

## So You Think There's No Right or Wrong, Eh?

“There is no right or wrong!”

I've often heard these words in discussions with non-believing friends and read them in other written opinions. Many who hold this outlook are just wanting to be seen as open-minded and sensible. They don't want to be seen as arrogant and intolerant.

Indeed, the cultural shift paints those that believe in right and wrong, also known as the concept of absolute truth, as arrogant, mean spirited, and worthy of scorn. In some ways, those labels have been earned by those who hold themselves up as standards. It is an effort that will always end in failure and deserved ridicule, for no human can be a standard for truth. But, believing there is right and wrong does not mean that those who hold such a belief are themselves the standard.

Believers tend to shy away from defending truth. Some are simply unprepared to mount such a defense. Some simply shy away from confrontation. Some don't want to deal with the harsh tactics of those that promote relativism, and that is entirely understandable, though such a retreat tends to help accomplish their goal of intimidation and shutting down voices that disagree with them.

Many even contend that truth cannot be attained or known, thus it does not exist. With no concept of truth, the usual alternative is to make your own truth, making every individual the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong. This outlook is enticing on many levels, and to many seems even noble and open-minded.

But it can be attained and it does exist. It emanates from God and His character. Jesus makes this clear when He says in John's gospel:

*“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6*

*“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,....”*

*Titus 1:1-2*

*“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Deuteronomy 32:4*

Truth can be known in the Person of Jesus Christ, therefore, truth exists!

So how do we get from the idea of “truth” to the idea of “absolute truth”. Let's start with a practical definition of “truth”. From the dictionary,

Truth: A verified or indisputable fact, proposition, or principle.

This stands in stark contrast to our relativistic culture that contends truth is in the eyes of the beholder; that truth is what you make it to be.

Norman L. Geisler details the problem with this outlook in his article "Any Absolutes? Absolutely!", where he says:

"This theory [moral relativism] is morally unacceptable because it implies that an act can be right for someone even if it is cruel, hateful, or tyrannical. Further, if this theory were put in practice, society would be rendered inoperative. There can be no true community where there is no common core of basic values. If everyone literally "did his own thing," chaos would result. Finally, this theory does not tell us which aspect of human nature should be taken as the measure of all things. One cannot simply beg the question by taking only the "good aspects." For that implies some standard of good beyond individuals or the race by which one can tell what is good and what is evil in human nature or activity."

Do you see that, sooner or later, there is an appeal to a standard, something that transcends those involved and the situation? We can state this another way by adjusting an old cliché:

**It is not that you can't legislate morality. It is a matter of whose morality is legislated.**

This problem is solved in the concept of *absolute truth*; truth that is objective, universal, and constant. That is, truth that is true for all people, for all times, for all places.

So the question then becomes who is in the position to say what is absolutely true? Consider these standards.

- Absolute truth cannot be the product of a human mind, for it would not be objective.
- Absolute truth, in order to be constant, must reach beyond human time lines. In fact, it must be eternal.
- Absolute truth, in order to be universal, must be above any individual experience. It must be common to all humanity.

Where do we find someone to fit this standard? Who is beyond the human mind, eternal, and common to all humanity and creation?

God alone meets these requirements. He alone is worthy and able to declare absolute truth.

"I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."  
Deuteronomy 32:3-4

"Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:16-17

It is God's nature that defines truth. It is not something He decides; it is something He is. He is the source of every good thing. He is objective. He is eternal. He is universal, above all and common to all of creation. Thus He can define what is right for all people, for all times, for all places.

- The reason we think that there are such things as "fair" and "unfair" is because God is a just God.
- The reason love is a virtue and hatred a vice is because the God who made us is a God of love.
- The reason honesty is right and deceit is wrong is because God is true.
- The reason chastity is moral and promiscuity is immoral is because God is pure.

So, when anyone acts immorally or unethically, they are not just offending someone's "idea" of truth, they are transgressing God's standard of morality, anchored in the nature and character of God himself.<sup>1</sup>

The logical conclusion of the premise that there is no right or wrong is that ***there is no God***. It is not a surprise to hear this from those who are not in the Family of God. It is expected for the ungodly to hold such a worldview.

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<sup>1</sup> Right from Wrong by Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, Word Publishing, page 81-83

But it is unfathomable that anyone in the Family of God, for any reason, to hold that there is no right and wrong. In doing so, they jettison their hope of salvation, their Eternal Father whose love reached across time and space to rescue His fallen creation from sin and wrong. They have traded their moral compass and anchor for the shifting sands of anarchy, selfishness, and evil.

This is why it is imperative that we cling to God's Word – His Truth – so that we may know Him and His ways.

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right,  
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.

Psalm 19:7-9