

"I Believe in Morality"

Every person has a sensitivity to right and wrong, a moral sense. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Only God could give us our sense of morality. We didn't get it from the rocks, and we didn't inherit it from animals. No God made us moral beings!

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God gave us the Scriptures to define what is right and wrong, to help us avoid what's evil and to practice what's good. The more we study and practice what God has revealed in Scripture, the stronger we'll become spiritually. Whether we obey God matters, and the Scriptures teach us how to love and to obey the Lord Jesus. It teaches us to avoid sin and to live righteously. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Now, each of us have within our souls a moral faculty called a conscience that accuses us when we do what's wrong and excuses us when we do what is right. When we violate our consciences, we feel the pain of guilt and shame. We feel guilty, because we know we have sinned; we feel ashamed that we're the kind of person who could do something so wrong. Even the most evil people know in their hearts when they have been evil. Everyone has a conscience. Sin defiles the conscience, but the blood of Christ can cleanse our consciences.

Thankfully, God trains our consciences so, and He does it through the Scriptures, so that we can avoid sinning against God and defiling our hearts. When people don't know the Scriptures, they may fool themselves into thinking what they have done is right, when God actually regards it as wrong. You remember Paul said in Acts 23:1 that he had lived "in all good conscience up to this day." Before he became a Christian, he thought it was right to persecute the church, to put people in prison, and to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ. When he learned the truth, he repented of his sins. And when he was baptized, God washed them away.

Now we offer this study free in a little booklet we call "Why I Believe". We're offering it free this month and if you'd like to have a copy or a CD of our study and 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 our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Timothy 2 verses 19 to 22, and we'll explore our need to live as God wills.

Our reading today comes from Paul's second letter to Timothy chapter 2 verses 19 to 22. And there he talks about our relationship with the Lord. How we live matters to God.

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Oh what a good reading. Pursue righteousness. Let's pray together. Father help us to pursue Your will to please You in all things. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Our moral senses aren't physical but spiritual and God-given. To suggest that we're moral beings because we evolved from non-living matter or from animals isn't rational. It isn't. Our self-awareness and our ability to evaluate the morality of our thoughts and behaviors must arise from being made in the image of God. We are moral beings who judge ourselves and judge what we see and experience in this life. This moral sense is a universal experience, found in every age and culture of mankind.

In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their, their eyes were opened to both right and wrong. They discovered that they were naked, so they "sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." When the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." You see they felt guilt from having disobeyed God and they were afraid of His finding out. They were ashamed of being naked, and Eve knew the serpent had deceived her. Only people made in God's image ever have these emotions or feel guilt.

There is a universal law of God that's higher than human law. And just because something is legal in the eyes of a society doesn't make it right in God's eyes. Dick Szanyo, my friend in Pelham, Alabama, reminded me of the Nuremburg trials after World War II. When the famous trials occurred, the Nazis defense was simple: "you're trying us based on British law, or American law. We were obeying German law, so you have no right to accuse us of the murder of anyone." Well, Robert Jackson who prosecuted the case argued that the Nazis weren't guilty because they violated British law, American law, or even German law. They were being judged by a law higher than the "provincial and the transient." What they did was always wrong, for all persons, in all places, and at all times!

Well, my friend, Dick Szanyo concluded, "Evolution does not and cannot account for this moral sensitivity. Individual humans cannot account for this "oughtness" that we all experience. Neither can groups of humans (like the Americans, English, or Germans) account for these truths. They cannot be found in the physics, or chemistry, or biology of Naturalism (that is, that nothing exists but a physical universe). Indeed, the only thing that can account for this common moral experience is a Supernatural Moral Lawgiver. And this is what we mean by God."

Jeremiah knew the nature of man was to downplay sin and even deceive himself about it. The prophet wrote in Jeremiah 10:23, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps." Man left to his own devices will try to justify whatever he says or does. Proverbs 14 and verse 12 says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." People can do very foolish, hurtful things simply because they want to. And love for sin will cause people to ignore all the warnings and plunge themselves into ruin. Proverbs 16 verse 2 says, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives."

Oh, you can fool yourself, you can fool your family, and your friends; but you cannot fool God. Proverbs 15 verse 3 says that, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." And nothing escapes the notice of God. What we think is trivial may be a serious matter to God. God loves us, but He cannot and will not overlook sin. The prophet spoke about God in Habakkuk 1 verse 13. He said about God, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on

wickedness with favor.” Now our consciences are a moral governor, but they must be brought into harmony with the will of God.

The serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer was a sexual predator and a cannibal of his homosexual lovers. Though Dahmer had been brought up to believe in God, he was exposed to atheistic evolution, which devastated his faith in God. Dahmer placed the blame for his murders on his atheistic beliefs and in the theory of evolution. From these beliefs, he found no reason to respect human dignity or life. In his interview with Dateline NBC, Dahmer said, “If you don’t...think that there is a God to be accountable to [and no atheistic evolutionist does]...what’s the point of trying to modify your behavior to keep it within acceptable ranges? That’s how I thought, (he says) anyway. I always believed the theory of evolution as truth, that we all just came from the slime. When we...died, you know, that was it, there was nothing.”

