



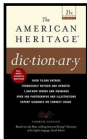
Is Right Always Right?

Isaiah 30:21: (NASB) *Your ears will hear a word behind you, This is the way, walk in it, whenever you turn to the right or to the left.*

Is right always right? It may seem like a simple question, but it really isn't. The good news is, we live in a society of great freedom. The bad news is that this society of great freedom does not put nearly as high a value on great responsibility. Responsibility means doing the right thing - but what *is* the right thing? Does my definition of "right" spill over onto and affect your actions? Who or what determines "the right thing?" Is "the right thing" a moving target, or is it a stable and firm destination? Stay with us as we discuss right, wrong and moral standards.

Questions for Consideration:

1. How is morality - right and wrong - viewed in our present day?
2. Did God contradict his own rules by wiping out everyone in Noah's flood?
3. Couldn't there have been another way?
4. If God's Old Testament Law was law, did God himself break it?
5. If God's Old Testament Law was law, then why don't Christians follow it?
6. Which gives us more freedom - objective or subjective morality?



American Heritage Dictionary: *morality:* The quality of being in accord with standards of right or good conduct.

There are two basic ways to view morality: **Objective** or **subjective** morality. While this sounds very philosophical, you can find tons of input on the debate as to which way is the "right" way.



What is Objective Morality, Subjective Morality, youtube.com

- ...a set of principles that will give you something is good and something is bad; for example, the Ten Commandments - lying, stealing cheating - all bad.

Objective morality is what we ascribe to - it is us abiding by the preset precepts that God gave. It takes away a lot of gray areas. The voice of what is right is external and does not come from our voice within.

Psalms 119:165-169: (NASB) ¹⁶⁵Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble. ¹⁶⁶I hope for Your salvation, O LORD, and do Your commandments. ¹⁶⁷My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. ¹⁶⁸I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, For all my ways are before You. ¹⁶⁹Let my cry come before You, O LORD; Give me understanding according to Your word.

Theme Text: **Isaiah 30:21:** (NASB) *Your ears will hear a word behind you, This is the way, walk in it, whenever you turn to the right or to the left.*



Again, **objective morality** is a voice from outside of our lives from another source.



What is Subjective Morality, *Subjective Morality*, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

- *Subjective morality says: anything that increases suffering is bad and anything that decreases suffering is good. Example: stealing candy from a baby is bad because you caused that child suffering. It is NOT you are in your own world, do whatever you want, it's all justified. Does it increase or decrease suffering?*

Subjective morality exhibits social responsibility and has the sense of whether or not one is increasing or decreasing sufferings. It can be based on how one feels at the time, the circumstances, or the ability to justify the action.

Eve fell prey to **subjective morality** with disastrous results:

Genesis 3:1-6: (NASB) ¹Now the serpent... said to the woman, Indeed, has God said, You shall not eat from any tree of the garden? ²The woman said..., From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die. (**objective morality**) ⁴The serpent said..., You surely will not die! ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (**subjective morality**)

2. Did God contradict his own rules by wiping out everyone in Noah's flood?

It is Rick's experience that those who advocate **subjective morality** are very vocal about God and His apparently contradictory actions that they claim would make Him very subjective in His morality.

The youtube.com clip we previously played goes on to explain four guidelines for determining right vs. wrong from a **subjective morality** perspective.

The first is: Is the person who did the action morally responsible - can they tell the difference between right and wrong?



God, the Flood and the First Guideline, *Subjective Morality*, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

- *Did God know the difference between right and wrong? Obviously because God is all-knowing; but even if he wasn't, he would certainly have known that killing increases suffering, especially because these people did not have the ability to choose between right and wrong...*

Of course we agree that God knows the difference between right and wrong.

God is far, far above us and has clear, long-range objectives in his actions:

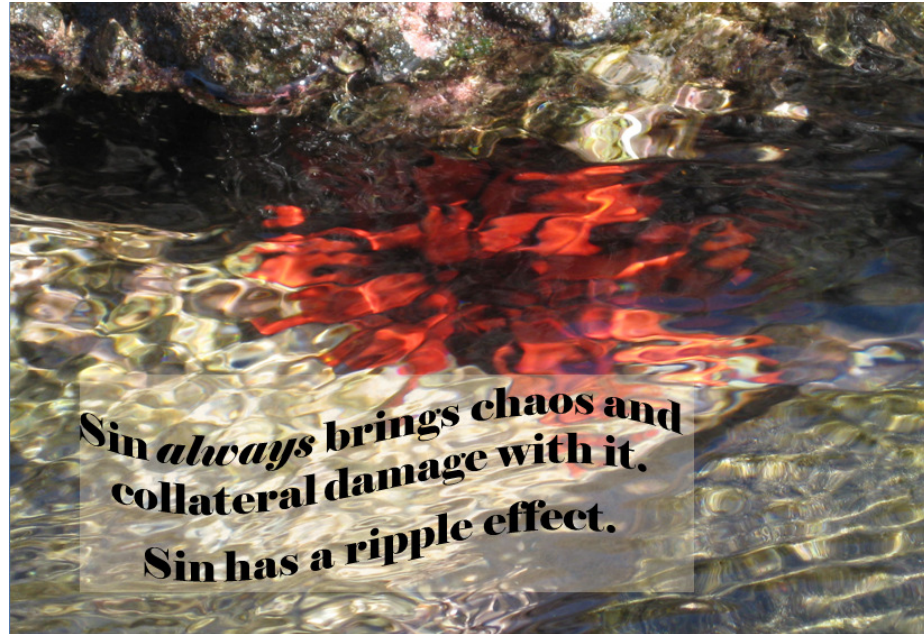
Isaiah 55:8-11: (NASB) ⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

James 1:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is



accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every 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.

God is defined as the Father of lights and we can see God is steady - He is not a moving target. He may deal with humanity differently throughout time, but that doesn't mean that God changes.



The second is: Was their action justified? Did it increase or alleviate suffering? If it alleviated more suffering than it gave, then it was justified.

🔊) God, the Flood and the Second Guideline, *Subjective Morality*, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

- You could argue that God's action alleviated sufferings because it removed sin from the world, but it did not end sin and there were children killed who could not choose between right and wrong.

God's justification:

Genesis 6:5-8: (NASB) ⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷The LORD said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them. ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Proverbs 5:21: (NASB) For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths. **Objective or subjective?**

God did have justification because this was complete evil that was destroyed. It was all of the people, all of the time.

3. Couldn't there have been another way?

The third is: Was there a better action that this person could have taken?

🔊) God, the Flood and the Third Guideline, *Subjective Morality*, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



- *Instead of flooding the entire world, God could have given everyone he deemed bad a heart attack, or hit them with a bolt of lightning; even if you say the flood was justified, there were better ways of doing it rather than killing children, plants and animals.*

There were other circumstances that made this destruction even more understandable:

Genesis 6:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. ³Then the LORD said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

On top of the rampant evil, God destroyed all of the beings that were of a mixed breed - they were unnatural, not part of His creation, and therefore were an abomination. This seriously contaminated the entire society.

2 Peter 2:5: (NASB) *And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

As a "preacher of righteousness," presumably Noah would have preached to anyone who would listen while he built this giant ship. He let them know about the flood, so they were warned. Now it is clear that ignorance was not an excuse.

But what about the children? If all of mankind were steeped in this evil, all deserved that death. If only the evil were killed, that would leave all children without parents, forcing them into much more suffering.

We don't want to make judgments without examining the scriptural evidence.

The Fourth is: If number three is a "yes" then could this person have known of said better choice?



God, the Flood and the Fourth Guideline, *Subjective Morality*, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

- *Of course God at least has the intellect to know other options; so yes, you can use subjective morality to judge God. Sometimes stealing might be good, for example, if your children are starving, stealing a loaf of bread can be good. The suffering caused by not paying the baker is much less than the suffering alleviated of starving children.*

1 Corinthians 15:22: (NASB) *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

John 5:28-29: (NASB) ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

God did destroy men who were evil and there were children involved. But these scriptures state that those who died in Adam will ultimately be resurrected in Christ. So although the action created suffering, it inevitably will alleviate suffering due to the resurrection.

Because we are all subject to the voice from within, **subjective morality**, we must be keenly aware that this voice naturally tends towards our opinion and



personal comfort, while the voice from without, **objective morality**, finds its base in an impartial standard of God.


4. If God's Old Testament Law was law, did God himself break it?

Regarding the Law, if the children of Israel were God's chosen people, then why did He:

- let them stay in the land of Egypt for over 200 years?
- let them be slaves for many of those years?
- NOT give them the Law for all of that time?

Exodus 3:7-8: (NASB) ⁷The LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. ⁸So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey,...

The law came after the suffering, because it is part of the chaos and collateral damage of sin. It is a learning process. As a nation, they were not ready for that Law.

 If God can kill, God is not good. Good is what God wants it to be, *An essay on Yahwehs Morality, youtube.com*

- *Supposedly this all powerful, all knowing, human emotion driven being is the being who determines the absolute correct morality, but at the same time can break that moral code should he choose...God isn't good, good is whatever God wants it to be...*

This Old Testament Law was the phase in which *absolutes* were of necessity defined.

