

Do you ever wonder ...

about moral absolutes? The dictionary points out that the word “moral” implies an evaluation of right and wrong. Many people think that morals are subjective, while the Bible teaches that God’s Ten Commandments are absolute. Which is correct?

In western Colorado, an expensive house was built on a cliff overlooking the Colorado River. Soon after the new owners moved in, the ground gave way and left part of the house dangling over the cliff. On the same street, other homes—built on rock—were unaffected. Failure to heed physical law in choosing the foundation was costly. Physical laws are neither subjective nor debatable; they are absolutes.

The French Revolution taught the world what life is like without the discipline and order of God’s moral law. Chaos erupted. We all know that without laws prohibiting stealing and killing, nothing and no one would be safe. *All* of God’s moral laws are absolutes; they tell us right from wrong. Breaking them always has consequences.

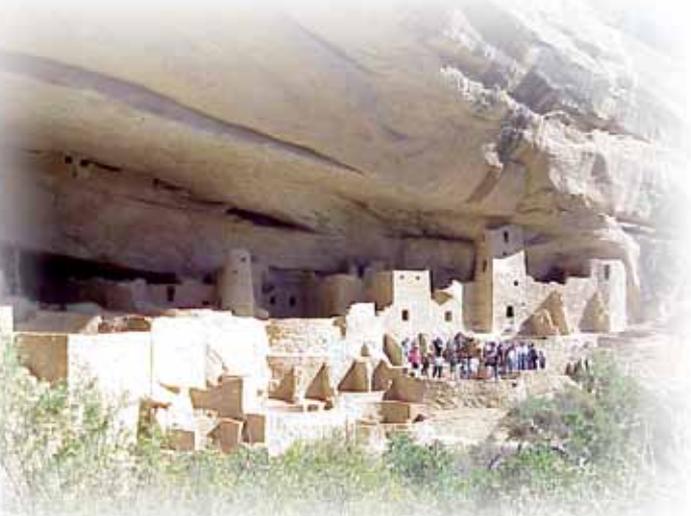


It seems to many people that absolute liberty is every person’s right. But an absolutely free lifestyle for one person means oppression for another. Furthermore, absolute liberty is not conducive to happiness. Catering to our fallen natures makes evil grow in us. Evil takes over, and we lose control. True happiness includes healthy self-esteem, and self-esteem depends in part on self-discipline. Experience has taught many that, like rock under a house, the Law of God is ...

A SECURE FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO BUILD OUR LIVES

1. What does the apostle Paul present as the only sure foundation?

“No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). Here we see that *Christ* is the only foundation anyone can safely build on.



2. How can that be if *the moral law is the foundation*?

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne” (Psalm 89:14). Righteousness and justice are referred to as constituting the foundation of God’s throne, or government in heaven and on earth. This matches with Christ, the one sure foundation.

3. What is the link between the moral law and Christ—and righteousness and justice?

*“All Your commandments are **righteousness**.” “He [Christ] is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are **justice**, a God of truth and without injustice; **righteous** and **upright** is He”* (Psalm 119:172; Deuteronomy 32:4). Christ and the moral law are both righteous and just.

4. How close is this link?

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14). We can actually replace “the Word” with “Christ,” and it becomes clearer: *“In the beginning was Christ, and Christ was with God, and Christ was God.... And Christ*

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:4.

² Nehemiah 9:12-13.

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became flesh and dwelt among us.” Christ is the Word. The Word encompasses the moral law. Thus Christ *is* the moral law lived out in our world. That makes sense because, as we learned in a previous lesson, He is the Creator and thus the Lawgiver.²

5. In what way did Christ illustrate this connection?

Says He, *“I delight to do Your will, O My God, and Your law is within My heart”* (Psalm 40:8). Thus, God’s moral law is a precise and comprehensive expression, a picture, of Christ’s very nature. Since Christ is perfect and eternal, and the commandments express His nature, it follows that God’s moral law is the “universal constitution.” It cannot be amended.

6. What was an important part of Christ’s mission on earth?

“The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable” (Isaiah 42:21 KJV). In His sermon on the mount,³ Jesus did just that. He taught that God’s moral law is to govern our lives and even our thoughts and motives. He showed how this law is perfect for practical daily living.

7. In the same sermon, what did Jesus say about the stability and permanence of the moral law?

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17-18). To fulfill a law means to obey its requirements, willingly and lovingly. This Jesus did!

8. What is the connection between obedience to the moral code and building on the foundation?

“Therefore,” said Jesus, *“whoever **hears** these sayings of Mine, and **does** them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock”* (Matthew 7:24). So, obeying God’s moral law is what it means to build on the sure foundation.

³ Matthew, chapters 5-7.





9. What does God's law do for us?

"For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life." *"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! Oh how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies.... I have more understanding than all my teachers.... I understand more than the ancients because I keep Your precepts"* (Proverbs 6:23; Psalm 119:1, 97-100). Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, is King David's "Ode to the Law." David loved the moral law of God, for he understood both its perfection and its protection. David's view of God's law is one reason God called him a man after His own heart.

