



## 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: (NASB)** <sup>24</sup>*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; <sup>27</sup>but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*



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

 **How to say no, Coronet Instructional Film (1951)**



- *So, well, I think the important thing is to know yourself and your standards. Know when and how you're going to say "no" - but in advance, even then it takes all the ingenuity you have.*
- *Well, I think we have cleared the air a bit, and we've outlined some skills in saying "no" and still keeping your friends. Think we ought to list them again in review? Lucy?*



- Try to avoid difficult situations.
- Howie?
- Distractions. Change the subject.
- Nora?
- Know exactly when you want to say "no" and be definite.
- Marty?
- And then say "no," friendly as possible but still "no," but don't be too preachy. (laughter)

There are two sides of professing what you believe...

### First, the weak side:

Titus 1:16: (KJV) They **profess** <3670> that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.



They claimed to know God but their actions did not show it. Profession is something that can make you look one way but you are actually living another way. When it comes down to moral standards, if we profess a belief we do not live up to, what are our standards based on - what we profess or how we act?

### Now, the strong side:

1 Timothy 6:12: (KJV) Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast **professed** <3670> a good profession before many witnesses.



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: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. <sup>15</sup>Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. <sup>16</sup>But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness.

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.

**Should each individual set the bar for their moral standards or should there be an absolute morality?**



A caller from the Philippines suggests: This generation has lost sense of authority. Psalms 19:7-9: <sup>7</sup>The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. <sup>8</sup>The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. <sup>9</sup>The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.



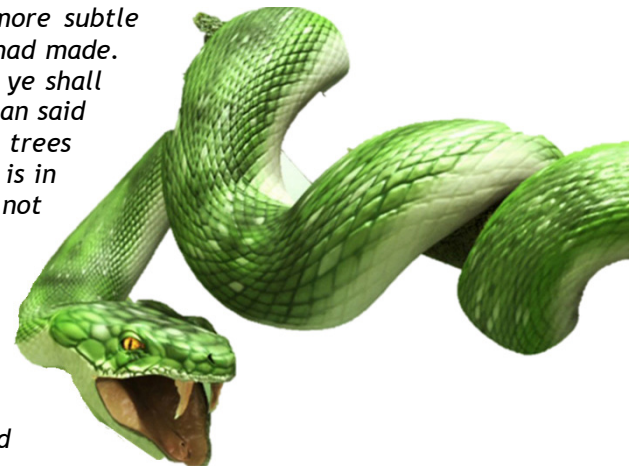
## **No absolute morality, No God - No Morals, Richard Dawkins**

- 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: (KJV) <sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? <sup>2</sup>And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: <sup>3</sup>But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.



**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,

**She saw the tree was good for food. 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.

Now, let's consider this:

### 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.*



So, who is doing the careful thinking and to what end?



**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:** (NRSV) <sup>33</sup>O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! <sup>34</sup>For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? <sup>35</sup>Or who has given a gift to Him, to receive a gift in return? <sup>36</sup>For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.





## 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.*



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Rational, emotional and spiritual mindsets all come into play with our moral guidance.

### 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: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup>because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

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: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup>Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

#### **3. Thou shall not use God's name in vain.**

Do our philosophies leave room for anything sacred?

Romans 1:25: (NASB) For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

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: (NASB) And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.



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: (NASB) *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents...*

**6. *Thou shall not steal.***

**Is it stealing if you don't get caught?**

Romans 1:29: (NASB) *being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips...*

**7. *Thou shall not lie or give false testimony.***

**How often do we judge before we have the evidence?**

Romans 1:30: (NASB) *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents...*

**8. *Thou shall not kill.***

**Jesus called killing someone's reputation murder - how are we doing?**

Romans 1:29: (NASB) *being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips...*

**9. *Thou shall not commit adultery.***

**How much has our perspective changed on this?**

Romans 1:27: (NASB) *and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.*

**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: (NASB) *Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.*



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 are we striving for: the lowest common denominator or highest common objective?

