

## Are God's Moral Behavior Laws still in Place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? 1 Cor. 6:9-11

*When God says some behavior is sinful, is it sinful for everyone in every age?* This is the question we will be examining today.

A recent poll indicates only 1/3 of all adults (34%), believe in moral truth. That is moral truth that is absolute and unaffected by the circumstances. That means that most adults in America don't believe in God's moral truth for all generations. So, I ask this morning, "**Can God speak authoritatively to all people for all time a message that cannot be change?**" Or can people be their own gods and decide what their own morals are to be?

When someone tells me, he can believe what he wants about morality, he is actually saying one moral belief is as good as another. This is a very popular teaching today. But if you really examine this thought, you will see that this belief cannot be true. *We need to understand, what people think about any one behavior never determines whether it is moral or not.* Just because someone thinks a behavior is moral doesn't make it right. Thieves think stealing is a good thing, but you don't want anyone breaking into your home and stealing your things. Rapist may regard defiling a woman as pleasurable, but no woman wants to be raped. People who commit sin always downplay the harm that sin does, but the victim sees how wicked sin really is.

People today have bought into the notion that love somehow transforms immoral behavior into moral ones. They believe that love makes wrong into right. God calls fornication, sex between two unmarried people, sinful; but many today think "love" makes fornication okay. It doesn't matter that a child may be conceived out of wedlock or a serious social disease may be transmitted; love in their mind makes fornication morally acceptable. It never occurs to them that their sexual desire may lead them to lie to themselves about the morality of sexual sin.

God in **Gal. 6:7-8** 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.***" The Lord tells us not to be deceived, because man tends to lie to himself when he wants something. People get involved with a sin, and all of a sudden that sin isn't so bad. People have a family member that gets involved with some sin, and all of a sudden that sin is now morally okay. Do we actually believe that all of a sudden God has changed his mind on this particular issue? Or, have we

just deceived ourselves to sooth our conscience? When people think they can overrule God's moral laws, they are not only deceiving themselves, they are mocking God and showing a great disrespect to Him.

**Proverbs 19:21** says, *“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.”* God doesn't change, and He especially doesn't change His morals in order to suit mankind. Moses wrote in **Numbers 23:19**, *“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”* We further read in **Psalm 33:11**, *“The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.”*

We need to know why the Lord's counsel stands forever and why we should pay close attention to it. **First, it is because the gospel is universal.** Jesus himself in **Mk. 16:15** said, *“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”* And when Paul was preaching to the pagan philosopher in Athens, Greece in **Acts 17:30** he said, *“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”* Jesus commissioned the apostles to appeal to every culture in every land until the end of time. His message was for everyone and applied to all cultures in all the world for all time (**Mt. 28:18-20 – until the end of the age; 2 Tim. 2:2 – Timothy was to pass the teaching on to men who would pass it on to others and so forth, until the end of time.**) The gospel gives hope to all men of all generations of salvation and forgiveness of sin.

These passages show us that the gospel was not merely a message for ancient Palestine; it is also a message for postmodern America and our postmodern culture. If the blessings of the gospel are available to all men – and they are – then all men are accountable to God. **Salvation is necessary because all people are lost in their sins.** If God met the need to save us from sin through Christ, isn't God also the authority that determines what sin is? *Why would God send His Son to die on the cross, when people can personally decide what sin is and what sin isn't?* In actuality we have deceived ourselves into believing that we can determine right and wrong for ourselves. Believing we can overrule God with our personal beliefs must be terribly offensive to God.

**Second, the words of Jesus reveal His eternal and final authority.** In **Mt. 24:35** He said, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”* Men have through the centuries since Jesus, have taken great pains to destroy and suppress His teaching. But God has seen to it that the Bible is still available

throughout the world. The moral and religious teaching of Jesus won't disappear simply because our culture has changed its mind about certain moral issues.

On the night of His death, the Lord promised the apostles in **Jn. 16:12-13**, ***"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."*** God told the apostles that they would be guided in all truth, they wouldn't lack anything they needed to live in accordance with God's teaching. God would not withhold any spiritual or moral truth that they needed to bring men to life and godliness. The principles found in the N.T. reveal the complete and sufficient will of God. It is the whole truth, and doesn't need help. In fact, the Lord takes offense at anyone who would add to or take away from what He has given us in the Bible.

