

**IS BIBLICAL MORALITY OFFENSIVE?
REASONS PEOPLE AVOID FAITH IN CHRIST: PART 4 OF 7**

Matthew 7 ⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Romans 13 ⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

1 Peter 3 ¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

James 2 ⁸If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹²Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! ¹

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984.

1. The Objection

The morality of the Bible is hateful and reflects a petty god.

A. What is being said?

The Bible portrays God as petty, jealous, mean, vindictive

B. The Assumptions

The idea of God is a fabrication

I can pass judgement on God based on my morality

No one can impose their morality on me (but I can impose mine)

2. General observations

A. A Jealous God?

The Accusation: God is a Jealous God (petty and/or control freak)

The Evidence: Exodus 20:4-6 'I...am a jealous God'

Jealous נָאֵץ (*qān-nā*): A verb pertaining to having a feeling of ill will ranging from anger or to a desire for exclusivity in relationship. The specific word is quite rare being used 6 times in the OT. It comes from a root word that incorporates the idea of zeal, envy and jealousy. It is best to see the desire for and exclusive relationship at the core of this word. It is also helpful to look at the risks and rewards having a ratio of at least 250:1 to the good.

A Question: Does God have the right to demand an exclusive relationship with people (created by him) who have made a similar commitment to him?

B. A Genocidal God? (racist)

The Accusation: God demands the annihilation of people(s)

The Evidence: Joshua 6:15-19 (as an example)

The Question: Is there any sense of mercy, forgiveness or other escape possible?

Genesis

C. An Unjust God?

The Accusation: God's punishment is too severe and unpredictable

The Evidence: The Flood or Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

The Questions: How are the passages read and interpreted?

By whose perspective is justice defined?

Genesis 1-11 should be considered as a unit

Genesis 15-18 needs to be read together

Jeremiah 18:1-12 provides something of God's perspective

D. God is Unforgiving?

The Accusation: God cares more for punishment than forgiveness

The Evidence: Any death that occurs for a minor violation

Such as Acts 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira

The Questions: Does God show any other response?

Psalms 103 God's posture is toward forgiveness

Romans 3:21-26 God views sin consistently and has a plan

John 3:16, 17; 20:31

3. Biblical Responses

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you,
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. *Matthew 7:12*

A. Read the Bible in Context

Simplistic or shallow reading and interpretation to be avoided

'Prescriptive' – how to fix it and 'Descriptive' – how it is

E.g. Judges 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes'

B. Where would you have God start or stop?

Autonomy, freedom, ability to act and choose

C. Omitted Passages and Ideas

Ezekiel 18:23 or Jonah 4:2, 3

Israel and Christians not exempt Luke 12:48 or James 3:1

How about the passages on the first page?

How do we reply?

There are hard sayings and uncomfortable ideas in the Bible

We need to see the larger context of who God is and what he is like. There are incredible pictures of God's love, compassion, forgiveness and mercy.

We should exercise caution when or if we insist on our present way of thinking (morality) is best for biblical interpretation and defining God.

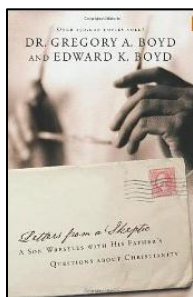
Use and consult some of the passages and ideas from the Bible that show something different.

Who defines God?

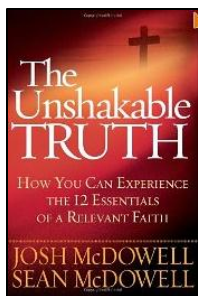
Next week's Question:

Does Christianity encourage people to be mean and intolerant?

Some other resources you might enjoy:



'Letters from a Skeptic' is actual correspondence between a believing son and his father. The dad raises practically all the relevant questions or objections a person might have toward faith in Jesus Christ. The son lovingly and respectfully meets the questions and provides well reasoned responses.



'The Unshakable Truth' is written by Josh McDowell who has been a speaker and debater offering evidence and reasons a person should consider leading to a positive choice to follow Jesus Christ. This book challenges the reader to embrace the ideas of essential to faith and our life changing response.