

## Introduction

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Every culture colors the way its members perceive and interpret reality. Though reality is always the same, cultural interpretations of it differ. What is considered important in Middle Eastern or Mediterranean culture may be considered quite unimportant in the prevailing culture of the United States. Even when both cultures use the same word to describe something important, like hospitality, the understanding of that item is very different. That is why a handbook of New Testament values is significant. The purpose of this handbook is to describe some of the values prominent in the New Testament and frequently referred to in the Bible in general. Each New Testament value will be contrasted with the understanding commonly held by United States citizens.

### **WHAT IS A VALUE?**

The word “value” describes some general quality and direction of life that human beings are expected to embody in their behavior. A value is a general, normative orientation of action in a social system. It is an emotionally anchored commitment to pursue and support certain directions or types of actions.

For example, most Americans pride themselves on being efficient. (N.B.: In this handbook, the word “American” refers only to citizens of the United States and does not include Canada or Mexico.) But what exactly is “efficient” behavior in a concrete situation? What does it mean to clean out a garage efficiently? What sort of

garage, with what procedures for the disposal of waste oil, for example? At an abstract level, values such as efficiency bear no reference to specific goals or specific situations. Giving a general value a specific content or meaning results from institutionalization.

In the example of efficiency, there are fixed ways of disposing of the usual waste found in a garage. Empty oil cans could be deposited at a filling station, while used air filters could be taken by weekly trash haulers. These fixed ways of realizing values are institutions. An institution is a somewhat fixed structure of procedures and behaviors that people follow while exercising a value. In sum, an institution is a general, abstract, social structure that gives shape to general and common values.

#### **APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING VALUES**

There are a number of ways to understand or view values. Consider efficiency again. While Americans do not expect one another to perform all tasks identically, they do expect one another to carry out those tasks with a maximum of practical sense and a minimum of wasted effort. It is considered stupid and foolish, at times even humorous, to do anything in an impractical or inefficient way, such as washing a car with a toothbrush or digging up a garden with a spoon. Americans constantly evaluate what they perceive in terms of its efficiency quality, even though they may not be aware of making such a judgment. The reason Americans are always making this judgment is that human efficiency is a central feature of the core American value called "instrumental mastery."

Instrumental mastery, which lies at the heart of the dominant U.S. culture, refers to the ability to control persons and things so as to maximize one's individual well-being. Being efficient is simply one variation on the value of instrumental mastery. Thus, the word "value" refers to the quality ("of what sort?") and the goal or purpose (directionality) of human behavior in general or of some aspect of human behavior.

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Values are also qualities that inhere in “value objects.” Value objects include: self, others, nature, time, space, the All. In the Bible, God is “the All.” Values are consequently revealed in the way human beings behave as well as in the way they assess value objects.

### **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

In order to realize values, human beings create and utilize social institutions. A social institution is like a set of railroad tracks of a specific width laid out in a given direction toward a specific end or goal. To illustrate, kinship or family is a social institution that serves as the means for bringing new human beings into existence and then nurturing them for a lifetime.

Institutions mark the general boundaries within which certain qualities and directions of living must take place. Generating and nurturing human beings must occur within the boundaries of kinship, whether in the form of the U.S. style of a nuclear family, the single-parent family, or communal living of one sort or another.

Institutional boundaries delineate and define value objects, i.e., the objects that embody values. For example, the individual person is a value object. Institutionally, individual persons are usually delineated by social arrangements called roles and statuses. Take a moment to reflect upon the roles and statuses that most persons in the U.S. possess within the social institution known as kinship: husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, cousin, and in-law. How is each one delineated from the other?

Roles and statuses are replicated throughout a social system because their dimensions distinguish one individual person not only from another person but also from nature, space, time, and the All or God. For example, we commonly refer to “mother” nature, but in actuality motherhood is a role and status of a human being. On the one hand, plants do not enjoy a mother status or role, and animals are given this reference by

analogy with human beings. On the other hand, plants play a role in the food chain or serve humans as decorative objects. These two roles delineate plants, one element of nature, from human beings, who do not ordinarily play a role in the food chain or serve as decorative objects.

As fixed forms of various aspects in social life, institutions focus on goals required for the maintenance of a social group. Institutions do not change, but the values which people follow in the pursuit of social goals (e.g., begetting offspring and nurturing related human beings) can and do change.

