



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Morality

Jeremiah 31:33 | But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

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- Why, do you think, are we afraid to tell others "you're wrong"? How should Christians approach making such a statement?
 - What is dangerous or problematic about persons grounding "right and wrong" in their own personal opinion?
 - What are some moral laws, which are true for all persons in all places and in all times? Why do even non-religious persons agree with these universal moral principles?
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HELPFUL ARTICLE

"Is Morality Grounded in God Just Another Form of Relativism?" by Greg Koukl

During a panel discussion I participated in after a talk I gave at the University of Alaska, one of the philosophy professors on the panel mentioned that a divine command approach to morality was just another form of ethical subjectivism - relativism, that is. This troubled me because I'm a moral objectivist committed to the idea that God's commands are the basis for moral obligations - a form of divine command morality. The comment seemed to put divine command ethics on par with ordinary moral relativism.

In a certain sense, though, the philosopher had a point. Subjectivism in morality, generally speaking, is when moral truth is completely dependent on an individual subject - the person holding the moral conviction. Good and evil are not objective features of the world but are subjective judgments of individual minds. God is a subject - a mind - true enough, and on divine command theory, morality is grounded in Him. At first glance, then, it seems that grounding morality in God provides no rescue from ordinary relativism.

But it does. Here's why.

In moral relativism, morality is grounded in a subject - a human individual or group of individuals - whose beliefs about right and wrong change over time. What is right or wrong for that person (or group) at one point in time could be completely different at another point since human subjective values vary. Nothing fixes morality in any absolute sense.

God is an individual subject, of course, but He's a completely different sort of subject. He is a personal being, but He is also the ground of being. He doesn't arbitrarily give commands according to His changing whim - ordinary subjectivism - because God doesn't change. Rather, His commands flow forth from the objective quality of His unchanging, morally perfect nature.

So even though God is a subject - a personal individual, so to speak - He is also an object of fixed moral perfection, the standard of good by which all other good (and bad) is measured.

The problem with relativism grounded in human subjects is that humans are multiple and they are whimsical. There are many of them, resulting in many "moralities," and their moralities change over time because they are not grounded in or attached to anything fixed and moral in itself

.In an odd sort of way, then, morality grounded in God can be objective yet still relative to a subject. Notice I did not say relative to any subject, but to a subject - God Himself, the only unchanging, morally perfect objective standard for absolute ethics.