

## **Are Jesus Teachings Consistent With**

### **Modern Care?**

**A comparison of Jesus lessons and Gilligans care**

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### **Introduction**

We examine Christs teachings and doctrines while considering the caring theme proposed by Carol Gilligan. We look at the similarities as well as the differences; we note parallels as well as orthogonalities. Many of Christs teachings seem to support Gilligans caring theme, but some apparently contradict it directly. Christs teachings are generally understood to be caring and moral, but the differences that arise between His and Gilligans systems of ethics help us to understand more fully what is revolutionary about Gilligans caring theme.

Rather than look at different narratives of Jesus actions and teachings and analyze them under the caring theme, we will look at Gilligans principles of care and examine the actions and teachings of Jesus under such scrutiny. This is a different approach than that taken to a Kohlbergian stage analysis; Gilligans principles should be seen generally in a persons behavior and thought, whereas the Kohlbergian stages are more distinctly seen in particular separate dilemmas.

Having examined Christ's doctrines in light of Larry Kohlberg's stage theory and concluding that Jesus was likely reasoning at a post-conventional level, either five or six, we also recognized that many of His teachings became irrelevant and simply a matter of taste in Kohlberg's analyses.

We hope to show that many of the teachings Kohlbergians discard will have a better, more relevant fit in Gilligan's care theme. We will examine how His doctrines can flow consistently with Gilligan's principles, but we also examine precepts that seem directly at odds with Gilligan's ideals.

## **Relational Orientation**

Jesus' teachings seem full of care and love and quite relationally based. Gilligan's care also promotes self care and leaves little to no room for absolutism, Christ's teachings may seem at odds with caring principles.

Christ's teachings are based in the Bible. The Bible both gives instruction to us and helps us see what God is like. "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures forever". But what then is love? God shows his love for people by caring for them. This love is seen through expressions of caring in the relationship between God and those on earth. People are encouraged to care for each other to express God's love. We are like God in many ways; we are made in the image of God. This applies even to people who are easily dismissed either for gross disability or age. The Bible shows that Jesus died for all humans, even the most unlovely. If God cares for every human being, and we are made to be like God, then we too are made to care for each other. To express care is moral in all circumstances as the moral imperative came from external authority, God.

As Jesus shows us out universal similarities, and that we are all merely creatures of God, we cannot help see that we must be relationally based. We cannot claim differences that will keep us from relations, as from design we are all but identical.

## **Attentiveness**

Attentiveness is a significant factor of ability to appropriately respond and act relationally. Without attentiveness, natural response is not all it should be, and will not have had all the proper stimuli. Lacking attentiveness relationality is cut short, and parts of relationships, even large meaningful portions will be ignored. Clearly one will have a very difficult time expressing mature care if one lacks attentiveness.

Jesus teaches little about attentiveness directly. His parables do not explicitly tell us to be attentive, or that we are more moral if we notice every detail of a situation. In fact, some of the parables might show different outcomes if characters knew more about the other persons involved. Were the laborers in the vineyard attentive to their employers habit of paying everyone the same wage, they might have shown up later in the day.

Had the slaves with money to invest for their master been more attentive to their surroundings, they may have been likely to invest differently, or to act differently with a foreknowledge of their master's upcoming return. Attentiveness can be dangerous as well and be used as way to discover loopholes and

unfair advantages.

Jesus leaves out attentiveness in the scenarios where it might make an outcome questionable, or where it might encourage people to act in ways that may not be consistent in principle (acting on peculiarities in situations and contexts). However, He uses His own attentiveness in ways to resolve conflict, and to avoid direct confrontation, both of which are important to a mature care.

In Matthew 21, Jesus' authority is challenged. "...The chief priests and elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said 'By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'I will ask you one thing too, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?' And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven", He will say, "Then why did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," we fear the multitude; for they all hold John to be a prophet.' And answering Jesus, they said, 'We do not know.' He also said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'"

Jesus reply is longer than necessary and avoids directly answering the question. His attentiveness to the situation is the key to understanding His long response. As the elders and priests recognize that the multitude will become a danger to them if they rebuke John's baptism. They know this as does Jesus through His attentiveness. Through attentiveness He also realizes that the elders and priests are not trying to further and deepen their understanding of God and Jesus, but rather they challenge His authority. They try to incite argument and conflict, but Jesus' response has avoided this conflict. Without a strong attention Hes lack this ability.