In any society, then, social institutions take on dynamic expression by endowing persons, things, and events with meaning and feeling. "Value" is another term for the meaning and feeling that inhere in persons, things, and events. To use our original example, efficiency is a value that can inhere in or be attributed to persons, things, and events. Precisely how a specific behavior or action will be assessed at any given time as efficient is not predefined. For example, an American who budgets time to accomplish goals within a predetermined period is normally viewed as efficient. By contrast, the Mediterranean native who values interpersonal relationships and cares little about how much time is spent on this aspect of life is also viewed in that culture as efficient. The fact that Americans would view this extravagance as a "waste" of time indicates that the meaning of "efficient" is rather fluid.

### **SYMBOLS**

Further, the valued person, thing, or event, that is, the object endowed with meaning and feeling, is often called a "symbol." Thus, a person, thing, or event filled with some socially appreciable value bears the meaningfulness characteristic of a symbol. From this point of view, social institutions are systems of symbols which establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and

motivations in human beings. Social institutions accomplish this by projecting concepts of an adequately meaningful, social, human existence, and then clothing these concepts with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. A country's flag is basically a distinctively colored cloth. When this cloth is called a flag and accepted as a symbol, it stimulates meaning and feeling that the cloth alone does not.

The way in which values are affixed to value objects is the process of "symbolizing," or having some person, thing, or event serve as a symbol. Symbolizing takes place by means of drawing lines over, under, around, through, into and out of persons (self, others), nature (the non-human), time, space, superhumanness (transcendence), the All, and then investing the lines thus drawn with feeling, and finally perceiving meaning in the emerging configuration.

### KINDS OF VALUES

There are many ways to categorize values; for example: core and peripheral, primary and secondary, means and ends, and so on. Values that are expected in all human interactions are core values, such as efficiency in the United States. In contrast to the U.S. core value of efficiency, honor and shame are core values in the Mediterranean world. Because this is a handbook of New Testament or Bible values, "efficiency" is not listed, but honor and shame are.

Values that are specific to given interactions are peripheral values. In the Mediterranean world, compassion is an example of a peripheral value because it is expected only in situations guided and governed by kinship considerations. Values that facilitate the realization of core and secondary values may be called "means values." Power, generosity, and eloquence are means values because they facilitate the realization of honor, which is the Mediterranean goal or end cultural value.

Of the major social institutions—economics, politics, religion, and kinship—the prevailing institution in the biblical world was kinship. The rules of kinship controlled the main ways in which core and peripheral values of the society were realized. Because of the centrality of the social institution of kinship, the value objects self, others, nature, time, space, and the All (God) were assessed, in the first place, by gender.

In the Mediterranean world, where kinship is basic, a human being is primarily male or female (husband//wife, son//daughter, brother//sister: kinship terms) rather than rich or poor (economic terms), powerful or powerless (political terms), pious or impious (religious terms). The human universe of discourse is then patterned in rhythms and stanzas which are primarily male and female in quality. The world of human affairs is gender-based, with a moral division of labor which is equally gender-based. Such an understanding, which is quite normal in the Mediterranean world, can prove troublesome in the Western world, and particularly in the United States, where some social movements would consider the Mediterranean perspective to be sexist or oppressive.

*Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, therefore, takes up words that linguistically embody meanings derived from the Mediterranean social system. Thus, the entries describe the value-meanings in the linguistic register of cultural anthropology rather than in the linguistic register of piety (as in a dictionary of spirituality), or the linguistic register of religion (as in traditional Bible dictionaries). The linguistic register of cultural anthropology requires a description of the value-meaning: (1) in itself, (2) with reference to the broader social system, and (3) in contrast to contemporary United States experience. Each entry strives to present this kind of information.

The reader who consults the Bible passages listed in each entry will notice that the values may be *explicitly* referred to in a given passages or only *implicitly* present as a feature of circum-Mediterranean societies. For in-

stance, the word “hospitality” is not mentioned explicitly in Matthew 25 (the last judgment scene), but the behaviors listed there and the context of these behaviors leave no doubt that hospitality is definitely implied.

As we shall point out directly, every human group has a set of major value-preference orientations. And, as a rule, the preferred values remain implied in native social interaction; they are implicit values. In this handbook, implicit values will be described at explicit entries. For instance, the implicit value “present orientation” will be described at the explicit entry “time orientation.”

