

"Morals Matter"

Do morals matter in our culture? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring how the loss of morals in our culture is leading us to destruction.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We love God and know that He wants what is best for us. According to Deuteronomy 6:24 that, every commandment of God was given for our good. God doesn't give us moral commandments for no reason. He knows what blesses and what harms. He wants our lives to be filled with what is good and right. He knows how immoral behavior ruins people and nations. When we allow sin, celebrate sin, and arrogantly condemn those who oppose the harm that sin does, we're leaving ourselves open to all the miseries that sin brings. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

When people want to do something, they often ignore reason and find ways to justify their behavior. People often speak of being happy or love as if it could make right out of something that is wrong. Being happy or loving someone doesn't make wrong into right. Love doesn't turn sinful behavior into righteous behavior. Many times people feel their sinful behavior is love for themselves or others, but the same behavior shows no love for God or for the truth. God said in Isaiah 5 and verse 20, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

You can't substitute sin for love. Sin will never bring lasting happiness. Morals do matter. While we may think we can get away with our sins, we never do. You see, we have a conscience that monitors our morals and either approves our behavior or condemns it. You cannot escape your conscience, and you cannot escape God. God always knows what we do and He is the final judge.

We offer this study on morals and how that they matter free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Ephesians 4:17 to 24, and examine how our morals matter to God and to our destiny.

Our reading today comes from Ephesians chapter 4 verses 17 to 24. And we'll see that sharp contrast between living the pagan life and living a life knowing Jesus Christ.

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Oh, how badly we need that new life. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You teach us the truth. Teach us righteousness and holiness. Help us to put away the old life and to take on the new life. That we may show our love and devotions to You. In Jesus name, Amen.

Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to a pagan world dominated by Rome. The Gentile world didn't know God nor what Jesus Christ did upon the cross. Our culture, frankly, is not much better than that ungodly culture. We've forgotten God, told Him to be silent, and have ended up darkened in our understanding, having callous hearts, possessing futile minds, and practicing every kind of impurity with greediness. We live in an ungodly nation that has no respect for the sanctity of life, the sanctity of marriage, or the truth. We'd rather speculate about genders than respect biological facts.

Much of our distrust in the morality of the Bible comes from our willingness to listen to the ideas of humanism, which is the enemy of God. People have swallowed into the belief that men are wiser and better than God. Such folly has always failed those who believe it and those who are influenced by its corrupt nature. Why, as Christians, would we want to serve the interests of those who oppose God? Why would we want them as our leaders?

When people fail to love the truth, they'll buy into a lie. The devil has lied from the beginning and tells many convenient lies that please people. 2 Thessalonians 2:10 to 12 says that, Satan deceives with "wickedness for those who perish, because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." When people love sin, they'll follow whoever gives them what they desire. Satan, however, will only enslave you and ruin your soul. God will judge those who love sin more than they love the truth and righteousness. Will God, will He judge you?

1 John 2:15 to 17 says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God continues to live forever." All the pleasures of sin will one day pass away along with this world. They hold no hope for you. Only those who follow Jesus Christ will continue to live in peace and love with God. God keeps His promises; but selfish, sinful behaviors hold no promise at all.

Hebrews 3:12 to 13 warns us, "Take care, brothers and sisters, that there will not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called "today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." I tell you, sin so deceives and hardens our hearts that people desert God. To "fall way" is a military term speaking of people who choose to desert rather than to serve. Many Christians have chosen to desert the faith. When you desert the faith, you lose the promises of the faith. You have no promise and no hope of eternal life.

Romans 8:12 to 13 says very simply, "So then, brothers (that is brothers and sisters that), we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living in accord with the flesh, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Living after the desires of the flesh have a big price to pay. You cannot live with God if you serve the flesh.

God's patience and grace are not inexhaustible. You cannot willfully continue in sin and expect the grace of God to keep on forgiving. God's grace is conditional. And "If you live according to the flesh" or

“if you put to death the deed of the body” will determine whether you face spiritual death or eternal life.

Galatians 5:19 to 21 speaks clearly, “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, (that is fornication) impurity, indecent behavior, idolatry, witchcraft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, (Paul says) just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Don’t be deceived or lie to yourself. You can’t make sin your way of life and remain right with God.

So what is moral? Are there moral absolutes? Many believe that whatever they decide is the right way to go, but Proverbs 12:15 says, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.” Oh, we can fool ourselves. Proverbs 14 and verse 12 reminds us that, “There is a way which seems right to a person, But its end is the way of death.” If morals are relative and subjective, then any choice is as good as any other. Well, what if someone chooses to harm you or your loved ones? Is that moral? You see no one wishes to be a victim. There are some universal understandings about abusing and harming others. When you’re the victim, you see things much differently than the one who abused you. Every victim is harmed and he hates what has happened.

