense... One cabinet member described it with relish as "socialism in one clause". • By comparison, the Race Relations Act had an effect, but not to the same degree. • In fact,

Mark Bonham Carter (who chaired the Race Relations Board) said with some exasperation about the enforcement of the act, "What we hoped for was an exercise in leadership by example. What we have had is malign neglect." So, whilst the legal perspective on social ethics is the one that most people think matters the most, the acts established by Parliament vary wildly in efficacy. Contrastingly, social perspectives appear to matter, but only inasmuch as they lead to legal change. • Despite being small-scale, the Ford sewing machinists strike was incredibly effective, • with the Trades Union Congress rather wryly commentating, "The strike brought the factory to its knees - after all, you can't sell cars without seat covers, and no one else knew how to make them." This one action in Dagenham paved the way for the Equal Pay Act and eventually the Sex Discrimination Act. • Whilst the George Floyd protests undoubtedly involved many more people than the strike at Ford, they haven't necessarily led to greater change yet. • Beyond this, there are three other reasons why these perspectives are important. • One, they're central: they affect everyone's lives on a daily basis (unlike the perspectives on some other areas of applied ethics). • Two, they're changeable: both laws and social attitudes in this area are ever evolving. • And three, they're complementary: unlike some areas of life (like foreign policy, for instance), public protest really does appear to drive legal change.

•• That brings us to the end of our discussion of legal and social perspectives in social ethics. Now you know what they are, how they work, and why they're important. Ultimately, it's worth remembering that the perspectives aren't homogeneous, because different campaigns and laws deal with different social issues, even if they're all ultimately concerned with the application of the principle of equality. And it's also worth noting that the legal and social perspectives are particularly closely entwined; as we've discussed, the Second World War was a watershed moment, and, ever since then, public opinion about social issues like sexism, racism, and ableism has been increasingly acknowledged and acted upon. Although plenty of protesters would claim that progress has been too slow, at least we're moving in the direction of greater equality. And on that tentatively positive note, goodbye!



Religious Perspectives in Social Ethics

Hi! This lesson is all about religious perspectives in social ethics, which means it's about the different viewpoints religions hold on social issues. We don't have enough time to cover every world religion or all their viewpoints. Instead, we're going to focus on the so-called "Judeo-Christian" perspective, which arises from the teachings of what Jews call "the Hebrew Bible" or "Tanakh" and Christians call "the Old Testament". • This means we'll focus closely on the Christian perspective; but, because Christianity and Judaism share some scriptures, • we'll also learn about teachings that inform the Jewish perspective. As we'll discover, religious perspectives in social ethics are complex, because they have to resolve the tension between social attitudes embodied in scriptures from thousands of years ago and those adopted by their followers today. Anyway, over the course of this lesson we're going to explore exactly what these religious perspectives are, how they work, and why they're important.

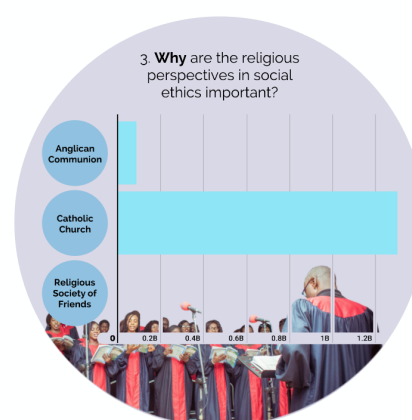
• So, without further ado, what are the religious perspectives in social ethics? Well, even in Christianity alone there are a few, and they're mostly influenced by two key ideas. • First, is the idea of equality before God, which is the Christian belief that all human beings are equal to one another in the eyes of God. • Second, is the idea of sanctity of life, which is the Christian belief that all human life is precious and holy because it's God-given. These key ideas arise from the Bible; however, there are plenty of apparently contradictory passages that point in different directions, which makes interpretation difficult. • For example, 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 makes clear that women aren't allowed to participate in church life; literally, they should be silent, subordinate, and content to ask their husbands about anything they don't understand when they get home (a theme repeated elsewhere in 1 Corinthians and echoed in 1 Timothy). • Elsewhere though (in Galatians 3:28 to be precise), Paul the Apostle emphatically underlined the complete equality of men and women with the words, "There is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Turning to the sanctity of life, with the exception of the long lists of offences in the Old Testament for which a death sentence is required, recognition of the precious and holy nature of human life is more uniform in the Bible. • Exodus 4:11 implies that God's creation of the deaf, mute, and blind is intentional, which leads some Christians (and, indeed, some Jews, because they share this scripture) to believe there is God-given purpose to disability. This idea was picked up and carried forward by Paul the Apostle in the New Testament. • In Romans 5:3-5, he suggested that suffering is purposeful, because it produces endurance, character, and hope; • and, in Galatians 6:2, he argued that it's an invitation to good Christian behaviour with the words, "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." These passages are based on the assumption that life is worth living even when it's incredibly difficult, and that there is both purpose and opportunity in suffering; Christians are called to meet these challenges positively and charitably, because their lives are God-given gifts.

