

Introduction to Christian Ethics - Introduction

HPRS4092

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Introduction

This module functions as a module for the distance-learning undergraduate programme at lvl4.

It aims to provide you with the core material and skills needed to excel in your studies and to allow for your progression through the programme as a whole.



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Initial Admin



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Aims of the Module

This module aims:

To deepen students' awareness of the Christian tradition and its approaches to ethical issues.

To analyse and assess the ways in which ethical questions have an impact on the world around us, shape our histories, and reflects concerns about the future.

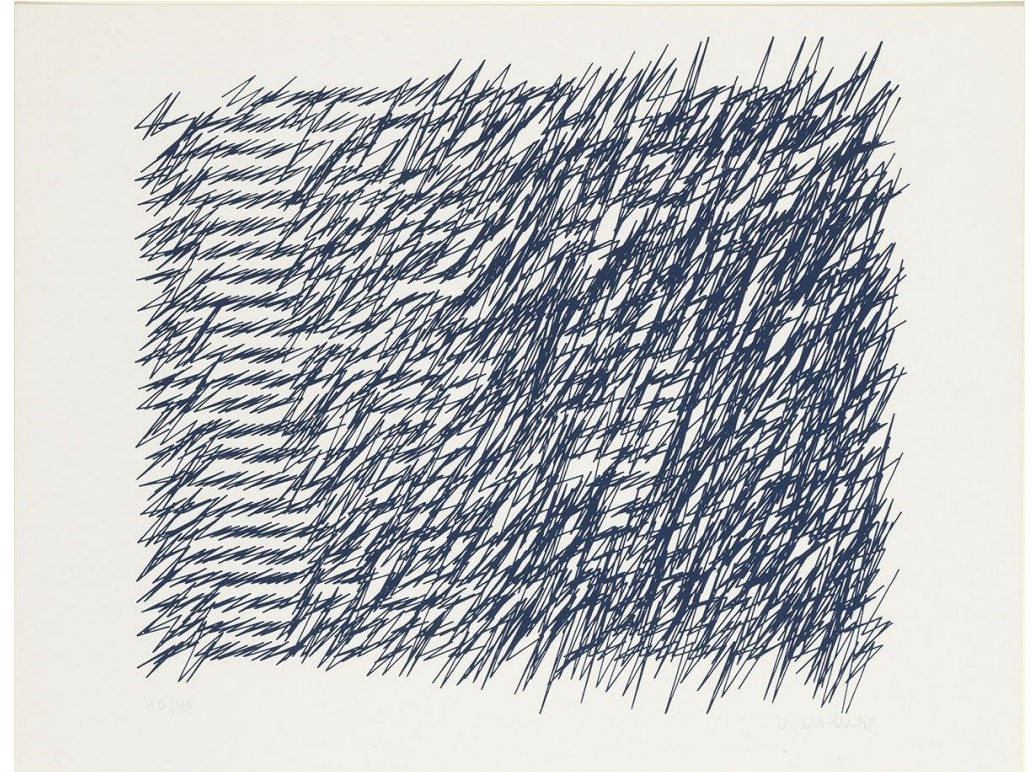
Using methods taught in class for critical reading and thinking, to identify underlying theological, social, and political impetus to historical and contemporary points of interaction between the Christian tradition and ethical questions.



Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Work creatively, respectfully and effectively with each other and with course content.
- Examine and explain motivating factors in points of ethical controversy within the Christian tradition in a variety of situations.
- Demonstrate charitable and thoughtful reflection of values held by others and the implications of those values (cause and effect).
- Critically assess values held in our contemporary society, and explore links that these values have with the past (change and continuity).
- Engage in appropriate work in the study of Christian ethics, and produce written work that conforms to standards that are established and upheld by the scholarly community, including the construction of a thoughtful claim that can be supported by evidence gathered.



