

Absolute Morality and Absolute Truth and What it means to you.

*If there is no absolute Morality, why was Hitler Wrong?
If there is an absolute Morality, why do YOU get to decide what it is and NOT Hitler?*

Here are some common statements that we Christians are going to run across regarding truth and morality:

1. There is no absolute truth.
2. That maybe true for you but it's not true for me.
3. I think all religions are true.
4. So many people disagree about Morality that there can't be an absolute Morality (or there is no absolute Morality).
5. Who are you to say other people's cultural values are wrong?
6. You have the right to choose your own values.
7. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.
8. Christians are intolerant.
9. Who are you to judge others? The Bible says: Judge Not.
10. It is wrong to force your morality on others!
11. You can't legislate Morality!

You will run into these statements at school, at work and maybe even at home. You will hear these statements by characters in movies, by reporters in the papers and by news anchors in the news. Your teachers may say these things, your friends may say these things, even your family may say these things, and if you aren't ready for them, you may accept them blindly yourself.

Now I'm not going to give you responses to these questions right away, why, because I want to lead you through the logic behind the response before I give you the response. I do think it is critical that we are able to respond to these questions rationally and logically. Because we believe that we serve a rational and logical God. Why do we believe that? Partly because rationality and logic are part of the nature of the mighty God we serve. We don't have time to go into that in this talk but we will at some point in the future.

Absolute Morality

First let's talk about Absolute Morality. I believe that there IS an Absolute Morality.

But you may validly ask how can I make such a statement. After all, don't different cultures have different moral values? For instance a friend of mine named Howard gave me an example where in certain jungle tribes, ankles are considered very sexual. When the missionaries first went out there the tribeswomen wore no tops. So to avoid staring at their breasts the men would cast their eyes down. Well this caused a lot of trouble because the tribesmen got angry that these men were staring at their wives ankles. Ankles were considered sexual, while breasts weren't. So doesn't that indicate that morality changes from one culture to another?

Today in our culture we presume that everybody will have sex before they are married. Our culture thinks that sex before, after and outside marriage is an acceptable standard and that the only reason that people weren't to have sex outside of marriage is because all the religious old coots who made up the old rules were prudes. Or they feel that these religious zealots didn't want grown adults to have any fun. So what was wrong 40 years ago is no longer wrong now it seems. And this we are told is an example of morality that moves with the times.

Furthermore, we run into situational ethics, for instance another friend called Spencer was telling me the case of a man who'd broken into a church and stolen food. His lawyer was arguing that the church planned to hand out that same food the next day anyway and so he didn't really steal, he just took his food early because he was hungry. Was the man really a thief?

So we are asked: doesn't morality depend on the situation? If so, how can I say that there is indeed an absolute right and an absolute wrong?

The consequences of no "Absolute Morality"

But before we get to that answer I want to ask you this: What are the logical and real consequences if there wasn't an absolute morality?

The immediate consequence of that is that there is no right and no wrong. It becomes one of those: What is right for you may not be right for me sort of things. Or who am I to judge you? And this may be very appealing. It's especially appealing today with the whole concept of tolerance.

But there are some real consequences to this. Let me give you an example. The philosopher Frederick Coplestone and the atheist Bertrand Russell were involved in a debate. And at this point those folk in my Biblestudy group will know what comes next. At one point in the debate, Coplestone said, "Mr. Russell, you do believe in good and bad, don't you?" Russell answered, "Yes, I do." "How do you differentiate between them?" challenged Coplestone. Russell shrugged his shoulders and said, "The same way I differentiate between yellow and blue." Coplestone graciously responded and said, "But Mr. Russell, you differentiate between yellow and blue by seeing, don't you? How do you differentiate between good and bad?" Russell said "On the basis of feeling-what else?" Now Coplestone decided not to do so, but the next question could have been. "Mr. Russell, in some cultures they feel like they should love their neighbors, in other cultures they feel they should eat their neighbors. Do you have any preference?"

You see the minute you take away the absolutes from the equation and make the issue arbitrary you end up with the question of who decides? If there is no absolute morality, is there a difference between Mother Teresa and Hitler? You see if morality is not absolute then what right do you have to make any distinction between the two, it becomes simply a matter of preference?

I like to put it this way: *If there is no absolute morality, why was Hitler wrong? If there is an absolute morality, why do YOU get to decide what it is and not Hitler?*

The fundamental problem with not having an absolute morality is that you then have no basis to judge Hitler. Because as far as he was concerned, it was moral to kill the Jews. Why? Because they were not human according to Him. How do we deal with that issue? Well one answer you'll get, which I found out from an atheist friend is: Because there is no absolute morality we base our morality on what best for mankind. You see he knew that he couldn't say you do what is best for your society or your family because... why? Because then he'd be forced to say that what Hitler did was OK, because Hitler was doing what was best for his own German society. OK so he said do the best for mankind. But still, doing what is best for mankind doesn't really answer the question. It doesn't answer the question because all it does is push the responsibility to other questions that we must still decide on.

Can you figure out what those problems are? What are the problems with that answer?

They are: 1. Who decides what is best for mankind? And 2. Who decides **who** is mankind?

After all one could well argue, perhaps what Hitler did was best for mankind. If you kill all the weak and sickly won't that improve the gene pool? Just like the wolves that cull the sick deer from the fold ensure that deer will always be healthy. And any deer with bad genes never survive to pass on their bad genes. A healthy species will last longer. Wasn't Hitler trying to do just this when he tried to create Friedrich Nietzsche's superman and super race?

Secondly, Hitler decided that the Jews did not qualify as mankind. Just like the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court back in the 1800s when they decided that African Americans were not considered persons. So who decides what is right and what is wrong? Who decides who is human and who is not? Breathe deep the gathering gloom, we decide what is grey and what is white? (Sorry that's a reference to the Moody Blues' theology).

Thirdly, if there is no absolute morality then doing what "is right" is merely a preference. Hitler preferred killing Jews, Corrie Ten Boom (who hid them) preferred saving Jews. I prefer Passion Fruit Sorbet, you prefer Mocha Almond Fudge Ice Cream. How can you say one is right and one is wrong? As we said before how can you say Mother Teresa is a saint and Hitler is a demon?

Now before we go into the details of why there *is* an absolute morality and what it is and how we can prove it exists and whether we can legislate it; let us understand why people abandon the concept of there being an absolute morality.

Why people abandon the concept of an Absolute Moral Law

I think that there are four reasons why people abandon the concept that there is an absolute morality.

1. They want to be loving and understanding

You see we have to understand, that when people say that they don't believe in absolute morality, it doesn't mean that they are part of a plot to destroy the world by dumbing down our ability to reason between right and wrong.