### **Natural Response**

Many studies suggest that caring comes from a combination of hormones and the memory of care received as a child. The most obvious example of this is the natural protective instinct most parents feel towards their children. Carol Gilligan is so convinced of the existence of this natural instinct, particularly amongst women, that she has argued for a complete ethical system based upon it. She proposes a caring theme approach to morality, as opposed to the justice theme. However, that a response is natural does not necessarily make such a feeling right. While the priest and Levite may have had a natural response to ignore the half dead man on the side of the road to Jericho, their response is not the good one. The Samaritan who felt compassion had the proper response. Natural response is not always the best one. (Luke 10:30-37)

Jesus' reactions and teachings might be interpreted differently in consideration the method of natural response. Jesus teachings can be interpreted to support the process that Gilligan puts forth. Jesus own actions illustrate that reactions will happen spontaneously and naturally while remaining influenced by the past. In Matthew 21 Jesus entered the temple and "overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves." (v. 12) It is possible that this was premeditated, and not simply natural response, but the contrast in these actions and the other characteristically placid and meditated actions of Christ suggest that this was spontaneous.

Even in the light that the action may have been spontaneous and a reaction to a misuse of the temple, it has been affected by previous experience. Jesus says "It is written 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a robbers' den.'" (v.13) Were this educational experience not part of Jesus' past, He may not have reacted this way.

This is not the only case when Jesus acts in a very emotional way. He prays prior to His arrest and crucifixion and "in agony He was praying very fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." (Luke 22:44) While Gilligan's principles are not written so as to explicitly include faith, Jesus is facing the moral dilemma of His life and His death, hinging on obedience. Clearly His prayers to God are deeply emotional, spontaneous reactions to His interaction with God.

These examples of acting with natural response are not the only relevant passage. Many of Jesus teachings are more consistent with other parts of Gilligan's natural response. Jesus teaches that "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court, and whoever shall say to his brother "good for nothing" shall be guilty before the supreme court, and whoever shall say "You fool" shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell." These are grudges, and ongoing disputes, but the exchange of insults and name calling are undesirable natural responses and are cause for guilt. Such reactions, as Gilligan states, suggest that more information needs to be gathered, more communication is needed, and that natural reaction should not always determine action.

Jesus might support Gilligan's claim that natural responses should not be immediately discarded as unthoughtful instinctive reactions, and also that not all natural responses are necessarily desirable or appropriate.

### **Response Ability and Know How**

It is easy to see lack of ability as cause to become uncaring. This may apply to those who feel unskilled or unable to help. A person may find themselves in a profession which leads them to be care givers, in the traditional sense of the word care. This can lead to the problem of that care may become solely professional, and be removed from the rest of daily life. Being caring may also become restricted to people in the caring professions. Such people may come home from work and rid themselves of the obligation to show care. The desire to be professional is praiseworthy, but professionalism as the sole motivation to care can reduce those who receive care to objects of professional practice, rather than fellow human beings in need. It strips caring of any notion of love.

Jesus set a model of caring that goes further than is demanded by professional requirements. He showed that caring is an expression of self-sacrificial love, deriving from God's character of love. Paul tells us in Colossians that in Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (Colossians 3:23-24) All our abilities to respond should always be used for care. Indeed, everything we do should be representative of love of God, and thus we will show caring motives to all, in everything that we do.

## **Dialogue**

Dialogue is arguably a more important facet in the early Church's method for resolution of ethical dilemmas than it was in Christ's teachings. Christ certainly taught through dialogue; some of His most prominent teachings came through discussions with the disciples. We are told that early in Jesus' life "it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions." (Luke 2:46)

Even in His childhood Christ realized the tremendous potential for learning and teaching through dialogue. Though His understanding was great at the age of twelve, His knowledge of would still have been limited by lack of personal experience. Dialogue with the teachers in the temple could only have helped him gain needed information. It also may be likely that He began the process of ethical deliberation as Gilligan encourages. He engaged in such discussion with the Pharisees and the Sadducees as well.