• Our next question is how the religious perspectives in social ethics work; and, to answer this, we're going to consider the perspectives of some specific Christian communities on three important social issues: sexism, racism, and ableism. • The Christian perspective on sexism is complex because of the contradictory picture painted by scripture and the patriarchs about the relationship between men and women. Some Christian denominations, like the United Methodist Churches and the Religious Society of Friends (or Quakers to you and me), support egalitarianism, which is the strictly equal treatment of men and women within Christianity. Nevertheless, the challenging words of Paul the Apostle mean that many denominations, including the Catholic Church, support complementarianism,



which acknowledges the equality of men and women before God but maintains strictly gendered roles (for example, by prohibiting women from entering the priesthood). • John Piper, the famous theologian and Baptist pastor justifies complementarianism by arguing that, "God has made Christianity to have a masculine feel. He has ordained for the church a masculine ministry." • By comparison, the Christian perspective on racism is more straightforward. Although the Bible was written at a time when slavery was widely accepted, and doesn't contain any specific prohibition against it, Christianity is now universally committed to fighting all types of racism. Having said this, some denominations are more successful than others; • in the Anglican Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has expressed disappointment at subtle types of racism, challenging his own church to change with the following words, "I'm ashamed of our history and I'm ashamed of our failure. There is no doubt when we look at our own Church that we are still deeply institutionally racist." Whilst Christian perspectives on sexism and racism are underpinned by belief in equality before God, • Christian perspectives on ableism are also supported by belief in the sanctity of life (especially among Catholics). In fact, the Catholic Church is strongly committed to fighting all types of ableism, and considers some disabilities to be blessings; • Pope Francis has even said that, "People with disabilities are a gift for the family and an opportunity to grow in love, mutual aid and unity." The Catholic Church firmly opposes abortion, even in cases where a severe disability is identified during pregnancy, which protects unborn children with disabilities from a type of unequal treatment that allows them to be killed before birth. Of course, this isn't a universal Christian position, and a handful of Protestant churches (like some Methodist churches) accept abortion in these cases. Nevertheless, in most denominations, belief in the sanctity of life exerts a strong influence over religious perspectives in social ethics.

•• This brings us to our final question: why are the religious perspectives in social ethics important? For me, these perspectives are important for one simple reason: most of the world's population is religious. • To illustrate this point, I'm going to make use of this graph, which provides information regarding the number of people who belong to various Christian denominations. • For example, the Anglican Communion has approximately 85 million members, just under one-third of whom belong to the Church of England. In other words, 25 million of the United



Kingdom's 67 million strong population belong to this denomination. If the Church of England successfully tackles institutional racism, it will have an effect on the social attitudes of over a third of the United Kingdom's population. • The Catholic Church exerts even greater influence, with records of an astonishing 1.3 billion baptised members worldwide; its strong sanctity of life stance undoubtedly prevents countless unborn children with disabilities from being aborted every year. • On the other hand, there are only 210,000 Quakers (a number so small you can't even see the bar on this graph); even though their egalitarian beliefs about the role of women are better aligned with most modern societies, complementarianism seems here to stay (not least because of the size of the Catholic Church, which is one of its most fervent proponents). Approximately one-fifth of the world's population is represented on this graph, which gives us some idea of just how powerful Christianity is; and this doesn't even take into account all Christians, let alone all religious people. If you haven't already guessed the significance of religious perspectives in social ethics, it's the fact they have the ability to shape people's behaviour across dozens of different countries. • Beyond this, there are three other reasons why these perspectives are important. • One, they're central: they affect the lives of all religious people on a daily basis (unlike the perspectives in some other areas of applied ethics). • Two, they're changeable: religious perspectives change over time, as religions respond to developments in the societies they exist within. • And three, they're complex: unlike laws, scriptures are open to a very broad range of interpretations, which means denominations often diverge from one another in their perspectives in social ethics.

•• That brings us to the end of our discussion of religious perspectives in social ethics. Now you know what they are, how they work, and why they're important. Obviously, it's impossible for us to consider every single religious perspective, but we've looked at Christianity (and Judaism, if somewhat fleetingly) and some of the differing viewpoints within it. Importantly, even if you're not religious, it's important to acknowledge the power of religions here. Pressure groups and protest movements, even the large ones, enjoy only a fraction of the membership. Consequently, religions have the ability to effect real change in the way social issues are addressed; in fact, they could go a long way to solving many of them if they got their acts together. And on that bold note, goodbye!

