

# Please Do Not Leave for College Series

## Lesson Three: Do Not Leave Proper Ethics for College

By Sean Sullivan

### Proper Ethics are Real-Life

Picture this: You are walking down the sidewalk and see a wallet laying on the ground. You pick it up and immediately notice that it is full of cash. Do you...? a. Grab the cash, pitch the wallet in the nearest ditch and think yourself lucky? Or, b. Search carefully for the owner's identification, in order to safely return the wallet and all of its contents? This is ethics in real-life. We need a good foundation of ethics.

Ethics are the standard "ought" and "ought not". Our Father God, through His word, guides us in the construction of proper ethics. God instructs us in proper moral ought and ought-not (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We are enabled with the knowledge of "righteousness" and prepared to do "every good work" by His revealed word.

God teaches us the knowledge of right and wrong (Galatians 5:19-25). With the desire for each of us to choose to do right (Colossians 3:23-25). Ethics: build our character, develop our trustworthiness, form our loyalties, and maintain our relationships—*throughout our lives*.

### Proper Ethics are from God's Directions

The idea of a self-guided life sounds good to a young heart—*full of dreams and desires*.

There is a problem with that idea: "...the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). "There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12). "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9). We need a better guide than "self" to be our foundation of ethics.

God's word warns us of the danger of sin in Romans 6:23a, where we are told, "...the wages of sin is death". God's word also warns in greater detail in both 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21—*teaching us that those who practice sin, "...will not inherit the kingdom of God."* To guard our hearts from sin, we must determine before we are faced with the moment of temptation that we will do what is right for our soul (Matthew 10:28; Matthew 25:46). We will stand before God to

answer for our choices (2 Corinthians 5:10)—*do what is necessary now to prepare and protect your soul, for that day*. We also know that Romans 6:23 continues beyond its warning, with a great promise of hope for those who seek to obey Him, as it says, “...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Both, God’s warnings and God’s rewards should set the foundation of our ethics.

### **Proper Ethics Put “Pre” Back in Prepared**

It should be no surprise that the world seeks your allegiance in their pursuit of immoralities.

We have been admonished, “*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*” (1 John 2:15-17). The world rejects God and God’s rules of conduct; they want their own desires to be their “guiding-light”—*led by lusts and pride*.

The way the world will try to change your mind is through the teaching of “situation ethics”. The concept of “Situation Ethics” rejects the notion that we should submit to predetermined patterns of conduct—*since such decisions will cause us to avoid certain experiences and we may “miss out” on life’s-true-essence*.

Proper Ethics are PREdetermined choices. The best place to determine you will not participate in sinful behaviors is long before you face them: We need to hear the instructions of righteous behavior (Ephesians 6:1-4); and then we need to stay-the-course (Proverbs 1:8-19). This proper foundation requires parents to actually establish rules of conduct and have some uncomfortable talks with their children—*things that have for too long been avoided because of unrealistic sensitivities* (Ignorance is NOT bliss, when it comes to sin). We must remember the freedom to choose doesn’t remove the consequences of choosing—*so, choose well* (Romans 6:23a). We must develop the character required to stick to our predetermined decisions. Deciding “what to do” in the moment is a recipe for disaster: If we wait until the moment that we are surrounded by pressures to participate, we **will** make the wrong decision (1 Peter 4:1-4); and we **will** end up siding with the wrong side (1 Peter 4:5). If we wait until the moment that our passions are on fire (1 John 2:15-17), we **will** make the wrong decision.

### **Conclusion:**

Every year young people leave their parental homes and head out into the world, full of hopes and goals—*many will be seeking a College education*. It is possible for every young Christian to be educated, and successful, without abandoning their faith in God, *but it will take determination*.

This time in a young person's life will test their faith; perhaps, more than ever before. Their foundations of character and ethics will be challenged; we must pray for their strength. God provides for the best possible life and He can lead us all the way to Heaven. To reject God's guidance is to reject Heaven; and that will be an *everlasting disaster*. Determine now that you will walk in God's way; then seek Him with all your heart. Embrace the hope of the gospel plan, obey God, right now.