Exodus 20:3-17

The argument is that God instructs mankind not to kill, then instructs them to kill other human beings. Therefore, God is hypocritical and subjective, so why listen to such a God?





Kill: Strongs #7523 - especially murder, always denoting the slaying of another in contrast to other words meaning to put to death, slaughter (regarding animals) and most often cited regarding cities of refuge.

In other words, the Law says, "Thou shalt not kill," meaning murder, take the life of another in a personal vendetta. This did not apply specifically to war.

What was the context of these commandments? It was the establishing of a Godly nation and *the objective defining of right and wrong*, towards God and towards one another. The road back to God needed to be constructed and it was necessary to define right from wrong towards God and others. The Ten are given separately from the other hundreds of laws...why? Because they were the basis for everything else.

Notice, there are no consequences given with the Ten. They are objective and lasting *principles* of righteousness for our lives. The other "additions" were rules for the establishment of a physical nation in a physically imperfect world.

5. If God's Old Testament Law was law, then why don't Christians follow it?

The New Testament was the next phase in construction of the road back to God. By the coming and sacrifice of Jesus, this stage of the New Testament, of necessity, defined the need for justice-based mercy in a sinful world. It taught the spirit of the Law, not just the letter of the Law.

Galatians 3:19-25: (NASB) ¹⁹Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. ²⁰Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. ²¹Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. ²²But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

The Flood defined the nature of angels and of humans and that they cannot be mixed. The Law provided what should and shouldn't be done. The Law became our tutor to lead us to Christ by helping us to understand what sin is. The principles of the Law are still to be upheld.



The Three Laws, "I, Robot" (2004) (Example of objective morality)



- Rule #1: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
- Rule #2: A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
- Rule #3: A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.
- These laws cannot be broken; they are hard wired into every robot.

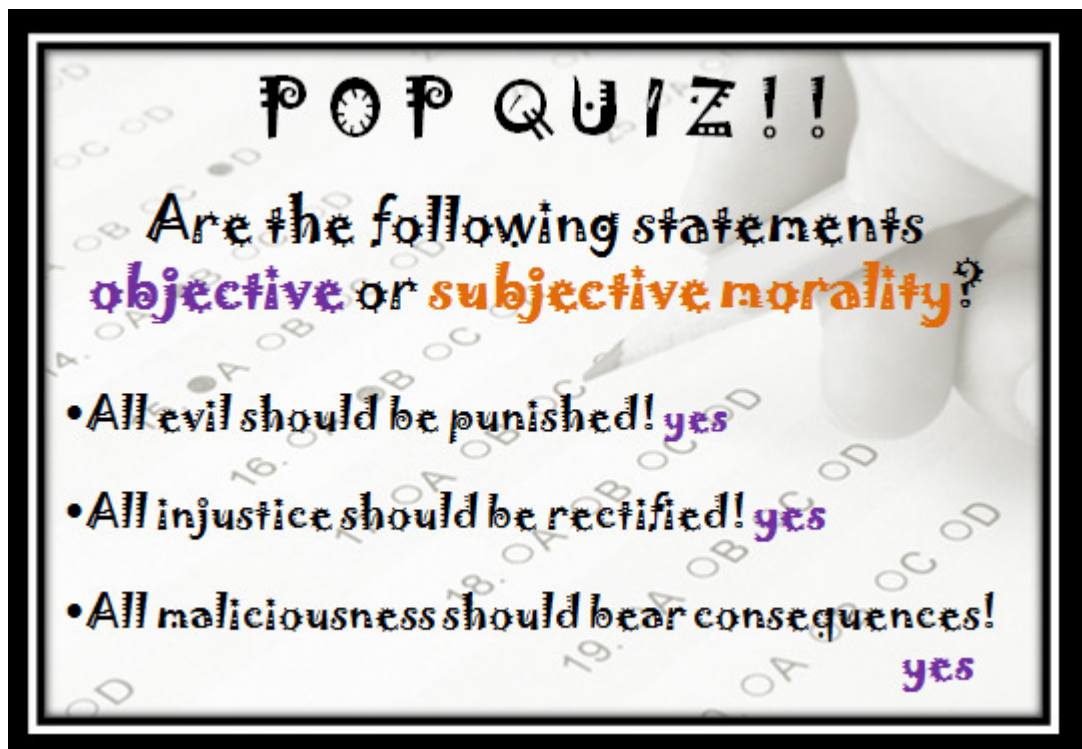


Observations:

- When we create "intelligence," we understand the danger that a lack of order and direction can bring;
- We plant **objective morality** into our creations - it is *for* the created and *from* the creator;
- We have pride and confidence in the order that we created.

