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## So, Where Should Moral Standards Come From?

**James 1:17:** (NASB) *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

Morality. Here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, morality has become a moving target. In any given circumstance, its interpretation can be diverted, diminished or even dissolved depending on what one may feel is right at the time. Is this the way life is supposed to work? Are we all supposed to only follow our own internal barometer or are we designed to follow an external constant? Is human nature a self-directing mechanism that will bring us to higher and higher levels or is human nature in its present state a sin-directed mechanism that brings us to idolatry? Do we know better, or is there something that we better know?

Are there sound moral standards that should apply to everybody or should everybody do what they think is best?

**Premise:** If you truly believe something, it has a profound effect on how you live and will dictate your words and actions related to that belief.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27:** To determine where our moral standards should come from, should we not aim to have this type of all-out dedication and belief as a model for whomever or whatever we want to believe in? It is the true integrity of one's heart and mind.



**Observation:** There can be a massive difference between merely professing something and truly believing something.

*Profess:* a. to declare or admit openly or freely, affirm  
b: to declare in words or appearances only: pretend, claim

There are two sides of professing what you believe...**First, the weak side:** Titus 1:16  
**Now, the strong side:** 1 Timothy 6:12

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** MANY PEOPLE MAKE PROFESSIONS BUT DO NOT LIVE THEIR TRUE CORE BELIEFS. MANY HAVE CORE BELIEFS THAT ARE NOT PROFESSED.

**2 Timothy 2:14-16:** Especially in the United States, there is such freedom for the general population that we can decide “what is right for me.” This does not always work with the deeper issues of life for society as a whole.



**No absolute morality, No God - No Morals, Richard Dawkins**

- *The absolute morality that a religious person might profess would include what? Stoning people for adultery. Death for apostasy. Punishment for breaking the Sabbath. These are all things, which are religiously-based absolute moralities. I don't think I want an absolute morality. I think I want a morality that is thought out, reasoned, argued, discussed, and based upon, you can almost say, intelligent design.*

God is not commanding those things here and now, but the Bible tells us that there must be standards for living and those standards must be firm.

**First an example of an internal, personal standard - Eve in the garden - from her perspective, everything seemed to be in order:** Genesis 3:1-6: So, Eve was well aware of the rules. <sup>4</sup>And the serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die:* <sup>5</sup>For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Satan told a lie (*ye shall not surely die*) and then he told a partial truth (*your eyes shall be opened meaning you will gain knowledge*). Eve LISTENED to a *contradiction* of the rule from God.

<sup>6</sup>And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise... Had she not seen the tree before? She saw the tree in a different light. She framed the contradiction in the context of “more information.” *she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat...* She wanted that fruit and the serpent said it was a good thing. God was emphatic that they not do this, but after it was “*thought out, reasoned, argued and discussed,*” in the words of Dawkins, she thought, “Why not?” Their internal standard took over. An internal personal standard - why is this not so good? It is personal based on “me,”

“right now,” circumstances and emotions! Good or bad, circumstances plus emotions can make a new moral standard.

**Premise:** If you truly believe something, it has a profound effect on how you live and will dictate your words and actions related to that belief.

Eve believed in what God said, but it was easily challenged by Satan with “new information.” She was deceived. Adam, however, was not.



**Media shapes us, *The Media’s Manipulative Influence Over Your Morals***

- *The media is the message and the messenger - and increasingly a powerful one.*
- *People learn more from media than any other single source of information, so if you want to understand what’s going on in our society in the 21st century, we have to understand media.*
- *If you think about media technology, they’re delivering content that is shaping our society, they’re shaping our politics, they’re shaping our national discourses, and most of all they’re shaping our children’s brains and lives and emotions.*
- *We estimate that there’s somewhere north of a billion people who use the Internet every single day. That’s just a reach that hasn’t existed before in terms of media.*
- *Our kids today live on Facebook and cell phones. The diversity of the platforms means that those images are impacting your kids 24/7, and whatever restrictions existed when we were growing up simply don’t exist today.*



**Observation:** There is a massive difference between merely professing something and truly believing something.

**Do we believe the following so deeply that we will abandon other moral standards?** Romans 11:33-36



**We design our moral society, *No God - No Morals, Richard Dawkins***

- *Can we not design our society, which has the sort of morality, the sort of society that we want to live in? If you actually look at the moralities that are accepted among modern people, among 21st century people, we don’t believe in slavery anymore, we believe in equality of women, we believe in being gentle, we believe in being kind to animals. These are all things, which are entirely recent. They have very little basis in biblical or koranic scripture. They are things that have developed over historical time through consensus of reasoning, sober discussion, argument, legal theory, political and moral philosophy.*

**Do the Ten Commandments provide a basis for the morality of believers AND unbelievers?**

The Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:1-17

**1. *Thou shall not take any God except one God.*** How many “gods” does our society have? Romans 1:18-20: Even atheists have things they draw close to, such as human intellect. Our society is built upon imagery for us to worship. On Sundays, many people don’t go to church to worship, but they worship around the television as they root their favorite sports team onto victory.