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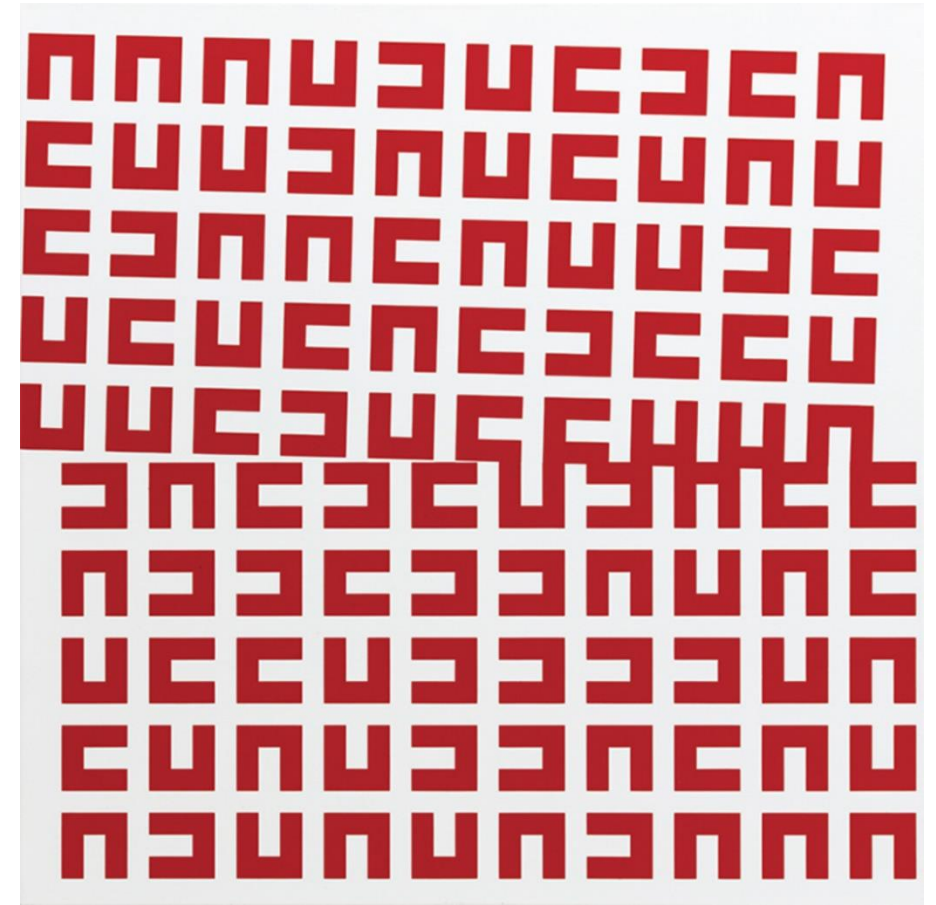
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Structure

In order to equip you with these skills, the module takes a journey through a number of different areas in Christian ethics, and engages with a variety of different themes and topics.

The module is roughly split into two areas – examining the general sources and themes, before narrowing in on specific ethical issues.

This means we end up covering quite a lot of material, some of which may be of greater or lesser interest to you – but all of which is important!



