Outline of the Crito

Introduction: Crito has come to argue Socrates into leaving the prison, escaping his sentence of death. He wonders at how peacefully Socrates sleeps, and hears of his dream.

I: C: Why Socrates should accept the escape his friends have arranged:
   a—It will be a loss to me of a friend.
   b—It will be a loss of reputation for all your friends, who will be thought to have valued money more than their friend.
S.--We should not care about reputation, or what the many may say; they can do no harm, for they cannot make a man wise or foolish.
   c—there are lots of places you can go where you will be welcomed
   d—think of your children, raised without a father’s advice
S:--I cannot abandon principles I have held before, just because they are now inconvenient. Here’s one important one: We should never deliberately do wrong. (49a)
   Of the opinions of men, not all are of equal value; we should trust the experts.
   Analogy with matters of physical health, and health of the soul: justice
A second principle: the important thing is not being alive, but living a good (just) life.
So the important question: is it right that I should leave here without the permission of the Athenians?

II: The premise of our discussion: we should never deliberately do wrong.
   That is evil and bad, contrary to the good and fine and right.
   a—so a man should not do wrong in return, even if he is wronged; nor retaliate for harms, nor defend oneself by harming those who have harmed him.
   Corollary: contract. It is wrong to try to get out of fair agreements, once made.

III: Discussion with The Laws:
   A city cannot survive if its laws are nullified by its citizens
   The verdicts arrived at in the courts (fair or not) are legally binding
   Through laws and the city you were born, and educated, and given a share in every good thing we could provide. Further, you chose not to leave, to emigrate and abandon your citizenship.
   You bore children into the state and its laws.
   Even at your trial, you refused when it was legally appropriate to suggest exile as an alternative punishment.
   To deny the verdict by escaping punishment is breach of a fair agreement, “breaking contracts and agreements you have with us.” (52e)
Following this clearly duty-based (deontological) argument, the Laws point out some consequentialist results of this action as well:
   Further, you’ll harm your friends; you’ll be viewed with suspicion by law-abiding men; you’ll prove the jurors right; you will be unwelcome in the conversations you are used to having, and couldn’t have them anyway, with a straight face, you who believes in the importance of actions consistent with your beliefs. Your children would probably be worse off than they will be here.
   No, Socrates, do not regard anything as more important than justice.
Crito: I do not have anything else to say.