### **VALUE OBJECTS AS A REFLECTION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR**

Values deal with the general direction of behavior. What direction should behavior take? What should guide this behavior? What attitude should be present as a person behaves? Reflection upon the value objects (individual person, others, nature, time, space, and the All or God) helps illustrate this dimension of values. Take careful note that in what follows, the category to which the value objects are assigned is social and cultural rather than psychological. For example, while an “individual” may be any biological entity from a single cell to a complex human being, the “self” is most often a psychological concept, while the “person” is the social and cultural designation. The entries will focus primarily on the social and cultural category.

*The Person:* Consider the value object called “the individual person.” When a person, “the individual self,” acts, does society expect this person to be ever mindful of “self”? If the person performing some action can say, “I as an individual am responsible for what I choose. I am doing this present action as I react to this or that stimulus,” such a manner of behaving is called “individualistic.” The individual person conceives, implements, fulfills, or fails to achieve a very individual goal.

Now suppose an individual person were expected to focus on the group's priorities rather than the individual's preferences, goals, etc. "The group wants, the group needs, the group demands, it would please the group if . . ." The group may be a family or an association like "The Twelve."

Further, suppose society expects individuals to focus on people above and below themselves socially, that is, to focus on hierarchy. "The authorities command, the authorities want, my father wants, the bishop wants, the pope wants, the king wants, or anyone above me wants me to behave thus and so." Obviously, in this hierarchical viewpoint, those below the individual must listen to and obey that person. "They ought to do what I want, what my status demands. They should respect my status, my choices, whatever I do."

These are three general orientations of human behavior. According to the orientation selected, the individual person will be perceived and interpreted as individualistically oriented, group oriented, or hierarchy oriented.

*God:* Using this same perspective to focus on the All or God, three interpretations are possible. In an individualistic social system, God is viewed as a "junior partner," just another individual like any other individualistic self, albeit more powerful. In a group focused social system, God is perceived to be ever present. God is a member of the group and is present wherever the group is gathered. In a hierarchical social system, God is above everybody else in a role such as king or patron.

*Others:* In like fashion, when dealing with others, consider whether others in a given society exist to facilitate one's personal ("my") success. "Do I have to learn how to control other persons and things in my environment so that I might succeed? Must I learn how to use other groups in my environment so that I might make it?" This outlook characterizes American *individualism*.

Another way to look at others is to divide them into groups: those who belong ("us") and those who do not

belong (“them”). The chief focus is “us.” Usually in this perspective “others” may join and leave “us” in some way, hence the abiding concern among “us” will be whether those within our group are trustworthy and can be duly trusted. This is a description of group behavior, or group orientation. Such considerations and relationships are called *collateral*.

Finally, others may be perceived as belonging to statuses held not because of individual achievement but because of birth. High class people are “high class” because they were born into propertied families, born into “blue blood.” In this viewpoint, the class above me is there because the families that constitute it have always been above me and my family. The class below me is there because the families that constitute it have always been below me and my family. This is a pyramid in which people attain their position by birth or fictive birth. Such relationships are obviously *lineal* or *hierarchical*. Slaves are such because they were born of slave parents. Others may be looked upon as markers in a hierarchy to which a person is expected to look in order to determine personal status. In such an instance, I mind my own family, or I attend to the members of my group, my faction, my coalition, my family over against other families.

*Nature:* Consider nature as a value object. When the main goal in society is to live in *harmony* with nature, there is very little concern to possess or own anything. Ownership is generally communal; things belong to everyone, and everyone seeks to fit into the scheme of nature.

On the other hand, when the main value or attitude to nature is *subjection* or *submission*, the chief concern is how to keep nature from doing harm. Nature divinities of various sorts are often involved in antagonistic relationships with one another and with human beings. Hence, human beings with this view of nature seek to develop propitiatory relationships to such divinities. If the

divinities can be appeased, human beings can live in peace with nature.

Finally, when human beings believe that they have control over nature, possession or ownership becomes a major value. Ownership, whether by individual or by group, is both prized and sought, and *control* also becomes a major value. Technologies to this end emerge or receive preference in a society where this value orientation prevails.

American readers should easily be able to identify the major value orientations of their society. They probably will find it more challenging to identify and appreciate the major value orientations of Mediterranean society. *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* aims to address that challenge.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT WORLD

To give the reader a context or reading scenario for the entries that follow, here is a general overview of *value preferences* common in the world of the people we read about in the New Testament. This overview sketches the dominant values of the Bible. We note that Mediterranean culture, or the culture reflected in the Bible, favors:

- (a) being over doing
- (b) collateral relations over individualism
- (c) present or past time orientation over future
- (d) subordination to nature over mastery of it
- (e) a view of human nature as a mixture of good and bad elements over a view of human nature as exclusively good or bad.

