

50 Bible Verses Everybody Should Know By Heart

Building Blocks of a Biblical Worldview – Part 5

Almost (if not) every day, when you read the paper, surf the 'net, turn on the radio, or sit in front of your television and observe some action taken and the reason(s) given to justify that action, often times, you have to ask yourself, "Was that the right thing for him/her to do?" Or, "That was wrong! Bad! Evil!" Fact is, morality is hard-wired into us (cf *Romans 2:14-15*). We simply cannot escape making moral judgments on behaviors. But is there an Absolute Standard by which any given actions can be measured? The Bible says there is, and that this Absolute Standard is a good thing! Since ETHICS is an inescapable concept, we need to make sure our worldview (that set of beliefs everyone has about **God, Mankind, Truth, Authority, Values, Ethics, and Hope**) includes the right standard of ethics that promotes the right kind of morality.

What is the relationship of "morals" and "ethics"?

**** MORALS has to do with MEASURING an action against a STANDARD. ETHICS has to do with what standard that action is measured against. ****

Let's consider how this definition works out with some current Moral-Ethical issues . . . people tend to use emotive standards ("I feel this is right") or sociological standards ("a majority of people think this is right") or pragmatic standards ("This will do the most good for the most people") to deal with issues such as abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriages, media censorship, animal rights, environmental issues, rights for pedophiles, rights for people in the porn business, property rights, etc . . .

What we REJECT: AUTONOMOUS (literally, "self-law") morality based on wrong STANDARDS.

See discussion of Genesis 3:5 ("The Basic Dynamic Of Non-Christian Ethics,"NEXT PAGE) and Isaiah 5:20 -- when people call "darkness" "light", they are determining which is which and are therefore assuming a responsibility that belongs to God alone.

What we EMBRACE: GOD'S LAW – for 3 reasons.

The 6th WORLDVIEW BUILDING BLOCK comes from two Verses: DEUTERONOMY 10:12-13, "...what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to Him, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's Commands and Decrees that I am giving you Today for your own good?"

- Embracing God's law demonstrates our RESPECT for the Lord God. It's HIS Law.
- It's a way we demonstrate our LOVE for the Lord God (1 John 5:3). Each act of obedience is an act of love.
- It's for our own GOOD, and for our PROTECTION. As with physical "laws" (gravity), so with God's Moral Law. You break it, and it will break you!

CLOSING THOUGHTS ABOUT GOD'S LAW AS A LIGHT, A LEASH, AND A LESSON LEADING TO LIFE . . . without LIGHT, it's dark. A kite is free to fly as long as it is tethered to a string; a fish is free as long as he's in the water. God's law is our "tether" and our "water". The Law is also a schoolmaster that teaches us what God requires, how we fail to do what He requires, and how Jesus did what He requires and offers in

the Gospel the opportunity both to receive Christ's righteousness and have the penalty for our sins paid in full by the death of Jesus.

The Basic Dynamic Of Non-Christian Ethics (A Brief Study Of Genesis 3:5)

In Genesis 2:16, God gave Adam a gracious invitation: "***You are free to eat from any tree in the garden.***" Then, He adds this straightforward, clear command and warning: "***But you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die.***" God clearly communicated the command, set the standard, and sounded the siren warning to Adam about the penalty for disobeying.

In the next chapter, Genesis 3, the "father of lies" combines an outright lie - "***You will not surely die...***" with a half-truth, "***... for God knows that when you eat of it (the tree God commanded not to eat of), your eyes will be opened and you will be like God. . .***" (Genesis 3:4-5a). The devil's strategy of combining lies and half-truths continues from Genesis 3 until now.

The question is, HOW will the man and the woman (they were together in the garden, cf. 3:6) be like God? Not in their essence - that's for sure. No part of God's creation can or ever will slide up some "scale of being" and graduate into godhood (that's impossible according to Genesis 1:1); but people can exercise one prerogative God does. Verse 3:5b reveals how mankind may be tempted to do what only God should do: "***... KNOWING good and evil.***"

Here's another question: HOW does God KNOW good and evil? Was He taught it? Did He discover it in a book? Did He consult a public opinion poll? No, He did not. In **verse 5**, to "***... know...***" something is to DETERMINE it. In other words, God Himself DETERMINES what is good and evil. That's the way the Bible applies the idea of "***knowing***" to God (cf. **Genesis 18:19; Exodus 3:19; Jeremiah 1:5**). In all the aforementioned cases, to "***know***" means to "***determine.***"

Another use of "***knowing***" ties into the idea of determining good and evil. In **1 Kings 3:9**, to "***know***" means to be like a judge DECIDING FOR ONESELF what is good and evil. The fundamental idea is that when a person decides or determines good and evil for himself or herself, he or she is assuming a prerogative that belongs to God and to God alone.

The basic dynamic of non-Christian ethical decision making hasn't changed since that dark day in Eden. We are tempted every day to be like God, determining good and evil for ourselves rather than following God's Revelation, His absolute standards for what is good and what is evil and then living according to God's Law-Word. Fallen, sinful people establish their own laws, norms, and standards, thereby demonstrating that they are not bound to a reference point beyond themselves.

The original sin of mankind, then, was to disobey the clear command of God and to determine good and evil for themselves. Even today, rather than following God's Law, Adam and Eve's descendants desire to be autonomous (a law unto themselves, setting their own standards) rather than living under the authority of God's Law.

Because of this act of self-determination of good and evil, although we are still the image of God, our whole nature is ethically twisted and turned away from God and we are ethically separated from God because of the ongoing sin of ethical self-determination (cf. Isaiah 59:2). Therefore, we tend (consistent with our fallen nature) to call "evil" "good," and "good" "evil" (Isaiah 5:20). Moreover, the words "right," "wrong," "good," "bad," "moral," and "immoral" have become empty containers fallen people fill with whatever meaning they want to. Having rejected God's absolute standards, fallen people embrace their own standards and live a life of ethical relativism in opposition to God.