



### Reason 3: The Moral Argument



Recently in London and New York, atheist groups advertised on buses, asking the question, "Why believe in a god?" They answer their own question, saying "Just be good for goodness' sake". They are saying, you don't have to believe in God to be good; you can be good without God.

Can someone be good without God? Sure, but that depends on how you define "Good". Ask yourself what is good? What is your ideal in life? Someone might see "good" to acquire great wealth, power and rule the earth and kill all people who don't have the same skin color, this to him is "good". Maybe you might define "good" as caring for others

and helping those who can't help themselves. How can we determine a standard for good? Let look at the options:

1. We determine what is good
2. Society determines what is good
3. Nature determines what is good
4. There is no good
5. God determines good



Rolls Royce Wraith 2014 \$285,000

We determine what is "Good"

Each person determines their own good! The problem with this a logical position is what is good for one person is not good for another. If for example you liked the Royals Royce Wraith 2014 with sticker price of \$285,000 and you could not afford one, but your neighbor had a nice blue one. If you walked over to your neighbors house, killed him with a knife and took possession of his car, it would be "good" for you, but bad for your neighbor. So in the end, this argument for being good falls apart because each person's definition of good is the standard for good.

- Does Society Determine what is "Good"

Someone might respond, society determines what is good. The problem with society determining the good is the same problem with a person; it only extends the argument to a larger group. For example, if a society of 10,000, **group A**, likes the cars, Royals Royce Wraiths, owned by a society of 1,000, **group B**, if group A kills group B and takes their cars is this wrong? If we say society determines what is right and wrong, group A is a society and group B is a society. The "good" for group A is "bad" for group B.

Any nation or ethnic group is a society, so if "good" was defined by the standard of the society, good would be determined by what society had more power to enforce its rules and laws on any weaker society. Take for example the Nazi of Germany, they killed and oppressed and confiscated the goods of Jews, was this right or wrong? If we say society determines what is right and wrong, we can say it was right, because the more powerful was enforcing its rules on the weaker. Society was determining what was right.

If society determines what is good, good will always change as more powerful groups take over weaker ones and enforce their rules.

Does Nature Determine what is good?



Someone might respond and say nature determines what is right and wrong, since we are the product of evolution, and we can see the fittest survive, then it follows nature itself determines what is right and wrong. If we see a lion kill a gazelle, is that good or bad? What about a shark killing a seal, is that good or bad? Its neither good or bad, it nature would be the reply of many. It's the way the world works, survival of the fittest.

So if nature teaches the strongest and smartest animal has the natural right to dominate and control the weaker, then this is "good"? So a stronger people or nation determining what is good is only an extension of nature determining what is good and bad.

Again looking at Nazi Germany, we have the same situation, a stronger people and nation, the Germans preyed upon a weaker people the Jews. Was what Germany did only a nature taking its course, so it was good because nature determined what is good? Today the Nazi symbols are seen as a symbol of evil in the secular world, because they killed 6,000,000 million Jews in World War II.

This question of right and wrong (good and bad) is the same problem faced when the victors of World War II wanted to prosecute the Nazi for war crimes. Under what moral authority could they prosecuted? The Nazi claimed they were only following orders of their government; they did not have a choice.

So if Germany would have won WWII, then would the Nazi have been hero's and allies evil? If we use nature as the determent of what is good and evil then we could say yes. Since the more powerful and intelligent has the right to impose on the weaker, this is what nature



teaches.

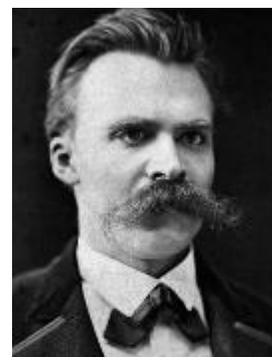
There is no good



If good is dependent on the more powerful determining its will on the weaker is there really and standard of good? The answer is NO, because the standard will always change since the authority is only who is more powerful. This eventually leads to the position of Nihilism. Encyclopedia Britannica defines this term as,

Fundamentally, nihilism represented a philosophy of negation of all forms of aestheticism; it advocated utilitarianism and scientific rationalism.