Knowing this complex of values, then, is essential if a reader wants to truly understand the people of the biblical world.

The following chart illustrates the range of value preferences available to all human beings but specifically as they are ordered in Mediterranean culture. The left column presents the first choice, the middle column the second choice, and the right column the last choice of value preferences in the Mediterranean world, generally speaking.

It should also be noted that these first, second, and third choices represent the dominant male choices. For females in this and every culture, the secondary male value preference tends to be the primary female value preference. Thus, in the United States, males generally are expected to achieve (doing), and only secondarily permit themselves to be spontaneous (being); women in general are primarily expected to be spontaneous, and only secondarily to be dedicated to achieving.

In Mediterranean society relative to this same area of concern, men are primarily socialized to spontaneity,

<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>RANGE OF SOLUTIONS</b>		
<b>Principal mode of HUMAN ACTIVITY</b>	Being	Being-in-becoming	Doing
<b>INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	Collateral	Lineal	Individual
<b>TIME ORIENTATION</b>	Present	Past	Future
<b>RELATIONSHIPS of humans TO NATURE</b>	Be subject to it	Live in harmony with it	Master it
<b>VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE</b>	Mixture of good and evil	Evil	Good

This chart is taken from John J. Pilch, *Introducing the Cultural Context of the New Testament* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991), page 244, copyright © 1991 by John J. Pilch.

while women are primarily socialized to achievement, doing, “work.”

The chart on p. xxv presents five major challenges to each culture and arranges the preferred order of responses (value orientations) in the circum-Mediterranean world in general, reading from left to right. It should be apparent that, reading from right to left, one can recognize the preferred order of responses in U.S. culture in general.

The following paragraphs further explain the chart with examples from the Gospel of Luke and other parts of the Bible.

*Being:* Like most people in his world, Luke viewed everything in dualistic terms. “Who is not with me is against me; who does not gather with me scatters” (Luke 11:23). Hence, people are divided into two groups: wheat or chaff (3:17) and bad or good soil (8:11–15). And the crowds are necessarily “divided” in the presence of Jesus into groups favorable to him and groups rejecting him; after all, “this child is set for the rise and fall of many” (2:34). All of Jesus’ preaching serves to bring to light the *being* of people, where they stand and on which side of the line they are.

How vital it is in Luke’s world to be in God’s kingdom rather than in the kingdom of Satan, God’s enemy. Luke’s world, of course, is dualistically divided into two kingdoms, God’s and Satan’s. The role of Jesus is that of “savior” who liberates those in Satan’s kingdom and brings them into God’s kingdom, that is, into a different *state of being*. Hence, Jesus “saves” people from Satan’s power by liberating them from misfortune and illness, sin and death (4:18–19; 7:11–15; 7:37–50; 13:16).

*Collateral Relationships:* The persons of Luke’s world are invariably known not as individuals but in terms of relationships or embeddedness within a group. Personal identity derives primarily from group affiliation. People are “sons of so-and-so” or members of a certain family or

clan. They are members of “parties” such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, or scribes. A major question may arise about “who is my neighbor?” (10:29) because the answer would clarify collateral relationships and hence appropriate duties.

Jesus seemingly attacks one set of collateral relationships, even as he replaces it with another. There is a considerable body of material in Luke which is highly critical of blood ties and kinship bonds. Jesus states that he has come not to bring “peace” but “division.” He will set family members against one another (12:50–53). Later he states that those who do not “hate” family members cannot be his disciples (14:26–27). And he criticizes those who prize these family relationships but still want to be his disciples (9:57–62). Luke even indicates that Jesus was more dedicated to the affairs of his heavenly Father than to the concerns of his parents (2:48–50). Finally, he described his authentic family not as his blood relatives but as those who “hear the word of God and do it” (8:19–21). But even as he criticizes one set of collateral relations, the basic kinship group, Jesus proclaims its replacement by attachment to him and his new fictive kinship group. Disciples remain in relationship, only in different collateral ones. Disciples are subsequently identified as embedded in Jesus and his group by taking his name for their primary identification: “And in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians” (Acts 11:26; see 26:28).