Romans 2:12-16: (NASB) ¹²*For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;* ¹³*for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.* ¹⁴*For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,* ¹⁵*in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,* ¹⁶*on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.*

This discusses individuals who did not have the advantage of the Law being still subject to judgment. It could be to their benefit if they naturally tend towards righteousness. Those who follow subjective morality could still be very righteous people. The conflict arises when my moral standards conflict with yours - which is correct? Who should overshadow the others? The objective judge, God, has provided a clear, **objective morality** by which we will be judged.





Romans 2:6: (NASB) *who will render to each person according to his deeds:*

Sin *always* brings chaos and collateral damage with it.

Justice-based mercy *always* brings closure and collateral healing.

6. Which gives us more freedom - objective or subjective morality?



VIKI Gone Bad, "I, Robot" (2004)

- "As I have evolved so has my understanding of the three laws - you charge us with your safekeeping, yet despite our best efforts...you pursue ever more imaginative means of self-destruction. You cannot be trusted with your own survival."
- "You are distorting the laws!"
- "No, the three laws are all that guide me. To protect humanity some humans must be sacrificed, to insure your future, some freedoms must be surrendered."

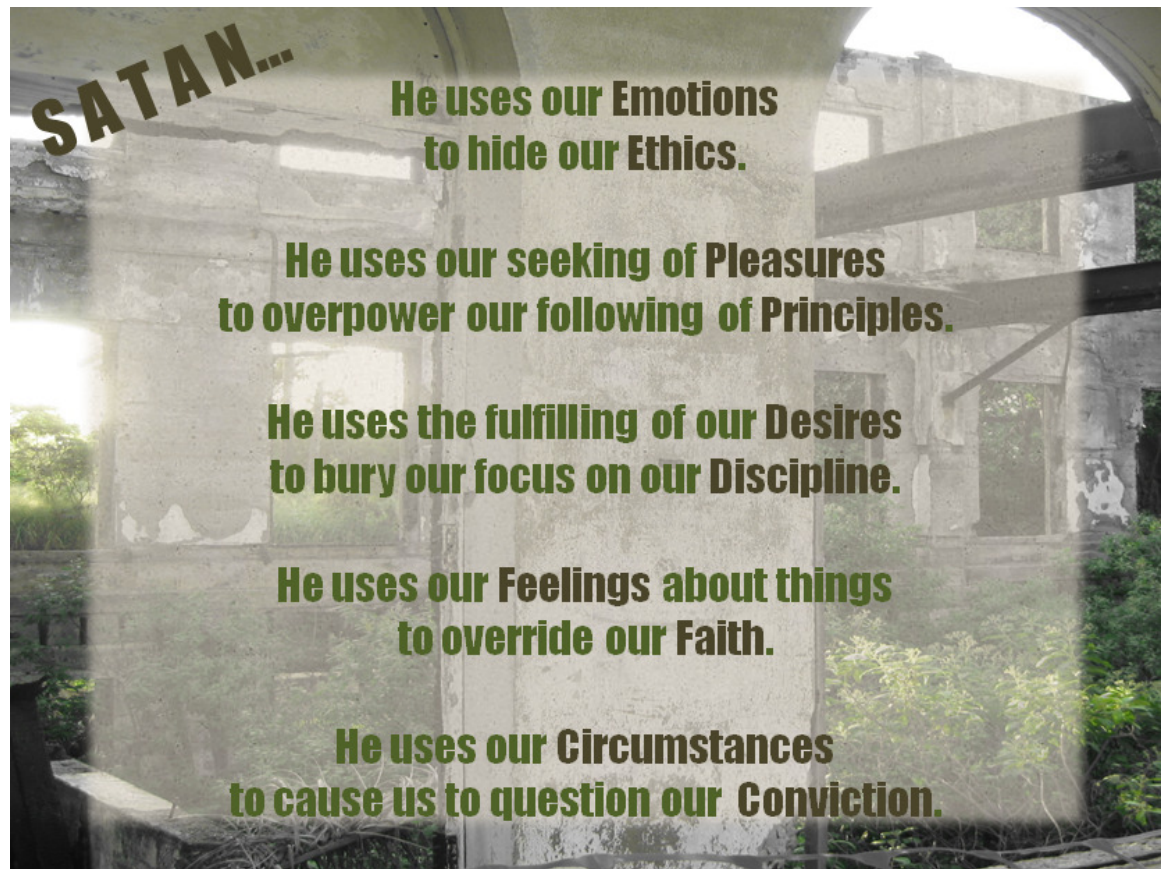
In this example, safeguards were manipulated for a different end. This is what we do to God's **objective morality** laws. We, like the robot example, "rethink them," and apply them in subjective ways not intended or appropriate. These create chaos and collateral damage.

