

# **“Is It Small-Minded of Me to Base Morality on Scripture?”**

A friend of mine and I were recently discussing different things and two things relating to scripture things came up. The first (what started the argument) Was I asked whether morality could be determined by age; for example, we say that is wrong for a kid but OK for an adult. My view was, if something is wrong should it not be wrong for all? She is a Christian but made some comments I wasn't sure how to respond to. She implied that I “thought small” because after about thirty minutes of debate I realized my morality was based totally on scripture. When I said “moral” I meant biblical. She however was saying the Bible doesn't answer everything and it is up to society to decide, because as she pointed out not every one is Christian and I needed to see the whole picture. This sounds immoral to me and in arguing it (using the Bible) she asked what seems un-biblical, yet I was stumped she said that “If the Old Testament grew into the New Testament then who's to say it isn't still growing?” She almost seemed to be implying that 1) scripture is not a complete canon yet and 2) it should change based on society. This seems very un-biblical and wrong but I wasn't sure how to respond effectively.

Thanks for your e-mail. The two questions you brought up show a great deal of insight on your part. I would be honored to help you work through these issues.

First, let's deal with morality. It's great that you base your moral behavior based on biblical principles. Unfortunately, not everyone is so wise. But even biblically speaking, there are some things that may be appropriate for some people that are not so wise for others. For instance, look at marriage. Wouldn't it be safe to say that a grown up married man is morally free to have sexual intimacy with his wife, but an unmarried teenage boy is not morally free to have sex with his

girlfriend? Circumstances may determine some of our standards of behavior. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:23-33 that we are free to act the way we think we should (since we have been freed from the Law), but that we must first consider that our actions affect others. Christian morality is not based on a list of rights and wrongs, but on the law of love for one another. Sure, there are some things that are always wrong (such as murder), and some that are always right (such as love), but to say that every wrong is wrong for everyone is going to lead to trouble.

Your friend has a point that not every issue is covered specifically in the Bible. But the Bible's principles can be applied to every issue. So, in fact, to think biblically is to think about the "big picture." Society is actually more interested in keeping order than in encouraging morality. Age, therefore, does make a difference about what a person ought to do; not because morality is relative, but because sources of weakness can be different in people.

The freedom that we Christians have to make decisions is kept in check with our biblically-minded discernment about what is best for others and ourselves.

To answer your second question: yes, the canon of Scripture is closed. The New Testament is not just a highlight in the evolutionary development of the Old Testament. It is the "New Covenant." It's called a covenant because Jesus Christ fulfilled in person the "Old Covenant's" purpose. Hebrews 1:1-2 points out that God has spoken in these "last days" in the person of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is the inspired foreshadowing of Jesus. The New Testament is the inspired testimony to His life and works. The first few centuries of Christians had divinely guided criteria for evaluating the worthiness of a letter to be included in the New Testament. (For more on this, see [Don Closson's article on the Web](#).) Nothing society or anyone else can come up with since could come close to adding to what Jesus has already done.

Furthermore, Jesus is the Word of God. How can God's very presence on earth be matched? His ascension into the heavens ended His earthly ministry. In the same way, His ascension also ended any speculation about another testament. (That's why there can be no new New Testament.) When He spoke the words "It is finished" on the cross, it illustrates that there is nothing else to be revealed. All that is necessary now is the fulfillment of His New Covenant, with the ministry of God's Spirit (through His church) and Jesus' glorious return. Our job is not to write more books of the Bible in order to make it apply to society. Instead we need to take what's already there and interpret it's vital and timeless message to every new society.

I hope this helps with your questions. If you have any more questions or need some elaborating, please feel free to respond. Awesome questions! He rewards those who seek Him.

Kris Samons  
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## **"Can a Born-Again Christian Remain in a Carnal State?"**

If one is truly a born again Christian, can they remain in a carnal state? If they are not willing to grow spiritually, give up those things which are offensive to God are they truly saved? Also much debate about losing one's salvation seems to be a confusing topic for some. It says in God's word that no man can pluck you out of the Father's hand but what if one decides to remove themselves by renouncing their belief in the Lord? God did not remove them, they removed themselves. We have a Bible study in our work place and this seems to be an

**ongoing problem to give a clear cut answer to. Please could you help me?**

Your questions are perceptive and very important for understanding the Christian life. I think it's safe to say that Christians are not effectually sinless people. With that in mind, our righteousness is not ours, but Christ's. Granted, a Christian is a regenerated being. We have the Spirit of God living in us and have the freedom to choose right over wrong. But some people seem to be changed overnight, while others are slower about showing the fruits of new birth. We must trust God to have that under consideration as He works in the life of new or not-so-new believers.