#### What happens when we seek the lowest common denominator?

Romans 1:28-32: (NKJV) <sup>28</sup>And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup>being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, <sup>30</sup>backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup>undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup>who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

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: (NRSV) <sup>36</sup>Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? <sup>37</sup>He said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

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.

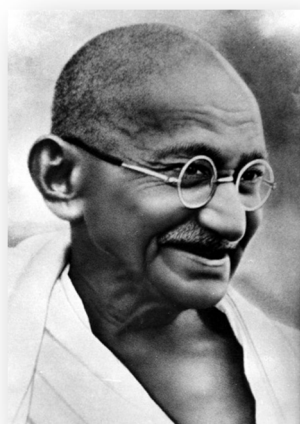


Morality is doing right, no matter what you are told. Religion is doing what you are told, no matter what is right.

The quote on the left is a popular thought. But this program is *not* comparing religion with philosophy. We are comparing true Christianity according to the Scriptures with human philosophy.

We should be focusing on God and the purest understanding of what He told us to do - not just "general" religion.

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: (NASB) *For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.*

**Pleasure without conscience:**

Ephesians 4:19-20: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>*and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.* <sup>20</sup>*But you did not learn Christ in this way,*

**Science without humanity:**

James 4:17: (NASB) *Therefore to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

**Knowledge without character:**

1 Corinthians 8:1: (NASB) *Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.*

**Politics without principle:**

1 Peter 2:13-14: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>*Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,* <sup>14</sup>*or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*

**Commerce without morality:**

Proverbs 20:10: (NASB) *Differing weights and differing measures, both of them are abominable to the LORD.*

**Worship without sacrifice:**

Romans 12:1: (NASB) *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*





## Should what people truly believe have greater value than what people merely feel?

### **Morals innate without God, No God - No Morals, Christopher Hitchens**

- *And where would our ethics be if there was no superintending duty? This again seems to me a very profound insult to us in our very deepest nature and character. It is not the case, I submit to you, that we do not set about butchering, and raping and thieving from each other right now but only because we're afraid of a divine punishment or because we're looking for divine reward. It's an extraordinarily base and insulting thing to say to people. On my mother's side some of my ancestry is Jewish. I don't happen to believe the story of Moses in Egypt or the exile but take it to be true, and I'm expected to believe that my mother's ancestors got all the way to Mount Sinai - quite a trek - under the impression until they got there that rape, murder, perjury and theft were okay, only to be told when they got to the foot of Mount Sinai, bad news, none of these things are kosher after all. (laughter)*

### **Actually, here is the biblical, historical record of mankind, long before the Law:**

**Genesis 6:9-13:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup>Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. <sup>11</sup>Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. <sup>13</sup>Then God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

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:** (KJV) <sup>19</sup>For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. <sup>20</sup>Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

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:** (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching; <sup>9</sup>Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck.

**Believe in the example of your parents and truly profess that belief!**

<sup>10</sup>My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. <sup>11</sup>If they say, come with us, let us lie in wait for blood, let us ambush the innocent without cause; <sup>12</sup>Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, even whole, as those who go down to the pit; <sup>13</sup>We will find all kinds of precious wealth, we will fill our houses with spoil; <sup>14</sup>Throw in your lot with us, we shall all have one purse...

**Doesn’t this sound like the peer pressure of today? Apparently, some things do not change. This is gang mentality.**

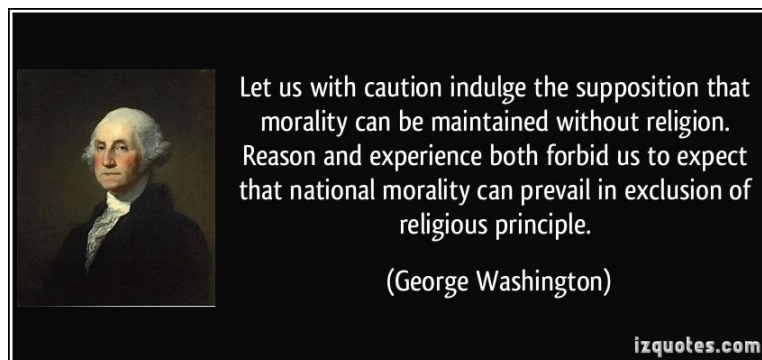
<sup>15</sup>My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path, <sup>16</sup>for their feet run to evil and they hasten to shed blood.