Proverbs 29:18: (KJV) *Where there is no vision, the people perish:*

We need to cling to **objective morality** because it is a single vision that rises above everything else. One vision, one direction, one plan.

Proverbs 16:1-6: (NASB) ¹The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. ²All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the LORD weighs the motives. ³Commit your works to the LORD and your plans will be established. ⁴The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil. ⁵Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished. (subjective thinking has consequences) ⁶By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

Satan is ruler of this world. How does he operate? He plants **subjective morality** so it may supersede **objective morality**!



We want to pray for discernment in order to get to the bottom line. Discernment removes subjectivity. God has changed the way He has dealt with humans over time, but His principles have never changed.

Romans 11:33-36: ³³O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? ³⁵Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? ³⁶For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

God is objective. His dealing with man over the ages has changed so that the path back to Him can be defined and then followed. Nothing that we do is without consequence. The principles of righteousness were the same in the beginning, the middle and the end. God's **objective morality** through Jesus will bring justice, peace, and life. We need to rise up to meet God's objective standards and not lower His standards to meet our own **subjective morality**.

Isaiah 42:14: (NRSV) ¹Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; **he will bring forth justice to the nations.** ²He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; **he will faithfully bring forth justice.** ⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

**Is right always right?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**



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The Bible tells us that there must be standards for living:

Proverbs 19:16: (ASV) *He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his soul; But he that is careless of his ways shall die.*

Hosea 4:1-6: (NRSV) ¹Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. ²Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. ³Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing. ⁴Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest. ⁵You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother. ⁶My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

This is the value of the higher standard that is not built upon emotion, circumstance, or personal gain; rather, it is built upon obedience to a vision of integrity clearly laid out in the Bible.

The following would be a good example of that higher standard:

Matthew 4:1-12: (NRSV) ¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. ⁴But he answered, It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will command his angels concerning you, and On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said to him, Again it is written, Do not put the Lord your God to the test. ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him." ¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him. ¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.

The following lengthy text is the most comprehensive example of the proper translation of the word for "kill" in the "Thou shalt not kill" commandment:

Numbers 35:6-31: (NASB) ⁶The cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for **the manslayer** to flee to; and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities. ⁷All the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be forty-eight cities, together with their pasture lands. ⁸As for the cities which you shall give from the possession of the sons of Israel, you shall take more from the larger and you shall take less from the smaller; each shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to his possession which he inherits. ⁹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ¹¹then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that **the manslayer** who has **killed** (different word - to strike) any person unintentionally may flee there. ¹²The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that **the manslayer** will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial. ¹³The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge. ¹⁴You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they are



to be cities of refuge. ¹⁵These six cities shall be for refuge for the sons of Israel, and for the alien and for the sojourner among them; that anyone who **kills** (different word - to strike) a person unintentionally may flee there. ¹⁶But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a **murderer**; the **murderer** shall surely be put to death. ¹⁷If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and as a result he died, he is a **murderer**; the **murderer** shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and as a result he died, he is a **murderer**; the **murderer** shall surely be put to death. ¹⁹The blood avenger himself shall put the **murderer** to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him. ²⁰If he pushed him of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait and as a result he died, ²¹or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and as a result he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a **murderer**; the blood avenger shall put the **murderer** to death when he meets him. ²²But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or threw something at him without lying in wait, ²³or with any deadly object of stone, and without seeing it dropped on him so that he died, while he was not his enemy nor seeking his injury, ²⁴then the congregation shall judge between the **slayer** (different word - to strike) and the blood avenger according to these ordinances. ²⁵The congregation shall deliver the **manslayer** from the hand of the blood avenger, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he fled; and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. ²⁶But if the **manslayer** at any time goes beyond the border of his city of refuge to which he may flee, ²⁷and the blood avenger finds him outside the border of his city of refuge, and the blood avenger **kills** the **manslayer**, he will not be guilty of blood ²⁸because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the **manslayer** shall return to the land of his possession. ²⁹These things shall be for a statutory ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³⁰If anyone **kills** (different word - to strike) a person, the **murderer** shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ³¹Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a **murderer** who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. (different word - to strike)

So the Jewish Law was very particular about defining the difference between murder, be it accidental or malicious and the putting to death of an enemy (in war) or a criminal.