I believe we need to reach out to these folks, not by attacking them because then we'll just create an enemy, but by coming alongside them and befriending them and then help them think through this logically.

Most people come to this conclusion because they really want to be loving and understanding. And it is exactly because they want to show compassion that they come to this point. You see, if you say there is an absolute morality then you come back to the statement I made before.

If there is no absolute morality, why was Hitler wrong? If there is an absolute morality, why do YOU get to decide what it is and not Hitler?

The problem is: if there is an absolute morality, then who gets to decide it. And most people don't want to decide it. They realize that their own morality would pale in comparison to others; they realize that if they went to another culture it would seem very pigheaded of them to try and impose their morals on those people. It's just that they want to be loving and understanding and they feel that by judging people they are not being loving or understanding. So in the interests of being fair and honest, they opt for a standard that says there is no moral standard. But the problem is that this is similar to a parent never punishing their child for beating up the next-door neighbor's kid. At some point that child is going to become a bully in school and maybe eventually a criminal. It is actually more loving to say No, what you are doing is wrong and will hurt you and others if you keep doing it. That's one reason why some people choose to believe that there is no absolute Morality.

2. They really want to do those things that God seems to say is wrong.

The other reason that people don't want to accept that there is a moral standard is because they are involved in an activity that would be condemned by this perceived moral standard; and thus they want to break the shackles of this ancient morality and want to be free to do what they want to do. On that level it's very selfish. Sometimes people feel that moral standards in the past were too strict and caused problems and the only way the human race can evolve and move forward is to get rid of some of these restrictions.

Remember how we talked about how people want to say that Sex outside of Marriage is OK and all those rules are old fashioned and unnecessary. What they don't realize is that God gives us all these rules for our protection. Not because He's a killjoy. The real reason for the Biblical laws about Sex is that there are long term consequences to sex before marriage, that aren't apparent right away. And as we've seen in our lifetimes, sex outside of marriage destroys the family, and this in turn can cause dysfunctional people, loners, sex maniacs, depressed kids, unmotivated kids, kids who join gangs and what not. Sure there are other things that cause them, but we know that dysfunctional families add to it. In fact there is a study called the "Leading Index of Cultural Values" published by Bill Bennet that show how crime and drugs and gangs and even our grades have started getting worse right after the "Sexual Revolution" of the sixties and the seventies. If you have the time this is a very worthy study. By the way we haven't even touched on the STDs and HIV all consequences precisely of sex outside of marriage. Imagine how long an STD would last if only 1 person had it and he only had sex with one other person who also only had sex with him?

3. They've seen situations where one moral law seems to conflict with another moral law.

The third reason I've come across is that too many people have abandoned the principle of Moral Absolutes because they ran into a Moral dilemma where two Moral Laws seemed to collide. So rather than realize that whenever two Moral Laws collide you simply apply the higher law, they abandoned the entire principle. Thus throwing the baby out with the bathtub. One shouldn't abandon the entire principle just because we didn't understand the right methodology.

For example, is it OK to run a red light? Of course not!

So we have a law:

1. *Don't run a red light.*

But hopefully you said: Well there are exceptions to that rule. Then the question is: are the exceptions to the rule less important than the original rule?

For instance, if you were to run a red light just because you were impatient, would that be OK? Obviously not, we'd say that was wrong. But that's not the example you were thinking of, was it? You were thinking that it's OK to run a red light for instance when you have a medical emergency and need to get someone to an emergency room? Right? So the valid exceptions to the original rule have to be more important than the reason for the original rule. So let's say there's someone in your passenger seat that needs medical attention immediately.

So to simplify, we have here two laws, the second overriding the first:

1. *Don't run a red light.*
2. *Do what it takes to save a person who is dying (you can rephrase this anyway you wish).*

So hopefully you agree that it would be silly to abandon all traffic laws in every case, simply because we have identified a condition when a higher law applied that superceded a traffic law?

The second thing we must realize is that, just because an issue is complex it doesn't mean that the entire principle should be abandoned. For instance we can show that the above decision to run a red light can be complicated and require an even higher moral principle that overrides the first two.

Should we run a red light if we have a medical emergency but if we ran the red light we'd kill someone else who was currently the crosswalk in front of us. Now an even higher law supercedes the "medical emergency" law. That is the law of don't kill.

In simple terms we now have

1. *Don't run a red light.*
2. *Do what it takes to save a person who is dying (you can rephrase this anyway you wish).*
3. *Don't kill anyone*

Again despite the complexity I see no sane people clamoring that we should abandon Traffic Laws. And again we don't eliminate traffic laws because the occasional exception to the rule.

Do you want to complicate it even more? Add another caveat. Let's say that there's a man standing in front of your car in the crosswalk about to shoot at you. He just shot your friend in the passenger seat, (which is why you need to get him to the hospital). The intersection is crowded, and the light is red. How do you make your decision?

Obviously you if you can think fast you try to figure out which laws work first.

1. *Don't run a red light.*
2. *Do what it takes to save a person who is dying (you can rephrase this anyway you wish).*
3. *Don't kill anyone*
4. *It's OK to kill someone in self-defense or the defense of others by hitting them with a car.*

So you hit the fool with the gun, you cautiously negotiate the intersection, and then you run the red light and drive to the hospital.

As you can see the list grows. The Moral Absolutes still stand, but the Lower Moral Laws give way to Moral Laws that superceded them.

In conclusion: no one abandons the law of gravity or disbelieves it just because we know that there are complicated exceptions that override it in certain cases (like the principles of aerodynamics).

Similarly we shouldn't abandon Moral Absolutes just because it is complicated and just because some supercede others. We just need to figure out the principles and apply them. That's what the Wright Brothers did when they figured out how to fly a plane.

Now some people may argue that this is situational ethics. But call it what you may, the real issue that we need to understand here is: Is there a higher moral law that kicks in, and if there isn't one, then we can't justify the action. Note that we also have to be careful how we apply the hierarchy of laws. For instance the law of Love does not supercede the law of "don't have sex before you are married". As much as the movies tell us that it does. In fact the law of love actually enforces the law of don't have sex before you are married, if you think about it.

We can and should debate the hierarchy of laws – and I am all for that but we must recognize that there is a hierarchy.

Now coming back to why people abandon the concept of an absolute moral law. Point 4.

4. Different Cultures seem to have different moral values

This example is the example I discussed in the beginning. Where one tribe in Africa felt it was OK to show your breasts but not your ankles. Now here's the issue in those situations.

First it is possible for a culture to be wrong, isn't it. This is very easy to prove isn't it. Any guesses? How can I prove that an entire culture can be wrong? Exactly... the German Culture during the early 40s. The discriminatory culture of the 1950's in the US.