**Let’s continue to develop where our morality comes from and why:**

**Romans 7:18-25:** (ASV) <sup>18</sup>For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. <sup>19</sup>For the good, which I would, I do not: but the evil, which I would not, that I practice. <sup>20</sup>But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.

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.

<sup>21</sup>I find then the law that, to me who would do good, evil is present. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: <sup>23</sup>but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.





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



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Psalms 91:11: *For God commands the angels to guard you in all of your ways.* Jesus summed up the Law as coming from within. You can think of the Beatitudes as "the Attitudes." Hebrews 8:10: *I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.* Do we make the most compassionate and life-affirming choice in each situation? Actions that we call sin arise from selfishness. The Christian does not try to develop selfless love on their own. The Christian is in Christ. Galatians 5:13: *Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.*

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



**Solidarity demands morals, *No God - No Morals*, Christopher Hitchens**

- *They're all forbidden - I don't think so. I think we can actually have a better explanation in every sense. Superior, as well as better, that no one would have been able to get as far as Mount Sinai or any other mountain in any other direction unless they had known that human solidarity demands that we look upon each other as brothers and sisters and that we forbid activities such as murder, rape, perjury and theft. This is innate in us.*

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.



))) **TV morals in the 21st century, *Declining Morality in the United States*, Katie Cole**

- *Younger generations become desensitized to things they see in the media and producers reveal more, leading less to the imagination. By being exposed to reality and ethics, we form morals and from these morals we make the majority of our decisions and life choices. This basic process is prevalent in the media-based messages about sexuality within teenagers. Our culture is framed the very way we think about something so private, and it allows young people to get a very warped perception of how some people behave. In order to break this cycle of declining morality, it is necessary that people stop feeding into this culture and demand creative, intelligent humor rather than crude humor.*

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: (NRSV) <sup>1</sup>Hear 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. <sup>2</sup>Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. <sup>3</sup>Therefore 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. <sup>4</sup>Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest... <sup>6</sup>My 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.

God gives us the opportunity, through Scripture, to understand the highest common objective.

*To love our neighbor as ourselves is such a truth for regulating human society that, by that alone, one might determine all the cases in social morality.* - **John Locke**

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...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
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*Morality is not the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness. - Immanuel Kant*

### Emotion vs. Principle

Our emotions are mankind's lowest common denominators and therefore they are our most common meeting place. Look at the actions and reactions of those around you - listen to their conversations, follow their thoughts - all of these things find their home in our emotions...

Let's take a moment and examine how faith and its placement work in a practical sense and see if we can pinpoint the role of emotion:

Our faith (belief) can be based on many different things:

- Science: A system of knowledge based on study and observation
- Medicine: The science and art of dealing with prevention and curing of disease
- Opinion: One perception of reality versus another
- Preference: A personally preferred perception of reality
- Tradition: Specific patterns of the past as a template for the present and future
- History: The accounts of the past as a tool to prepare for the future
- Astrology: The alignment of stars and planets as tools to plan your life
- Prophecies: Nostradamus, the Mayans, etc.
- Paganism: We are the gods
- The Secret: The concept that the universe waits for your direction to fulfill your life
- Atheism: The belief that God does not exist or should be ignored
- The Bible: A book of history, prophecy, philosophy, tradition, medicine and science

The bottom line here is that all of the above approaches to life or parts of our life rely on faith. In many of these cases, our faith is well placed and necessary and will yield life-enhancing results. In other cases, our faith would be better placed elsewhere.



### **A few examples of the placement of faith:**

James 1:19-27: (NRSV) <sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. <sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. <sup>25</sup>But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. <sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James 3:13-18: (NKJV) <sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.