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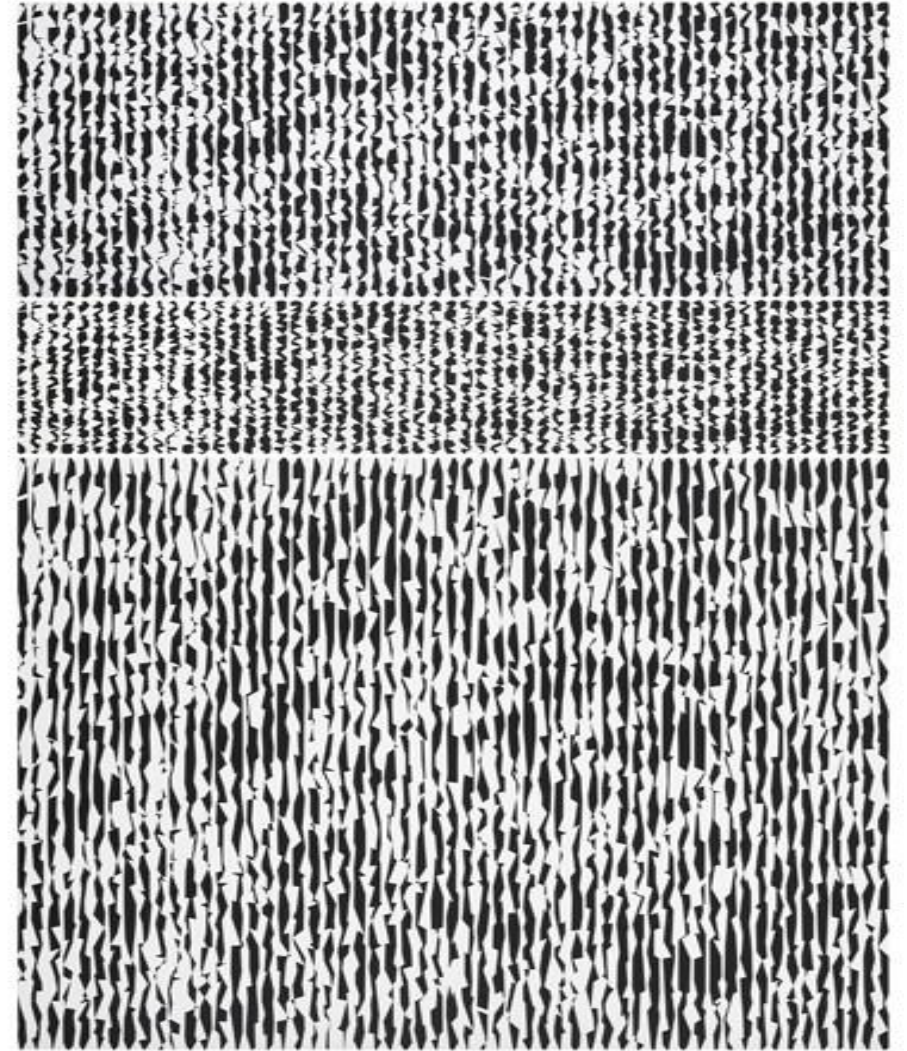
Structure

For the first four sections of the module, students will be introduced to the building blocks of contemporary Christian ethics – e.g. scripture, tradition, reason etc.

This will include discussion of sources, methods, and styles within them, as well as some of the differences between approaches.

Alongside this, students will be provided with a number of primary and secondary readings on the aspect of ethics under consideration within each section.

These four sections will give you a firm grounding in the key ethical sources and principles of Christian ethics.



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Structure

In the second half of the module, we begin to focus on specific ethical issues and the approaches to them made by differing Christian traditions.

For each section, students will be provided with pieces of preparatory reading that describe specific applied instances of Christian ethics within the contexts of the session.

Each session will address a specific area of common ethical reflection – gender and sex, for example, or war and peace – that has pre-occupied Christian ethical reflection.

In each case, students will have a number of readings to complete, some guided material, and a number of posed questions to answer.



