

- What makes an act wrong? Relative and absolute morality, conscience, free will
- Causes of crime and aims of punishment
- Treatment of criminals, work of prison reformers and chaplains
- Responses to the death penalty

Key Concepts

Good	What is morally right and to our advantage.	Evil	What is considered very immoral and wrong.
Forgiveness	Granting pardon for a wrongdoing.	Free Will	Ability to make choices. Nothing is pre-determined.
Justice	Fairness; where everyone has equal opportunities.	Sin	Deliberate immoral action; breaking a religious or moral law.
Suffering	Pain or distress that can be physical or emotional.	Morality	Principles determining right from wrong.

What makes an act wrong?

There are two main forms of **morality**. **Absolute morality** refers to a principle that is never altered. **Relative morality** refers to principles that are changed according to situations. Christians believe in **free will** and humans have the ability to make **moral** or **immoral** choices. Often these choices are a result of **conscience**. For Christians, deliberately going against the **teachings of Jesus** and other religious leaders would make an act a **sin**.

Causes of crime and aims of punishment

There are many different causes of crime and often they are the results of making poor or **immoral** choices. **Punishment** can have different aims such as **justice** (to show the importance of keeping the laws of the land), **retribution** (a form of revenge), **deterrence** (to try to stop others from committing the same crimes) and **reformation** (to educate the criminal to make **moral** choices).

Treatment of criminals, work of prison reformers and chaplains

Most Christians believe that **God** is the final **judge**. There have been many Christian prison reformers (e.g. **Elizabeth Fry**) who have followed **Jesus's** teachings on forgiveness and believe there is something of **God** in everyone. **Prison Chaplains** help prisoners and their families in many practical and spiritual ways e.g. holding discussion groups, **praying**, offering advice on parole etc. They can support prisoners' families with pastoral and practical support.

Christian attitudes to the death penalty

Different interpretations of the **Bible** result in different views. Many of the same arguments are held for other matters relating to sanctity of life such as **abortion** and **euthanasia**. Christians believe life was given by **God** and only He can take it away, so many disagree with the **death penalty**. They argue that one of the **Ten Commandments** forbids killing and refer to Jesus's teachings on forgiveness and not seeking revenge. Some Christians, however, do believe in the death penalty and refer to the Old Testament which states 'an eye for an eye'.

Key Sources of Authority

- 'You shall not kill' from the Ten Commandments - Exodus 20.13
- Jesus taught that it was wrong to seek revenge and retribution. In Matthew 5 he taught that you should 'love your enemies' and that 'If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the left cheek also.'
- Conscience

Key Connections

Each area of study will connect with other areas in Component 1 and Component 2 (Christianity). Consider how...

- Attitudes to the death penalty relates to sanctity of life (Component 1).

Exam Practice

- Describe Christian views about the use of the death penalty. (5)
- What is meant by morality? (2)