

## God's Answers to Life's Questions

### 503 How Do We Know Right from Wrong?

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Today we're asking the question, "How do we know right from wrong?" With same-sex marriages, nudity, profanity, and corruption filling the news these days—and many people unwilling to make any judgments. This unwillingness to say anything is wrong has left a lot of people uncertain about what to believe. One class of college students told their professor that they were afraid to say anything at all was wrong—even the Holocaust!

#### We're living in a morally confused society

- Three-quarters of adults (74%) say they are concerned about the moral condition of the nation.
- 72% say there are no absolutes—moral or theological
- Many college students and young adults are unwilling to make any judgments at all about right or wrong.
- Getting drunk is considered morally acceptable among one-third
- Breaking the speed limit (39%).
- The use of profanity 37%.
- Half stated that watching a movie with explicit sexual behavior is morally okay.
- (58%) say that co-habitation is morally acceptable.
- (48%) believe that homosexual relations should be legal, but only (25%) say that such relations are morally acceptable.
- Similar numbers say abortion is wrong but are pro-choice. Pro-choice of wrong?
- This permitting of wrong is confusion. If we are willing to permit it, on what basis do we say it is wrong?
- What of murder? Rape? Theft? Shall we say they are wrong but permit them?
- 34% say Bible is not totally accurate in all that it teaches
- 53% say all pray to the same God, no matter what name they use
- 44% say Jesus committed sins while on earth
- Only 15% cite the Bible as the dominant influence on their thinking about truth.
- 'if it feels good, do it,'
- 'everyone else is doing it'
- 'as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else, it's okay.'
- 'if it works, it must be okay'

In fact, the fast decline of moral foundations among our young people has culminated in a one-word worldview: 'whatever.'

#### How do people judge right/wrong?

- (44%) cited their desire to do whatever will bring them the most pleasing or satisfying results.
- (17%) base their morality on what they believe will make other people happy or minimize interpersonal conflict.
- (17%) credits the values they were taught by their family.
- (24%) lean primarily upon religious principles and teaching or Bible content when making moral decisions.

If there are no absolutes and if religion and morals are merely matters of opinion, then nothing is right for everyone, everywhere, all the time; and nothing is wrong either. Nothing can be said to be right or wrong. It would be then be foolish to condemn the terrorists or to condemn someone who raped your mother. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4)

#### How can I tell right from wrong?

Surveys tell us that most people in Western society claim to be moral relativists; that is, they claim that what is right for one person is not necessarily right for another. But it is very easy to say there are no objective or absolute moral principles. It is much more difficult, however, to live as if there are none. The way we live, our behavior and the way we respond to how people treat us, the judgments we make when other people are mistreated—these things reveal what we really believe about right and wrong.

"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Mt. 7:12). It is the tendency of people to downplay their own sins, while the recognize the sins of others. When someone mistreats you, you know it. You feel it. You know when you have been wronged. What is true for you is true for everyone—we are to treat others the way we wish to be treated. The Bible is, of course, the source of even this truth!

#### Psalm 19:7-11

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;

The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

**Galatians 6:7-8** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Sin is thought to be outdated, offensive in its tone. The more we put down the concept and practice sin—the more relevant we find it! But some have to find this out the hard way.

#### The prodigal son (Luke 15:11ff.)

"A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. 13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

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"Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving *anything* to him. But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

How sad it would be to wake up in the pig pen to find the lifestyle we've chosen. How much better to listen to God and His word, to live how He teaches and to follow Him in every way! To become a Christian, believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, repent of your sins, confess His name, and be baptized. Biblical baptism is immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Thanks so much for being our guest. We hope that our time together was a blessing to your life. We believe the greatest need of our time is to know God and to listen to His Word. It seems that many in our society want to say to God, "Hush and go away!" The increase in nudity and profanity on our airways, the unwillingness to have Bible reading and prayer in our schools, the constant desire for separation of church and state is leading us to become a secular nation.

This throwing God out of society has led to

- Couples cohabiting without marriage (4.5 million)
- Divorce in 1 of every 2 marriages
- 1 birth in 3 to unwed mothers
- Television with no topic censored
- Morally confused children
- People who seem to have no consciences

The only morality that will lift man above the level of animals is a morality that appeals to the spiritual side of man.

When we shut God out, we begin living lives without His wisdom and His love. When we understand that we have been made in the image of God and are made to glorify Him, we'll begin to live lives that reflect His holiness and His goodness. We need God in our lives and in our morality.

There is no greater need in our time than to know and to love Him.

Jesus gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God

and Father, to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen. (Galatians 1:4). He was not content to merely cleanse us from sin; He wanted to lift us up to a higher and better life. We can find that life by coming to Him and studying His word.

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