

Christianity and Hot Button Issues

Biblical and Cultural Challenges Christians Must Face

#3 – ARE TRUTH AND MORALITY RELATIVE?

Statements like “what is true for you may not be true for me” reflects the view that truth is relative and depends on the circumstance. This is “moral relativism.” 2 Judges 21:25

“True for you, but not for me” is a denial of absolute truth, which is God’s truth. John 17:16-19; John 8:31-32; John 14:6, Psalm 25:5; Psalm 119:137-144, 160; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 1:18-20.

Why do People Embrace Moral Relativism?

(1) They want to justify their sin. (2) They want power over their lives. (3) They believe it gives them more freedom. (4) They believe that truth is illusive. John 3:19

What is truth? Would you Agree?

(1) Things can be true even if no one knows it. (2) Things can be true even if no one admits it. (3) Things can be true even if no one follows it. (4) Things can be true even if no one but God grasps it fully. (From *True for You But Not for Me* by Paul Copan) See John 14:6; 17:17-19; 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

The Dangers of Moral Relativism are Evident In:

(1) Definition of marriage and its breakdown. (2) Abortion/infanticide. (3) Sex education in the schools. (4) Penalties for not agreeing with the cancel culture (doxing, trolling, loss of employment.) (5) Teachers being forced to use student selected pronouns. (6) Employment contingent on woke views. (7) Limiting parental rights at school and in medical care. See 2 Timothy 3:1-5 for how morality declines in the last days.

Moral relativists like to question Christians with, “who are you to judge me?” Matthew 7:1; Galatians 6:1. Jesus saying there is a speck in another’s eye that needs to be removed? Jesus isn’t saying we shouldn’t help someone who has a speck in their eye. Rather, Jesus is saying examine ourselves very carefully and deal with our own sin before identifying a sin in someone else. This is similar to Galatians 6:1

Moral relativists like to argue that Christians are not tolerant. Why is this an issue with moral relativists? (1) They believe that Christians are hypocrites. (2) they do not understand the difference between condemning and discerning and evaluating sin. (3) They believe they are tolerant unless of course you disagree with them. We are to follow Matthew 7:1 and we are to be tolerant of unbelievers, but there is a limit. We are also to be tolerant with believers, but we are still supposed to help them with their wrongdoing. See Ephesians 4:2; Ephesians 5:11-13.

Moral relativists like to state, when faced with a contradiction, “that’s just your opinion.” This is an issue with moral relativists because they really mean, “I am right and you are wrong.” We can respond to this with: (1) “Are you saying that there is no truth, just opinion?” (2) “Is it possible that some opinions are better to believe than others?” (3) “Is it possible that what I believe is true and what you believe is false?” (4) “Is it your claim that this is just my opinion a way of avoiding a discussion when you don’t know what to say?” There are times we should avoid discussions with those who are unable to have a civil conversation. See 2 Tim. 2:23; 1 Cor. 3:19; and Titus 3:9.

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Moral relativists will claim: “You can’t legislate morality.” Even the U.S. Supreme Court in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992)* an abortion case agreed argue that they too were not able to legislate morality when they said: “Our obligation is to define the liberty of all, **not to mandate our own moral code**...At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.” The fact is that all laws and court rulings are legislating morality. Yet that is exactly what they went on to do, i.e., affirm *Roe v. Wade*. The argument is really whose morality to legislate. Morality is not theirs or ours—it is God’s morality since He is the source of all truth. We should be asking and discerning what is right and what is evil along with what should be made into law. See Romans 1:9-21 and Romans 2:15 for a discussion of natural law and the law written onto people’s hearts.

We should ask people who argue you cannot legislate morality: (1) “Are you saying we should have no laws since all laws are a reflection of morality.” We should ask: “Are you saying we should have no laws against murder, rape, child abuse, slavery, sex trafficking, and the like?”

Biblical Response to Relativism

How should morality be treated in light of scripture? Scripture is the basis for all morality by God giving us His word on what is right and what is wrong, as well as applying His word in all areas of life. 2 Timothy 3:16 “All scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness.” See also Romans 12:2 and Hebrews 5:14 about the discernment Christians should use.

How Do Moral Relativists (Liberals) Think?

From *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview* by General Editor John MacArthur:

1. They no longer would concern themselves with thoughts of God, but with the thinking of men (Ps 53:1; Rom 1:25).
2. They no longer would have spiritual sight, are blinded by Satan to the glory of God (2 Cor 4:4).
3. They would no longer be wise but foolish (Ps 14:1; Titus 3:3).
4. They would no longer be alive to God, but rather were dead in their sin (Rom 8:5-11).
5. They no longer would set their affections on the things above, but on things of earth (Col 3:2)
6. They would no longer walk in light, but rather in darkness (John 12:35-36,46).
7. They no longer would possess eternal life, but rather faced spiritual death—i.e., eternal separation from God (2 Thess 1:9)
8. They would no longer live in the realm of the Spirit, but rather in the flesh (Rom 8:1-5).

Resources Specific to this Subject:

Book: *True for You But Not for Me* by Paul Copan, which covers the scope of moral relativism.

Book: *Legislating Morality* by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek.

Book: *Think Biblically: Recovering a Christian Worldview* by John MacArthur-General Editor.

Website: <https://crossexamined.org> which has many resources dealing with many areas of apologetics and the issue of legislating morality.

KBC Website: See PDF file ‘Wk3_Truth and Morality_Supplement’