

"Morality"

In a morally confused world, how can we know right from wrong? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Why do Christians appeal to the Bible as the standard for morality? Can't people do what they feel is right?

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. You can trust the Bible, because it is the Word of God. This book is not the work of men but comes from the mind and heart of God. The Bible says in 2 Peter 1:20 to 21, "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The Bible wasn't the product only of men. Men spoke from God. That's why we trust God's Word. We're delighted you've joined us. We want to hear from you and be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Being religious and being righteous are not the same thing. Many who claim to be religious aren't right with God and don't live righteous lives. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 23:27 to 28, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

Sadly, some Christians act like that. In their speech they claim to love the Lord, but their actions show that they love the world. Christians ought to do what's right, because they love the Lord and because they are accountable to the Lord. Morality starts and ends in our relationship to the Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ. We choose morality because of who we are and Whose we are. We don't belong to ourselves; we belong to God.

If you want to study more about morality, we offer the information on this program free. If you'd like a printed copy of our study 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 stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org and on YouTube!

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1:13 to 16, and explore Christian morality.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 13 to 16 and they discuss how we should live holy lives.

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."

That's the word of God. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father help us to live lives that honor You and that are set apart. Help us to avoid the things that are evil and to do the things that are good. Help us in every way always to serve You and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The character of God is the basis of morality. God is entirely pure and holy, and He wants His followers to be pure and holy. The adjective "holy" and the noun "holiness" appear more than 900 times in the Bible. The word "holy" in the Old Testament refers to separation from the impure or sinful and a consecration to what is pure and right. God told Moses in Leviticus 19 verse 2, "Speak to all the

congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”

The idea of holiness is always set in contrast to something that is profane or common. Our present society has lost its sense of holiness. We’ve pushed the holy God out and allowed the profane world in. We’ve ceased to give God the respect and honor He deserves. Obscene language and behavior fill our media, celebrities mock Christ and the Bible, Hollywood glorifies unmarried teenagers losing their virginity, and faith in Christ is now unmentionable at public schools.

What’s this done? It’s caused us lose our respect for the good and right and to feel no shame about the immoral and wrong. God sent the prophet Jeremiah to Judah, a people who didn’t want to hear what God says. And it’s similar today. The people then had become idolatrous and immoral. They ignored God and followed prophets who dreamed up their false prophecies. They lived shamelessly. Jeremiah 6:15 asks, “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.” Many today have no shame about anything. They simply don’t care.

Morality is unalterably linked to love. Our love and respect for God and our love and respect for other people leads us to do what is right and to refuse to do what is wrong. We learn what is right and wrong from the holy and pure character of God and we find the motivation to be moral out of respect and love for God. God’s ways are loving and kind. And when people follow God, they bless everyone; but when people push God away, you can be sure that chaos and wickedness will fill their lives.

1 John 4:7 to 8 says, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” Love, God, and morality are inseparably linked together. To reject one is to reject the others as well.

The apostle Paul explained how love and morality fit together in Romans 13:8 to 10. He said, “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (You see) Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Everything God morally requires of us is right and loving; and love means it ought to be done. Everything God morally forbids is wrong and unloving; and it must not be done. It’s wrong not only because it violates God’s law but also because it fails to show love to God and other people. And you can’t separate morality from love.

Now scripture reveals how God sees sexually immoral behavior in the book of Ephesians, chapter 5. Verses 3 to 5 says, “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (and that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

People who refuse to live moral lives won’t have an inheritance with God. People tell us immoral behavior is no big deal, but God says in Ephesians 5:6 to 10, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become (partakers) partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”

Before a person comes to know the Lord, he lives in darkness and he thinks like the world thinks about sin. But once a person comes to know Christ, he can no longer live like he did as an unbeliever. There is a difference between people who know and love the Lord and those who don't. God said in Ephesians 5:11 to 12, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret." Some of our television shows expose how ungodly and sinful people live. Godly people find it shameful even to mention the sinful things people do in secret.

The Lord Jesus said in John 3:19 to 21 "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." True Christians forsake their sins and live righteous lives, while wicked people cover up their past.

God expects His people to live holy and pure lives. He doesn't want them to live as worldly people live. The Scripture says in Romans 12 and verse 2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." God expects His people to change their lives, to leave the old sinful life behind and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly.

They transform their lives by renewing their minds. And the more they draw close to God by studying His Word, the more they become like Christ. When Christ is in their hearts, sin no longer has the appeal it once had. Suddenly, sin becomes disgusting to them because they see how sin ruins. Committing adultery, murder, stealing, and coveting are destructive. Drunkenness, premarital sex, illicit drug use, and lying hurt everyone involved.

