

Study II

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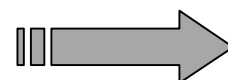
MORALITY

THE NEW TESTAMENT COMMANDS

Morality is *right or wrong behaviour*. When God begins to work in someone's life the first thing they become aware of is their lack of moral purity. We describe this feeling as the "conviction of sin". While we intuitively know what constitutes "good morals" or *good behaviour* it is normal for our consciences to become dull and unable to feel healthy guilt unless the grace of God rescues us. Even those whose hearts have become hardened by sin and unable to realise when something is immoral can become more moral when they are made aware of the Moral Law.

1. Why is it that most people know intuitively what is right or wrong behaviour?
(Note Romans 1:19; 2:14-15)

But just because someone becomes more moral (from being aware of the Moral Law) and may even feel that they are "living as a Christian" their good morals will not save them from sin. But, there is an expectation that when someone is saved they will live a morally different life to the person who is not saved.



2. According to 1Peter 3:16, what role does a Christian’s morality play in the their witness?

3. What reason does the Bible give for people refusing to order their lives according to the Moral Law? (John 3:19)

Morality is not just a Christian concept- it’s a *human* concept. That is, it applies to everybody, not just Christians. Morality is designed by God to protect people and keep them safe. Morality is not designed to make people religious! God’s Moral Law for mankind is best summed up in what we call *The Ten Commandments*.

4. Write down the Ten Commandments in their given order (Exodus 20) -

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

(iv) _____

(v) _____ vs 12

(vi) _____ vs 13

(vii) _____

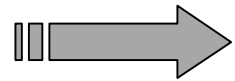
(viii) _____

(ix) _____

(x) _____ vs 17

Refer also to: Matthew 4:10; 1Corinthians 6:9-10; 10:7; Acts 15:20; Romans 13:9; 1Tim. 6:6; Matt. 19:19; Eph. 6:1-3; Ephesians 4:28; Romans 7:7.

5. How did Jesus sum up our obligation to the Moral Law? (Matthew 22:37-39)



C.S. Lewis said that there were three reasons for all people to keep the Moral Law:

- (1) to ensure fair play and harmony between individuals;
- (2) to help make us good people in order to have a good society; and
- (3) to keep us in a good relationship with the power that created us.

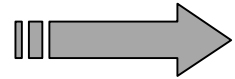
6. Morality is a Law like Gravity. If someone says that they don't want you to impose *your* morality on them, how might you respond?

When Christians try to influence morality of our society through lobbying for better legislation they are often faced with the protest that *you can't legislate morality*. But since morality is *right behaviour* and the laws of a society are supposed to reflect right behaviour, *you can **only** legislate morality*. The real question is: *Whose morality are our legislators legislating?* This is why Christians should be engaged in the political process so that at the very least, we can be salt and light for the good of our society's wellbeing.

7. Based on 1Corinthians 15:33, what can help people to live morally good lives?

Christian fellowship should encourage fellow believers to live morally well. God's moral standards are not a burden to the believer (1John 5:3). In fact, one of the differences between the regenerate and the unregenerate is that for the believer, God's commands are empowering (note John 6:63; 12:50; 2Cor. 3:6). When God's Moral Law tells us not to murder, lie, cheat, have sex before marriage, or to be greedy, we don't just keep these standards, we surpass them by living by a higher, royal, Law.

8. What does the New Testament call this "royal" Law? (Rom. 13:8, 10; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8)



9. Read Colossians 3. Can you identify any moral instructions for believers in this passage?

Some people claim that as long as what they do doesn't *hurt* anyone else, then there is nothing wrong with their behaviour.

10. How might you respond to this claim?

When the apostles were confronted with the first Gentile converts (who were not familiar with the Ten Commandments or the Laws of Moses) they had to give them a standard to live by (since the New Testament had not been written yet).

11. What is the essence of what the apostles instructed these first Gentile converts as recorded in Acts 15:28-29?

Morality is the starting point for godly behaviour. Jesus said that morality starts in the heart (Mat. 15:19) - which is why it's so important to guard our hearts (Prov. 4:23) and one more reason why pornography is so dangerous to our moral condition. Morality encompasses how we treat ourselves and others. This is why morality immediately addresses sexual behaviour.

12. How does 1Corinthians 6:18 describe sexual sin as different to all other sin?

May God enable us to live Christ-honouring, morally upright lives, that point people who are desperately looking for a way out of the maze of sin, to Jesus as Saviour.

Amen.