*Present Time Orientation:* Modern readers of Luke–Acts frequently identify as a major theme of his works the motif of “prophecy-fulfillment.” The scenario needed for understanding this “prophecy-fulfillment” material is the present time orientation which Luke shares with his world. Now is the time to be alive, for God has remembered his promises to Abraham (Luke 1:54–55, 72–73) and to David (1:32–33). Now is the great day of salvation when the prophecies of redemption and salvation are fulfilled (Luke 2:25–26, 38).

Luke most dramatically expresses his present time orientation with the emphatic comment “Today!” Angels tell shepherds that “*Today* is born to you a savior” (2:11, author’s trans.). Jesus himself proclaims that Isaiah’s prophecies of gospel and liberation are fulfilled “*today* in your hearing” (4:21). To the tax collector Zacchaeus Jesus proclaims that “*Today* salvation has come to this house” (19:9), even as he tells the dying insurrectionist, “*Today* . . . you will be with me in paradise” (23:43). Therefore, do not expect much talk in Luke of Jesus’ future coming. The basic time orientation is on “today” and not the distant future (see 12:28; 13:32–33).

This time orientation might lead a reader to examine again the statements about God’s kingdom in Luke–Acts. If these reflections prove stimulating, a reader might well find a strong emphasis on what theologians call “realized eschatology,” an emphasis on what is already achieved in Jesus. In Luke, one would look specifically at a passage such as 17:20–21 in which God’s kingdom as a future or distant event is criticized in favor of a present orientation: “For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

*Relationships of Human Beings to Nature:* With regard to *nature* it seems quite clear that first-century Palestinians felt there was little a human being could do to counteract the forces of nature. Their primary value orientation, like that of all peasants, was to suffer nature, to be *subject to it*. From this perspective Jesus’ healings and miracles stand out as exceptional events in a world where humankind had no power over nature. When Jesus casts out a demon, the crowd is genuinely amazed: “With authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out” (Luke 4:36). When Jesus calms the storm, his disciples marvel: “Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?” (Luke 8:24–25).

*Assessment of Human Nature:* The first-century Mediterranean assessment of human nature is that it is a

mixture of good and evil propensities. Paul, for example, uses the words “flesh” and “spirit” to describe two different “drives” a human being experiences in nature and activity. To the Galatians, he writes that “. . . the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:19–23).

Jesus is even more to the point in his private discussions with his disciples after his confrontation with the Pharisees regarding support of one’s parents (Mark 7). “What comes out of a [person] is what defiles a [person]. For from within, out of the heart of [the person], come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, [the evil eye] or envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person” (Mark 7:20–22, author’s trans.). Here Jesus describes the wicked propensities of a human being.

In summary, not only must modern observers and interpreters clarify their own viewpoint and articulate their own values, they must strive as well to imagine and learn the viewpoint and values of those of another culture whom they would study. The model presented schematically here can be studied in greater detail elsewhere (see John J. Pilch, “Sickness and Healing in Luke–Acts,” in *The Social World of Luke–Acts: Models for Interpretation* [ed. Jerome H. Neyrey, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991] pp. 181–209; and John J. Pilch, *Introducing the Cultural Context of the New Testament* [New York/Mahwah: Paulist, 1991]). Additional information about the United States based on this same model can be found in Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennet, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (rev. ed.; Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural, 1991). Such a study can prove to be of inestimable value in analyzing and comparing the U.S.

with the various groups that populated the first-century Mediterranean world. It can also assist in interpreting New Testament texts with sensitivity to the value preferences of the Mediterranean culture in which these texts originated.

The chart that follows was designed by Bruce J. Malina to illustrate how these various value preferences are arranged differently by different groups in the first-century Mediterranean world. Readers should be able to recognize the short-hand in the chart as it reflects the fuller statement of value preferences identified in the model above.

Key: “⇒” = is preferred to

*Being-in-becoming* characterizes that cultural preference whereby a person seeks to develop all aspects of personality at one time. Such a person often begins one activity and then turns to another, and yet another, prior to completing the first.

Note well the contrast between the value preferences of Jesus (along with Israelite peasants) and mainstream United States citizens. In contrast to prevailing American culture, the Mediterranean world in general places emphasis on:

1. *being and/or becoming* (that is, on *states*),  
not on *doing* (activity)
2. *collateral* (group) and *lineal* (*hierarchical*) *relationships*,  
not on *individualism*
3. *present* and *past* time orientation,  
not on the *future*
4. the *uncontrollable* factor of *nature*,  
not on its *manipulation* or *mastery*
5. *human nature* which is a mixture of both *good and bad*,  
not *neutral* or *correctable*.