Secondly it turns out that even in various cultures many times the underlying principles still stand. It's how the principles are interpreted. You see in the African tribe example it's not really that the breasts are wrong or the ankles are wrong. Neither breasts nor ankles are morally wrong are they? It's never wrong for the husbands to see them is it? You see it's the underlying principle behind the laws. Here's the basic issue. Both cultures felt that sex was reserved between a man and his wife. So whatever was considered sexual was to be respected. In their culture breasts were not considered sexual so it was fine. But ankles, now those were to be respected. (Of course you may ask what about those cultures that feel that sex is not to be reserved between a single man and single woman? Well perhaps they fall under the first instance? Could it be that they are wrong? It is possible isn't it? When we talk about how laws should be derived later on, we'll show you in that section about how to determine if a culture's morals are wrong. Also numerous anthropological studies have shown that the vast majority of indigenous cultures reserved sex to between one man and his wife or wives. We can argue about the immorality or morality of multiple wives separately). But the point is there was a fundamental moral value here.

Similarly in the middle ages it was considered to be OK to kill witches. Nowadays we don't kill witches. Have our morals changed? Absolutely not! You see what has changed is that we realize that witches do *not* have the power to put evil curses and make us sick or kill us. We realized that witches do not kidnap our children and boil them alive and eat them. In fact if a witch (or anyone) were really to kidnap your kids and kill them, wouldn't you be the first to insist that we hunt the felon down and kill them or at the least put them behind bars for the rest of their lives. The moral value: It's OK to stop people from killing others, didn't change. In fact we do hunt down serial murderers and depending on the current laws put them to death or imprison them for life.

Of course some people could argue that witches do indeed kill and eat people, but since we do also believe strongly that you are innocent until proven guilty (another moral value), we'd have to prove that first before we could do anything to that witch. You see our morals didn't change, what changed was our understanding of the situation; it became clearer and more logical.

I'm sure there are other reasons. But these should give you an understanding of where most people come from and why they believe these things.

Can we Legislate Morality:

We now come to the next important issue.

Can we legislate Morality, and if we do

1. Is it constitutional?
2. Is it enforceable?
3. Is it ethical?

Ok, now one of the statements I've heard many times is this: You can't legislate morality!

This is the funniest statement I've ever heard. Why do you think this is funny?

Exactly, because if we don't legislate morality what on earth are we legislating most of the time? Platitudes? Fuzzy feelings? What? Cultural values? How would you like a law that said: It is illegal to eat anything but Turkey on Thanksgiving day because that's the American Way. Obviously we don't legislate stupid things like that. We legislate things like. Thou shalt not KILL! Why?

Because it's what? It's WRONG to Kill. It's IMMORAL to kill. We legislate things like Thou shalt not steal! Isn't stealing a moral issue? How about the laws that said that Slavery was illegal? Was that just because it was economically bad to have slaves? Au contraire mon frere. It was economically bad NOT to have slaves - for the land owners. After all what could be better than free labor?

But it was MORALLY wrong to have slaves. That law was solely based on the concept that slaves are human and have rights and that it was what? WRONG to take away their rights.

Even when we legislate things like Thou shalt not litter. Why are we legislating it? Because we think that littering destroys the environment. And we think that destroying the environment is a what thing? A bad thing. Would that make destroying the environment an IMMORAL thing perhaps? Of course it is. Of course it's also a beauty thing, but that then moves into the issue of the fact that you are defacing public property. That's a moral issue again, because you are spoiling something that also belongs to other people.

Even Tax laws are based on moral issues. Someone creates the tax code based on some moral value e.g. it's good to educate all kids. It's good to give single mothers money for food. So to pay for that we create a law that says "it's necessary to take money from people and give to these good causes." Do you notice a hierarchy of laws there.

So as you can see most of the time our legislation is about moral issues. Now given, occasionally we do legislate non-moral issues, like we will celebrate Mother's day on the second Sunday in May. But is this the same?

Is there really a punishment associated with that? I mean let's say one Mother's day I actually forgot to send my mom a card for being the best mother in the entire world, which she is by the way.

Will the ATF-MDEs That's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Mother's Day Enforcers, come charging into my door, throw me to the ground, hog tie and handcuff me, shove me into a police car saying "please mind your head" and then haul me to off to jail for 3 years until I learn to respect and love and make my mother a priority and "Call your mother young man" says the judge as she passes down my sentence?

Absolutely not. Or what if I celebrated it 2 days later. Do I get stuck with a \$15,000 fine for being late? Nonsense. Right.

So when we do legislate non-moral things, we don't punish them, do we? We just declare them and recommend people follow them. But if you think about it - why do we declare Mother's day in the first place? Because we think it's what...it's 'Good' to honor your mother. And it's what? BAD to ignore her.

We don't have a Hitler's day do we? Unless it's to remember all the BAD things he did. So that we never forget it and do it ourselves. Again it's a moral issue there.

So we do legislate moral things all the time and most of the time and over and over again, and we punish people who violate those very same Moral laws.

So in my opinion anybody who says we can't legislate morality is really ignorant.

Unless ----- he means that we **can** legislate morality but we **can't** enforce it. Well we'll deal with the enforcement part in just a bit.

I want to make a comment about schools here in passing. Many years ago when I was a junior high counselor at Los Gatos Christian Church, our junior-highers were invited to a discussion about schools in a cable public access forum in down town Los Gatos. This was a tiny event, you have to understand that probably 5 people were watching the show at the time and it was a tiny studio. It was meant to be something like an Oprah talk show with the Junior Highers participating. Bad idea. What junior higher has the guts to discuss things when adults are around? Anyway it ended up with the two guests doing all the talking. Back then I wasn't as opinionated as I am now.....what are you laughing about. Really I wasn't. I hadn't read as much nor had I had as many discussions with friends. And I wasn't as bold. Anyway, halfway through the discussion, one of the teachers in the discussion said: Well, schools aren't here to teach kids morality!

Well that stuck in my craw and though I didn't have the boldness to speak out, after the half hour show was over and after they turned off the camera. I piped up and I asked the teacher as nicely as I could.

I said, "You said that the schools aren't meant to teach kids morality. So are you saying that you don't think the schools should teach kids not to cheat on their tests? How about stealing their neighbors' watches or books?"

He turned red and to his credit he sheepishly said. "OK I guess that **was** a very foolish statement **wasn't** it."

You bet it was a very foolish statement.

Of course schools have to teach morality. What could be worse that us churning out a school full of intelligent, mastermind criminals, or a bunch of well educated thieves and rapists and murderers. The sad thing is that seems to be exactly what we are doing these days. True, schools aren't supposed to teach ONLY Morality, but they'd better be teaching kids that it's wrong to cheat as well as that 1 plus 1 equals 2.

1. Is Legislating Morality Constitutional?

Anyway enough of that tangent. Let's talk about if Legislating Morality is constitutional.

