

Moral Relativism

Objective

To discuss the meaning and social implications of moral relativism

References

The Holy Bible

Scriptural verse

“Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23)

Introduction

- In this age, we have lost the confidence that statements of fact can ever be anything more than just opinions. The word "truth" now means true for me.
- Whether we realize it or not, this concept - Moral relativism - is the air we breathe, the background noise in our culture today. In this sort of cultural climate the only heresy is telling someone else that they are wrong. Tolerance has become the ultimate virtue, not "truth".
- According to the Barna Research Group, 81% of young Americans have adopted a view that "all truth is relative to the individual and his/her circumstances".
- Definition:
 - We can all decide what is right for ourselves. You decide what's right for you, and I'll decide what's right for me. Moral relativism says, "It's true for me, if I believe it. "
 - Moral relativism asserts that morality is not based on any absolute standard. Rather, ethical "truths" depend on variables such as the situation, culture, one's feelings, etc.
 - Moral Relativism says that there is more than one right answer or way. More than one absolute truth.
 - Truth is not objective or universal but relative to the specific group, culture, time.
 - There is no universal moral standard by which to judge others, we ought to tolerate the behavior of others even when it runs counter to our personal or cultural moral standards.

Lesson outline

Tolerance

- The main argument relativists appeal to is that of tolerance. They claim that telling someone their morality is wrong is intolerant, and relativism tolerates all views.
- First of all, evil should never be tolerated. Should we tolerate a rapist's view that women are objects of gratification to be abused?
- Second, it is self-defeating because relativists do not tolerate intolerance or absolutism.
- Third, relativism cannot explain why anyone should be tolerant in the first place. The very fact that we should tolerate people (even when we disagree) is based on the absolute moral rule that we should always treat people fairly—but that is absolutism again! In fact, without universal moral principles there can be no goodness.

Moral Absolutism

- Absolutism claims that morality relies on universal principles (natural law, conscience). Christian absolutists believe that God is the ultimate source of our common morality, and that it is, therefore, as unchanging as He is.
- C.S. Lewis points to the nature of most quarrels as a clue to what we truly believe. Inherent in those quarrels is a concept of fairness, as in "how would you like it if someone did that to you?" When we make that statement, we are appealing "to some kind of standard of behavior [we] expect" the other person to know about. Where do you think that standard originates?

- Even so-called relativists reject relativism in most cases. They would not say that a murderer or rapist is free from guilt so long as he did not violate his own standards.

Conclusion

The premise of this world is that there is no God – If there is no God, there is no Absolute Truth. If there is no God, there is only the individual. Each individual can, then, make up his own truth. We want, if we may, to construct our own reality. We don't want to be compelled to submit to a reality that lies beyond us.

We ask Our Heavenly Father to help us overcome this monstrous challenge that is rooting itself in the fabric of our society. We ask Him to help us “buy the truth and do not sell it” (Pro 23:23) so that we can walk in the Truth (Ps 86:11, 3 John 1:4) for we “belong to the truth” (1 John 3:19). Our Father is the Truth (John 14:6) and our Mother is the pillar and ground of truth (1Tim 3:15).

Activities/Discussion Points

How should we approach discussions in which views are expressed that are contradictory to Christian beliefs or the truth?

How should we encounter the moral relativism around us?

How can we share with others the existence of God in our lives?