

Week 9: Christian Morality – Objective Truth

Objective: Show that Christian morality is grounded in the unchanging nature of God, demonstrate the difference between objective and subjective moral claims, and equip Christians to stand for truth in a relativistic world.

A. Introduction – 5 minutes

Ask: “Where does morality come from?”

- Thought Experiment: If tomorrow every human agreed that racism or abuse was morally good, would it actually become good?
 - If morality changes by vote, does that mean the Holocaust was only ‘wrong’ because of who won/lost the war?
- Illustration: Comparing morality to gravity:
 - You don’t invent gravity.
 - You can deny gravity.
 - But denial doesn’t stop gravity from working.
- Christian morality claims something similar: moral truth exists whether we like it or not.
- Ask: If morality is only preference, then guilt, praise, repentance, and forgiveness are illusions. Are they?
- If no real moral law exists:
 - No one is truly guilty
 - No one is truly heroic
 - Forgiveness becomes meaningless
 - Repentance becomes psychological, not moral

Today’s goal: Show that Christian morality is objective - not invented by people, but grounded in God.

Transition: So, if morality is real and meaningful, the next question is: what kind of truth is it? Is it preference - or something deeper?

B. Objective vs. Subjective Morality – 10 minutes

Category	Example	Changes?
Preferences	Ice Cream flavor	Yes
Cultural Practices	Dress Styles	Yes
Moral Truths	Murder, abuse	No

Ask: Why do we instinctively put murder in a different category?

- Objective vs. Subjective
 - Objective: True regardless of opinion (e.g., murder is wrong)
 - Subjective: Based on personal feelings/preferences (e.g., favorite food)
- Ask: Can morality be both true and changing?
 - Why does that matter?
- Scripture:
 - Romans 2:14-15 – Moral law is written on human hearts.
 - Isaiah 5:20 – Warning against calling evil good and good evil.
 - Micah 6:8 – God requires justice, mercy, and humility.
- When people say “There is no objective morality,” they still protest injustice.
- Moral outrage only makes sense if real moral standards exist.
- C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity: humans argue as though a real moral law exists – and expect others to follow it.

Transition: Once we admit morality is objective, we have to ask an unavoidable question: objective according to what - or whom?

C. The Source of Moral Truth – 10 minutes

- God’s nature is the standard of right and wrong
 - Psalm 119:137-138
 - James 1:17
- We are made in His image (Genesis 1:27)
 - Image of God → intrinsic human worth → universal moral obligations
 - If humans are not made in God’s image, then human rights are social agreements - not moral realities.
- Moral truth flows from who God is - not just arbitrary rules
 - Ask:
 - Why is killing an innocent human categorically different from destroying property?
 - Why do we believe all humans have worth, not just useful ones?
 - Scripture:
 - Genesis 9:6 – Image of God grounds moral accountability
 - James 3:9 – Image of God grounds how we treat others
- Clarify what Christians are not saying:
 - Morality is not arbitrary (“God just decides randomly”)
 - Morality is not external to God (“God obeys some higher law”)
 - Instead, God’s nature *is* the moral standard.
- Illustration: God and morality is like the sun and light
 - The sun doesn’t invent light arbitrarily.
 - Light flows naturally from what the sun is.
 - Remove the sun, and light disappears.
- Scripture:
 - Psalm 89:14 – Righteousness and justice are the foundation of God’s throne

- Titus 1:2 – God cannot lie
- Hebrews 6:18 – God’s nature limits what He can do morally
- Contrasting some false alternatives (Christianity isn’t the only moral theory; but the only coherent one)
 - Cultural relativism - Cultures disagree → disagreement doesn’t equal nonexistence
 - Evolutionary morality – Explains behavior, not obligation (Why we do feel guilt ≠ why we should obey it)
 - Legal positivism – Law tells us what is legal, not what is right
- Science can tell us how moral beliefs arose - but not whether they are true.
- Additional Scripture
 - Acts 17:26–27 – Unity of humanity + moral accountability
 - Romans 3:20 – Law reveals sin, not invents it

Transition: If that’s the Christian account of moral truth, let’s see why the alternatives - especially relativism - can’t carry the same weight.

D. The Problem with Moral Relativism – 5 minutes

Claim: “What’s true for you isn’t true for me.”

- Problem: Leads to contradiction and injustice.
- Example: If lying or abuse is only “wrong for some,” there’s no universal justice.
- Judges 21:25 – Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.
- Ask: Is it objectively true that ‘there is no objective truth’?
 - “Should we tolerate intolerance?”
- Cultural Examples
 - Human rights language
 - Social justice movements
 - War crime tribunals
- Every appeal to human rights assumes universal moral truth - regardless of culture or time.
- Scripture:
 - Proverbs 16:25 – A way that seems right to man
 - Judges 17:6 (pair with 21:25) – Repeated warning
 - Romans 1:18–25 – Moral confusion follows rejection of God
- Common objection: “But Christians disagree on moral issues too - doesn’t that prove morality isn’t objective?”
 - Response Framework
 - Disagreement ≠ nonexistence
 - (People disagree about math and science too)
 - Moral confusion often comes from:
 - Ignorance
 - Sin

- Cultural pressure
- Inconsistent application, not lack of truth
- Scripture:
 - 2 Peter 3:16 – Misuse of Scripture acknowledged
 - Romans 7:15-25 – Moral struggle ≠ moral nonexistence

Transition: Knowing the truth isn't the same as living it. And Christians don't just defend morality - we're called to embody it.

E. Living Out Moral Truth – 5 minutes

- Christians are called to live holy lives (1 Peter 1:15–16)
- Speak truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)
- Do not compromise but be compassionate and clear.
- Use Jesus as the model:
 - John 8:1–11 – Truth without condemnation
 - Mark 10:21 – Jesus loved him before correcting him
- Respond with:
 - Clarity – “I believe this is objectively true”
 - Humility – “I could be wrong, but here’s why I believe this”
 - Compassion – “I care about people, not just arguments”
- Caution: guard against becoming Pharisaical
 - Objective morality does not save us. It condemns us - and drives us to grace.
 - Tie morality to the gospel:
 - Law reveals sin
 - Christ fulfills the law
 - Obedience flows from redemption, not fear
 - Scripture:
 - Galatians 3:24 – Law as tutor
 - Romans 8:1–4 – Grace + transformation
 - Titus 2:11–12 – Grace trains us to live godly lives

F. Application and Encouragement – 5 minutes

- God's Word gives us a foundation for ethics and justice.
- Moral clarity helps in parenting, relationships, and evangelism.
 - Real-World Application Scenarios (can briefly discuss):
 - Parenting decisions
 - Workplace ethics
 - Sexual ethics
 - Speaking up vs. staying silent
- Objective morality is not oppressive - it's protective.
- Psalm 19:7–9 – God's law restores the soul.
- Illustration: A broken compass doesn't mean north doesn't exist

- It means the compass needs recalibration
- Christian morality isn't about inventing direction - it's about aligning ourselves with true north.
- Assign: Read Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount) for next week on suffering and Christ's teaching.

G. Class Discussion – 5 minutes

1. Why is it important that morality is objective?
2. Why do people want morality to be relative?
3. How does believing morality is objective change how we forgive?
4. What moral issue today most clearly reveals whether someone believes in objective truth?
5. How can we respond to the claim that 'truth is relative'?
6. How can we live morally with both conviction and compassion?