First of all, how many of us have read our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution lately? I would recommend that we all read these great documents at least once every two years. Read it from end to end. From the Declaration of

Independence all the way to the 27th amendment passed in 1992. We have a sacred trust here folks. I was born and grew up in very many strange countries. And let me tell you the only reason we are where we are today in the US is because of our constitution. I have lived in countries that have greater resources than we have, smarter people that we have. Yet their people are oppressed and starving. And I also want to say, don't be arrogant. Rome fell after 1000 years sacked by the Vandals (yes that's where the word came from). But it fell first from within, due to apathy. This can happen to our great nation as well. This is a sacred trust. Don't be fooled. It can happen to us. And maybe it will one day.

So what was the reason for the declaration of Independence in the first place?
Because the people in the colonies felt that they were what? Unjustly treated by an unjust King. They felt the king was what? Wrong! Immoral! Bad.

What did Jefferson say in the declaration?

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a History of repeated injuries and usurpation, all having in direct objection the establishment of absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

It goes on like that including statements like:

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People. He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with the Circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

And so on and on. What were the founding fathers saying? They were saying that King George was what? That King George was WRONG!!! That he was immoral, that he was unjust.

The entire declaration of Independence, the entire foundation of our country was based on the fact that someone was wrong and someone else was right. In other words they not only decided that there was an absolute morality, they also decided that King George was at the wrong end of it! And then they decided that they were going to found a new country based on those facts.

They didn't say King George was right for him and wrong for us. They said King George is wrong for *everyone*! And they were submitting the facts to whom?

Let the facts be submitted to a candid world.

In other words to everybody. They were saying our buddy Georgie is wrong wrong wrong, even for himself!
So our declaration was based on the concept that there was an absolute morality that applied to the ENTIRE world.
And as a result of that declaration, we created our constitution. Now could they then decide that even though their purpose and incentive for the constitution was based on the idea of morality, that from then on no moral laws would be constitutional?

Let me rephrase that so you all understand clearly. Does it make sense that after coming up with the declaration and constitution because of moral issues that they would then make that very same constitution ban the concept of all morality?

Obviously not. That would not only be self-defeating because it would be inane and incompetent.

Now let's read more of the declaration:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by ... whom?...
their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

First let's notice. Who gives men their rights? Is it given to them by Government? Let me ask you that again. Are your rights given to you by the Government?

Absolutely not.! According to the constitution our rights are given to us by the **Creator**.

Remember this Rights are not given to us by the government. They are given to us by the Creator.
So if you take away the creator, you take away what? those very same rights.

Let me say that again: If you take away the creator, you take away our inalienable rights.

If you disagree with that and you are a US citizens, your render the US declaration of Independence a erroneous illogical document.¹

Yes it is true, my atheist friends whom I love and tease all the time cannot claim any of the rights in the constitution for themselves. I always tell them, it's a good thing we extend it to you...

Well then you may ask. What then is the purpose of Governments? Their purpose is what? Let's read:

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

So what is the purpose of the Government? To give us these rights? Not at all! The government is there to secure these rights that we **already have**.

You see Governments are instituted among Men to secure these rights that we what? Already HAVE. Not rights that we were given by the Government. But rights that we already have. You see the Government's job is not to give rights to people but to protect the rights they already have.

Now let's keep going.

That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the what?

The right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles...

Now why did I bring this up? Because I think it is very important that we realize that our founding fathers wrote into the declaration that whenever a Government started doing the WRONG thing - read IMMORAL thing and violated their inalienable rights. It was then the right of the people to alter the government, which meant of course the law. And if that didn't work it was OK to abolish the government and start a new one.

So our declaration insists that we use moral judgment to run the government and alter it if it ever becomes immoral. They then used this very same declaration as the basis for which to create our constitution.

So in conclusion. To answer the first question: **Is it constitutional to legislate morality?**

It is **very** constitutional to legislate Morality. In fact the declaration itself makes **moral** claims to it's own validity and insists that governments are tested morally. In fact the constitution is based on the concept that morality is in fact legislateable.

Now at this time you are going to ask me? Well whose morality do we legislate? We will get to that later.

The second question may come up. But what about the first amendment?

Congress shall make no Law respecting an Establishment of Religion, or prohibiting the free Exercise thereof; or abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the Press, or of the Right of the People peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for the Redress of Grievances.

Well it's quite plain here. Congress is **not** allowed to establish a religion.

And I whole-heartedly agree. Congress is **not** allowed to establish a religion and should not.

But wait a minute. Am I contradicting myself? How can it be OK to legislate Morality but not to establish a religion? Isn't that the same thing?

And that's exactly the mistake so many people make. But the founding fathers' weren't confused by this. As you read through the constitution you see that they did not think that Morality was a Religion.

Let me say that again: Morality is not a Religion! And the founding fathers did not think so either.

Yes Religions do suggest Morality, but morality is separate from Religion. Wow that's quite a claim. And this is the key here.

¹ Remember too the problem with rights being given to you by the government... If the government is the grantor of your rights, doesn't that mean that the government can then take away those rights? Does that mean that the slaves had no inherent rights? Isn't the truth that the slaves really had rights all the time (given to them by God), but they were being immorally oppressed by the government. If the government had been the grantor of rights then the slaves got rights that weren't really theirs and the whole battle for their rights was a farce. No their rights were given to them by God and the Government back then tried to violate that.

Let me give you some evidence.

- i. Atheists can be and most are Moral people even though their logic of where those morals come from may be faulty.
- ii. Many religions have valid moral laws
- iii. (Specially for Christians we know that) Morality will not save you from separation from God

Morality is usually self-evident. Religion is not.

We'll talk about this much more, later on.

Now I need to clarify a few things here.

- i. First we are not discussing the origin of moral laws.
- ii. Second we are not discussing the finer points of moral issues, for instance it is quite possible that after agreeing on some of the basic moral issues certain individuals may disagree on ways to implement them, or details of all the various situations where they apply
- iii. Third we are not saying that without the knowledge of the Holy we will ever be able to comprehend ALL the moral laws that do exist
- iv. Finally we are not even suggesting that anyone can ever keep all the laws that we even know of.

But the overall issue is **Morality is not Religion**, our forefathers (OK some of your forefathers, my and the rest of our **adopted** forefathers) knew and understood this and had no problems claiming to hold to morality while not embracing any particular religion.

So while the First Amendment clearly forbids the federal Government from establishing a national religion, it does not forbid the government from establishing a national morality.

Legislating Morality, Geisler & Turek. 1998, Bethany House Publishers, page 22

In fact, the First Amendment itself claims a morality doesn't it. Because the First Amendment says in effect what? That it is what - *Wrong* for the Federal Government to establish a national religion. Isn't that a moral value? Of course it is. This concept is repeated over and over in the Amendments. Especially when it comes to the 13th amendment about Slavery.