The social sciences and classical philosophical systems were rejected entirely. Nihilism represented a crude form of positivism and materialism, a revolt against the established social order; it negated all authority exercised by the state, by the church, or by the family. It based its belief on nothing but scientific truth; science became the cure-all for social problems. All evils, nihilists believed, derived from a single source—ignorance—which science alone would overcome.<sup>1</sup>



Frederick Nietzsche  
1844-1900

<sup>1</sup> Nihilism: Encyclopedia Britannica 2004 Edition

Nihilism is the logical conclusion of atheism. If there is no God, then there is no moral authority of what is right and wrong. The only authority is power to be imposed on the weaker. Life is meaningless, all assumptions of what are good and bad are only illusions to placate the masses. The atheist philosopher Frederick Nietzsche realized this in his writings, Encyclopedia Britannica comments,

With the collapse of metaphysical and theological foundations and sanctions for traditional morality only a pervasive sense of purposelessness and meaninglessness would remain. And the triumph of meaninglessness is the triumph of nihilism: "God is dead." Nietzsche thought, however, that most men could not accept the eclipse of the ascetic ideal and the intrinsic meaninglessness of existence but would seek supplanting absolutes to invest life with meaning. He thought the emerging nationalism of his day represented one such ominous surrogate god, in which the nation-state would be invested with transcendent value and purpose.<sup>2</sup>

So if there is no God, then good and bad are meaningless terms, they only refer to flavor of the day, this is the logical conclusion.

*God is the definer of Good*

This is the point of the Moral Argument for the existence of God, for Good to exist there must be a standard of Good to determine what is Good and Bad outside of society itself.

C.S. Lewis, a Christian philosopher and writer, wrote about this dilemma in his book *Mere Christianity*. His arguments are summarized by Norman Geisler<sup>3</sup>;

1. There must be a universal moral law, or else:  
(a) Moral disagreements would make no sense, as we all assume they do. (b) All moral criticisms would be meaningless (e.g. "The Nazis were wrong."). (c) It is unnecessary to keep promises or treaties, as we all assume that it is. (d) We would not make excuses for breaking the moral law, as we all do.
2. But a universal moral law requires a universal Moral Law Giver, since the Source of it:  
(a) Gives moral commands (as lawgivers do) (b) Is interested in our behavior (as moral persons are).
3. Further, this universal Moral Law Giver must be absolutely good: (a) Otherwise all moral effort would be futile in the long run, since we could be sacrificing our lives for what is not ultimately right. (b) The source of all good must be absolutely good, since the standard of all good must be completely good.
4. Therefore, there must be an absolutely good Moral Law Giver

*God as the Moral Law Giver*

However, if God does exist, then moral absolutes exist. For example; You are invited to a house for a party, when you enter the house you become the guest of the owner. As a guest, you have privileges; you can eat freely of the food, sit in the chairs provided, talk with other guests; use the restroom, play the piano and have a good time. However, since you are an invited guest and not the owner you have restrictions. You cannot paint the walls, break the windows, be disrespectful and harmful to other guest or the owner or destroy property. As long as you abide by the terms of being a guest, you are free to stay at the party. Living in the world, we are guests of God.

We are in the world; the one who owns the world has the right to determine what the rules on His property are, today we call this property rights. The owner of the house can tear down walls, break his windows, smash the furniture, but the guest does not have the same privilege. God has the right to determine what is acceptable and not acceptable. God has revealed what is acceptable through individuals, recorded in His word the Bible.

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<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche's mature philosophy: Encyclopedia Britannica 2004 Edition

<sup>3</sup> Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Baker Books, 1999 pg. 500, Norman L. Geisler



**If God made the Earth, does he have the right to set the rules?**

The question of what is Truth? Who is God? Why the Bible? Are separate issues. But we must agree that “If there is a God and He did make the World, then He has the right to establish what is right and wrong”, and if there is no God, then we are free to do what we want. We are nothing more than accidents and we are on an equal footing with animals and insects. One day we will cease to exist, like a leaf, falling from the tree and decays into dirt.

Scripture: The Ten Commandments are an example of God telling his guests what is acceptable.

<sup>1</sup>And God spoke all these words, saying:

<sup>2</sup>“I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

<sup>3</sup>“You shall have no other gods before Me.