Some things are always wrong, and deceiving ourselves about it doesn’t change things. Let’s remember that God has the final say in eternity as to what deserves condemnation. Just because something is popular doesn’t make it right. Just because the majority of people believe it or do it, doesn’t make it right. Matthew 7:13 to 14 says, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. “For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” People justify their actions when they see other people doing something, but following the crowd and ignoring the teaching of God will only lead to destruction.

Some think that because people disagree over morals, that the truth about what is moral is impossible to discover. Again, this is deceiving. It is possible to know the truth, and there are some absolute truths. If someone says there are no absolutes, we ask if he is absolutely sure of that. Some things are acknowledged as wrong in all or at least almost all societies. Murder, adultery, stealing, and rape are never godly or moral.

What kind of people does God want us to be? Paul reminded the pagans who had been darkened in their understanding but became Christians in Ephesians 4:20 to 24, “But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

The more we deny our old life of deceitful lusts and take on the new life of following Christ, the more moral we will become. Jesus is our example of morality and righteousness. And unlike many religious teachers, we never have to be ashamed of anything He did or taught. The more we become like Him, the better our world will be. We’ll never be moral people till we listen to the teaching of Jesus, found in the word of God, and follow it.

Peter described our lives in Christ in a world that doesn’t understand or appreciate us in 1 Peter 1:13 to 19. He said, “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who

called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

We become right in God's eyes when we're saved by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ. Salvation is not earned but given; but gifts come with responsibilities. No one is saved apart from repentance. God can make you holy, but you also must choose to live holy lives. If the price Jesus paid with His body and blood doesn't mean anything to you, you'll never find eternal life. But if His redeeming you with His precious blood matters, then show it by conducting yourselves in respect to His teaching. People who fear or respect God don't live like those who don't care whether God exists. If you don't care about God, how can you imagine God will care to save you on the last day?

We serve a holy and just God, who will one day render judgment on evildoers. Romans 2:6 to 11 reminds us God "will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. (that's what they'll get) There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God." One day God will render judgment on you. You can ignore or deny that fact, but you can't change it.

You might think there is no hope for you. The inspired apostle Paul spoke clearly to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 6:9 to 11, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor those habitually drunk, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." Now here Paul lays down that sin will cause one to be lost eternally. Then he gets specific, he says to the church at Corinth, "Such were some of you." You see some of the Corinthians had committed those very sins. Paul, however, does not leave them hopelessly lost. He reminds them of their change. He said, "but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Oh, I tell you, you too, can have hope. No matter what your past has been, you can change. The devil says you can't change, but God says you can. The Bible everywhere acknowledges people can repent. You can become a different person. You can repent! You can have a clear conscience and be washed free from sin. God can wash you clean from your sins. He can sanctify you and make you holy in His sight by the blood of Jesus. And God can justify or proclaim you innocent. You have hope!

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for the hope we have by the blood of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of our sins. Help us to leave our old man of sin and to live a new life of righteousness as we serve You and love You. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Just because you think what you do is okay before God doesn't mean that God approves. God's not like us. He never approves of sin, and He's the judge of what is right and wrong. David said of God in Psalm 5 and verse 4, "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil can dwell with You." People often suppose God thinks the way they do. After telling people about their wickedness God told the wicked in Psalm 50 verse 21, "These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes." You may think you're okay now, but what will you do if you're not okay with God on Judgment Day?

The most dangerous thing you can do to your soul is to forget or ignore God. Many people today simply don't care whether there is a God. One day they'll wish they had cared. One day they will bow the knee and confess Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father. Is Jesus your Lord? Now if Jesus is Lord of your heart and life, morals matter to you.

To follow Jesus and be washed with His blood, you must believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. As we have mentioned, you must also repent, turning away from sin and turning to righteousness. With love and faith you must confess your faith and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Being baptized means someone will baptize you in water, and God will save you and unite you with Christ according to Romans 6:3 to 7. Now you aren't working in baptism; rather God is working on you (Colossians 2:12 to 13). And in baptism God forgives and saves you. And God adds you to the church, and God causes you to be born again.

We hope today's study about how morals matter has helped you see their value and to turn away from the lies of men. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH on YouTube as well! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and like the programs you watch. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do say to you, please show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. Now if you can't attend because of sickness and other things, we understand that. But don't neglect worshiping at church if you can attend. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We want you to have a church family. Somebody that can help you to learn about God. Someone to pray and worship with. And someone who will stand by your side when you need it. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.