## VALUE ORIENTATION PROFILES

	Italian Rural	Roman	Greek
<b>Activity</b>	Being ⇨ Being-in-becoming ⇨ Doing	Being-in-becoming ⇨ Being ⇨ Doing	Being ⇨ Doing ⇨ Being-in-becoming
<b>Relational</b>	Collateral ⇨ Lineal ⇨ Individual	Lineal ⇨ Collateral ⇨ Individual	Lineal ⇨ Individual ⇨ Collateral
<b>Time</b>	Present ⇨ Past ⇨ Future	Past ⇨ Present ⇨ Future	Present ⇨ Past ⇨ Future
<b>People-Nature</b>	Subordinate to ⇨ Live with ⇨ Rule over	Rule over ⇨ Live with ⇨ Subordinate to	Subordinate to ⇨ Live with ⇨ Rule over
<b>Human nature</b>	Mixed ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good	Good ⇨ Mixed ⇨ Evil	Mixed ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good
	Israelite Peasant	Judean Elite	Pharisees
<b>Activity</b>	Being ⇨ Being-in-becoming ⇨ Doing	Being ⇨ Being-in-becoming ⇨ Doing	Being ⇨ Doing ⇨ Being-in-becoming
<b>Relational</b>	Collateral ⇨ Lineal ⇨ Individual	Lineal ⇨ Collateral ⇨ Individual	Lineal ⇨ Individual ⇨ Collateral
<b>Time</b>	Present ⇨ Past ⇨ Future	Present ⇨ Past ⇨ Future	Past ⇨ Present ⇨ Future
<b>People-Nature</b>	Subordinate to ⇨ Live with ⇨ Rule over	Rule over ⇨ Live with ⇨ Subordinate to	Subordinate to ⇨ Live with ⇨ Rule over
<b>Human nature</b>	Mixed ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good	Mixed ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good	Mixed ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good
	Jesus	Paul	American
<b>Activity</b>	Being-in-becoming ⇨ Being ⇨ Doing	Being-in-becoming ⇨ Being ⇨ Doing	Doing ⇨ Being ⇨ Being-in-becoming
<b>Relational</b>	Collateral ⇨ Individual ⇨ Lineal	Lineal ⇨ Collateral ⇨ Individual	Individual ⇨ Collateral ⇨ Lineal
<b>Time</b>	Present ⇨ Past ⇨ Future	Present ⇨ Past ⇨ Future	Future ⇨ Present ⇨ Past
<b>People-Nature</b>	Live with ⇨ Subordinate to ⇨ Rule over	Subordinate to ⇨ Live with ⇨ Rule over	Rule over ⇨ Subordinate to ⇨ Live with
<b>Human nature</b>	Mixed ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good	Evil ⇨ Mixed ⇨ Good	Neutral ⇨ Evil ⇨ Good

To facilitate still deeper immersion into the world of the Bible in general and the New Testament in particular, consider the following chart of comparative features contrasting U.S. and Mediterranean societies. Familiarity with this chart will shed great light on the handbook entries.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>U.S. Society</b>	<b>Mediterranean Society</b>
Privacy	There is an unwillingness to enter the private lives of others or to have others enter one's own private life.	There is an unwillingness to leave alone the lives of others or to have others leave alone one's own life.
Communities	People have to freely join communities; they tend to have broad, shallow relationships rather than deep, long-term ones. Americans avoid obligations and indebtedness to others.	People have no choice but to fit into inherited communities; they have extremely few but deep relationships within those communities.
Primary reality	The basic belief is individualist realism. The individual is believed to be the primary reality, with society as a second order, artificial or derived construct.	The basic belief is group realism. Society (groups) is believed to be the primary reality, while the individual is a second order, artificial or derived construct.
Psychological development of the child	The focus in childhood psychological development is on separation, individuation, and leaving home in late adolescence (a sort of second birth). The prospect of the child never leaving	The focus in childhood psychological development is on co-dependence, on group embeddedness, "dyadization," and the son(s) and wife's fitting into the paternal home upon marriage

