

## “The Supreme Ethic” Outline

1. **Introduction** - Story of The Jefferson Bible - “The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth”
  2. Ethics Crash Course
    1. **Definition** - “Ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime.”
    2. Many Sources - Code of Norms
      1. Culture
      2. Majority
      3. Transcendent
    3. **Quote** - “Ethics... is the science of holiness.” 7T 276:
  3. **Passage** - Matthew 22:36-40
    1. ““Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.”“This is the great and foremost commandment.“The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’“On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”” (Matthew 22:36–40 NAS95)
      1. Jesus quotes Deut. 6:5 & Lev. 19:18
    2. The importance & Supremacy -
      1. All Law & Prophets - Character & Messages of God
    3. Context of Passover
    4. Temple Teachings
    5. Series of 4 challenges & responses
    6. Woes on the Pharisees follow
    7. Comparison to Luke 10 passage
  4. **Point 1 - For humanity, the code should be transcendent.**
    1. Human Types of Love
      1. Erotic; Brotherly; Family; Agape
      2. Agape - TDNT
        1. **Quote** - “The demand of Jesus is self-evident because he creates a new situation. He proclaims God’s mercy as a new event that changes everything. The forgiveness of sins that he brings releases a new and overflowing love (Lk. 7:47) which fills and directs all life and action.” TDNT on Agape
3. Jesus uses Agape to highlight the type of love that comes from God
  1. Combination of the two - Deut. 10:14-15; 19
2. **Question?** - So how do we love a spiritual being?
  1. Answer - through the faithful exercise of His will.
    1. “No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” (1 John 4:12–13 NAS95)
3. **Story** - My Love And Baby’s Love
4. A gentleman who was a professed Christian was taken seriously ill. He became troubled about the little love he felt in his heart for God, and spoke of his experience to a friend. This is how the friend answered him. “When I go home from here, I expect to take my baby on my knee, look into her sweet eyes, listen to her charming prattle, and tired as I am, her presence will rest me; for I love that child with unutterable tenderness. But she loves me little. If my heart were breaking it would not disturb her sleep. If my body were racked with pain, it would not interrupt her play. If I were dead, she would forget me in a few days. Besides this, she had never brought me a penny, but was a constant expense to me. I am not rich, but there is not money enough in the world to buy my baby. How is it? Does she love me, or do I love her? Do I withhold my love until I know she loves me? Am I waiting for her to do something worthy of my love before extending it?” This practical illustration of the love of God for His children caused the tears to roll down the sick man’s face. “Oh, I see,” he exclaimed, “it is not my love to God, but God’s love for me, that I should be thinking

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of. And I do love Him now as I never loved Him before.” —Gospel Herald

5. Summary of Point 1 -Love is the Supreme Ethic

### 5. Point 2 - Beware of basing spirituality on human relationships

1. We are taught to love within our family units, sometimes those break down. The gospel orients us to experience love from above.
2. **Quote** - “God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love.” - SC pg 9
3. **Verse** - “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:7–8 NAS95)
4. **Story** - Best Motive In Christian Work
5. Hudson Taylor was interviewing some young people who had volunteered for the Lord’s service. He asked several practical questions to find out how well qualified they were for the life they were anticipating. “And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?” “I want to reach others across the sea because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” one replied. Another said, “I want to go because millions are dying without ever having heard of Jesus, the only One who can save them.” Others have similar answers.
6. Hudson Taylor looked at them thoughtfully for a moment and then said. “All of your motives are good, but I fear they will fail you in times of severe testing and tribulation—especially if you are confronted with the possibility of having to face death for your testimony. The only motive that will enable you to remain true is stated in II Corinthians 5:14. Christ’s love constraining

you will keep you faithful in every situation.” —Our Daily Bread

### 7. Point 2 Summary - Beware of basing spirituality on human relationships

1. John 2:25 Voice Paraphrase - “But Jesus saw through to the heart of humankind, and He chose not to give them what they requested. He didn’t need anyone to prove to Him the character of humanity. He knew what man was made of.”
2. “He knew the fickleness of the human heart, and how many fair-weather converts were heedless or hypocritical (see ch. 6:64). See on ch. 7:2–9.” - SDABC

### 6. Point 3 - Our love for one another is empowered by God’s love

1. Second great commandment - “Love your neighbor as yourself”
  1. Golden Rule - ““In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12 NAS95)
2. Jesus points to this as the identity of His followers -
  1. **Text:** ““A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”” (John 13:34–35 NAS95)
3. Apostolic Encouragement - **Text:** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1 John 4:7–8 NAS95)
4. **Quote** - “Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father’s heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Timothy 3:16.” SC pg. 11

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5. **Appeal Story** - He Merely Showed Hands
6. William Dixon lived in Brackenthwaite, England. He was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw that the house of one of his neighbors was on fire. Although the aged owner was rescued, her orphaned grandson was trapped in the blaze. Dixon climbed an iron pipe on the side of the house and lowered the boy to safety. His hand that held on to the pipe was badly burned.  
Shortly after the fire, the grandmother died. The townspeople wondered who would care for the boy. Two volunteers appeared before the town council. One was a father who had lost his son and would like to adopt the orphan as his own. William Dixon was to speak next, but instead of saying anything he merely held up his scarred hand. When the vote was taken, the boy was given to him. —Neil Strait
7. **The Supreme Ethic Summary** -
  1. Point 1 - For humanity, the code should be transcendent.
  2. Point 2 - Beware of basing spirituality on human relationships
  3. Point 3 - Our love for one another is empowered by God’s love

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. And what you learned and received and heard and saw in me, do these things. And the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8–9 NET)