**The Ranking the Bioethical Principles: Exploring Their Significance and Context within the Christian Biblical Narrative**



The Bioethical Principles: In bioethics, autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice guide ethical decision-making. While these principles provide a foundation for addressing complex moral dilemmas, their hierarchical order and relative importance have been subjects of debate and scrutiny. In the context of bioethics in the United States, the elevation of autonomy to a chief position has raised concerns about the potential disregard for other principles and values. This essay explores the ranking of these four principles, seeing their importance within bioethics and how they might be ordered within the Christian biblical account.

https://youtu.be/BpfhVrpBF2s?si=K-HPryXwbAbZg72j

**The Bioethical Principles**

[The Bioethical Principles]; Autonomy

The principle of autonomy emphasises an individual's right to make informed decisions about their own life and healthcare, free from external coercion. It respects human dignity, personal values, and self-determination. In the United States, a culture of individualism has contributed to prioritising autonomy in bioethical decision-making. Yet, critics argue that an excessive focus on self-sufficiency can lead to a fragmented understanding of ethics, disregarding potential costs and interconnections with other principles.

The Bioethical Principles: Beneficence

Beneficence entails promoting the well-being of patients and maximising positive outcomes. It compels healthcare providers to act in patients' best interests, providing care that seeks to improve their health and quality of life. This principle aligns with the generous nature of healthcare professions and the moral obligation to prevent and alleviate suffering.

The Bioethical Principles: Nonmaleficence

Nonmaleficence is closely related to beneficence but emphasises the avoidance of harm. It requires healthcare physicians to refrain from actions that could cause damage or worsen a patient's condition. This principle underscores the importance of carefully minimising risks due to the latent adverse effects of medical interventions.

The Bioethical Principles: Justice

Justice pertains to the fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and conduct. It seeks to ensure that all individuals are treated equitably and without discrimination. In healthcare, this principle addresses issues of access to care, provision of resources, and decreasing disparities. It is a critical principle for promoting social and healthcare equity.

Ranking the Principles: Context and Considerations

Ranking the four principles requires a nuanced approach considering the ethical dilemma's context and nature. While autonomy often takes precedence in the United States due to its emphasis on individual rights, its dominance can lead to ethical conflicts when it clashes with other principles. The interconnectedness of these principles necessitates a balanced approach that avoids absolutism.

In the Christian biblical narrative context, the principles can be reevaluated through Christian ethics and values. The Bible emphasises love, compassion, and the well-being of fellow human beings. While autonomy can find support in concepts of free will and personal responsibility, beneficence and nonmaleficence align with the Christian imperative to love one's neighbour and alleviate suffering. Justice, deeply rooted in notions of fairness and equity, resonates with biblical teachings about caring for the marginalised and advocating for those in need.

The Christian Biblical Narrative and the Ordering of Principles

In the Christian biblical narrative, charity and nonmaleficence are foundational principles. The teachings of Jesus Christ exemplify acts of compassion, healing, and service to others. These principles emphasise the ethical duty to promote well-being while avoiding harm. Love and sympathy, central themes in Christianity, underscore the significance of seeing the welfare of others.

In the context of the Christian narrative, autonomy might hold a complementary role rather than a supreme one. The concept of free will is present in the Bible, but it is often accompanied by the responsibility to use it in ways that align with God's teachings and the welfare of the community.

Justice, as portrayed in the Christian narrative, finds its roots in the prophetic call for fairness and equity. For instance, the Good Samaritan parable demonstrates the essence of justice by emphasising the duty to care for those in need, transcending societal borders.

***Conclusion to The Bioethical Principles***

In bioethics, the four principles provide valuable guidelines for ethical decision-making. However, it's important to be carefully considered within the context of the situation. While autonomy has been critiqued for overshadowing other principles, a more balanced approach that considers the interconnectedness of these principles is essential.

When examined through the Christian biblical narrative, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice emerge as central principles, reflecting the teachings of love, concern, and equity. Autonomy, while significant, harmonises with the broader Christian ethic when understood as an answerable exercise of free will by principles that promote the common good. Finally, ranking these principles should reflect a harmonious integration that honours the values of both bioethics and the Christian account, leading to results that prioritise human well-being and ethical integrity.

***References to The Bioethical Principles***

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