

Summary of Col Phil Exner USMC Ret. Ethics

The overall video is a recording on the topic of Biblical military ethics. The speaker reflects on the importance of ethics in the development of Christian military leaders and discusses the broad scope of ethics, including military, medical, business, and legal ethics. The speaker emphasizes the need for character development and integrating Christian values into day-to-day actions. The goal is to help individuals integrate their faith into their roles within their countries and military. The speaker also mentions the importance of ethical training in non-Christian countries and the challenges of instilling ethical behavior in young leaders. The conference includes discussions on leadership, teaching ethics, and the development of lesson plans. The speaker expresses gratitude for the support and looks forward to the future of the ACCTS Biblical Military Ethics Training Project and its impact on young military leaders around the world.

Transcript 1. 0 min to 26 min 45 sec.
Presentation #4 29 Jan 21 Exner. MP4

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This conference will now be recorded. Cal sent me some questions, but I'd really like to start with just some reflections on overall topic of ethics. And why,

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what you guys are all doing is so very important in the development of Christian military leaders around the world, which is, of course, that's the core mission of ACCTS.

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Now, I'm sure Tony Pfaff could give you a better definition of ethics technically, and probably most of you could by now. I just wanted to share some thoughts on the topic because they think that God is going to bring a lot of wonderful spiritual fruit from this problem is that ethics is extremely broad topic and And I really appreciate the work that all the different praying playing groups are doing to support it For

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a verse today, I picked one that everybody knows but might not have thought of the context context of ethics, and that's Romans 8: 29. But of course, that's usually nested in the very famous passage where it says,

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"And we know that God works all things together for the good of those who love him. For called according to his purpose, for those whom God foreknew, he also predestined that he conformed to the image of the Son,

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so he would be the first born among many brethren." Those he ? and called, those he called he justified and those he justified he also glorified. So I kinda wanna start right there and just talk about what ethics is.

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And one of the things that people think about when they hear the word ethics, of course, is rules of conduct in certain top players. 'Cause you're working on military ethics, but there is medical. business ethics,

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even legal ethics, so some might question whether they really exist. We also, in a general sense, have expectations regarding other people's conduct in society that are often called ethics,

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like telling the truth, being fair, whatever that means, courtesy, keeping promises, even if they're not writing and that sort of thing. But really, what are ethics? And when Cal started this whole thing I was kind of wondering where it's going to go because it is such a complex area and a lot of times I'm not quite sure what people are talking about when they did.

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But perhaps I hope to be able to write a tiny bit of focus on that. Um, somebody said that once ethics are just ways of addressing competing moral absolutes.

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So as an example, if we invite you over for dinner, and it's the worst thing you've ever tasted in your life, that somehow you managed to choke it down, and we ask,

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well, did you enjoy dinner? Well, you're immediately confronted with a moral dilemma here about charity versus honesty. And when we talk about ethics in the context,

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of a particular profession or a particular situation, usually it involves dealing with competing priorities, competing things which are saying,

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"No, this is what you should do." And it can help you sort through those decisions. Now, it's very easy, though, to let ethics just then become a whole set of rules and nothing more,

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even a set of principles. But even to the extent that ethics is just rules or even guidelines, they indefinitely require some sort of discipline.

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If they become part of who we are, though, they fall away as mere rules and then they become reflections of our character, namely who we are, who we're created to become.

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Not long ago, I saw this little girl, she was out for a walk with her daddy. and she was kind of skipping along just ahead of her dad, and she was singing softly to herself and some made -up song,

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I guess, and swinging a stick at the time of her little private song. And her dad saw that she was getting a little wild of a stick, so he just gently told her put the stick down to her.

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And, amazingly, this little girl just released the stick. dropped it to the ground without missing a skip or a note, and she just continued joyfully skipping along on her walk with her daddy.

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There was no fighting, no arguing, no, I like my stick. Just a reflex of obedience. In fact, I don't even think, it didn't seem to me that she even noticed that she was obeying.

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She just obeyed. And it didn't diminish her joy in any way. She continued joyfully skipping along with her daddy. and being able to just bask in that.

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So I think that when we think about ethics, it is inculcating in ourselves such a reflexive obedience that that when God asks us to do something or puts us in a situation that we tend to know a little bit more well this is this is what I should do.

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And oftentimes we'll look on ethics from the perspective. of big questions, big tough, tough questions. For example, one thing has come up from time to time in our OCF group has been,

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what do you tell the brand new lieutenant or captain who just gets to his unit and is told by his commanding officer, he called and he says, "Your first big task,

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lieutenant, is going to be, you're going to be in charge of this year's Gay Pride Month." and I want it to be the best one ever, and we want it. And now all of a sudden he's confronted with this question about how to respond to this order,

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to this tasking. And we look on that, and that's a pretty tough question. How do you do it? And you contextualize it into other things. But a lot of some ethics,

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if you will, as they're lived out, comes down to practicing obedient in the thousand little things so that when we're confronted with big ethical questions,

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we already kind of know the sort of path that God's called us to go on. And so my prayer is that we'll become more like that kind of little girl walking with God hour by hour and obeying him in the thousand and one little things that come our way

Now I'm going to tie this sin to ethics if I move directly here, but I think that reflexive obedience is really the leading, is allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us through each day and form our consciences for us.

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what would Jesus do? What would he do now? What would he do in the next hour, in the next hour? And then when things seem to be conflicting, it makes life a lot easier. And we can just more clearly see what it is we're called to decide it.

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And sometimes I think if you attack the big questions to Erwin. that you miss the underlying principles of being an ethical person.

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Our home in Colorado Springs right across literally two miles from the north gate of the Air Force Academy we would take people there to go to the visitor center which is largely designed for parents who want to know what's happening to Little John and they have this kind of really neat thing about the honor code and tells about how would cadets go through but there's some there's one of the little placards that

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they've got that I really love and it talks about the honor code um and he says this says we are not content at the Air Force Academy to produce officers who act honorably our intent is to produce officers who are in fact honorable.

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And there's a really big difference because if our acting honorably rises out of fear of punishment or discovery or for some other ulterior motive and pride,

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then it's not the same thing as that which God wants to develop in us. And think in terms of aviation,

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as I said, I've just came back from this flying around, throwing holes in the sky for about an hour. In aviation, we train young student pilots to do a variety of basic maneuvers,

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straight -level turns and climbs, in a sense. And then we gradually combine them into maneuvers that are more complicated. like climbing turns. And then they get built into bigger things,

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They send their cadets to this thing because we start to wrestle that. A lot of questions I don't know the answers to and I'd love to have input for that program among others.

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How do we reach the young people? That's important. We could have the greatest answers in the world here a bunch of among the bunch of old guys. But what can we do that's going to attract young people and give them a foundation to respond biblically so they can at least make choices in these matters.

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Yeah, I'd love to see some. - Well, thanks for that. We hope that maybe some of these, like I said, we don't have any today on, but as we go forward and they have more,
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these young leaders, potential leaders or developing leaders participate with us, it will get more insights of how, how we can use which products are are probably the best or what format we should use and these these type things but that'll take some time as we get it because it's not easy to get to these young guys they're they're busy with their own their own active duty schedules and their families and everything

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else so but but thanks thanks for being with us on this this part and contributing to much and supporting so well what we're what we're doing.

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You know when you talked and gave your little opening I was thinking about you were pointing out sort of what would Jesus do and and also the idea of virtue ethics which is to me the the closest field of the philosophy of ethics that applies.

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whereas, and that that's a fertile area to at least to deal and communicate with the non-Christian community, ethics community as well.