Now remember we still haven't answered the question of what is morality or whose morality do we legislate. As I said we will deal with that later.

2. Is Legislated Morality Enforceable?

OK so maybe it is constitutional, but **is it enforceable?** Can we enforce laws of Morality?

Now if you recall I said that this is sometimes what people mean when they say that we can't legislate morality. They mean that we **can** legislate it, but it won't do us any good because nobody will follow it.

Here are their 3 main excuses:

- i. People are going to do it anyway
- ii. You can't make people do good if they don't want to
- iii. Laws can't change hearts.

Let's deal with these one by one.

i. People are going to do it anyway

This is the first argument we hear. In fact it's usually applied to things like drugs and prostitution. But what's the immediate answer to this?

Obviously, it's fallacious, because does anyone here think we can ever stop murder completely? Obviously not! But we don't see anyone arguing that we should throw out or not enforce laws against Murder or stealing. We should have laws against things that are clear violations of the Moral Law and we do, in most cases.

What people are usually arguing in these cases is that they don't think that that particular activity is IMMORAL. Like prostitution and smoking marijuana. But that's a different argument. Let them prove to us that it is moral then we will accept the legalization of it.

Another aspect of this is that they will point out other immoral acts that should be illegal but aren't. Like adultery or smoking. Well this is a much more complex issue and we'll deal with it when we get to the section on what sort of morality we should legislate.

ii. You can't make people do good if they don't want to.

This is partially true. However the issue is deeper than that. You see we may not be able to make people do good all the time. But you can influence them to do good by rewarding good actions and punishing bad actions (Skinner's famous experiments). Furthermore, laws implemented today will influence children who grow up under that law.

We see over and over again that laws influence kids. Kids will embrace them more often than not, and while it is true that some of them will rebel, it turns out that more will conform to laws they grew up with than would conform to the principles if they didn't grow up with the same laws. Can anyone think of an example of this? Let me ask you that again. Can you think of a law that was implemented and generations after it was implemented most people started believing it?

I'll give you an example when I answer the next item. Note by the way that this is not an excuse to create restrictive meaningless laws. I believe laws have to be based on a moral value.

iii. Laws can't change hearts.

Let me answer this by giving you some facts about the alcohol prohibition in early 20th century.

In 1919, Congress passed the 18th amendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcohol. From 1920 to 1933 people claim it was a big failure and it didn't stop anyone from drinking, it just made them all outlaws. But the truth is quite the opposite. Here are the facts:

- i. In the 1830's the average alcohol consumption per person was 7.1 gallons per year. The problems were so bad that various states decided to go dry. By 1910 consumption was down to 2.6 gallons per person.
- ii. While prohibition was active, alcohol consumption did in fact go down, and by the time it was removed, alcohol consumption was only at 1 gallon a year. Down from 2.6. This was counting all the "illegal" alcohol consumption.
- iii. Even after prohibition, it wasn't until 40 years later in 1975 that consumption went up to 2.6 gallons per person again. Those 13 years of prohibition had an impact for 3 times as many years.
- iv. During prohibition Admission to mental health institutions for alcohol psychosis dropped 60%. Arrests for drunk and disorderly conduct went down 50%. There were less alcoholics on the street corners. There was less family violence due to alcohol.
- v. And what's amazing. Even crime dropped. Despite all the stories we here about the Mob and everything, homicide actually increased at a higher rate *before* Prohibition than during it.

What this shows us is that laws do change behavior and they can change hearts.

While discussing the previous point, I asked you to think of an example when kids who had grown up under a law had embraced it as their morality. Can anyone think of such an example? What law that was newly enacted changed the psyche of the nation?

Exactly, the anti slavery and anti discrimination laws. During the time of slavery, most of the American people had no qualms about being slave owners and racists. By the early 1950's most of the American people had huge qualms about being slave owners but less qualms about being racists. Today most all of us have qualms about both.

What happened to our national conscience? Why did this happen. Why is it that I as an Indian (previously known as colored) can not only exist peacefully here but I can even find and marry a very very gorgeous lovely intelligent redheaded lady of European origin?

Are we better people today than we were then, is that why I don't have to worry that I'm a brown man in a predominately white country? Absolutely not! In fact in many cases we seem to be worse people. We can see that with the crime and violence around us. But we all seem to agree that slavery and racism is bad. Why? Because the laws that we grew up with have imprinted themselves on our hearts, on our conscience and on our very identity of whom we are as human individuals.

Laws can and do change hearts, especially if you grow up with them.

Further more as Martin Luther King Jr. said: "It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me. But it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important."

Notice that laws can work both ways too. Prior to 1973 a vast majority of Americans felt that Abortion was immoral. But in 1973, seven Supreme Court Judges decided to change the law and within one generation we are where we are today with 50 to 52% of Americans thinking Abortion is OK. Laws can and do change hearts all the time.

Now remember if anyone argues that laws can't 100% change hearts, we agree whole-heartedly. But if we can get 60% of the population to change their hearts I think that's a great success.

Now we were if you recall discussing whether Moral Legislation is Enforceable. And the answer from the Civil Rights movement is yes. It is enforceable to a large extent. Never to 100%, but certainly to a very effective extent. Sure we can't stop all discrimination, but the fact that it is illegal to discriminate has made my life easier that it would have been. I'm not complaining. Laws do change things and it does change hearts and minds. Anyone who argues against that has never studied the facts.

3. Let's look at if it is ethical to legislate Morality.

Well right off the bat we have a problem. Because we already said that first of all we almost ONLY legislate Morality. So we'd have a problem if it were unethical to legislate it. In that case we wouldn't be able to legislate anything and we'd have no laws and all our laws would be unethically legislated (huh?). What kind of a civilization would that be? One without laws? *So obviously the first problem with that question is that the alternative is unlivable.*

The second problem with the question is that let's say some one made the statement that it is unethical to legislate morality. What would they be saying? What is another word for unethical? How about immoral? So what they are really saying then is that: It is immoral to legislate morality. Or it's wrong to tell someone that they cannot do wrong.

Well that puts us in a fine to-do doesn't it? Why? Because what they are saying is that ... and I'll go slow on this because I confuse myself sometimes when I say this: They are saying that it's wrong to tell someone that something is wrong.

Whoa...we'll if it's wrong to tell someone that something is wrong, why are **YOU** telling me that it is wrong? It's a self-refuting suicide statement.

This therefore answers one of the questions we raised at the beginning of this series:

The question was: It is wrong to force your morality on others!

The answer is simply to ask this: If it's wrong to force your morality on others why are you trying to force this particular morality on me?