In contrast to His childhood Jesus' dialogue in later life loses some of its learning intentions, and focuses on teaching. In the point of moral supremacy at which we assume He attained little moral and ethical knowledge could be gained from conversation. Dialogue could entertain and further the ends to achieve the most favorable outcome for all parties, but made no changes in His conceptions of right and wrong.

The disciples in the early Church made great use of discussion and dialogue in ethical debate. From the issue of necessity of circumcision to general moral precepts the early body of believers could not have functioned without much interpersonal dialogue.

## **Non-Harm (pacifism)**

Gilligan stresses the importance of ethical methods that avoid any harm to others as well as to self. Moral resolution, she claims, should not leave people being hurt, and should not leave relationships damaged.

Jesus made statements which are compatible with Gilligan's hopes for the ideal treatment of others. The Golden Rule is the simplest way of stating just such a principle. Jesus' interpersonal relationships and actions also support this claim, simply by kind and caring actions which avoid harm.

Jesus makes it clear that even in situations where harming another may be an expected natural response, it should be avoided. We are not surprised that Peter draws a sword against those who come to arrest Jesus, yet Jesus Himself tells Peter that those who live by the sword shall die by the sword. (Matthew 26:52)

Gilligan presses the importance to avoid interpersonal loss, and that harm to relationships must also not occur. Yet Jesus tells the disciples that whoever leaves their mother or their father, wives or children to follow Him will be repaid many times over in the kingdom to come. Leaving these can on be seen as interpersonal loss, although to follow Christ is to make the greatest interpersonal gain.

Jesus tells His followers that one cannot follow Him who does not hate their family (Luke 14:26). As in the last paper, let us stress that this does not mean to literally hate one's family, but to love Christ so much more than in comparison familial love is as hate. This instruction to people who'd known Jesus for a short time, but their families for their entire lives clearly isn't one that will most easily, and most effectively avoid interpersonal loss. Jesus teaches that loyalty to and love of God must take precedence to all other relationships.

### **Compassion Towards Need**

Compassion toward those in need is seen in mixed light in the New Testament. Most teachings suggest that we must show compassion toward those in need, there are a few examples which suggest the contrary.

We look at some of the miracles performed by Jesus. Healing the sick and casting out demons are not only compassion toward those in need; they are actions by He who has the ability to satisfy such a need. Note that compassion does not always enable a caring individual to satisfy a need. Merely wanting people not to be sick is not enough to become a doctor, nor does wanting no one to be homeless give the ability and resources to provide housing.

Jesus' miracles do not always help only needy people. Lack of wine is not a life threatening dilemma. (The sanitation of water as opposed to an alcoholic drink may have been significant Jesus time frame; we do not touch upon this issue.) Despite Jesus words "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4) which seem almost rude and cryptic, Jesus shows empathy and turns the water to wine.

To cure people sounds exciting and is an attractive ability. Simply providing comforts like food, proper hygiene and relief from pain is less glamorous. In the world today money is allocated to research cures for disease rather than to procure comfortable beds or appetizing food for the diseased. Sometimes patients suffer discomfort while pursuing of a cure. If the treatment only prolongs the patient's life for a few months, but makes those months a miserable experience, is this caring? Care is different from cure. Care is not simply removing a problem or removing a person from a problematic situation. Care considers the needs of the whole person, but a cure treats only the ailment.

Jesus felt compassion for the two blind men He met near Jericho and cured them. We may try desperately to find a cure that we might not face the sobering truth that we are mortal. Illness, ageing and death may be kept at bay, but they will never go away. Caring is not limited to cure; caring is necessary whether or not there is a cure.

### **Empathy Towards Joy**

The early Christian church showed empathy towards joy. This is seen in the epistles, as well as Jesus actions in the Gospels.