	home is a discom- forting option for both parents and child.	rather early in ado- lescence. The pros- pect of a (male) child ever leaving home is a frighten- ing thing for both parent and (male) child.
Moral imperative	The moral impera- tive is: be good be- cause it makes sense, it is right, it works, it leads to competitive success.	The moral impera- tive is: be good to those in the group so that people in the group will con- tinue to love/like/ help you. The out- side is important only insofar as it impacts the group.
Personal beliefs	One discovers one's personal beliefs in the isolation of one's private self. The self is seen as autonomous, imag- ined as existing in- dependently, en- tirely outside any controlling tradition and community; in- dividuals see them- selves as actually free to choose their tradition and community.	One discovers one's deepest beliefs in and through the group, the com- munity, and its tra- ditions. There is rarely, if ever, an experience of an autonomous self; it is rather impossible to imagine a self acting independ- ently, outside the inherited tradition and the community that upholds it.
Life	Life is like a game in which one joins teams for sociable problem solving, re- quiring respect for rules as much as love of competition. The good life offers achievement-oriented security within a fixed social order.	For elites, life is like a pilgrimage or quest, with a story line or narrative that links present to past, the individual to society, and both to a meaningful, ever unfolding cosmos.  For the vast major- ity, the non-elites, life is a skirmish of

		ongoing conflicts in defense of the scarce acquisitions amassed by one's group and always desired by others. In these conflicts it seems that the immoral are ever victorious.
Personal features	Salient personal features are: self-reliance, individual happiness and success, self-realization, and psychological gratification.	Salient personal features are: strength of character, perseverance, concern for status, group well-being, and satisfaction from status and role performance.
Causality	Focus is on efficient cause (on how to produce effects, know-how, pragmatism). The focus is on future oriented potential (but without asking for what purpose, why?). There is achievement orientation assessed in terms of quantity (and often regardless of the quality of the achievement). The morality of a problem lies in the goodness or badness of strategies, means or techniques, hence on utilitarian concerns.	Focus is on final cause (for what purpose, on know-why, purposiveness). The focus is on present oriented selection of tasks in terms of purposes for pursuing them (but without concern for how these goals might in fact be realized; good facade and good intention suffice). The morality of a problem lies in the goodness or badness of principles concerning the ends pursued, hence on intentions.
Freedom	Concern is with a freer, more autonomous self; to be free of obstacles is a good in itself, with little concern about	Concern is with the primary goal of maintaining the status quo; to be free of constraints is a precarious

	asking "free for what?"	position, hence, little concern about asking, "how to get free?"
Focus or attentiveness	Constant attentiveness is given to what one does as individual agent. Total inattentiveness to what one has received from others or to one's obligations to those from whom one has received.	Constant attentiveness is given to what one has received from others and one's duties to those from whom one has received. Total inattentiveness to what one in fact has individually contributed to the realization of goals.
Nature of society	Society is individualist oriented; it is based on individual achievement orientation. Tenancy is temporary; no hereditary dependency. Obligation derives from individuals contracting to their own self-interest.	Society is kinship oriented: lineage and inherited status are decisive. Tenancy is permanent, serving as the basis of hereditary dependency. Obligation derives from group membership and serves the survival of the group.
Kinship relations	Since kinship relations are independent of individual choice and will, they can be dismissed to a considerable extent (unless elaborated on another basis, e.g., friendship).	Since kinship relations are independent of individual choice and will, they are perceived as God given, sacred. They couple with other imposed relations such as civic friendship in public solidarity (high grid) or in contending factions (low grid).
Relationships	Anything that creates more sensitive, more open, more intense, more	Anything that creates more obedient, more closed, more passive, more

	charitable relationships points to achievements of which group members may be proud. But anything that renders those same relationships fragile and vulnerable is seen to undermine those achievements (although free individual choice requires fragile and vulnerable relationships).	compliant relationships points to achievements of which group members may be proud. And anything that renders those same relationships permanent and unwaveringly impermeable is seen to further support those achievements.
True good	Since the only measure of good is what is good for the self, something that is really a burden to the self cannot be good.	Since the only measure of good is what is good for the group, something that is really a burden to the group cannot be good.
Meaning of life	The ultimate meaning of life stands quite apart from conforming to the purely procedural and institutionally variable rules and regulations that surround the individual in society; self-integration is what counts.	The ultimate meaning of life consists precisely in conforming to the purely procedural and institutionally variable rules and regulations that surround the individual in society; social integration is what counts.
Right to think	It is ethically and religiously wrong to violate the individual's right to: think for oneself, judge for oneself, make one's own decisions, or live life as one sees fit.	It is ethically and religiously wrong to violate the group's right to have its legitimate managers: think for its members, judge on their behalf, make decisions for them, or make sure that life is lived as those managers see fit.

