

Exposing Enemies Within the Church: A 7-Session Bible Study Series
Session 3: Situationism

Three Possible Approaches to Determining Right from Wrong

1. **Legalism:** Determining right from wrong by looking to and examining God's law as the absolute standard for morality and ethics. The moral and ethical laws of God are considered to be the gold standard for judging all actions and attitudes; they are binding principles that are reflections of His character and expressions of His love. They are absolute; truth is absolute. Another word for this approach is *foundationalism*.
2. **Situationism:** Evaluating right from wrong according to the ideal (or more realistically, the emotion) of love. This approach says love is all that really matters. According to this approach, truth is subjective and relative.
3. **Antinomianism:** Determining right from wrong on the basis that "law is the enemy of liberty — spiritual anarchy is good; truth is relative."¹ Antinomianism also can be defined as "the heretical doctrine that claims Christians are exempt from the obligations of moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments" (EWTC film). The emphasis of antinomianism is freedom. Session 4 will explore and evaluate antinomianism.

These are *possible ways* to make ethical and moral choices, but not *equally reliable ways*. It's important to note that while each one has its own special emphasis,

- the second and third view truth as **subjective** and relative, and
- only the first sees truth as **objective** and absolute.

The term **subjective** is used to describe the second and third approaches because with them, personal preferences and emotions — internal influences within and unique to individuals — play prominent roles in the decision-making processes. In other words, with situationism and antinomianism, each decision made is an expression of the individual's perspective *relative* to the choices available to him or her. Benign examples would relate to matters not considered to be moral or ethical, such as a preference for country music over rock or classical music over jazz, or a preference for cheesecake over blueberry pie.

The term **objective** is used to refer to an external standard by which choices can be evaluated and decisions made. *Objective* standards of moral right and wrong exist independent of opinions and feelings. They are applicable to everyone, and unchanging, or absolute.

Note:

¹Rev. Cary K. Gordon, *A Storm A Message A Bottle: A Road Map to American Redemption*, (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House 2015), 39.