To see such a value in the epistles, we need only see instructions such as Paul gives; "encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11). To encourage those who are downhearted and sad is sympathy, but to keep encouraging one another, to build up one another, is a continuous action which celebrates and revels in another's good fortune.

Paul writes in Romans that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). How could Christ not show empathy to joy when joy comes from the Holy Spirit? Lack of empathy with such joy is impossible.

Jesus' own actions also encourage joy, and admonish those who try to crush it. "And some of the Pharisees in the multitudes said to Him 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples [who were praising God joyfully (v.37)],' And he answered and said 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!'" (Luke 19:39-40) Not only does Jesus allow his disciples to continue in joyful praise, but he scolds those who try to interfere. Furthermore, Jesus not only empathizes with joy, but He claims that there is no way to prevent it; it is necessarily unavoidable.

## **Fostering Relation**

It may be unclear what Jesus full teachings about fostering relations might have been. Certainly He addressed relationships of greater magnitude than those which are interpersonal. The Jewish Messiah is a light unto the world, to the Gentiles and the Jews alike. He would have to support large cultural relationships and political peace. On a small scale that is only interpersonal the lines become blurred, and the individuals actions may not be what are expected.

Jesus tried to foster interpersonal relationships, particularly with those who were in the most need of them. When Jesus dines with the tax gatherers and the sinners, He fosters relationships with those whom others (in Jesus' in-group, nonetheless!) avoid relations. Jesus says that "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick." (Matt. 9:12) Likewise, it is not those who already have established, strong, built up relationships who need more relations, but those who have none. Such a philosophy towards fostering relation helps avoid alienation and resentment.

In contrast, Jesus warns the disciples to "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (Matt 16:6) Jesus is telling His disciples to be careful to the teachings and doctrines of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Such lessons might be absorbed in the course of fostering relationships between the disciples and the legalistic sects.

The disciples do mold their actions and behavior so as to foster relationships. Some of these actions may also imply some tentativeness and shadedness, which Gilligan also holds important. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul addresses some of the early Church's questions about food, particularly meat sacrificed to idols. It was practice in that day that on non-Judaic altars animals would be sacrificed and the meat later sold in the marketplace. Paul, having explained some of his reasoning, continues, "But take care lest this liberty of yours [to eat meat sacrificed to idols] somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore if food

causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble."(1 Cor. 8:9-13)

Certainly Paul's words would differ were he a conventional Kohlbergian. Kohlbergians would proudly declare their right, their *God-given* right, to eat meat sacrificed to idols. Paul declares that he has the ability, and that there is no sin in the action, but that if it causes anyone else to become weak, if in eating such meat he might bring someone any weakness, he'll stop forever. Paul's words and actions foster relationship.

### **Problem Solving Through Relation**

Aside from a few contextuality issues, Jesus doesn't deeply touch onto the notion of problem solving through relation. In contrast, Gilligan states that an ethical problem is an interpersonal problem that is no one individual's to solve.

Her claim gives us no insight as to why Jesus' temptations in the desert were ethical dilemmas. Again we see the same trap that Kohlberg fell into: leaving faith and religious belief out of morality. If we include faith in moral themes, Jesus' temptations then become an inter'personal' dilemma between Himself, God, and Satan. However, Jesus answers Satan's temptations simply, and without negotiation. He doesn't reason with Satan, He doesn't even consider what Satan might be thinking or feeling. (When we consider that angels can be joyous, and that God loves perfectly, it seems safe to assume that Satan is also capable of reason and emotion.)

On the other hand, Jesus' temptations could be considered interpersonal resolution. If we assume, as we probably should, that during Jesus' forty day fast, He prayed often. He has developed and strengthened His relationship with God. Satan now appears with alluring temptation. The scene is not unlike a married couple, of whom one is suddenly faced with the temptation of some extramarital affair. Jesus resists temptation, resorting to the Word of God, which is a significant portion of His relationship with God. The tempted spouse should likewise discuss the new temptation with their partner, and hopefully overcome it.