The third problem is that any legislation in any way on any moral issue is a moral judgment in itself. In other words legalizing something or making something illegal is still a moral judgment. For instance, Libertarians say that they don't want to impose any restrictions on people. Many of them would legalize Prostitution and Drugs and keep abortion legal and so on and so forth. But let's think about this. We already know that the side effect of Prostitution is that home and families are broken up. We know the consequences of legalizing drugs will be a huge price in the lives of addicts. You see when the Libertarian says we don't want to impose our morals on Prostitution on anyone, they are in fact doing just the opposite of what they claim they don't want to do:

They are imposing their own morals on Prostitution on our families and us. And they are imposing the effects of Prostitution on our families and us. This could range from broken families, increased crime, increased drug addiction (because most prostitutes are addicted to drugs), increased sexually transmitted diseases and the lot.

Furthermore I am always happy to apply their own moral standards to them. For instance they always say as long as people aren't hurting anyone but themselves we should let them do those activities. OK so if I can show them that it hurts at least 5 people will they agree with me to ban those activities? You see it's not that we disagree that if something doesn't hurt someone we should not ban it. We disagree on whether it hurts anyone or not!

So in conclusion, the question of "**Is it ethical to legislate Morality?**" is answered quite simply: It is impossible not to legislate Morality. And in fact the question is rather meaningless. The real question is only whose morality and what morality will you legislate?

Whose Morality do we legislate?

If there is no absolute Morality, why was Hitler Wrong?

If there is an absolute Morality, why do YOU get to decide what it is and NOT Hitler?

This is a key question and it would seem difficult to answer. However I believe that answer is straight forward as I hope to prove to you. There are a few options that we have:

Note we've already answered the question of if we should legislate at all. And the answer was yes. So now we have the following options

- a. We should legislate from the Bible
- b. We should legislate from the Koran or some other Religion and its book.
- c. We should legislate the opposite of any religion i.e. from Secular Humanism.

Option a. We should legislate from the Bible.

I may shock some of you today. But I'm going to say that **I don't think** we should be legislating from the Bible. Let me explain myself: The United States has **never** been a government based on Biblical Law. It has always been a Government based on Moral Law. Remember we said that Morals are separate from Religion. Remember though Religion is not separate from Morals, but Morals are separate from Religion. In other words people who are atheists can be moral. They may be illogical in how they come to their morals but they can know morals. How can I say this? Quite easily. Now this is not an argument you want to use with non-Christians, but fortunately for one the non religious won't care that I said that Morals are separate from Religion. They will in fact agree with me. (Convincing the Religious non Christians like the Muslims may be a bit more difficult). But how can I say this? How can I say that you can know morality without being religious? I'll give you the Christian answer.

Well, what does Paul tell us in the Bible? He says that every person has within them the knowledge of good and evil.

Romans 2: ¹⁴*Even when Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, instinctively follow what the law says, they show that in their hearts they know right from wrong.* ¹⁵*They demonstrate that God's law is written within them, for their own consciences either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right.*

So all mankind has in them a sense of Good and Evil

Secondly, the Biblical law of Moses was only given to the Nation of Israel.

Psalms 147: ¹⁹*He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel.* ²⁰*He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws.*

So the Biblical law was not given to any other nation and it was only to be imposed in Israel when it was under a Theocracy. But the US is not a theocracy and I don't think we really want it to be one. We've seen the types of things that can happen under a pseudo theocracy like during the Spanish Inquisition and worse.

Thirdly while many of the founders of our great Country were Christians, some like Jefferson were merely deists. Jefferson actually physically cut out all the miracles from his bible and his ended with Jesus just being buried. A very tragic tale if you ask me.

Fourthly many of the people who came to America to begin with, came fleeing religious persecution. They would no more want to be ruled by an Episcopalian Theocracy than you would. Also remember even when Christians legislate through religion you get the twisted excesses of the Spanish Inquisition.

Fifthly while many nations were condemned for the laws they violated that were written on their hearts, they were never condemned for things like not keeping the Sabbath or for not sacrificing at the temple. So they were not held to the Biblical Law.

Sixthly when judgment day comes, each person will be judged according to what? To whether he has rebelled against God the Son and that will determine his everlasting state *not* if he kept every word of the law. We are no longer under the law when it comes to salvation. (We are still under it when it comes to the physical consequences on ourselves, our families, our loved ones, our culture and our world).

So should we legislate the Bible. I think not.

I don't think we have Constitutional case for it, nor do I think we have a Biblical case for it. But having said that this does not mean:

- i. That Christians should not be politically active. They should be very politically active. Why? Because we believe that of all people, Christians are more in tune with the Moral Law and the Bible calls us to be Salt and Light to the world. But it calls us to be able to defend our moral laws with logic and reasoning and in winsome ways. The Bible does not command us to set up a Christian America, but a *Moral America*.
- ii. It does not mean that Christians as individuals cannot gain guidance from the Bible in their roles within the government or their roles when it comes to voting for moral issues. We believe in an absolute morality and we believe that God determines it, so it is natural that we should turn to him to find it. Remember Morality is not Religion. However we cannot impose that requirement on non Christians, but we are free to try and convince the majority that our logical reasons are valid.

Option b. We should legislate from the Koran or some other Religion and its book.

Well this is quickly answered. Obviously for some of the same reasons as why we shouldn't legislate from the Bible, we shouldn't legislate from the Koran or any other Holy book. Besides we've seen the effects of legislating from the Koran. It's known as the Taliban. We also notice that there are no Democracies who legislate from the Koran. Or should I say there are no real Muslim Democracies today. Maybe Iraq will be the first one if we can stay the course and see it through. Maybe it wont.

Option c. We should legislate the opposite of any religion i.e. from Secular Humanism.

The problem with secular humanism is that it is based on some very faulty premises.

- i. It assumes that mankind is basically good.*
- ii. It assumes that you can avoid absolutes*
- iii. It assumes that mankind gives mankind their value and their rights.*

i. It assumes that mankind is basically good.

This is always the easiest thing to disprove.

First of all if mankind is essentially good, why is the world getting worse? Why did we kill more people in the last century that we've killed in all the centuries combined till now.

Secondly if mankind is essentially good, why is it that we spend our time having to teach our kids to what? To share, to obey, to be kind, to be respectful. How many parents say to their little 2 year old: Now Sally you need to learn to be a bit more selfish. What does a 2 year old say when she has something and another 2 year old wants to share it? MINE! We have to teach them to share. To be polite. To say thank you. To not cheat. To not lie. To obey. Why do we have to teach 2 years olds to be good, if they are already inherently good? You tell me.

