

God's Unchanging Standard of Morality

“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?” (Malachi 3:5-7)

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:” (Heb 12:14)

First of all, let's seek to understand what our title is calling us to contemplate. *Morality* defined means 1. beliefs about what is right behavior and what is wrong behavior and 2. the degree to which something is right and good: the moral goodness or badness of something. Ethics and virtues would be synonyms to morality. A *standard* is a level of achievement, etc that is considered acceptable or desirable. And last of all, *unchanging* means without variation, or staying the same.

So when we speak of *God's Unchanging Standard of Morality*, what we mean is that which God sees as right and wrong does not change. Included in this is the concept that what God holds man accountable for and will judge him for in the judgment may already be known. God will not change or bend the rules.

Let's break this down into some truths for us to ponder.

I. Our God is Holy and Unchanging.

One of the problems mankind has persistently struggled with is seeing the big picture. It is difficult for man to believe that God means what He says. This is because of how things seem to work out for the wicked at the present moment.

As humans we often fall prey to the ideas of *situational ethics*. Simply stated, this means, acts are judged by our love for the individual who made the choice instead of by unchanging principles of God's standard. Depending upon the plight of your circumstances, what you did may be right, or it may be wrong. For example, a young person may believe that divorce and remarriage is wrong, especially if he has experienced the pain of his own parents committing adultery. Later he changes his mind when he finds himself married to someone unfaithful to him.

Malachi, quoted in the passage above, spoke to a people who struggled wishing they could decide what was right and wrong. In this passage, God is facing a difficult judgment. He always hates and judges sin. But He had made special promises to Abraham's seed forever. He cannot change. Therefore God judged the individuals and nation that chose evil, but refrained from cutting off the Jewish nation. He had made promises to them that He will yet fulfill.

Moses provides a lesson “for our sakes.” What could be so wrong with striking the rock? It had been struck before, and God had not forbidden to strike it again. But

Moses (and God) went over that lesson again and again. (De 1:37; 3:2; 4:21 and 34:4)

II. Though God is unchanging, His methods of working with mankind change from one dispensation to the next.

There is much error promoted under the name of Christianity today because people do not understand the difference in the way God relates to mankind, and how He expects His People to relate to their fellow man in the different periods of time. Each dispensation is a separate economy or different system of management.

As time moves from one economy to another, God has always given clear direction what the new set of standards of behavior are.

1. The Age of Innocence – Creation to the Fall. Be fruitful and multiply. Dress and Keep the Garden, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. The Age Without Law – Adam to Noah Not allowed to eat of the tree of life, no other rules given. Evil runs rampant.
3. The Dispensation of Civil Law – Noah to Moses Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Evil is restrained.
4. The Law Given by Moses – Moses to Christ The Ten Commandments, 613 Mitzvot given to the Jewish people. Many of these apply to tabernacle or temple worship.
5. The Dispensation of the Gospel of Grace (Church age) – Christ's first coming to the gathering of the Church unto Him. Beginning with the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instituted the Kingdom of Heaven, a kingdom totally separate from the nations of this world. In this era, God shows His grace to sinner and saint alike. We are to obey the commands of Christ and His apostles and reflect God's grace to all, even those who would harm us.
6. The Day of the Lord – As travail cometh upon a woman with child and they shall not escape. (2 Th 2:3-12; Rev 6-18) We are not sure of the rules for God's people in this time, the Two Witnesses are allowed to burn with fire those who would harm them (Rev 11) and angels preach the everlasting Gospel (Rev 14) neither of which is proper now.
7. The Dispensation of Divine Government (the second part of the Day of the Lord) – The Thousand Year Reign of Christ. Again, we do not know the rules for this era.

We understand God's plan for Christians today is to put Jesus' love and grace on display. We understand that God may arrange for us to be treated unfairly, even as our Lord was treated unfairly, so we can display His grace and mercy to mankind. Saints in the Old Testament showed their faith in God by killing their enemies. Today Saints show their faith in God by loving their enemies, even laying down their lives for them.

These changing ages do not mean God is changing morality. They mean He is working with mankind in different ways to bring mankind to Himself and His holiness. He will judge each human in the context of what His will was for mankind in the age in which he lived.

