

Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way.

1). How is the Bible (Scripture) different from other books that might teach systems of "Morality"? 2 Peter 1:20-21 (MsgB)

The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private opinion. [21] And why? Because it's not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God's Word.

2). The men and women who wrote the Scripture had to write in from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts. They had nothing else to use than their own minds, talents, language and personal style, but they wrote what God wanted and with God in control. This is evidenced from the variety of literary style and personalities that show in the writings, yet there is a continuity of truth that reaches from the first word to the last. How are you preparing to make Scripture more the authoritative source for your faith, life, and system of "Morality"?

3). How will reading the Scripture on a daily basis help you do a better job of following the Character of God as your system of "Morality"? How does Jesus' example encourage you? Matthew 4:4 (MsgB)

Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God's mouth."

Friday:

c. God's revelation comes through Holy Spirit. John 14:26 (NIV)
But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

- 1). When you are out there in daily life struggling with making right, God-pleasing decisions who has God given you to guide you and motivate you? _____**
- 2). Nature reveals truth, but the human sinful nature suppresses that truth. When you invited Jesus into your heart what advantage was given you? John 14:17 (MsgB)**

This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can't take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you!

3). How will Holy Spirit help you make God honoring decisions? John 16:14 (MsgB)

He will honor me; he will take from me and deliver it to you.

■ Will you choose "Morality" that leads to destruction or Life? ■

FELLOWSHIP NOTES

Reaching People for Christ
and
Helping believers grow to be like Him

CHARACTER CRUNCH

PART 5: MORALITY

Everyone has adopted some kind of system that is used to divide his actions between "right" and "wrong". What one considers "right" or "wrong" is determined by the foundation on which he has built his system of making choices.

Some build on the foundation of personal pleasure, happiness, power, and self-realization. For these individuals, as long as an action will promote one of these selfish ambitions then he will consider it "right". For these individuals, it does not matter how their choices impact others or if the choice is in harmony with the character of God.

They want you to believe that there are no absolutes. A right decision is made based on circumstances, pleasure, and what brings them the most benefit. So what is "right" today might be "wrong" tomorrow. This standard of "Morality" has no consideration for anyone other than self. At first hearing it might sound inviting. As long as you are the only one conducting life based on this standard of morality it might not be too bad. Remember, however if this is the standard, then everyone else is conducting life that way toward you, as well. You are always the loser and they are always the winner.

In this study you will discover that God has a system of "Morality" that is not built on situations. It is built on the solid unchanging foundation of God's Character.

Life generates pressures that will try to influence you to make choices based on standards other than those built on God's character and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This is "Character Crunch". You will recognize it when you feel this tugging force from within to take actions that are below your normal moral principles. This is when you begin to learn how deep or shallow your commitment is to becoming like Christ.

Monday:
Marks of Morality:

1. Morality is based on God's character. Psalm 119:137-138 (NIV)
Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right. [138] The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy.

- a. What are the character traits listed in this passage that God wants you to practice in your daily life? 2 Peter 1:5-7 (NIV)

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; [6] and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; [7] and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

- b. Rate your progress in living out these moral attributes:

- 1). Good character: _____
Your plan to improve: _____
- 2). Knowledge of God's Character: _____
Your plan to improve: _____
- 3). Self-control under pressure: _____
Your plan to improve: _____
- 4). Perseverance (passionate patience): _____
Your plan to improve: _____
- 5). Respect for God: _____
Your plan to improve: _____
- 6). Kindness to all like they were family: _____
Your plan to improve: _____
- 7). Unselfish love: _____
Your plan to improve: _____

Tuesday:

2. **Morality is based on God's purpose:** Micah 6:8 (Living)

No, he has told you what he wants, and this is all it is: to be fair, just, merciful, and to walk humbly with your God.

- a. Does God want you to relate to Him through the impersonal ways of rituals and traditions? _____
- b. What are the more personal ways God wants you to relate to Him from the inward person? (Micah 6:8)

- c. God wants you to relate to Him from the inside out. Living a lifestyle like His because you want to, not a burden imposed on you from the outside in the form of rituals and regulations. How are you doing with establishing a lifestyle built on the desires of your heart because this is the way God's heart is?

- 1). Are you fair in your dealing with others? How are you saying "no" to the "Character Crunch" when a lying or altering a product would mean more money for you?

- 2). Do you show mercy to those who wrong you? How are you carrying through on meeting the needs of others?

- 3). To be humble before God means that in your heart you lift Him to the throne of your life. What evidence can you find in your life that God is more important than self and in control of your life?

Wednesday:

3. **Morality is based on God's revelation.**

God has provided three sources of revelation: nature, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit. Nature and Scripture are available to everyone. For those who have invited Jesus into their lives as Savior, God's Holy Spirit dwells in them and He is a special Counselor for godly Morality".

- a. God's revelation comes through nature. Romans 1:20 (NIV)

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

- 1). Stop long enough to look at the environment around you that man did not make or build. List some of these things and their awesome qualities and unexplainable dependence on one another.

- 2). What has God revealed about Himself to everyone through the created world at which you have just taken a long look?

- 3). Through your analysis of God's created world, you can identify the existence of God's "invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature". This lets you have resources to identify God's Character. Certainly one of the most obvious things about that "Character" is that it is unchanging. The attributes of the world around you are working together today just as they were millions of years ago. How can you apply this character trait to establishing a system of "Morality"?

- 4). Scripture acknowledges that you have the capacity to see and intellectually comprehend that God has a system of "Morality" based on His eternal Character. It also acknowledges that you are tempted to suppress that truth and follow your own selfish, sinful system of "right" and "wrong". Are you ignoring this obvious truth, or have you invited Jesus into your life as the starting point to build a system of "Morality" based on the foundation of the unchanging character of God? Romans 1:21-23 (NIV)

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

- 5). You can be tempted to change the things God made into your god rather than the Creator. Is the dream of your life, for which you would die, God? Has the pursuit of things such as personal goals, money, power, and comfort so dominated your life that they dictate a system of "Morality" where the end justifies the means? _____

Thursday:

- b. God's revelation comes through Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16 (MsgB)