

***WE DIDN'T MAKE IT UP**—Because morality is based on the nature of beings apart from ourselves, this understanding of right and wrong comes to our minds automatically. We don't originate moral law.

***WE CAN'T CHANGE IT**—No matter how much we might like to bend the moral rules, we can't make the law be any different than it is. If a human being is extremely valuable, then we can never make it right to murder another person. We can't change the law just because we feel like it, because it isn't based on our feelings.

***WE CAN'T MAKE IT GO AWAY**—Lastly, just as we didn't make up the law and can't change it, we also can't make it go away. It is based in the nature of things, so it does not depend on our feelings or choices for its existence.

Thus, we have to live with absolute moral law. We don't get to choose whether there will be moral law or not, only how we will respond to it.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Now, when God communicated the Ten Commandments to mankind, He wasn't telling us anything we didn't already know. He was simply stating for us what we already knew to be absolutely right.

Though God tried to tell us what was for our highest well-being, we all rebelled against His law and went our own selfish ways. As the moral Governor of the universe, God must judge us for our selfishness and rebellion. This is why all those who break His law are separated from Him. Separation from God is the penalty for sin (the breaking of His law).

But though God must judge us for our selfishness, He also loves us. Because of His great love for us, he provided a way to be forgiven for our sins and restored to an intimate, loving relationship with Him. This way that God made was through the death of His Son, Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He provided for the forgiveness of our sins.

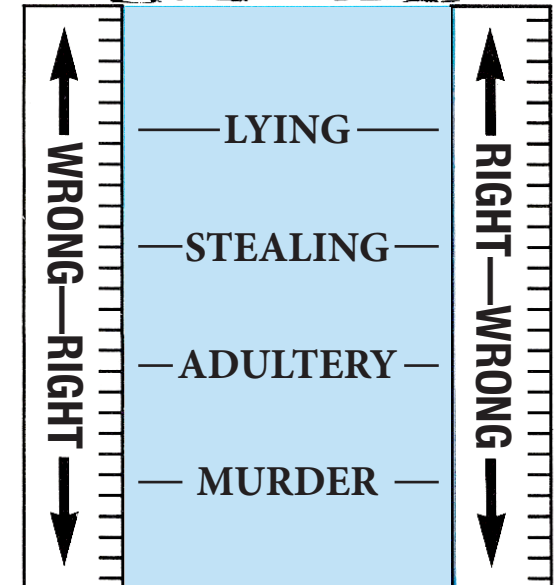
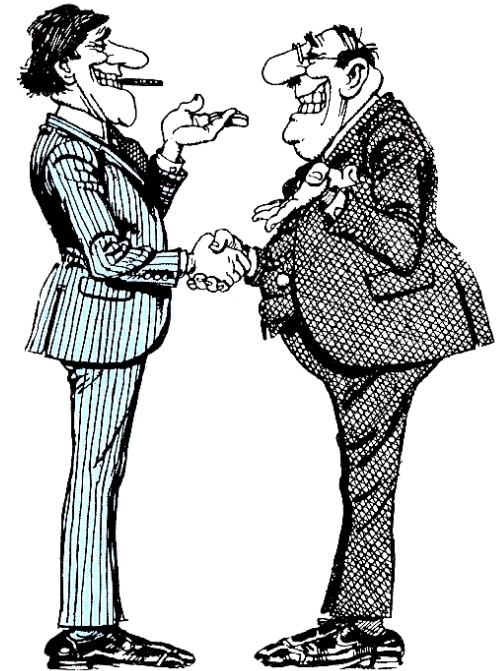
Since God respects our free will, He will not force us to love Him. Thus, we must meet certain conditions if we want to be forgiven and come into relationship with Him. These conditions include:

1. Acknowledging that you have rebelled against God. ("All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23)
2. Turning away from your lifestyle of selfishness. ("Repent for the forgiveness of your sins." Acts 2:38)
3. Committing yourself to living the way God commands you to live—loving God, and loving others as yourself. ("Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself." Mark 12:30, 31)
4. Asking God's forgiveness for your sins. ("If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." I John 1:9)
5. Taking your hands off your own life and allowing Jesus to be your master. ("If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9, 10)

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MORAL RELATIVITY



“WHAT’S RIGHT FOR YOU IS RIGHT FOR YOU, BUT NOT NECESSARILY FOR ANYBODY ELSE. EVERYBODY MAKES UP HIS OWN STANDARDS OF RIGHT AND WRONG.”

