

Apologetics #4: The Moral Argument for the Existence of God
Oct 27, 2019 | Will Galkin | Gospel Grace Church

Session Intro:

Non-theists and theists can finally agree about something. The 20th century was one of the bloodiest centuries our world has ever known. Historians approximate 125 million people lost their lives. The world at war abetted the production of weapons of destruction as never seen before. We have watched planes crash into buildings and genocide rip through countries. Atomic warfare and tribal warfare have scarred the globe. Local eruptions of bloodshed via drive-by and school shootings have brought the violence to the neighborhood. The newscast replays the gore of serial killers and the sad news of another suicide. Atheists and Christians alike denounce the violence. But why is this violence bad? Why should anyone refrain from hurting people? Is there an objective right and wrong?

What is the Moral Argument?

“The moral argument begins with the fact that all people recognize some moral code (that some things are right, and some things are wrong). We sense this most when injustice happens to us or we are stirred at the injustice of others. Every time we argue over right and wrong, we appeal to a higher law that we assume everyone is aware of, holds to, and is not free to arbitrarily change. Right and wrong imply a higher standard or law, and law requires a lawgiver. Because the Moral Law transcends humanity, this universal law requires a universal lawgiver. This, it is argued, is God.”¹

Romans 2:14-15 says that the moral law (or conscience) comes from an ultimate lawgiver above man. If this is true, then we would expect to find exactly what we have observed. This lawgiver is God.

➤ **Questions about the Moral Argument:**

- Can you be good without believing in God? Yes

- Can you be good without God? No

- What is the logical outline of the moral argument for God?
 1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
 2. But objective moral values and duties do exist.
 3. Therefore, God exists.

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/moral-argument.html>

➤ **Failed Attempts at Obtaining Goodness without God.**

When confronted with the moral argument for God the non-theist has to confirm or deny the follow portion of the argument: **Objective moral values and duties do exist.** The person that denies any “Objective” moral value finds himself defending a form of moral relativism. Let’s look at a number of ways that western culture has attempted to use forms **of moral relativism** to be “good without God.”

1) Social Contract

Explanation:

Problem:

2) Emotivism

Explanation: The statement “Murder is wrong” is translated as, “I don’t like murder.”

Problem:

The problem with this view is that this theory lacks the foundation to speak rationally about somebody else’s viewpoint. Morality has been reduced to an emotion.

3) Utilitarianism

Explanation: The basic premise is that pleasure is good and pain is bad. Since people at the core are selfish, pain and pleasure serve as a “utility” to help in making moral decisions. This resulted in ethical imperatives like, “Make the choice that produces the greatest pleasure for greatest number of people.”

Problem:

4) Conventionalism

Explanation: Rather than individuals determining what is truth, truth is relative to entire cultures. It is the consensus of the culture that determines what is right or wrong.

Problem: The problems with this view are quickly seen when peoples of different cultures with dissimilar sets of rules begin to interact. Whose values do they submit to? What right does one have over the other?

Application: All of these ethical theories are connected to some form of relativism. Therefore, with these theories there will always be a subjective nature to determining right and wrong.

Therefore: Ask the hard questions!!!!

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Moral Objectivism without God.

1) Humanism

Explanation: Greg Epstein, in his book *Good without God* said, “Humanism means taking charge of the often lousy world around us and working to shape it into a better place, though we know we cannot ever finish the task. In short, humanism is being good without God.”

Problem: Still have not answered how do we know what is good? Yet, to know what is “good” there must be some universal standard of goodness. This would infer that there is some universal giver of that standard. This is the issue that the non-theist has been wrestling with for numbers of year.

2) Science

Explanation: Well-known atheist Sam Harris argues like this:

- Questions about morality are nothing more than questions about happiness;
- Science can tell us how to make the greatest number of people happy;
- Therefore, science can answer moral questions.

Problem: Science can help us develop technology, but it cannot tell us whether it is right or wrong that a discovery is used in a particular way. Indeed, the more science we do, the more questions of ethics are raised—science actually generates moral questions; what it doesn’t do is solve them.

3) Naturalism:

Explanation: Some would claim that whatever moral constructs in present-day Society are actually hardwired into our bodies through evolutionary development. The statement would be, “morals don’t come from a ‘god’, they come from our DNA.”

Problem: If DNA is the source of our morality then can anyone say that something is ACTUALLY wrong?

Application: Ask the hard questions!

- If everything ultimately must be explained by the laws of physics and chemistry, help me understand what a moral value is (does it have mass, occupy space, hold a charge, have wavelength)?
- How did matter, energy, time and chance result in a set of objective moral values? Did the big bang really spew forth “love your enemy?” If so, you have to help me understand that.
- What makes your moral standard more than a subjective opinion or personal preference? What makes it truly binding or obligatory? Why can’t I just ignore it? Won’t our end be the same (death and the grave) either way?

Resources and Tools:

Acts 17:11

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 But test everything; hold fast what is good.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Websites about the Moral Argument for the Existence of God:

Two great articles from RZIM

http://ca.rzim.org/regional-blog/can-we-be-good-without-god/#_ftn1

<http://rzim.org/just-thinking/must-the-moral-law-have-a-lawgiver/>

Good article from Reasonable Faith

<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/can-we-be-good-without-god>

Apologetic Help in Engaging Others

Appendix has a list of the moral law in as seen in many cultures
Lewis, C. (2014). *The Abolition of Man*. HarperCollins e-Books.

Geisler, N. L., & Turek, F. (2007). *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Short Videos on the Moral Argument.

Video on the Moral Argument for the Existence of God

<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/moral>

Video of Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis: The Reality of the Moral Law

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqsAzlFS91A>