We are instructed that if we are angry with a brother, we need to resolve that anger and conflict to patch our relation before we can properly continue our relationship with God. (Matt 5:22-25) Jesus teaches to keep interpersonal relationships sound and healthy. He continues that anger is cause for guilt, and thus an ethical problem. He also tells us to go and be reconciled. To 'go and be reconciled' is more than a single person deciding to be angry no more and is an interpersonal process. Thus anger is an "interpersonal problem that is no one individual's to solve."

Jesus teaches to "first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matt 7:5) Under the assumption that these specks and logs are ethical problems, possibly between the individual and God (not explicitly between two earthly individuals), it seems that to help each other we must also help ourselves. If everyone has these problems however, no one will achieve anything lacking interpersonal help.

These examples support Gilligan's interpersonal problem solving, but many of Jesus' teachings advocate that we may need to cast away interpersonal advice and troubles in order to pursue moral and ethical methods. In the parable of the sower and the seeds, the seed which is caught in the troubles and cares the world, possibly interpersonal counselings and imperfect relationships, is the seed which is caught among thorns.

In Jesus' teachings interpersonal relationships may not be a large part of problem solving, but it is clear that in the early Church, after Jesus' ascension, debate and consensus seeking did play a significant part of ethical resolution, particularly with the Gentile church. While many today question whether a Jew can also be a Christian, in the early church the pressing question was whether or not a Gentile must first become a proselyte Jew to become a Christian. In Acts 15, we read that some men came from Judea and were teaching that "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1) Whether or not one must follow a long established moral commandment in order to receive eternal salvation is an ethical issue, and the involved parties certainly realized this.

Paul and Barnabas discussed this matter at great lengths with those from Judea and eventually, having reached no resolution on the issue, the lot of them decided to send Paul and Barnabas to the church at Jerusalem. There they would discuss the matter with the elders. At Jerusalem, there was much debate, and much prayer, and eventually consensus was reached that a Gentile needn't first become a Jew to become a Christian.

Significance lies in the fact that when this issue was brought up, rather than splitting apart, or departing from each other on doctrinal basis, the involved parties tried to resolve the ethical dilemma interpersonally through discussion and debate, including individual reflections and conclusions.

## **Contextuality**

Contextuality is not a strong point in Jesus' moral teachings. Jesus' leans towards absolutism, though the absolutes may only be principles, and leaves interpretation and course of action to be determined. Jesus never instructs in a way that says "Sometimes you should this, and other times maybe you should do this." Jesus never instructs: "Well, maybe you'll just have to figure that out if the time comes up." This contextuality is not present in Jesus teachings.

Some passages support the idea that Jesus may have acted in a contextual manner. When Jesus is anointed with perfume prior to his arrest, some of the disciples became upset at the lost cost of the perfume which could have gone to the poor and promoted other useful, more altruistic, and utilitarian causes. In Mark, Jesus replies "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good thing for Me. For the poor you always have with you, and whenever you wish, you can do them good; but you do not always have Me." (Mark 14:6-7) While it is hard to argue with anything that Jesus has actually said; that the poor will be present, and that she has done a good thing for Him, Jesus' words seem out of place, and less caring than what we are accustomed to hear from Him.

In John, the story is more fully explained, and contextuality is clearer. "But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?' Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it." (John 12:4-6)

In this light, it seems that while Jesus still spoke truthfully, it is possible that He might rather have supported the poor. Realizing that it would not happen were the woman to give the money to Judas, Jesus presents an explanation to show that the woman isn't doing anything wrong, and as such should not be admonished.

Passages in which Jesus converses with others and is able to understand their motives are the examples which illustrate Jesus' contextuality. Various people asked for explanations of parables and teachings, yet Jesus gives them different answers. To Pharisees who try to confuse Him and trick Him into self-incrimination or blasphemy, He responds with questions that expose their lack of understanding. When the disciples ask so as to truly understand, Jesus explains His words peacefully and patiently.