Lionel Dahmer, Jeffrey’s father, gave this explanation for Jeffrey’s thinking in A&E’s Biography of Jeffrey Dahmer: The Monster Within, which aired in 1996. Jeffrey believed, well, “If it all happens naturalistically, what’s the need for a God? Can’t I set my own rules? Who owns me? (and then he said) I own myself.” You see God and morality are unalterably connected to each other. A good, holy, and pure God gives us the foundation for our faith and for our morals. God created us and owns us all, whether we realize it or not. Romans 14:12 says, “So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”

In fact, Christians do not own themselves. They have no right to participate in immoral behavior. The Corinthians were well-known for being sexually immoral people. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 to 10, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.” You see sin has a high price to pay. If you want to live with God, you must leave sin.

Now he explained in Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6 verses 18 to 20. He explained, “Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man (the one who commits fornication) sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” When Jesus died on the cross, He bought us to redeem us from sin at the cost of His own blood. Now it’s vital to our souls that we realize that we are not our own. We belong to Jesus Christ!

When people imagine that they can do as they please and aren’t accountable to God, there’s no limit to the evil they will do. Fyodor Dostoevsky in his book *The Brothers Karamasov* examined the thoughts of Ivan Karamasov, who believed that “if God did not exist, everything would be permitted” or lawful. Though Dostoevsky didn’t use those exact words, his character Ivan did say on page 72, “There is no virtue if there is no immortality.” Well, he toyed with the idea that there’s nothing moral, nothing good or evil, because there is no God. And in the end, all that kind of thinking brought was pain and regret. The historian and humanist, Will Durant said, “There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.” It was George Washington who said, “It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible.”

Now, God not only sees our behavior; He knows and tests our hearts. God said through Jeremiah the prophet in Jeremiah 17:9 to 10, “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, (speaking through the prophet) search the heart, I test the mind,

Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds." God sees things as they truly are! You can't spin a lie with God; He'll see right through it. Hebrews 4 verses 12 to 13 says, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Because God knows us, we should make it our aim to please Him in every way.

Our relationship with God ought to direct our thinking, our words, and our behavior. God said in 1 Peter 1:13 to 16, "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 (God speaking) am holy." A holy person keeps himself free from the ways of sin.

The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 3 verses 12 to 13, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Oh, God loves you and will do everything He can to keep you from falling away in sin which leads to unbelief.

Hebrews 10:26 to 31 warns, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Don't let sin overwhelm you with grief and despair. God's love and grace provide the way to salvation. The wicked won't inherit the kingdom of God (that's true), but they can repent and change. The Lord Jesus will help you become a different person with a clear conscience. After listing several sins, you remember, Paul said again in 1 Corinthians 6:11, "Such were some of you; (that is you sinned all these things) 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." You don't have to remain enslaved by what you were. God can wash you, make you holy, and justify you! You can become a child of God and live a new life filled with love and hope and eternal life.

Let's pray together. Oh, Father help us to flee the things that are wrong. And to chase after the things that are right. Righteousness, and faith and love and hope. Give us strength Father to do Your will every single day. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

When our conscience stings from our sins, and we realize how our sins are painful and can cost our souls, we start looking for forgiveness and a clean conscience. Guilt and shame will cause a person to despise himself or herself. You may not like what you see when you look in the mirror. Does your conscience sting? What are you doing about it? Some people ignore their consciences and become callous to sin. They don't care what they do or whom they hurt. I worry more about the person with a seared conscience than I do for the one who feels guilt. Why? It's because that pain, a godly grief, may cause him to repent.

2 Corinthians 7 and verse 10 says, "For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death." Your God-given conscience isn't a curse. It's God opening our eyes about what's wrong, so that we may pursue what's right and be saved. Guilt grieves us, but God offers us a clean conscience! In Christ we have forgiveness and hope. We can be born again and walk in newness of life. The old man of sin dies, so that we can be free from sin and raised with Christ!

Oh, trust in the Lord and confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Let your grief over sin lead you repent and turn from evil to the Lord. When you do, you're ready to be baptized! In baptism God washes away sin (Acts 22:16), causes us to be born again (John 3 and verse 5), and makes you His child (Galatians 3 and verse 27). He also gives you newness of life free from sin (Romans 6:3 to 7). Why not turn your life around and come to the Lord?

We hope that today's study about morals has encouraged you. We're offering this free book "Why I Believe". It's free for you or you can have a CD of our study. If you live in the United States and want the book or want a CD, 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. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. And you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We offer free Bible Correspondence courses and study sheets. Now, we're here to help you to get to heaven.

There's no better day than today to look at the Lord and get your life back on track. Well, as always we say to you God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.