And since we know mankind is not essentially good, we see the effects of this in any system that makes that faulty assumption. For instance take communism. The basic idea of communism was great. Every one works as hard as he can, and takes only what he needs. What a great idea. But communism failed, why? Because they found out that human nature worked the opposite. Everybody worked only as much as they needed and took as much as they could and the system went bankrupt. People were starving. Corruption was everywhere. It has failed in Germany, China and Russia and everywhere else.

ii. It assumes that you can avoid absolutes.

Secular Humanism has traditionally assumed that you can avoid absolutes. In fact one of the signers of the Humanist Manifesto II: Joseph Fletcher, also author of the book Situational Ethics: The new Morality claims that there are no absolutes. Yet the Humanist Manifesto II that he signed insists that there should be total sexual freedom for consenting adults, legal abortion and euthanasia. But aren't those absolutes? The problem is that you can't avoid absolutes. Because the very statement that you should avoid absolutes is what? It is an absolute statement in itself. This illogic permeates their philosophy such that everything falls apart.

iii. It assumes that mankind gives mankind their value and their rights.

I was in a hilarious email debate with a friend of mine even as I was preparing for this talk. My friend claims that while he agrees that fetuses are human, he believes that they have less value than babies. He believes that this is logical and morally acceptable.

So let me ask you this: What is the problem if mankind gets to determine the value of other men? Slavery? Racism?

The funny thing is that my friend is African American. So I asked him, if he thought it was morally acceptable for the KKK to determine his value? He doesn't seem to get it. Any time a human determines the value of another human and we accept that as moral, we have just gone back to Hitler's Eugenics. Hitler decided that the mentally retarded had less value than the fit people. Then he decided that the Aryan race had more value than the Jews.

Mankind's inherent value has to come from something that is not Mankind. It has to come from the Creator of Mankind. If it doesn't all we get is "Might is Right". This philosophy exists in many places, but how can we even claim that this is Morally OK.

This is identical for our rights as we talked about earlier. Humanism assumes that mankind's rights come from other men or from the Government. But what are the consequences if the Government is the grantor of rights?

Obviously, you'd be stuck saying that it is then morally OK for the government to take away those very same rights that it granted you. Then you'd be forced to say that it was morally OK for the slaves to have no rights back in the 1800's. Because why? Because it was the government who took those rights away. I can't say that it was Morally OK in 1800 but not now?. I know it was wrong then and it is wrong now, and it will always be wrong.

Rights have to come from the Creator or they are fleeting and at the whim of those in power.

So we agree that we cannot use Secular Humanism from which to legislate Morality.

So from where do we legislate the Morality that we need to legislate?

If it's not from Christianity;

If it's not from Islam or any other religion;
If it's not from the lack of any religion i.e. secular humanism;
Where is it from?

Here's the answer: We should legislate the Moral law that is written on our hearts. We already talked about how everyone has the moral law written in their hearts. We must legislate from that.

But how do we know what these moral laws are? How do we know what these truths are?

Well, the Declaration of Independence answers that quite well, it says what: We hold these truths to be what? *Self-evident*. Exactly! We should legislate the moral law from self-evident truths, just like the Declaration of Independence does.

You see we as Christians believe there is an absolute morality and that it is written in on ALL our hearts, even the non-Christians, even the atheists. But you may say, why do so many people disagree on what that morality is then. Well we answered that at the beginning of this series. Do you remember them? They were:

1. They want to be loving and understanding.
2. They really want to do those things that God seems to say is wrong.
3. They've seen situations where one moral law seems to conflict with another moral law.
4. They think that different Cultures have different moral values.

We answered all of these and explained why they were invalid (you may want to go back to your notes for a review). The point I am trying to make is that if people would look unemotionally and logically at the consequences of their opinions they would change their stance and be able to determine a moral law that is very universal.

Now we come to the big issue. OK given all that how do we determine the Moral Law in a secular society. Or how does a non Christian determine moral law? Or to get down to the main issue.

How Do We Come Up With Moral Laws In America?

Taken from Legislating Morality pages 121-125

1. The first and basic principle is quite simple. The moral law should be decided based on the Golden Rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.²

But we have to go a step further. Moral laws should be based on our reactions to others doing the exact same thing to us. In other words. Is it OK to cut in line? Well how would we feel if someone cut in line in front of us. That's the determination. Not whether we want to cut in line. But how we would feel if we were in their shoes and we cut in line. Same with abortion. We don't determine abortion based on if we want to have an abortion. We determine abortion based on if they want to abort *us*. How would I vote on abortion if they were aborting *ME*!

2. Increased incidence of disease and death or pain (emotional or physical) is a good indication that moral principles are being violated.³

If an action causes death and disease it's probably an immoral activity.

3. Lawmakers must legislate according to the natural hierarchy of absolutes.

What does this mean? It means that we should always be aware of the hierarchy of laws. Remember the example of the traffic light?

The Moral Hierarchy

- a) Don't run a red light. But this is overridden by:
- b) Do what it takes to save a person who is dying. But this is overridden by:
- c) Don't kill anyone. But this is overridden by:
- d) It's OK to kill someone in self-defense or the defense of others by hitting them with a car.

I think most all of us would agree that saving the **life** of an innocent person is the highest law, saving the **rights** of an innocent person would be lower and so on.

4. Governments must take great care to balance person rights with personal responsibilities.

Remember that God gives us rights. So when someone comes and says I have a right to free food, we must sit and ask, is that an obvious natural right? And the answer is no. That's a right that the Government can create. In which case it probably isn't a real right.

² This criteria can also apply to other cultures, like the example of a culture where a man can have multiple wives. We must understand if the man would be happy if the roles were reversed and he was one of the 4 husbands to one wife?

³ For example certain cultures hold festivals where sex is not reserved to a man and his wife. Does this result in emotional pain or disease? If it does then it is immoral regardless of if it is acceptable in that culture.

Here's an interesting quote. Humanist say that they have a right to abortions, a right to health care, a right to welfare, a right to paid leave, a right to arts funding, a right to same sex marriage, a right to a certain wage, and at the end, a right to die... and then they claim that they don't believe in absolutes...who are they kidding?

5. Moral laws cannot be written solely with the extreme exceptions in mind.

In other words, we can't write laws to legalize all abortions just because we can think of some exceptionally rare cases where an abortion could possibly be justified. This is like arguing that we should not have speed limit laws because somewhere someone who is allergic to bees may get stung by a bee while driving and need to drive at 110 miles an hour to an emergency room.

6. Ambiguity over "where you draw the line" is not an argument for not drawing any line at all.

For instance just because multiple states disagreed with whether the drinking age should be 18 or 19 or 21 did not mean that there should not be a drinking age law. We should draw the line somewhere while we continue to search for the optimum. Some times I believe the age for drinking should be under the age of 16. No one above 16 should be allowed to drink. That way you'd never be able to drink and drive. OK I'm just kidding.