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup>you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. 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, <sup>6</sup>but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

<sup>7</sup>“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

<sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

<sup>12</sup>“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>“You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>“You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>“You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

**Exodus 20:1-17**

## Dialogue between a Christian and a Moral Relativist

Scene: Joe and Mike are two high school friends. Who meet 10 years after High School; in those 10 years, Joe comes to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and changes his life to conform to a Christian worldview. Mike remembers the old Joe who loved to go out and party, dance and have a good time with the girls. After not seeing each other for a number of years, they run into each other at a mutual friend's house. While sitting down on the couch they hear the news the Massachusetts Supreme Court has just removed the ban on same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. Joe Christian, upon hearing the news acts disgusted and makes a comment that begins the following exchange.

**Mike Skeptic:** What's wrong Joe?

**Joe Christian:** This country is in trouble when judges don't see the difference between marriage of heterosexuals and homosexuals.

**Mike Skeptic:** Well Joe we live in a different age, we are seeing civil rights extended to groups who have been prevented from being part of society, we are becoming more tolerant of other views.

**Joe:** Mike, What the basis of right and wrong?

**Mike:** As long as you don't hurt people, everything is ok.

**Joe:** So is there anywhere you draw a line of right or wrong?

**Mike:** Joe, As long as you have two consenting adults, there should be no limits.

**Joe:** What about prostitution? Shouldn't polygamy also be legal since they are consenting adults?

**Mike:** You ask a lot of questions! I don't see a problem with prostitution. As far as marriage between two people, we need to keep some order in our society. And culture really determines what is right and wrong. If the majority of the people in this country don't see a problem then it's ok with me.

**Joe:** So do you think the culture and society determine what is right and wrong?

**Mike:** We live in a pluralistic society and *morality is relative*, that's just the way it is Joe.

**Joe:** What if the majority of the people in the United States thought Hitler was right, and they wanted to kill the Jews? Would they be right or wrong?

**Mike:** Joe, don't be silly we are not talking about Nazi Germany, we are talking about the United States.

**Joe:** Mike, the United States was founded on a Judea-Christian worldview, with moral absolutes of "Right and Wrong" if morality is just relative, does it matter what you think is right or wrong? Can we condemn Hitler's Germany and say he was wrong in what he did? Aren't we *intolerant* and *judgmental* if we reject Hitler's view because he disagrees with us?

**Mike:** He was wrong because he hurt people

**Joe:** So if you are saying there *is wrong* then there must also *be right*, correct? Are you now saying morality is not relative? That as long as you do not hurt people everything is ok.

**Mike:** Yes, that my position as long as you don't hurt people, everything is ok

**Joe:** What is the basis of your Morality? Who or What says you should not hurt your fellow man?

**Mike:** Well society says it

**Joe:** Doesn't society always change? Won't they change again?

**Mike:** Have you become religious on me?

**Joe:** If God made the world, doesn't he have the right to set the rules?

**Mike:** Who says there is a God? In addition, who says what the truth is?

**Joe:** Well I was asking myself that very same question 7 years ago, that's when I found the God of the Bible is God.

## Quotes from Moral Movers

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain the privation of pleasure.”

**John Stuart Mill** (1806-1873) *Utilitarianism*

Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence.

Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism.

**Jean-Paul Sartre** (1905-1980)

The bad man is the man who no matter how good he has been is beginning to deteriorate, to grow less good. The good man is the man who no matter how morally unworthy he has been is moving to become better. Such a conception makes one severe in judging himself and humane in judging others. It excludes the arrogance which always accompanies judgment based on degree of approximation to fixed ends.

**John Dewey** (1859-1952) *Reconstruction in Philosophy*

“Since there is no God to will what is good, we must will our own good. And since there is no eternal value, we must will the eternal recurrence of the same state of affairs.”

**Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900)

The stronger must dominate and not mate with the weaker, which would signify the sacrifice of its own higher nature. Only the born weakling can look upon this principle as cruel, and if he does so it is merely because he is of a feebler nature and narrower mind; for if such a law did not direct the process of evolution then the higher development of organic life would not be conceivable at all...If Nature does not wish that weaker individuals should mate with stronger, she wishes even less that a superior race should intermingle with an inferior one; because in such a case all her efforts, throughout hundreds of thousands of years, to establish an evolutionary higher stage of being, may thus be rendered futile.

**Adolph Hitler**, *Mein Kampf*

Make war upon such of those to whom the scriptures have been given as believe not in God, or in the last day, and who forbid not that which God and His Apostle have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of the truth, until they pay tribute out of hand, and they be humbled.

**Mohammed** (Surah 9:29) (570-632 AD)

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself’ all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments”

**Jesus** *Matthew 22:37-40* (0-33 AD)