**2. *Thou shall make no image of God.*** What kind of images of gods have we created? Romans 1:21-23

**3. *Thou shall not use God’s name in vain.*** Do our philosophies leave room for anything sacred? Romans 1:25: Doesn’t this sound like today’s society?

**4. *Thou shall keep the Sabbath holy.*** Have we replaced holy times with holes in our lives?

Romans 1:28: In this time of great awakening and great knowledge, we have greater depravity.



**Climate of violence to women, *The Media’s Manipulative Influence Over Your Morals***

- *In a world of a million channels, people try to do more shocking and shocking things to break through the clutter. They resort to violent images or sexually offensive images or demeaning images.*
- *It creates a climate in which there’s widespread and increasing violence against women.*
- *When is it gonna be enough?*
- *We’re socializing boys to believe that being a man means being powerful and in control.*
- *Being smarter than women or better than women or our needs get met first in relationships with women - that’s not genetically predestined. That’s learned behavior.*

Mr. Dawkins was talking about designing a reality we want to live in that has equality.

Realistically, it is great to have the philosophy but it does not match the reality. The world is getting morally worse, not better.

5. *Thou shall honor thy mother and father.* Where does our society show us this? [Romans 1:30](#)

6. *Thou shall not steal.* Is it stealing if you don't get caught? [Romans 1:29](#)

7. *Thou shall not lie or give false testimony.* How often do we judge before we have the evidence? [Romans 1:30](#)

8. *Thou shall not kill.* Jesus called killing someone's reputation murder - how are we doing? [Romans 1:29](#)

9. *Thou shall not commit adultery.* How much has our perspective changed on this? [Romans 1:27](#): How tolerant has our society become?

10. *Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife or possessions.* Our whole social structure is about “I want.” [Romans 1:24](#): Standards from God are so much more superior to be able to function in society than what we can come up with on our best day!

What happens when we seek the lowest common denominator? [Romans 1:28-32](#): This is a scathing indictment of the 21st century!

 Cherry picking scripture, *No God - No Morals, Richard Dawkins*

- *These do not come from religion to the extent that you can find the good bits in religious scriptures, you have to cherry pick. You search your way through the Bible or the Koran and you find the occasional verse that is an acceptable profession of morality. You say, “Look at that! That's religion,” and you leave out all the horrible pits and you say, “We don't believe that anymore; we've grown out of it.” Of course we've grown out of it! We've grown out of it because of secular moral philosophy and rational discussion.*

Okay, no cherry picking on morality - here is a blanket statement of Jesus summing up both the Old and New Testaments: [Matthew 22:36-40](#): Jesus lived this every day of his life. The atheist perspective does not understand the plan of God as a big picture and the God of resurrection. Jesus gave us the highest common objective based on godly instruction - MUCH BETTER than the lowest common denominator.

 How you look, *The Media's Manipulative Influence Over Your Morals*

- *Girls get the message from very early on that what's most important is how they look. That their value, their worth depends on that. And boys get the message that this is what's important about girls. We get it from advertising, we get it from films, and we get it from television shows, video games, everywhere we look. So, no matter what else a woman does, no matter what else her achievements, their value still depends on how they look.*

The philosophers of our time will tell you this is not what we believe...but unfortunately that is how society acts. There is a difference between the philosophy and the reality.

The following are all examples of “enlightened” highest common objective thinking that were around long before our current age of “enlightenment.”

**Seven Deadly Sins according to Mahatma Gandhi** - they all have a basis in Scripture.

*Wealth without work:* [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#) *Pleasure without conscience:* [Ephesians 4:19-20](#)

*Science without humanity:* [James 4:17](#) *Knowledge without character:* [1 Corinthians 8:1](#)

*Politics without principle:* [1 Peter 2:13-14](#) *Commerce without morality:* [Proverbs 20:10](#)

*Worship without sacrifice:* [Romans 12:1](#)

**The biblical, historical record of mankind, long before the Law:** [Genesis 6:9-13](#): Human activity was godless and senseless. “Innate” behavior displayed long before the Law was not good. **Biblical principle as to why we are so stuck in sin, death and misery:** [Romans 5:19-20](#): The Law labeled and identified sin to make it clear that this was not the way humanity was designed to be. The Law gave us the barometer for understanding what God expected from us.