It's important that we look at our lives and the lives of others from a broader perspective than we might be used to. God works throughout our whole lives. When we become Christians we can look back at times before our salvation and see that He was working even then. I think we'll also be able to look back in eternity and see where God was working throughout our whole lives (unsaved and saved), when we weren't even aware of it. To get to the point, living "carnally" does not necessarily invalidate a person's claim to salvation. But at the least it ought to call it into question. 1 John 2:3-6 gives us an effective measure of our relationship to Christ. If we know Him, then we'll act like it. If I'm not finding the desire or the ability to follow Christ's will for my life, then I am forced to ask, "Why not?" I can recount many testimonies of people who truly came to know Christ after being in such a predicament.

A believer's security is a very important issue. For if one can forfeit his inheritance, then how many sins will it take to disqualify him. John 10:27-30 does teach that no one is able to "snatch them out of the Father's hand." Paul says in Romans 8:38-39, "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in

all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” So it seems that no one (not even the person himself) or no thing can take us from God.

Better yet, what if he chooses one day to renounce the faith he once held so dearly? I’m in no place to decide if someone’s profession of faith was sincere or not. But we do have the responsibility as brothers and sisters in Christ to challenge each other to bear fruit. If it isn’t being seen, then there ought to be someone who can say, “Hey, I’m not seeing any fruit.” Philippians 1:6 affirms our hope: “Being confident in this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” So, biblically speaking, salvation is for keeps. The question must be, “Is the person who isn’t living for Christ really a Christian at all?” Only God and the person in question can really answer that. Our responsibility as a community of faith is to encourage one another to be true to each other’s profession of faith.

I hope this helps you in your search for truth. He rewards those who seek Him.

Kris Samons  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Can a Christian Lose His Salvation?”**

I have been debating a Christian online about whether salvation is permanent, which I believe it is. I have seen many scriptures that show this is the case but the person I am debating has brought up two verses I have never looked at

before and I don't know how to respond. The verses are 2 Peter 2:20-21:

*"For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them."*

I looked in a couple of commentaries as well as in *When Critics Ask* (by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe) and they either said nothing about it or they didn't address the issue at hand. I have just within the last month or two started getting your newsletter and reading your articles/e-mail responses and I have been very impressed. So I was hoping that you could shed some light on this issue.

You have brought up a great question! The security of every believer is a critical issue in the Christian life. John 10:28-30 assures us that if we are given eternal life by God through Jesus Christ, no one can snatch us from the Father's hand. Romans 8:28-39 also guarantees that nothing in all of reality can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

With that said, there is the issue of the "apparent" problem passages. Of them, 2 Peter 2:20-21 seems a real nasty one. But upon reading the entire epistle from Peter, one can see that the people in question are false teachers. Peter's perspective, as that of Jude in Jude 19, is that these false teachers were not truly Christian. As Jude puts it, they are "wordly-minded, devoid of the Spirit." Most likely these teachers publicly professed Christ as their Lord, but their subsequent rejection verified their unchanged spiritual condition.

The Bible as a whole teaches that believers are securely held

in God's hand. But let us be careful not to judge others because of what we see or don't see. Challenge one another in perseverance to bear fruit, but leave the final judgment to the word of God that is "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Thanks so much for your insightful question. God gives understanding to those who seek it as if searching for buried treasure and precious silver. [Proverbs 2:3-5]

Kris Samons  
Probe Ministries

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## **"Do You Have Anything on Scientology?"**

### **Would you have anything on Scientology?**

To put it bluntly, Scientology is a cult, and one designed to fleece the flock at that.

Watchman Fellowship ([www.watchman.org](http://www.watchman.org)) has a lot of excellent information on Scientology, but let me give you an overview of the problems with this self-proclaimed "church" from Watchman Fellowship's profile on Scientology (<http://www.watchman.org/profile/sientpro.htm>):

#### *Problems with the Founder*

Scientology was founded by L. Ron Hubbard after a career as a science fiction writer in the 1930s. His book *Dianetics* came out in 1950 and the religion of Scientology was established by 1953. Scientology publications have made grandiose claims

about Hubbard such as earning a degree in nuclear physics and a doctorate, becoming a WWII hero who miraculously cured himself of nearly fatal combat wounds, and discovering the secret to curing various diseases—all of which have been shown to be false.

