

Questions for Lesson 22: Morality's Proof of God (Part 2)

1. Is there any logical reason for an atheist to be moral?

Answer: No. There is no reason. That does not mean that atheists will not be moral, but they really have no reason to be. Modern atheists like Richard Dawkins deny that such things as good and evil exist. "In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, and other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reasoning in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there, is at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. ...DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music." (Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden*, New York: Basic Books, 1995, p. 133). If this life is all there is, why not do anything we want that will give us pleasure? As long as we do not get caught, we will reach all that has meaning.

2. Why is the idea "everything in moderation" a bad philosophy for a Christian to follow?

Answer: (1) You never know where the involvement may take you. No drug addict or alcoholic ever got started planning on having addiction take over their life. (2) Some acts only require one experience to produce a catastrophic result. The idea that you can't get pregnant the first time you have sex is simply not true. An STD is usually contracted in a single sexual act. (3) Many acts leave permanent scars. The first time you have sex with someone you're not married to, you have destroyed something special as the presentation points out. (4) The reputation and influence of a Christian is at best damaged and at worst destroyed by a single failure. We cannot be the influence God wants if we have let the world influence us.

3. What controls conscience?

Answer: Experience. Those of us who have served in the military can tell you that being in combat changes you. Your conscience is never the same. First Timothy 4:2 would be good to read. You can be hardened by experience. Prostitutes will talk about how long it took to be able to do anything sexually and not have it bother them.

4. If our conscience is already 'seared' how do we reform it?

Answer: This is what becoming a new creature at baptism is all about. Our spiritual make up can help us gradually change our conscience, but it takes time, prayer and God's help. When we are baptized and die to sin we can rebuild a life with a different conscience. Romans 6 talks about this in great detail. The word "conversion" means what it says.

5. How does God help us overcome a life of immorality?

Answer: Acts 2:38 is heavily quoted to show the importance of baptism, but the last part of this verse talks about "the gift of the Holy Spirit." We are told in verse 39 that this is a promise given to us (afar off) and is a special help God offers to us if we will turn it over to Him. The Spirit doesn't make us robots, but it provides God's help when we have done all we can do.

6. How does being a Christian help me with morality?

Answer: In addition to the help the Spirit gives us, everything we as Christians are called to do strengthens us and gives us the tools to live morally as God wants us to. Meeting together, singing together, communion, giving to meet needs, prayer, being taught, serving others, and confessing our sins and struggles to brothers and sisters are all things that strengthen and help and encourage us.

7. What happens when I mess up?

Answer: We are called to be faithful. We are not called to be perfect. I can be faithful to my wife, but I cannot be perfect to my wife. We will never be perfect in our lives, but we can be faithful to God. The Bible promises us that if we strive to be as God calls us to be, that God will continue to help us and that there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). We are also told that the blood of Christ continually cleanses us (1 John 1:7-10). This is a growth process, but God helps and directs it.

8. Why is this lesson called "Morality's Proof of God"?

Answer: The alternatives given in the presentation are all atheist challenges. "Everyone's doing it," results, "It's my life," frequency, "times are changing," and conscience are all alternatives to God's command. In every case, even with our limited human minds, we can see the superiority of God's teachings. Scholars have tried for over 2000 years to find an alternative to what Jesus taught, but all attempts have ended with disastrous results. God's way works, and in the words of Jesus "By their fruits you will know them" applies. You can't look at the wisdom and functionality of the teachings of Jesus and attribute it to a great man or a wise teacher. It is God's plan for man and it works because God created us and knows our needs and what works for us.