Jesus instructs His disciples to allow contextuality when they speak in times of trial. "And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious about what you are to say, but say whatever is given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." Jesus is not explicitly encouraging contextuality in morality, but in interpersonal relationships and actual actions. This leads both to contextual morality, insofar as following a principle may not always lead to the same action being taken. This is found even in Kohlberg's moral stages in which Stage 5 thinkers may always come to different conclusions, while not having brought any harm to their Stage 5 thinking. It should be noted that Jesus' contextuality is still dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer, and does not necessarily encourage contextuality in the larger societies as a whole, but rather in those who have accepted an absolutist principle system, and an absolute God.

### **Balancing Self And Other Care**

Gilligan makes it clear that in the caring theme she proposes that there is necessarily more self care than is traditionally seen in 'caring' people. This particularly applies to the image of a caring woman, but persons who are rooted more in a justice standpoint can also lack self care, possibly through concepts of nobility and honorable self sacrifice.

Jesus does not fit well into this aspect of Gilligan's caring theme. Principles of caring and self sacrifice state explicitly that "we must care for ourselves as well as others, no allowing other to take advantage of us and not taking advantage of ourselves for their sake." Yet Jesus instructs us that we "do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other. And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you." (Matt 5:39-42)

It is difficult to construct a more concise and emphatic rejection of Gilligan's principle. Jesus teaching instructs to give to those want to borrow, and to give to those who ask. Those can be conservatively described as generosity, but to give freely to those who sue you, and to offer more of yourself as a victim are principles clearly at odds with Gilligan's admonition to avoid self sacrifice.

This was not merely passing teaching. Jesus is not momentarily promoting a thought that would be pleasant were everyone to lead a life of non-violence and asked only out of need, but Jesus' actions exemplified these principles to the point of death. His disciples realized this too, and write accordingly. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her."(Eph. 5:25) Paul

understands that Christ's life and relation with the Church is indeed to be seen as an example of specific interpersonal relationships. Such absolutism and generality also helps make a case against contextuality.

Gilligan's principles would that we "resist tendencies to become martyrs in hopes of being an admirable and admired person." The counterexample is that Jesus was crucified, and was a martyr. His reasons are not that he hopes to become an admired and admirable person. In fact, the argument can be made that Jesus would agree with Gilligan, to some extent.

Jesus is not completely opposed to martyrdom, but before His arrest, His prayer shows that He isn't looking forward to persecution and execution with a mind that says "I hope I'll be an admirable and admired person." Jesus embodies and encourages an attitude that is more self sacrificing than that of which Gilligan would approve.

### **Tentativeness and Shadedness**

Jesus does not make his moral teachings tentative, limited by lack of information, or shaded. Jesus' teachings were revolutionary, and his interpretations new and fresh, but they are not based on His own times and experiences anymore than anyone else's. They are absolutist.

It is the case that some of Jesus' teachings may leave the legalist wanting more detailed instructions, but His principles are still absolute and right and wrong are simply the will of God and opposition to it.

John writes in Revelation, "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book." (Rev. 22, v18,19) John could not be clearer about the fact that the Bible, whether one interprets it literally or figuratively, is not meant to be tentative or shaded.

The disciples of Jesus do leave room for a measure of flexibility in that sometimes, rather than give commands, they give advice. "...it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband. ... But I say this by way of concession not of command. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God..." (1 Cor. 7:1-7) Paul explains that the 'commandment' to marry is not a commandment, but tentative advice, and shaded as it applies to those who will be tempted to sin if they do not marry.

The tentativeness and shadedness of Jesus and the disciples lies not in whether something is right or wrong, but rather in the obligatory as opposed to the supererogatory. This is not seen in Kohlberg's stages until the post conventional Stage 6. This is not the same as Gilligan's principle that morality 'must be posed on a continuum of better-worse, not as an absolute disjunction of right and wrong.' Paul's teaching may be interpreted to agree with either perspective, but Paul explicitly states that his words are not a commandment, but rather his own personal advice, not the absolute measure of right and wrong, but a guideline to rightness for those who cannot fulfill the supererogatory.