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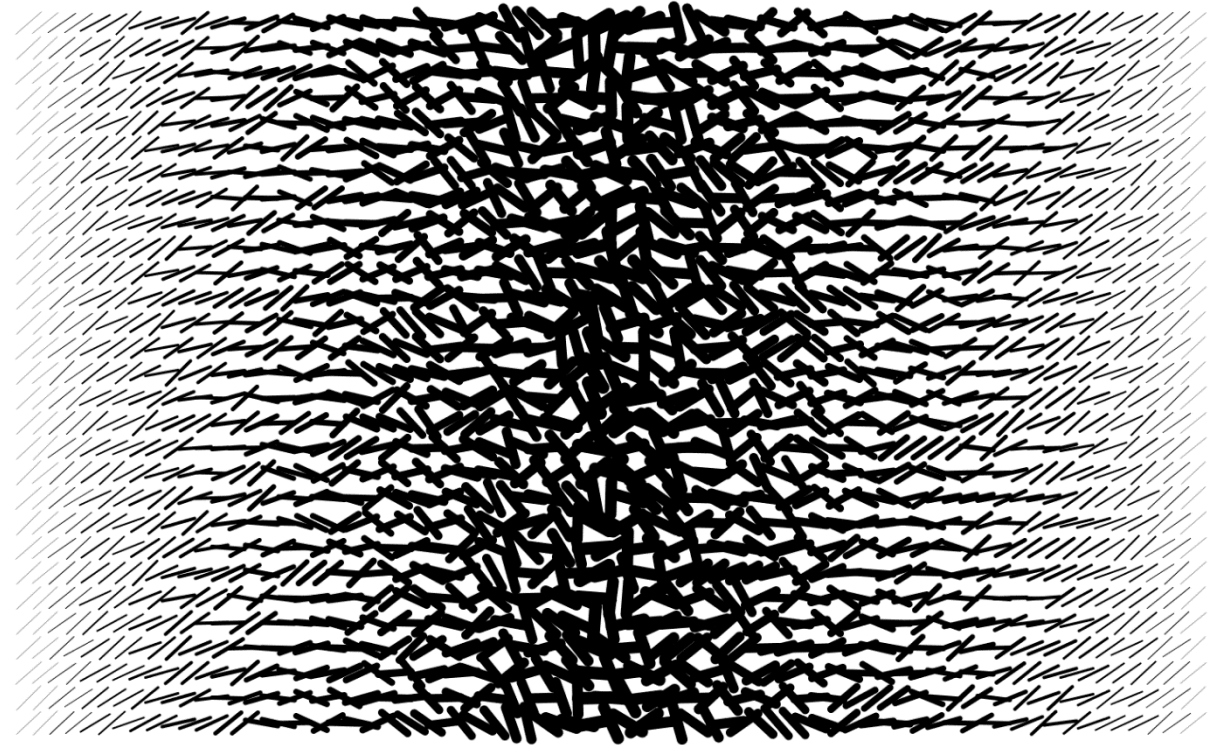
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Expectations

In order for this module structure to work effectively, there are some expectations of you, the student.

These are primarily making sure that you have read the preparatory texts and that you are able to engage in discussing them in the available student forums.

If you are struggling to achieve these expectations, please do reach out to the module tutor before the issue becomes acute.



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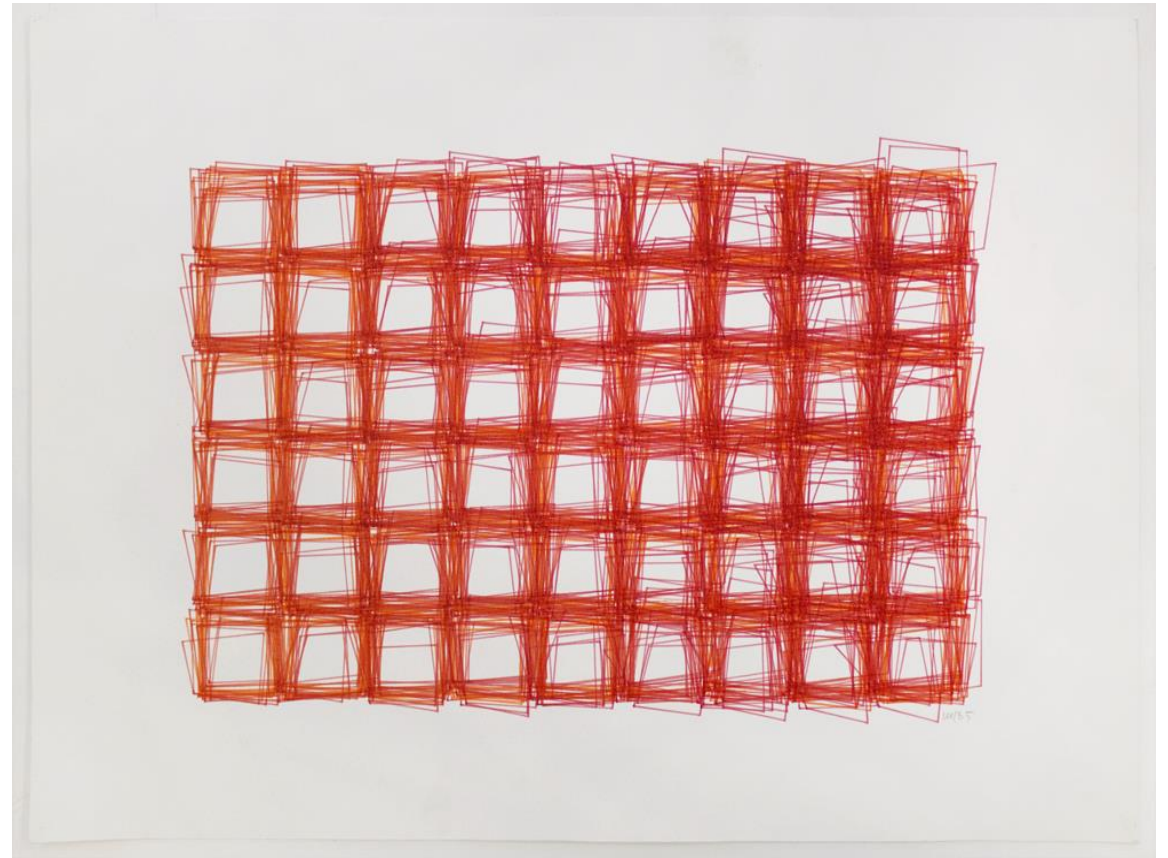
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Assessments

