



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
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**Does Morality Exist in Our Modern Relativistic Society?**

By Freddy Davis

There is actually a lot of talk these days about ethics and morality. No matter what subject you are talking about, whether politics, race relations, medicine, the use of computer technology, sexuality, or virtually any other topic, everyone seems to have a belief about what is right and what is wrong. The only problem is, without some objective standard for determining what is moral and what is immoral, the discussion itself is quite meaningless. For instance:

- **Technology** - A computer technician fears that as computers become more powerful, those without access to the technology will be left behind. His concern "assumes" a moral framework where all people have a right to that access, and that if everyone can't have it, no one should have it. But where does this moral point of view come from? It is just his own personal moral belief.
- **Sports (Entertainment)** - Major League Baseball decided to pull the All-Star game from Georgia because the top management believed that a law passed by the Georgia legislature concerning voting was discriminatory. This in spite of the fact that: their headquarters are in a state that has even stronger voting laws; the baseball commissioner himself is a member of an elite country club in Georgia; and the leagues has defended their interaction with China – which is a one party system and actually does not even allow popular dissent. On top of that, they moved the game from a state that has a 30% black population to one that has about 4%. How do they justify these moral inconsistencies?

- **Sexuality** - In physical reality, there are only two genders – male and female. Every person has DNA and genitalia that makes them one or the other. However, many powerful people and institutions now insist that there are MANY genders (some identifying as many as 100). But where does this come from? Certainly not from science. It is a concept born of a desire to make any form sexual activity acceptable in general society. It is a moral choice, not a scientific one. But what is the basis for this moral choice?
- **Science** - Science is supposed to be based purely on observation and experiment. However, many people are now using a new standard to determine what is "scientific." This new standard is "scientific consensus." What this means is that if a majority of scientists believe something, it almost doesn't matter whether or not it can be verified by the scientific method. Man-made global climate change and the theory of evolution are two topics in modern times that are deemed to be true, not because they have been demonstrated scientifically, but because they fit the naturalistic preferences of those in power in the scientific community. But it is the moral implications of this that is really the bottom line. Supporters of this point of view insist that societal changes be made based on their beliefs. But why these beliefs?
- **Church** - What is salvation? If you are a biblical Christian, you recognize salvation to be a spiritual concept where God provides a way for individuals to obtain eternal life. However, if you believe in most liberal forms of theology, salvation is the process of making society better based on the concept of social justice. The biblical point of view comes from a belief that the teachings of the Bible

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are objective truth. The point of view of liberal theology looks to relativistic philosophy for its moral foundation, and they adjust their religious beliefs to social circumstances. Thus they end up supporting non-biblical things like abortion, homosexual marriage, sexual relations out of wedlock, and they disregard certain civil laws that don't fit their narrative. So just how do they justify redefining morality to be something other than what is revealed in the Bible?

- **Education** - Political correctness has taken over many educational institutions. Rather than being places where different ideas can be held and debated, many have become bastions of intolerance. The State University of New York, for instance, suspended a student from a teaching program for posting a video online that declared "a man is a man, a woman is a woman" (and it was on his own private account – nothing to do with the school). Somehow, the university bought into the moral belief that this kind of viewpoint was unacceptable for a student to hold. Where does the university get its moral beliefs?
- **Journalism** - NBC News anchor, Lester Holt, gave a speech and asserted that reporters don't need to hear both sides of a story before determining the truth. He said, "I think it's become clear that fairness is overrated ... the idea that we should always give two sides equal weight and merit does not reflect the world we find ourselves in." Somehow it has become okay for journalists to become partisan megaphones rather than honest reporters of the truth. How does this moral point of view become dominant in the news media?

- **Business** - One of the world's largest businesses, Amazon, has now decided that there are certain books that it will no longer carry simply because the authors hold views about sexuality that disagree with the company's leaders' moral beliefs. They have come to see viewpoint discrimination as an acceptable approach to business without any kind of objective basis for doing it. So why these particular beliefs?

### The Foundation of Relativistic Morality

Relativistic morality is simply the attempt to impose a moral code without any kind of objective foundation. The reason for the existence of any given moral standard, thus, becomes nothing more than some person's or group's personal preferences, or a pragmatic answer to some perceived problem.