From the Watchman web page cited above:

Biographers have also uncovered Hubbard's involvement with the occult, which probably influenced his writings. Hubbard claimed to have had a near-death experience where he learned everything that ever puzzled the mind of man. The notorious Satanist, Aleister Crowley, was Hubbard's mentor and he lived with Crowley protegee John Parsons, engaging in sex magic at their black magic mansion hospice (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 June 1990, p. A1). Despite the inconsistencies in his history, Hubbard would become one of the wealthiest and most well known leaders of a religious movement in only a few years. As of 1986 over eight million copies of his book *Dianetics* had been sold (*Ibid.*, p. 299). Scientology's methodology and beliefs have led them into a long history of criminal and civil actions and convictions. Both the U.S. Federal and Canadian courts have found top Scientology officials, and the church, guilty of charges such as burglarizing, wiretapping, and conspiracy against government agencies (*Time*, 6 May 1991, p. 50).

## **Problems with Doctrine**

Note the science-fiction terms that Hubbard coined to explain his new "religion." Mankind, at his core, is a *Thetan*. The Thetan is that part of each individual which is immortal and which has become contaminated or debased by the influences of *MEST* (matter, energy, space, time). These contaminating influences have created *engrams*. Engrams are mental recordings of past moments of pain and unconsciousness that need to be cleared out so people can return to their original immortal, god-like, powerful state.



Scientology provides expensive “spiritual counseling” in the form of *Auditing*, where the engrams are cleared out of peoples minds through the use of an *E-meter* (like a lie detector). How many auditing sessions it takes to reach the goal of *Clear* depends, frankly, on how much money one has, up to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Of course, no one successfully reaches this higher state of being because that would put an end to the flow of money.

Scientology claims to be compatible with all other religions. It doesn't have to be practiced in place of any other faith system. It attempts to combine eastern religions and biblical wisdom with western philosophies. Scientology claims not to contradict other religions, but this is not true. Hubbard attacked Christianity as an ‘implant’ and said Christ was fiction. (*A Piece of Blue Sky*, p. 383).

Scientology has had a rocky history with the U.S. government's financial institutions. Tax difficulties, fraud, and embezzlement have been constant sources for friction between the government and the leadership of the “church.”

In addition to some of the obvious problems with Scientology, there are many apparent dangers. Despite calling itself a church (obviously for the tax benefits), it seems to be disinterested in the concept of God while preoccupied with the doctrine of Man. Since men are inherently good in this worldview, the Christian view of sin is treated with contempt. Men do not need salvation through Jesus Christ; they only need to be cleared of their painful memories through the expensive Auditing process.

Watchman Fellowship recommends these resources (most of which are now available on the Web; links are provided):

1) *Scientology: Cult of the Stars*. Various articles on Scientology written by Watchman Fellowship staff and previously published in the *Expositor*. Includes information on

lawsuits filed against Watchman by Scientology, various doctrinal papers and Scientology President's claim to be a practicing Mormon. 23 pages.

2) [\*A Piece of Blue Sky\*](#), Jon Atack. This book was written by a former Scientologist who is one of the premiere experts on the subject. It traces the history and sordid details of the organization. Interesting quote from the book: "It was 1950, in the early, heady days of Dianetics, soon after L. Ron Hubbard opened the doors of his first organization to the clamoring crowd. Up until then, Hubbard was known only to readers of pulp fiction, but now he had an instant best-seller with a book that promised to solve every problem of the human mind, and the cash was pouring in. Hubbard found it easy to create schemes to part his new following from their money. One of the first tasks was to arrange "grades" of membership, offering supposedly greater rewards, at increasingly higher prices. Over thirty years later, an associate wryly remembered Hubbard turning to him and confiding, no doubt with a smile, "Let's sell these people a piece of blue sky." 428 pages, Hardback.

3) [\*L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?\*](#) Brent Corydon. Written by a former high ranking member with the help of L. Ron Hubbard, Jr. (the founder's son), this book exposes the "corruption and mind-control" of Scientology. 402 pages.

4) [\*Understanding Scientology\*](#), Margery Wakefield and Bob Penny. Ex-Scientologists, now Christian, give detailed understanding of the inner workings, beliefs and front organizations of Scientology. 167 pages.

5) [\*The Road to Xenu\*](#) and [\*Social Control in Scientology\*](#). An autobiographical account revealing the methodology and unethical induction techniques in novel form. 169 pages.

Hope this helps.

Kris Samons and Sue Bohlin

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