As part of this module, you will also complete two assessments.

These assessments have been kept deliberately open in nature in order to allow the student multiple potential approaches to the question.

Student **MUST** seek out the advice and guidance of the tutor before engaging in the assessments.



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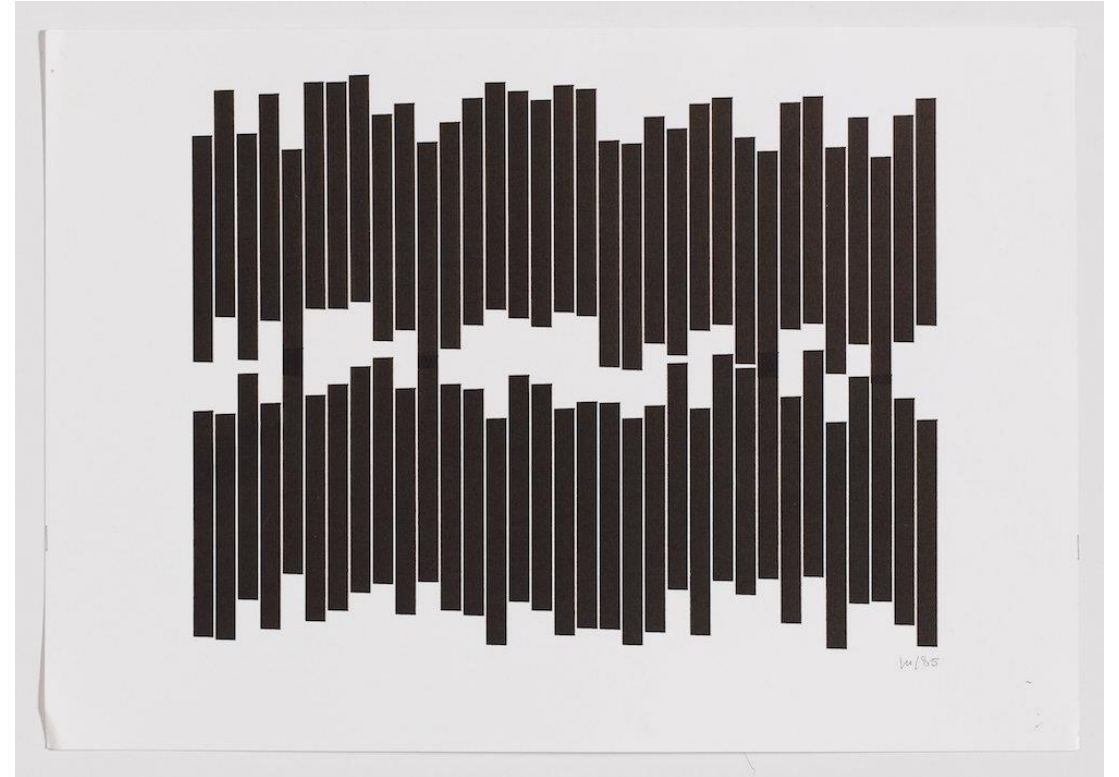
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Assessment One – 2,500 words – 50%

2500 words (50%): Identify and assess the key theological and ethical principles to be found in the Old Testament and New Testament texts we have examined in class. Provide reasons and justifications for your selection of these themes.