III. Our society is undergoing fundamental changes.

Our Western society has never been godly or without fault. There are however, fundamental shifts taking place in the morality of our society. The following chart shows a brief summary of this change, most of what has happened in my lifetime. These changes have been escalating in more recent years.

The Old Foundations	The “New Morality”
1. Truth is absolute.	1. Nothing is absolute, but the new Foundational Beliefs promoted by liberal media.
2. Religion is the backbone of society. While many live hypocritical lives, it would be shameful to reject religion’s benefits.	2. Religion is a curse, and therefore all traces of it should be removed from public life. Holidays receive neutral labels to remove any connection to religious significance.
3. Authority and respect for authority is essential for civilization and human progress.	3. Authority is to be mistrusted because it preys on the weak, and anarchy is preferable over patriotism.
4. Human life is sacred, and deserves protection whether we know it is cognizant or not.	4. Sentient life (beings with feelings) should be valued and protected.
5. Marriage is God-ordained and occurs between a man and woman until death. Physical intimacy is legitimate only within the realm of marriage. All other sexual activity is immoral and wrong.	5. Marriage is a human contract made between two people and either party can terminate it for any reason. Any form of physical intimacy is legitimate if it occurs by mutual consent.
6. Women should be protected and nurtured but not granted equality with men. Their womanhood is given to them to serve the human family.	6. Women should free themselves from the oppression of men, and be equal. They are free to do with their bodies whatever they please.
7. Children need to be corrected and taught to fill their place in society. Corporal punishment is needed to teach a child to find and take his place.	7. Children need to be allowed to express their individual talents. Corporal punishment teaches a child to use violence to solve problems.
8. All white people are created equal, and are superior to other races.	8. All humans are created equal, but racial minorities should receive preferential treatment.
9. Smoking cigarettes is acceptable - even fashionable, but drugs and narcotics are for forbidden.	9. Cigarettes are strongly discouraged and smoking is illegal in many settings, while drug usage receives growing support.
10. Western civilization and its heritage should be studied and valued above all others.	10. Non-Western cultures and other oppressed peoples should be studied and valued above Western civilization.
11. The human family is created male and female. Each gender is important and fills a distinct role.	11. Gender is not determined by genetic makeup, but by what one feels or wishes to be.
12. Different viewpoints should be heard and examined, but only what is true should prevail.	12. Only those viewpoints which are politically correct should be allowed to prevail.

IV. God calls us to be His voice to challenge the depravity of our age.

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light... Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.” (Eph 5:3-13)

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;” (Php 2:15)

One of the strongest mis-beliefs of our generation is that every and any life style is acceptable as long as it does not judge any other lifestyle. However, if we would be Followers of God, we are not allowed to quietly live alongside those who are violating God’s standards and act as if there will be no consequences. In fact, we are instructed to respond in three ways.

- v 7 We are not to partake in, become personally contaminated in the sin that others are accepting as normal.
- v11 We are instructed that we are to have “no fellowship” with them. Strong’s says this means “to share in company with, i.e. co-participate in. Also,
- v11 We are instructed to “call out” the sinner. (Reprove means to rebuke or tell them their fault.)

When we do this, the Bible says become lights in our generation. But we also know when we do this, we raise the fury of those around us. They will call us “goody-goodies” or worse. Sometimes these sins come into our family circles. There is tremendous pressure to accept people as they are. More and more we have family members who are divorced and remarried or choosing the “gay” lifestyle.

We must bathe these situations in prayer. We may not be “mean” or prideful in our responses, but on the other hand, it is not loving to ignore the plight of those committing sins “unto death”. Let us believe the truth according to God’s Word, live it sincerely, and boldly proclaim it to all we meet in life’s journey. Let us be found doing this when Jesus comes again!

In the midst of the chaos before the flood there was a man who walked with God. One day God unexpectedly called him out of that immoral setting. Out of the chaos that exists presently, Jesus one day will take out a select few for Himself. Who will that be? It will be those who carefully walked with Him in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. The question we must be honest with is, am I changing my morals to fit in with a wicked world, or will I be found worthy to walk with Christ in white?