Society and the individual	The individual is prior to society; society comes into existence only through the voluntary contract of individuals trying to maximize their own self-interests.	Society is prior to the individual; individuals come into existence as singular persons only through the societal recognition and legitimation of singular individual roles and statuses exercised by persons on behalf of their group(s) and trying to maximize the group's collective interests.
Success	Success is the outcome of free competition among individuals in an open market.	Success consists in living up to and maintaining one's inherited social status.
Achievement	Achievement is deserved only to the extent that individuals can claim to have succeeded through their own efforts. While others may have contributed, a successful person denies the moral relevance of those contributions.	Achievement is deserved only to the extent that individuals can claim to have succeeded through inherited status, kinship connections, and the group support that is one's due. A successful person is aware only of the moral relevance of the contribution of others to one's success.
Politics	Politics is viewed in terms of a consensual community of autonomous but essentially similar individuals.	For elites, politics is viewed in terms of the nation (or ethnic group) in which concerns of national (ethnic) interest and the best families that embody and represent those concerns

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		transcend particular interests. For the vast majority, the non-elites, politics is viewed in terms of conflict among contending groups with differing utilitarian and expressive interests.
Illegitimacy and anomalous status	Non-autonomous individuals are illegitimate and anomalous.	For elites, families that represent non-elite and non-national interests are therefore illegitimate and anomalous.  For the vast majority, the non-elites, groupless, unconnected individuals and families are therefore illegitimate and anomalous.
Wealth and power	Different levels and degrees of wealth and power derive from competition and achievement assessed as amoral.	For elites, different levels and degrees of wealth and power are what constitute the social body and have positive moral meaning (United States residents see this as due to exploitation and oppression, but Mediterraneans see it as deriving from some higher order norm ennobling and obliging high status people).  For the vast majority, the non-elites, different levels and degrees of wealth

		and power are due to inequalities of moral probity, with the wealthier and more powerful perceived as more corrupt.
Religion	Religion, a free standing institution, is concerned with the moral order; religion is an individual concern operating through voluntary associations.	Religion, embedded in kinship and/or politics, is concerned with the moral order; domestic and/or political religion is a public concern, controlled by elites and operating to maintain the public order.
Attitudes and behaviors	Emphasis is on self-control, self-respect, and ethical commitments in a competitive world.	Emphasis is on deference and obedience to public authorities, on submission toward serving the stable harmony of an organic community.
Emphasis in religion	The emphasis in religion is on the individualistic, the self-affirming, the affective (e.g., on "God's" love or the equivalent, on sentiment and emotion, on acceptance of the self).	The emphasis in religion is on the collective, the group-affirming, the rational (e.g., on God's truth and commands, on doctrine and on objective ethical norms).

The Mediterranean world is a conflict-ridden world: it is agonistic (see **POWER**). But conflict is over practical means, not over ends. Conflict over practical means in no way implies doubts over ends. Conflict over the practical dimensions of realizing some goal or stage of behavior (e.g., how to leave home effectively, start a change group, choose a marriage partner) in no way means a

conflict or even a doubt over the value of the goal or stage of behavior (e.g., to leave home at all, to work for change, to get married).

### HOW TO USE THIS REFERENCE WORK

This handbook requires the reader's collaboration. Attend to whether the words and Mediterranean values described here are evidenced in all parts of the Bible. While the contributors are Bible scholars, not one of them believes that every occurrence of their assigned word and value has been identified and listed. The best way to use this Bible resource is to accept the words and values as presented at face value and to use them as a set of new lenses with which to read familiar Bible passages. The reader should strive to determine whether these new lenses make a difference in understanding and interpreting these familiar passages.

The question is not whether the entry is correct or incorrect. The question is whether it covers all cases. Can the definition and description offered in the entry be validated? Can the reader demonstrate that the explanation is valid or invalid? If the definition seems to work in a majority of cases, take careful note of the cases in which it doesn't seem to work and seek to explain why it does not work.

The editors and all the collaborators in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* encourage readers to submit their comments and suggestions for improving subsequent editions of this pioneer publication.

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