When you transform your life and conform to the Lord Jesus, you have nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, your life will reveal what the will of God is. God's will is good, and acceptable, and perfect. Now righteousness blesses everyone. We delight in having good people around us. We want to know that we can trust our family, friends, and neighbors. Businesses want employees who have moral character. Cities, states, and nations want moral and God-fearing leaders. When we associate with or elect ungodly or immoral people, we get people who open the door to more and more wickedness.

The Scripture says in 1 John 2:15 to 17, "Do not love the world or 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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

What you love determines the direction of your life. If you love sinful things, you'll find ways to sin and get others to sin. Every sin arises from the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes, the pride of life, or a combination of the three. All the sinful things that people prize and yearn for will not be of any value on Judgment Day. How good you look, how much money you have, and all your worldly accomplishments may impress people here and now; but they won't show God how you loved Him. One day the earth and all its works will pass away. Only the person who does the will of God abides forever.

C. T. Studd wrote a little poem that we should take to heart: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; Only what's done for Christ will last." That's true. Don't waste your life on fleshly things that will perish. Don't lay-up treasures on earth and ignore your relationship with God. Don't get so filled with your pride that you have no room for the Lord Jesus. God didn't make you to live on earth forever. He has

something better in store for you. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 9:24, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." If you live only for the here and now, you'll lose everything. But if you faithfully serve the Lord Jesus, you will have eternal life in a place far better and grander than anything in this life. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; Only what's done for Christ will last."

Why does all this matter? Why are we talking about morality? Because the moral choices that we make in this life determine our eternal destiny. Whether we choose to follow Christ or choose to follow the world matters. We can't pretend our choices don't matter. Of course, they matter. And God is not blind, and He will not overlook our behavior. Galatians 6:7 to 8 says, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." You can't live to please the devil and expect to enjoy the grace of God. Don't deceive yourself.

Each of us must choose whether we'll follow God or follow the world. And your life matters because your example and your influence matter. When you give in to worldly lusts, you tell your children, your neighbors, and your friends what direction you intend to go. When you support ungodly ways, you tell what side you're on. You can't straddle the fence, and you can't remain neutral. You must choose between serving God and serving sin. Now your soul depends on choosing what is right and rejecting what is wrong.

You can't push God out of your heart and expect Him to bless you on the last day. It just doesn't work that way. 1 John 1:6 says, that "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." You can't be close to God and love sin the way the world does. James asked the rhetorical question in James 4 and verse 4, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity (that is hostility) with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Christians ought to know this.

The apostle Paul asked in Romans 6:1 to 2 "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" We can't, not if we love the Lord and expect to enjoy His grace and forgiveness. Friend where is your heart? What life are you choosing to live? I hope and pray that it's one that is a holy and pure life.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your grace and love. Help us to never cheapen and take Your grace for granted but to turn from our sins. And turn to what is right and to do Your will and to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. This is our pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Sadly, many Christians fail to live up to God's moral standards. They claim to follow Christ but live as worldly as the people who never read the Bible. They want the Lord's salvation but not His morals. Some Christians actually shame the name of Jesus Christ by the way they think, the way they talk, and the way they act. Many call themselves Christians but have quit worshiping at church and ignore the morals of the Bible. They get caught up in sin and drift away from God. Sin causes people's love for God to grow cold.

If we call ourselves Christians and love the Lord, we must watch how we live. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:17 to 19, "And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed (redeemed) from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or

spot.” The Lord Jesus, Himself, redeemed you from sin with His own blood. No one could pay a higher price. Does that matter to you?

I hope it matters greatly. Friend, abandon the worldly ways of sin and come to the Lord Jesus Christ. We must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. We can't let sin dominate us anymore. Believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you're baptized, God will wash away all your sins, make you His child. And we hope that you'll do that today!

Now we hope that today's study about morality has challenged you to draw closer to Christ. We offer a free printed copy of this message, and if you 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 the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now these programs appear on our website at www.searchtv.org and we offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you want one, let us know. We'll be glad to send you one and we offer them free. We also have free study sheets that go with our programs. Now you can download them before each program at our website or you can call and request them. Now if you get a hold of us we won't ask you for money. We won't put you on a list. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Please worship with a church of Christ that's in your area. If you've haven't been attending church, we ask that you start worshiping with them again. Get involved in church! And if you're looking for a good church home, a biblical one, we'll be happy to help you find one. Churches of Christ love and they want guests, and if you go you'll be so glad that you attended and that you worshipped with them. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep watching and telling a friend about this program. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.