

Raising Your Standard of Morality

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Webster's New World Dictionary defines morality as "1. moral quality or character; righteous or wrongness, as of an action 2. the character of being in accord with the principles or standards of right conduct; . . ."
- B. How high is your standard of morality? With this lesson, we will show the importance of avoiding wrong standards of morality as well as the need to raise our standard of morality by following God's word.

I. STANDARD TO AVOID: THE WORLD'S.

- A. Mankind, when left to his own decisions and reasoning will create a variable standard of morality.
 - 1. At one time, the theory of evolution was not widely accepted. That has changed.
 - 2. At one time, the standard for modesty in public demanded that women not show their ankles. Clearly that has changed.
 - 3. At one time, it was improper for a gentleman to use curse words in a public setting. That has changed.
 - 4. At one time, divorce was frowned upon and strongly discouraged. Again, this standard has also changed.
- B. Man's changing standard of morality is poison to the life of a Christian. Consider the following Biblical observations regarding the ways and thoughts of man.
 - 1. Man cannot direct himself. (Jeremiah 10:23)
 - 2. The way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord will weigh man's heart. (Proverbs 21:2)
 - 3. While the way of man seems right to him, his way will lead to death. (Proverbs 14:12)
 - 4. We must not direct our steps by the moral standard of the world.
- C. Children of God must follow the ways and thoughts of God, which are clearly higher than man's ways and thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)
 - 1. Man sees the "benefits" of a state lottery. Christians see the proven moral decay and corruption brought about by a lottery.
 - 2. Man sees the right of choice being more important than the life of an unborn

child. Christians see all human life as precious and a gift from God.

3. Man sees the “happiness” of two men or two women as being more important than marriage being between a man and a woman. Christians see marriage as God designed it: One man and one woman for life.
4. Man sees sexual activity as a natural body function that should not be limited to a marriage relation. Christians recognize that the marriage bed is honorable and undefiled. (Cf. Hebrews 13:4)

II. GOD’S PEOPLE MUST FOLLOW GOD’S STANDARD.

- A. In time’s past, God’s people have not always followed His standard of morality. Consider the example of Israel and Judah. Notice some comparisons with God’s people of the new covenant.
 1. Hosea 4:1-3, 12
 - a. No truth or mercy. (v 1) *Are we in possession of truth or mercy?*
 - b. No knowledge of God. (v 1) *Are we in possession of the knowledge of God?*
 - c. Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery, and bloodshed. (v 2) *Are we guilty of such works of the flesh? (Galatians 5:19-21)*
 - d. Asked counsel from wooden idols. (v 12) *Do we seek advice and counsel from the moral standard of man? (Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:18-21a)*
 2. Hosea 6:4-6
 - a. Faithfulness like a morning cloud and dew that goes away. (v 4) *Does our faithfulness last all the day long or does it vanish away? (Cf. Hebrews 11:6)*
 - b. Neglected mercy and the knowledge of God. (v 6) *Again, are we neglecting mercy towards others and the knowledge of God?*
 3. Hosea 6:7-11
 - a. Like men, they transgressed God’s covenant. (v 7) *Are we transgressing the covenant of Jesus Christ? (Cf. Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 8:7-13)*
 - b. They dealt treacherously with God. (v 7) *Have we dealt treacherously in not obeying Him, in robbing Him of glory, honor, praise, etc.?*
 - c. Band of robbers. (v 9) *Are we thieves?*

- d. Murderers. (v 9) *Do we hate others? (Cf. Matthew 5:21-23)*
 - e. Committed lewdness. (v 9) *Do we behave in lewd manners in our dress, our words, our behavior? (Cf. Galatians 5:19)*
 - f. Harlotry in Ephraim. (v 10) *Have we committed spiritual harlotry by serving other “gods” within our lives? (Cf. James 4:4-5)*
4. Hosea 7:4-8
- a. They were adulterers. (v 4)
 - b. Inflamed with wine. (v 5) *Has alcohol become an issue for us? Do we socially drink alcohol? Do we have a problem with drunkenness? (Cf. 1 Peter 4:1-4)*
 - c. Ephraim mixed himself among the people. (v 8) *Have we joined in sin with the people of the world? Have we joined ourselves in unholy alliances with those who oppose God? (Cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)*
- B. God’s people of the new covenant must not walk in the path of Israel and Judah.
- 1. God’s people are to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. (Romans 12:1-2)
 - 2. God’s people are to seek first the kingdom of God. (Matthew 6:33)
 - 3. God’s people are to pursue righteousness and fight the good fight. (1 Timothy 6:11-12)
 - 4. God’s people are to stand against the ways and wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:10-13)
 - 5. God’s people are to put on the “new man.” (Colossians 3:8-17) (Take notice of verse 17.)

CONCLUSION.

- A. Consider Psalms 12:1-8.
 - 1. Have Christians ceased from serving God?
 - 2. Have the faithful disappeared from among men?
- B. Christians must always maintain a high standard of morality. Do not allow the foolish wisdom of the world to dictate your moral standard. Listen only to the enduring word of God. Let us all raise our standard of morality to God’s standard.