10. How did Jesus say we can show our love for Him?

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17). Furthermore, the Spirit of God gives us more truth if we obey God's commandments and live up to the truth we already know.

11. What is God's deep longing for us, and how will we reach His ideal?

"Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18).





12. Who did God say would receive mercy?

“For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:5-6). God is “jealous” when we worship objects (the benefits of which are only imaginary), our own ideas, demons (who are evil and betray their worshipers), or anything other than Himself, the Creator of all.

13. What awaits those who build on Christ as their foundation?

“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). The holy city, New Jerusalem, will be a safe place. However, here on earth is where we choose to have His law written in our hearts. Now we need to practice the principles of His kingdom as we keep God’s “law and order.” Faith in Christ, when He lives within us, enables us to keep all of God’s commandments.⁴ Building on the sure foundation of Christ and His moral law, through the grace of God, will result in our being made righteous and entitled to inherit the eternal, happy home.

⁴ Revelation 14:12.



OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

- **Paul says we are not saved by “the works of the law.” Why then try to keep it?**
The apostle wrote that *“a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, ... for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified”* (Galatians 2:16). Some Jews tried to get the Gentile converts to keep the abolished ceremonial laws. Paul showed that pardon for sin is obtained solely by faith in Jesus’ sacrifice, which those ceremonial laws only symbolized, or pointed forward to. Furthermore, the Bible eliminates any hope of our being saved by our own efforts to keep the moral law, for only by faith in Christ is our obedience and service possible or even acceptable to a holy God. In other words, as weak, sinful humans we *cannot* keep the moral law in our own strength; and even if we could, it would very likely be for a selfish motive, which is unacceptable to God.

God looks for that faith that works by the love⁵ Christ demonstrated on the cross of Calvary. *“We love Him because He first loved us”* (1 John 4:19). What does this love lead us to do? *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome”* (1 John 5:3).

- **Will God reject me if I consciously break His commandments?**
No. He will continue to try to draw you to Himself. But when God’s love fills our hearts, we no longer enjoy sin. There is a change of heart and mind, described in the Bible as the “new birth.” Bad habits may still remain, but we work with Him to expel them as soon as possible and seek His power for victory. (This is called sanctification.) When we choose to serve God, the Father and the Son come to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit. In their presence sin appears for what it is—repulsive—and we want no part of it.⁶

If the Ten Commandments are eternal, what law was nailed to the cross? Of vital importance is the need, as explained in Lesson 13, to “Know the Difference” between the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law.

⁵ Galatians 5:6.

⁶ Psalm 119:11; John 14:21-24.

REVIEW QUESTIONS



Please answer the following questions—and send them to us so we can help you with any misunderstandings. Note that multiple-choice questions may have more than one correct answer. *Circle the letters of all correct answers.*

1. What is the absolute standard of right and wrong?

- a) There is no absolute standard; everything is relative.
- b) God's Ten Commandments.
- c) The Constitution of the United States.

2. Home construction and our lives have what in common?

- a) The need to follow absolute laws for success.
- b) Nothing.
- c) Both need a stable foundation.
- d) People have absolute freedom to build both as they please.

3. What foundation is safe to build our lives on?

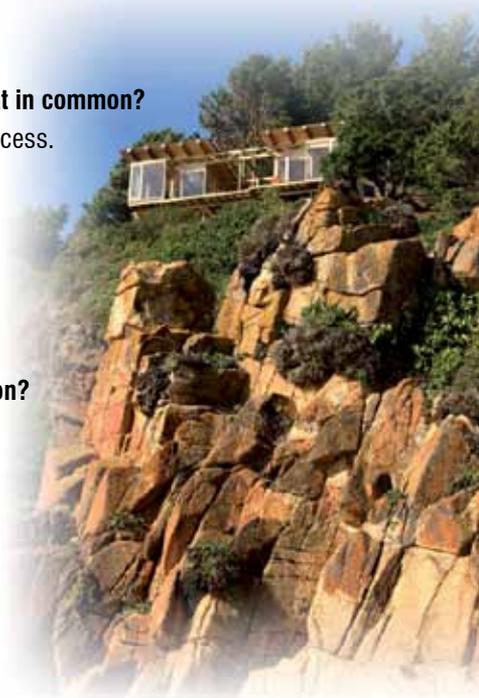
- a) Christ, the Rock.
- b) Common sense.
- c) The moral law, an expression of Christ's nature.

4. What is the foundation, or constitution, of God's universal government?

- a) God's almighty power.
- b) The Ten Commandments.
- c) Righteousness and justice.

5. Christ came to ...

- a) magnify the moral law and make it honorable.
- b) fulfill the moral law.
- c) destroy the moral law.



6. To “build on the rock” means to ...

- a) have great determination and be goal-oriented in life.
- b) conscientiously follow the instructions God gives us in His Word.

7. David loved the moral law because ...

- a) he could use it to control his subjects.
- b) it made him wise.
- c) God told him to love it.

8. God wants us to keep the moral law because ...

- a) He wants us to have peace.
- b) we will receive the Spirit of Truth.
- c) it will make us righteous.

9. “Blessed are those who do His _____, that they may have the right to the _____, and may enter through the gates into the _____” (Revelation 22:14).

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