

The Standard of Morality

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Each of us make decisions everyday with moral and ethical consequences. A young person faces decisions concerning cheating on a school examine, lying to a friend, or whether or not to engage in sex. As we mature, similar decisions must be made such as cheating our employer, lying to an associate, or cheating on a spouse. All decisions have consequences. A poor decision concerning cheating may cause us to loose a job, and an improper decision regarding sex may cause irreparable harm to those we love. Thus, our moral and ethical decisions are most important and should be considered carefully.

With this in mind and when considering morality and ethics, there are two basic standards. First, some believe ethics and morality are founded within a person's own heart or conscience. This is clearly being advanced by much of society today. The scenario is presented of a young lady who is faced with the decision to have sex with her boyfriend. The person who advises her says she will just know when it is the right time. Such decisions are based upon subjectivism and human emotions. Second, others believe there is a standard of ethics and morality, and that standard is the Bible. This is objectivism, and the Bible is the objective standard. In the scenario above, the young lady's decision is based upon the standard. She must ask herself, "What does the standard, the Bible, say about sexual behavior outside of marriage?" Then, she must adjust her life accordingly.

Amazingly, the Bible says much about both of these basic standards. Concerning the first, the Bible says,

— "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

— "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

— "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered" (Proverbs 28:26).

These verses should be sufficient to expose the foolishness of subjectivism. Concerning the objective standard of morality, the Bible says,

— "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm

119:11).

— “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3).

— “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

Not only are there consequences of our decisions and actions in this life, there are consequences in the life to come. After this life is completed, every person will ultimately stand before God in judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Paul wrote, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). If the standard of judgment is subjective, then there is really no standard at all because what may be right to one person could be wrong to another or visa versa. Also, unless there is ultimate human accountability, there is no basis for ethics and morality, and for there to be fair human accountability, there must be an objective standard.

Thus instead of looking to yourself for moral and ethical decisions, turn to God’s word for the answers. If you apply the principles set forth, the consequences of your decisions will be favorable for you now and in the life to come.