This common sentiment, echoed by many people in our society today, is not a new idea. The concept of moral relativity—there is no absolute right and wrong—is about as old as mankind itself, but it has become much more popular in our generation.

BUT WHY?

People always have a reason for the things they say and do. Our words and actions come from what we believe to be true—our philosophy of life. And there are reasons that people today believe that there are no moral absolutes. Here are just a few:

***WE’RE JUST ANIMALS**—Some people think that since we are just accidents that evolved from the lower forms of animals, then there can be no moral absolutes. The only laws, they say, are natural selection and survival of the fit. After all, it’s not wrong for the cat to kill and eat the mouse, is it?

***EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE**—There are no absolutes of any kind, so there can be no absolute right and wrong. Since man cannot establish absolutes with his finite mind, then there can be no absolute morality. Thus, everybody has to make up his own standards of good and evil.

***IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT!**—Some people say that if you feel something is right, that makes it right. They somehow think that a person’s subjective experiences determine his truth and meaning in life, so if a person feels something is right or wrong, his feelings make it right or wrong.

***THE MAJORITY RULES**—Lastly, there are some people who think that if the majority decides something is right, then it is right. If almost everyone thinks that murder is wrong, then it is wrong. All you have to have is a 51% majority to determine moral absolutes.

WHAT’S WRONG HERE?

Although many people believe the philosophies expressed above, there are some serious problems with both the logic of the positions and their practical outworking.

***EVOLUTION**—Though some people may contend that they are only animals, they will never be consistent with this position morally. Cannibals kill and eat people, yet most other societies would not accept that as right or good. But why? If we’re only animals, why shouldn’t we kill and eat other people? Even if a person says that it’s OK to have that moral standard inside your own tribal group, this doesn’t help, since cannibals don’t eat people from their own tribe but from another. People may like to think that we can all act like animals, but something inside us will not let us hold that position seriously.

***RELATIVISM**—To say that everything is relative seems like a nice, neat way to solve all your moral problems. The problem with this idea, though, is that people can never live consistently with this position. The thief thinks it is just fine for him to steal from others until someone steals his stereo system. Then it is suddenly absolutely wrong for people to steal. We may like to think that we can live with relativism, but no one can live this way practically.

***SUBJECTIVISM—”IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT!”** sounds like a liberated way to live, but there are grave problems with this idea. For example, Charles Manson and Adolf Hitler felt that it was perfectly right to kill other people. If we were to work on the basis of what everyone feels, then no one could tell Manson and Hitler that they were absolutely wrong. We could only tell them that we think or feel that they were wrong. So, what is right then, what I feel or what someone else feels? No one can tell for sure when feelings are the basis.

Some people may object to the use of Manson and Hitler as examples, since they are so extreme. Correct, they are extreme, but the problem is that they are true examples, and we will have to deal with them.

***THE 51% MAJORITY**—When the 51% majority rules, then whatever they say is right, is right. The big problem with this kind of thinking is that it completely eliminates minority rights. If 51% of the people in a nation feel that it is just fine to have another race as their slaves, then that is right. If 51% feel that it is OK to murder your next door neighbor, then that becomes absolutely right. Although we like the democratic idea of the 51% majority, all of the advances in civil rights in our country have been made on the basis of absolute principles, not a majority rule.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

So then, if evolution, relativism, subjectivism, and the 51% majority cannot tell us what is absolutely right and wrong, just where will we get this information? Why do we have this inner feeling that there are moral absolutes when it seems so difficult to prove their existence? Let’s take a brief look at the qualities of moral law:

***MORAL LAW IS NATURAL**—That is, it is something that we understand because of the kind of beings we are. We were created to understand moral law. It comes to us intuitively, as a function of our being.

***MORAL LAW IS BASED ON VALUE**—We understand that other people and things around us are valuable. We do not learn this, it happens automatically. Because of this perception of the value of other beings, we know that we should do what is good for them, and not what will harm them. This is our basic understanding of good and evil. It is based on the value of the beings to whom we’re responding.

***MORAL LAW IS ABSOLUTE**—Because moral law is a function of our beings, and is based on the value of other beings, it is not left up to our feelings to determine what is good or bad for others. The value of others determines what is right and wrong for us, so it is absolute. Moral law is based on something outside ourselves—something objective to us.