7. Lawmakers who believe and live by the Moral law themselves will be better legislators of that moral law than those who do not live by the law.

In other words Bill Clinton was a lousy President, why? Because he did not live under the moral law, but he expected the rest of us to do so. He violated it and thought that he was above it. Crooked politicians should be ousted, why, because if they don't believe they need to live under the moral code, how can we expect them to come up with valid moral codes. Remember the best way to determine a moral code is in our reactions to it. If crooked people never stop to consider what they would do if the tables were turned, how can you expect them to come up with true moral laws?

Remember the fools who said that "Character doesn't matter; it's the economy stupid?" They claimed that a politician's private morals should not be used to determine how they would come up with the nations moral laws? But then why were they all rightly up in arms when a racist like David Duke a former KKK member tried to run for office?

This is a critical point. Since our understanding of the moral law for a situation is based on how we "react" to a particular situation, if we elect a crook, he will react to all the situations incorrectly and thus we will end up with what - bad moral laws.

Ravi Zacharias says: "One can no more reconcile immorality in private with a call to public integrity than one can reconcile being a racist in private with being unprejudiced in public."

8. Laws with a long history in this country and across cultures should not be discarded lightly.

One should never remove a fence until one has thought long and hard and studied why the fence was put there in the first place. Most of our laws came about for a particular reason. And while some need to be abandoned, we should understand what all the reasons were for their existence before abandoning them. Sometimes they needed to be abandoned because they were immoral laws in the first place, like the laws that discriminated racially.

9. Laws that promote traditional morality and religion can only be good for the country.

As long as we don't legislate Religion, laws that promote it yet separate it and protect it can only be good for us.

10. I'll add a 10th to them. Christians have to be ready to logically and rationally defend moral laws and defeat immoral laws. I think this is self-explanatory.

I'm sure we can come up with more points but this is a good start.

In closing I want to give you the responses to the 11 comments you will hear in the world.

1. There is no absolute truth.
2. That maybe true for you but it's not true for me.
3. I think all religions are true.
4. So many people disagree about Morality that there can't be an absolute Morality (or there is no absolute Morality).
5. Who are you to say other people's cultural values are wrong?
6. You have the right to choose your own values.
7. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.
8. Christians are intolerant.
9. Who are you to judge others? The Bible says: Judge Not.
10. It is wrong to force your morality on others!
11. You can't legislate Morality!

1. There is no absolute truth.

Your response: Is that true?

You can elaborate. "You tell me that there is no absolute truth, but that statement commits suicide because you are making a statement of absolute truth when you say that. So there is at least one absolute truth that you know of. And if there is one then surely there may be others."

2. That maybe true for you but it's not true for me.

This is a tougher statement because there are situations when this may be applied.. E.g. A married man can say to a single man: It may be true that it is wrong for you to have sex but it isn't wrong for me. But you need to go to the root of the principle and see if it applies. In the above example the moral principle is that Sex outside of marriage is bad for the individual and society and fails many of our 10 guidelines. This fact is true regardless of if you are married or not. It is a truth.

3. I think all religions are true.

This is easily disproved to us, but to others it may take some doing. The best way I've seen to present it is to use a religion other than Christianity so you don't raise any ire. Try saying: Well in some religions like the Thagee religion in India, it is considered a duty for the Thagees to kill someone for God Shiva. Do you think that that is a true and moral religion? Thus obviously not ALL religions are true. There are some that are not only false, but also evil.

4. So many people disagree about Morality that there can't be an absolute Morality (or there is no absolute Morality).

See the section specifically on this before hand.

5. Who are you to say other people's cultural values are wrong?

To respond to this ask this simple question: In Germany in 1942 it was culturally alright to kill Jews. Are you saying that this was not wrong because it was their cultural value? Obviously cultural values CAN be wrong. The issue is how do we determine if they are wrong or not. For that we go back to our 10 guidelines.

6. You have the right to choose your own values.

Ofcourse we have the right to choose our own values. But is it not possible that people can make immoral or invalid choices? Cannot people have bad values and make bad decisions? A thief decides that he deserves to own your stuff. Are you saying that this is a valid and good moral value? The Nazis chose their own values. Are you saying that they made a valid choice?

7. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.

Ask: Just like the sincere Nazis?

8. Christians are intolerant.

As Inigo Montoya said: "You keep "usink" that word, I do not think it means what you think it means."

You say Tolerance, but I think you mean agreement or compliance or approval. The word Tolerance has been bandied about and misused.

What is the meaning of the word tolerance?

If you tolerating someone it means that you dislike this person but you allow him to be in your presence and don't hit him over the head.

For example you don't tolerate something you agree with, you don't tolerate people you like or points of view you agree with. You can ONLY tolerate something you hate, you can only tolerate people you don't like (or you can be intolerant of them and kill them). You don't tolerate cookie dough ice-cream, you enjoy it. You tolerate peppermint pepperoni ice-cream because your two year old decided to make some. Not because you like it, but precisely because you dislike it (but like your daughter).

Tolerance does not mean approval.

9. Who are you to judge others? The Bible says: Judge Not.

For this you'll have to refer to my forthcoming paper on this. But the quick answer is: Why are you saying that I am wrong to judge others, aren't you judging me when you say that?

10. It is wrong to force your morality on others!

If you say it is wrong to force your morality on others, then you just made a moral statement, so why are *you* forcing that morality on me? You see we all force our morality (bad or good) on others in some way. The thief forces his bad morality on me when he steals my belongings. Society forces its morals on those living in that society. It is impossible to avoid.

11. You can't legislate Morality!

We only legislate Morality, we legislate and enforce with penalties little else. Show me a law that has a penalty that is not based on a moral principle. (For a fuller answer refer to the section in this paper that covers this in great detail.)

12. But you said: : *If there is no absolute morality, why was Hitler wrong? If there is an absolute morality, why do YOU get to decide what it is and not Hitler? What's the right answer then?*

Well the answer is this:

There IS an absolute morality and neither you nor Hitler gets to decide it. God decided it.

But the problem then becomes: How do I know what God wants. Some religions say that God wants us to kill infidels, others say God wants us to love everyone. How do we know what God really wanted?

Well you have to prove that your religion is from God and you can't trust your feelings. If you are a Christian you must be able to prove that the Bible is God's word and it is historically accurate and that Jesus was really God and lived, died and rose from the dead. And you must use physical and historical proofs. Otherwise you are stuck again. But after you do this, you still have a problem because most people won't have done the research and even if they do they may not agree with you. So in that case you use the 10 points given earlier under **How Do We Come Up With Moral Laws In America?**

References: Legislating Morality, Geisler & Turek. 1998, Bethany House Publishers.

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