

Has America Lost Her / His / Its Morality, OR . . . ?

Part 1 – The FOUNDATIONS of the “New Morality”



Quick Assignment (!): How many implied values and/or moral judgments can you find in this cartoon? Moral outrage is implied throughout. “Senseless” is a meaningless moral term because every act makes perfect sense to the one who does what he/she does. “Divisive” is given a morally negative connotation, but who’s to say it’s wrong to be divisive? Cartoons are seen as a problem. There’s an implied value

judgement/moral judgment on Americans not “waking up” to an ethical problem (cartoons). The solution to the problem is “control”. But control by whom?

There’s absolutely no doubt about it. If you’re a Christian, your world has been rocked by some of the news of the past twelve months ago. News about mandatory health care, about abortion, about same sex-marriage, about transgendering, and other issues. All the arguments in favor of accepting and legalizing the aforementioned issues tend most always to be framed in moralistic language. How should a Christian think Biblically about these issues? And how should we respond? AND . . . what can we expect in both the near and distant future?

In these times in which we are living, what should we say about times like these? Are the times a-changing, or . . . was the late Paul Harvey (1918-2009) right?

“In TIMES like these, it’s helpful to remember that there have ALWAYS been TIMES like these.”
– Paul Harvey

What we’re seeing has always been around. **Consider 2 passages and how they apply to today’s issues of morality and values.**

- **Exodus 20:1-4 – The Law is given in the context of gracious deliverance. So it’s grace first, then Law. The order is important! Literally, the phrase “before me” is not just ahead of God, but “before my face”, or there are to be no other Gods but Yahweh. Yahweh is exclusive, and all other “gods” are not contenders but pretenders.**

The issue for ALL image-bearers of God has ALWAYS been the Issue of LORDSHIP.

“Lord” = Biblical shorthand for:

CONTROL – Yahweh is sovereign, saves by grace before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), and is totally in charge.

AUTHORITY – Yahweh alone ultimately guides what we are to think, say, and do.

PRESENCE – Yahweh is always “on site” and actively present in every life. He’s watching over us, which is both good AND convicting!

- **Joshua 1:6-9; 24:14-15 -- the exhortation is to put away other “gods” and serve Yahweh.**

The Ultimate REFERENCE POINT / LAW GIVER in ANY system of morality is the “god” of that system. When someone says, “You SHOULD / NOT!” the best immediate answer is “Sez WHO?” The answer to that question is the “god” of that command / moral imperative!

To understand our culture and the moral issues in our culture, we need to consider what an “ism” is, and how it affects our lives. Understanding these “isms” is foundational to dealing with any issue of morality and/or values.

What IS an “ISM”?

It is a SUFFIX, but what does the suffix indicative of? When “ISM” is attached to something, it’s indicative of a lens through which something is viewed. The “ISM” colors the lens of whatever is being looked at; and the “ISM” is usually indicative of the ideology controlling any moral or value judgments made.

What are some “ISMS” competing against each other for Lordship of our values and standards of morality?

Ageism – It’s seeing life through the lens of whatever age group you’re part of. “Old is good / Old is bad” is an indication of “chronological snobbery”. And idea is neither good nor bad because of it’s age! The “god” of that system is the age group one chooses.

Capitalism – It’s seeing life through the lens of private ownership and profit. Whatever threatens either is seen as something “bad”. The “god” of that system is Money.

Communism – It’s seeing life through the lens of government control of the means of production and distribution of goods. Whatever threatens government control is “bad”. The “god” of that system is the government.

Socialism – It’s seeing life through the lens of redistribution of wealth so as to “level the playing field” and make everything and everybody equal, while actually penalizing achievement. The “god” of that system is equality, as defined by the government, so the government becomes the “god” of this system, too.

Globalism – Either that one nation-state would control the world, or that the world should be one nation. Either way, the “god” of that system is nation-state.

Scientism – Science doesn’t just describe; it PRESCRIBES what should be and what should be believed, and the “god” of this system is the scientist.

Racism – Every problem is seen through the lens of race; so to disagree with what one race believes is to be wrong. Justice is often seen as a revenge-oriented reparations for past “injustices”. The “god” of the system is whatever race is crying foul and demanding justice.

Hedonism – Pleasure, what feels good, is the greatest good and highest value of life. If it feels good, do it! In this system, pleasure is the “god” that must be served. When I am primary, I am the “god” of that ism.

Individualism (or me-ism / egoism) – What any given individual thinks / wants / needs is seen as primary. It’s the belief that it’s all about ME. I am, therefore, the “god” of that system.

Materialism – Two types. 1st, things are more important than anything else. 2nd, reality is only what can be perceived through the five senses. The “god” of this system is concrete, sensible things.

Sexism – Everything is seen through the lens of gender. Disagreement with what one gender believed is seen as “sexist” and oppression of one sex over another. The “god” of that system is gender.

Vegetarianism – Everyone is seen through the lens of if they eat something “with a face” or eat veggies. To not eat veggies only is considered wrong. In this system, the “god” is one’s diet.

Moralism – Making judgments based on a standard of right or wrong. The “god” is the one with the standard.

Legalism – Doing what is “right” (as determined by whoever) to gain favor or acceptance from the “god” one is trying to gain the favor of.

** In light of these discoveries about “isms”, is America less Moralistic than he/she/it used to be, or is something else going on? Tune in next lesson . . .