This essay requires you to apply ethical and theological analysis to both the Old Testament and New Testament – texts specifically examined in class, but also more widely – in order to identify the key theological and ethical principles underpinning their ethical reasoning.

Remember, you need to justify your choices uses the texts themselves.



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Assessment Two – 2,500 words – 50%

2500 words (50%): Choose a concrete contemporary ethical dilemma, in discussion with the course tutor, and provide a reasoned ethical response to it, drawing on the sources and resources of Christian ethics studied.

Students are encouraged to choose under-explored ethical dilemmas, either contemporary or niche, in order to expand their ability to ethically reason.

Remember, you will need to identify from which Christian tradition you are reasoning and to demonstrate the use of appropriate ethical resources in doing so.



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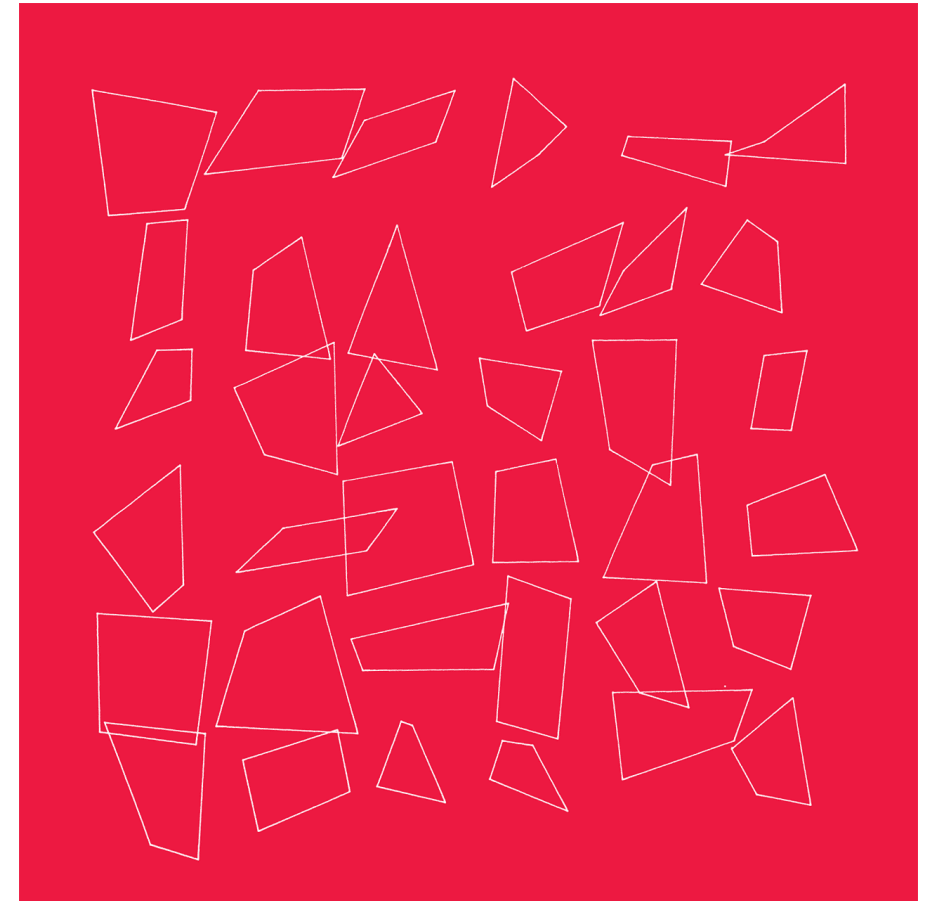
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Recommended Reading

If you are looking for some general texts on Christian ethics, I would recommend:

‘Introducing Christian Ethics’ by Wells, Quash, and Eklund (2nd ed) – widely available second hand, or on amazon, for approx. £20

‘An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues’ by Lovin – widely available second hand, or on amazon, for approx. £25



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