Jude, the half brother of the Lord Jesus, recognized that the faith, that is, that body of revealed truths given to the apostles, was to be given once for all time. In **Jude 3** he said, ***"Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."*** Jude moved by the Holy Spirit of God told us that this gospel faith, delivered to the saints by the Lord Jesus and His disciples, was given to man once for all. The idea that the gospel would need reinventing for whims of each passing culture and generation is never ever contemplated in Scripture. Every culture was to conform to the gospel teaching delivered once for all time by the apostles of Jesus Christ. The gospel was given to change the sinful things in every culture so that it might conform to the once for all delivered will of God. The delivered faith is once for all, just like the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross was once for all to bear our sins (**Hebrews 9:28**).

**Third, the gospel is unchangeable.** Solomon wrote in **Prov. 30:5-6**, ***"Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar."*** **Revelation 22:18-19** warns everyone about this specific book of Revelation. He says, ***"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*** If we have no

right to edit God's word in the book of Revelation, would it not also be true of all of God word revealed in the Bible?

The book of Galatians describes some Jewish Christians who wanted to bind Jewish laws and traditions on the Gentile converts to Christianity. They were taking things from the old covenant that was made with Israel at Sinai and expected the Gentiles to obey both the teaching of Christ and the Jewish laws and traditions. In **Gal. 1:6-8** Paul wrote concerning this, ***"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."*** God will curse anyone who would dare to change or edit His gospel. Anything that is unchangeable, especially coming from God, must necessarily be absolute.

*These three characteristics, derived from an absolute God, make the gospel absolute truth.* Those who espouse Christianity have very little to say or offer if the gospel they believe and preach is not settled in heaven. It is a great offense to God to suggest that in dealing with our sins somehow the death of Jesus wasn't enough or its message isn't universal, final and unchangeable.

It is the ultimate confusion to suggest that sin is an ever-changing concept subject to the passing whims of culture. This suggests that Jesus didn't know what sin is or was or what it will be. It means the all-knowing God in heaven really doesn't know as much as we do. It suggests that we can take a vote on what we think and then treat God as if He's subject to what we decide. **God is God, and we aren't.** *He makes the moral rules that will judge us on the last day, and we are accountable to Him.* He can't deceive Himself about right and wrong, but we can deceive ourselves. He knows everything, and we will never be as smart or as wise as He is. Shouldn't we listen to Him, rather than imagine that we can reinvent morality to suit ourselves?

The universal, final, and unchangeable nature of the gospel, is revealed by an absolute God, and that makes it absolute and not relative. **If we didn't believe our message is settled in heaven, we would have nothing to offer.** Paul argued that if the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was not true, then our faith is in vain and our preaching is in vain (**1 Cor. 15:4**). And then in **verse 17** he says, ***"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."***

The death and resurrection of Jesus provide an eternal and universal message. **It is a consistent message of forgiveness and life.** What people think about Jesus doesn't change the truth or change the facts. Jesus either died for our sins or He didn't. Jesus either arose from the dead bodily or He didn't. Saying both options are true at the same time is illogical and contradictory. If both options are true, we can't be certain we are forgiven or have a home in heaven. Truth matters in our practical lives. If the bodily resurrection of Jesus is both true and false at the same time, we have no hope at the grave of a loved one. If truth is relative to our whims, we must take back everything we believe. We are only fooling ourselves if we think we can sin against God and everything will be okay.

**Why does this matter?** It matters because God matters, His teaching will judge you someday, and you matter. When people draw their moral values from their personal desires rather than from God, *they drift away from what is right and what is moral into what is wrong and immoral.* Rhett Butler used a foul word in the movie, "**Gone with the Wind**", in 1939; and foul language soon was fashionable. Today movies and television allow the foulest language imaginable. If we give Satan an inch, he'll feel free to take a mile. If you ignore God's moral law, you could ruin your life and risk your soul. Don't do that. Stay with God.

Let's return to **1 Cor. 6:9-11**, "***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 men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.***" Let's not deceive ourselves. Even the laws of the land cannot change God's laws. What God says is wrong is wrong and will remain wrong until the end of time.

Thankfully we have hope in Christ. The sinful pagans at Corinth didn't remain in sin; they repented, and they changed their lives. While they were in sin, God would not let them inherit the kingdom of God. But they came to Christ; and the Lord washed them, made them holy, and regarded them as righteous. There is always hope for people who forsake their sins and turn to the Lord. Rather than saying sin isn't sinful, repent. Rather than thinking you can change God's mind or His laws, be obedient to His will. When people forsake God's law, they do so at their own peril. Won't you repent and be saved?