

MORAL RELATIVISM

Romans 12:9-21

Intro: I hear all the time: "There are no moral absolutes! Say what you want, no matter how vile it is. Think what you want and do what you want." This is where the philosophy, "If it feels good do it," comes from. The only absolutes that some people have is what they want. This in itself is selfishness and a sin. The real problem today is that everyone wants to do their own thing without being told that they are doing wrong.

What we read in Romans 12 points out good and evil. To the moral relativist, there is no evil. This is why we do not want to call terrorists evil. That is why President Ronald Reagan was berated for calling Russia, "The Evil Empire." In the speech on this subject, that he gave to the British Parliament on June 8, 1982, he said this about the British Government led at that time by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: "The British people know that, given strong leadership, time and a little bit of hope, the forces of good ultimately rally and triumph over evil...Here is the enduring greatness of the British contribution to mankind: individual liberty, representative government, and the rule of law under God."

We need to be very concerned about the growing acceptance of moral relativism. It is not a new philosophy, but it is one that was not widely embraced in the United States until the late nineteenth century. In 1947, during a debate at the United Nations on universal human rights, the American Anthropological Society declared that moral values are relative to cultures, and that there is no way of showing that the values of one culture are any better than that of another. Does this mean that Cannibals are doing right when they eat the Missionary? Does this mean that the sexual mutilation of women in Central Africa is acceptable?

What type of Judge do you want to hear a case against a child predator? A moral relativist or a moral absolutist? I'll take the moral absolutist every time. Jesus had no sympathy for child molesters. He said "And whosoever shall offend [Greek skandalizo, to cause distrust] one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Jesus knew of the scars left by sexual abuse.

You may question are there moral absolutes? The pilot who in the darkness of a storm trusts his impulses and not the absolute instruments of his plane will most likely end up dead. The Word of God communicates to the human race that there are absolutes. Psalm 95:5 says: "Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thine house, O Lord,

forever.” Yet, the moral relativist gets things twisted because he does not want a sovereign to rule over him. So he does what the Bible says he will do; he will call evil good and good evil. Because of this, a woe is placed upon him (Isaiah 5:20: “Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet , and sweet for bitter.”)

The Bible is to be our compass in the stormy sea of life. The Word of God will lead into moral excellence, a better people and a better life.

I. THERE IS A NEED FOR VIRTUE AND MORAL EXCELLENCE

A. Christians are to forsake the path they once walked and live holy lives (Ephesians 2:1-3). The child of God is to forsake the cravings of the flesh and live morally.

1. We are told in 2 Peter 1:5-8: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [moral excellence]...”
2. Ephesians 4:17-20– We do not learn indecent and filthy things from Christ; they come from the evil one.
3. The early believers came out of societies that were wicked and vile. There was devil worship, idolatry, illicit sex etc. Our society today is wicked, and the words of Romans 12:1-2 stands as a beacon of light today as it did when it was penned: “And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

B. When nations turn away from the absolute truths of the Bible, they are turning from moral absolutes and headed for trouble.

1. Psalm 9:17: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” How different this is from Psalm 33:12 that says: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”
2. When you cast away the law of God, you invite his woes upon you (Isaiah 5:21-23). Verse 23 speaks of justifying the wicked with bribes and taking away the rights of those who live righteously.
3. When you get turned away from God’s law, there is a breakdown that leads to bad judges, that in turn leads to crime and chaos.

II. MORAL ABSOLUTES IN THE BIBLE

- A. The Bible is a divinely inspired book with many moral absolutes.
- B. The Ten Commandments give us direction individually and as a nation.
- C. A few verses that teach us moral absolutes.
 - 1. Ephesians 4:31-32 teaches us to not have hard feelings, anger, or rage. We are also taught to be kind and forgiving as Christ is forgiving.
 - 2. Ephesians 5:3 tells us that we are to be pure sexually without even a hint of immorality for God's people are not to be like the world.
 - 3. Ephesians 5:4-7-- Vs.4, exhorts us to not tell dirty jokes; Vs. 5 that those who cannot control their immoral behavior are lost; Vs. 6, don't be fooled by words that have no spiritual meaning; and Vs. 7, do not go along with that kind of people.

III. THREE VERY IMPORTANT ABSOLUTE TRUTHS

- A. God loves and cares for His people, and His Son, Jesus Christ, is truth (John 14:6). The truth of God's love is seen in His laying down His life for us (1 John 3:16).
- B. The second absolute truth is that we have an adversary, and he is Satan.
 - 1. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).
 - a. Satan lies and tells you that there is joy and happiness where it is not.
 - b. He also tells you that joy is not where it is (John 10:10).
 - 2. Satan lies and says you cannot be forgiven for your sins. This damages your self-worth.
- C. The third absolute truth is that believers can overcome the temptations of the Devil and live victoriously.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - 2. Romans 8:37: "We are more than conquerors..."

Conclusion: The Bible is the moral compass for man. D.L. Moody said of the Bible: "The Bible will keep from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible." In the High Priestly prayer of Jesus for His people, He prayed to the Father saying: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

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