## **What Kohlberg Left Out That Gilligan Includes**

Our Kohlbergian analysis left out and discarded much of what Jesus taught His followers. These aspects are not irrelevant morally, and help to explain why following Christ is a worthy cause, and offer much encouragement to those who try. Kohlberg did not find them morally relevant, as many such teachings are more practical and specifics based, whereas Kohlberg only states that having some such principles matter, not that the actual principles are all that significant.

The Beatitudes are discarded by Kohlberg's theory, partially because they are simply statements, not even necessarily moral in themselves. It is not clear why the poor in spirit, the meek, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness are blessed, except in that their affliction will be treated.

Gilligan's theory however will permit much more analysis on this short passage. Reasoning behind these blessings may not be considered much more in the caring theme, but the amount of relational preconception that they will give is tremendous.

Relationally we might be inclined to shy away from those who are poor, we might not notice those who are meek, we might try to avoid the company of those who mourn, and we might tend to decry the idealism of the peacemakers. This is all quite easy to do if we can consider these people as unimportant and apart, but it becomes impossible if we must recognize them to whom God have given blessings.

The Beatitudes not only offer comfort to all who may realize they are blessed for their condition, but it gives any person relationally considering morality much more to think about before they respond to any given person.

Gilligan's caring theme allows a fuller view of Jesus teachings to be examined in a moral and ethical light. Care gives a set of principles which encompass a wider field of actions and teachings. Care lets us look at aspects of actions and thoughts that may not normally be considered moral.

## **What Gilligan Leaves Out That Kohlberg Included**

Gilligan forces us to regard as incorrect almost as much as Kohlberg forced us to regard as irrelevant. The care theme is a set of principles and descriptions of actions to take to proceed along the course of ethical resolution. These principles, though contextuality and shadedness, and lack of concrete right-wrong and presence of a continuum of good and bad, eliminate the possibility to have a set of principles of right and wrong.

Gilligan's caring theme forces us to disregard any absolutist principle, no matter how sound, as improper in absolutism. No matter how strong a natural response is that an action is wrong, there may still be cases where it's the right thing to do. No matter how good something may seem, care forces us to say that is not necessary, that there may be a situation that arises in which we must reject the goodness of the action.

Jesus, His disciples, and the rest of the Bible teach absolutes and concrete principles. Some are particular to an action, some are all encompassing. Gilligans care theme rejects all of them. This is a significant problem to any rationally thinking person who can think of things that should always be considered wrong.

This rejection of solid moral principles and guidelines may not be present in the highest Kohlbergian stages, but Kohlbergs Stage 4 provides a place for them. Kohlberg also tends to the notion that at the highest levels of moral thinking everything may be contextual, but he does not force every stage to reject such absolutes.

### **What Gilligan and Kohlberg Left Out**

Kohlberg and Gilligan alike leave out any place for faith. They do not provide for divine command. The relational aspects of neither theme provide any notion of treating relationships with God any differently than those with human peers. Jesus does make this distinction, yet moral philosophers do not seem to consider it properly or adequately.

Gilligan and Kohlberg both leave out the possibility for absolutism at their highest stages. Kohlbergs stages are descriptive and so are more easily forgiven. Gilligans however are instructional, and have no way of resolving the possibility that morality could actually concrete with unchanging principles and rules.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus teachings are more fully seen when considered under Gilligans caring theme. Gilligans care allows us to analyze statements which are not immediately seen as moral. Gilligans care also removes from consideration absolutist principles which Jesus puts forth. Kohlberg acknowledges and embraces these principles as vital to moral understanding.

A combination of the justice and caring themes will more fully encompass the pragmatic, practical aspects of Jesus teaching and instruction. Faith is still not directly included into morality, even in the combination of themes, but all detailed aspects of day to day moral reasoning and ethical thought are present.

Such a combination of the justice and caring themes which are present in the Christs words and actions show a truly adequate moral comprehension. Neither Gilligan nor Kohlberg capture the entirety of theology or metaethics present in Jesus doctrines, but together they adequately describe the course of actions which will be consistent with Christs commands.