In order for there to exist an objectively real morality, there must be an objectively real transcendent moral law giver who is able to express a moral law based on the existence of actual reality. Thus, those who insist on relativistic morality either dismiss the possibility that objective reality exists, or that, even if it does, it is impossible to know it.

Naturalism is at the root of most moral relativism in modern society. This worldview system is the belief that the natural universe, operating by natural laws, is all that exists. With that as a starting point, no objective transcendent reality, nor a transcendent moral law giver (God), is acknowledged to exist. And if that is true, there is no other possibility for the existence of a moral code than for human beings to make it up for themselves.

If two people, or an entire society, agree on what the moral rules should be, there would not be any serious problems. However, that is virtually

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never the case. With no objective standard, settling this problem cannot be done based on what is objectively real, true, fair, or right. So what do individuals or groups who believe in this relativistic understanding of reality do when there is disagreement on what should be considered moral and what should be considered immoral? In a situation like that, the ultimate arbiter is power – the one who has the ability to impose their beliefs gets to set the rules.

## The Foundation of Biblical Morality

As opposed to Naturalism, biblical morality is based on an objective foundation. What that means is that there exists objectively real, actually true moral values. These moral values are true no matter the circumstances.

What is important to realize is that for this kind of approach to morality to exist, there must also exist an eternal, transcendent moral law giver. After all, the values must come from somewhere, and any source less than an eternal, transcendent source would mean that there could be possible exceptions for any given moral rule. If there are possible exceptions, relativism becomes the only alternative.

The Bible reveals just such an objective source – God. He is both eternal and transcendent. His very personhood is the source of truth and right. When He created man in the natural universe, He revealed knowledge of Himself – which included values that characterize His being. It is these values upon which morality is based. With that as a starting point, we can say that the moral beliefs revealed in the Bible are both true and right. Along with that, we can also say that moral beliefs that are contrary to those taught in the Bible are objectively false.

## How Christians Should Deal With This

Living out the Christian faith in an environment where Christian values

are looked upon as deviant is no walk in the park. Pressure is exerted from everywhere to coerce Christians to compromise their beliefs – or at least to accept that what the Bible considers immoral acts are acceptable in society.

But compromise is not okay. Compromise means that one does not believe that the gospel message is absolutely true. For a Christian who truly believes the Bible, the relativistic values of naturalistic beliefs are, literally, the road to Hell. Believing and following the teachings God has revealed in the Bible requires that we understand what they are, and that we share them with those who don't know Christ. And EVERYONE who accepts relativistic values has rejected the gospel message.

There are two things that Christians MUST embrace in order to confront and overcome the relativism that now dominates modern society – education and right action.

## Education

The education element is nothing more than embracing Christian discipleship training. The teachings regarding what is moral and what is immoral are clearly taught in the Bible. Those who do not know what those teachings are can never be in a position to express God's moral values in the world. But also realize that it is not enough to know "what" the Bible teaches. We need more than just a superficial understanding of Jesus. We also need to also know "why" what is taught in the Bible is true – as opposed to the relativistic values we confront in the world. If we don't know the "why" part, we will never have a sufficient understanding as to why the teachings of the Christian faith are true, nor a sufficient reason for following biblical teachings in the face of the opposition we face in society.

### **Right Action**

The action element of dealing with relativism in society relates to how we actually live out biblical values in daily life. It is one thing to know what is right, it is another thing altogether to be willing to live it out in an environment that literally HATES those values. That means being active in sharing the truth of the gospel, as well as promoting biblical values in society at large.

### **Bottom Line**

There is only one way to stand up against the lies of relativism, and that is to be willing to live out and speak the truth no matter the cost. As difficult as it is to take this road, it is the only way. Otherwise the lie wins.

This means speaking out when relativistic values are promoted in technology, sports and entertainment, sexuality, science, church, education, journalism, business, politics, and any other place it rears its ugly head. And while pushing back against it is an important starting point, that too is not enough. We must also be ready and willing to share the origin of the truth – which includes an explanation of the gospel message. It is only when we get that right that we will be in a position to truly make a difference in modern society.

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