 The last 50 years of TV, *Declining Morality in the United States, Katie Cole*

- *In the past 50 years, our nation has gone from family friendly television shows to degrading, dramatic shows that portray reality in a negative light. Even shows from the early 90's had a specific moral embedded within them pertaining to family dynamics, struggles in school or differences among people in the world. Now, shows have messages about relationships, sex, drugs, money and illegal use of alcohol. Shows nowadays are described as a parent's worst nightmare or mind-blowingly inappropriate as shown in these ads for Gossip Girl. Fifty, even 20*

*years ago, the norm was that sex was inappropriate to discuss and being promiscuous about sex was considered immoral. Now a person is considered weird if he or she has not had sex in, say, forty years.*

So, what does this say about our “innate” behavior now, thousands of years after our pre-Flood example? Doesn’t it imply that without guidance, without a pathway, human nature still gravitates towards base and unkind behavior? As an example, sexuality has become part of our everyday conversation and we cannot get away from it. This is the time we are supposed to be the most “evolved” in creating our own morality?!? Proverbs 1:8-16

**Let’s continue to develop where our morality comes from and why:** Romans 7:18-25: This perfectly describes why society has gone off the cliff even though our philosophical approach to morality has risen to such heights. We are sinful human beings and don’t do the things we know (or should know) are right. Even the Apostle Paul, with his spiritual knowledge and focus, battled this every day. Paul was not talking about “rape, pillage and murder,” but he is talking about sinfulness like human selfishness, idolatry, sloth and covetousness.

We can counter our innate sinfulness with the higher and external law of God.

### **Does religion cause more pain and death or does it bring more peace?**

A common complaint is that religion has caused the vast majority of the wars and the death that civilization has experienced. Many things have been done in the name of religion that were not at all representative of the true principles of the religion itself.

The knee jerk reaction to this would be to toss all religion, as it has caused so much pain, sorrow and death. Why not root out the problem at its source?

(Source: Deaths in Wars and Conflicts in the 20th Century, Milton Leitenberg) CORNELL UNIVERSITY. PEACE STUDIES PROGRAM, OCCASIONAL PAPER #29, 3rd edition ©August 2003, 2005, 2006: “A Beastly Century:” It was a phrase used by Margaret Drabble, a British novelist, in an address to the Royal Society of Literature in London, on December 14, 2000. But of course it was no more than a human century. In 1994, the historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote that 187 million people were “killed or allowed to die by human decision” in what he called the “short century” - a period of about 75 years from 1914 to 1991. ...However, the sum that he provided was low by just about 44 million people for the full twentieth century, during which approximately 231 million people died in wars and conflict and, in very large numbers, “by human decision.”

(Source: “If it feels good for me, isn’t it right?” [www.gospel.com](http://www.gospel.com)) But history suggests that by removing the restraints of God’s law and love, the worst barbarism breaks forth. There were several massive efforts to control or forbid religion in the twentieth century—Soviet Russia, Communist China, the Khmer Rouge, and Nazi Germany. The result was not more peace and harmony but more oppression. As Alister McGrath said in his history of atheism, “The 20th century gave rise to one of the greatest and most distressing paradoxes of human history: that the greatest intolerance and violence of that century were practiced by those who believed that religion caused intolerance and violence.”

Left to ourselves, humanity will go to the lowest common denominator - man’s injustice to man. Left to God, He guides us to the highest common purpose.

A final example of the need of humanity to have higher, external guidance - God’s own people sin!

(Source: Israel Guilty Before God, Bible commentary by J. Vernon McGee) Out of the heartbreaking experience in his own home, Hosea now comes to speak to the nation—and he knows how God feels about them. ... God has said, “They have sinned. They have played the harlot and been unfaithful to Me.” Now God is going to bring them into court, spell out certain charges against them, and prove those charges. The message of chapter 4 is that Israel is guilty of lawlessness, immorality, ignorance of God’s Word and idolatry.

Hosea 4:1-6: God gives us the opportunity, through Scripture, to understand the highest common objective. Our moral code must come from something higher than us.

*So, where should moral standards come from?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*