

How to Make Moral Choices

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The Big-Picture Truth: God has provided everything believers need to make decisions that are consistent with faith in Him.

Understanding #1: The Bible must be every Christian's authoritative source for moral choices.

What supports this conclusion?

- The Old Testament

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8 (New International Version)

If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?" Proverbs 24:12 (NIV)

- The example of Jesus (See Mark 7:8; 24)

"You put aside God's command and obey human teachings."⁹ And Jesus continued, "¹¹. . . you teach that if a person has something he could use to help his father or mother, but says, 'This is Corban' (which means, it belongs to God), ¹²he is excused from helping his father or mother. ¹³In this way the teaching you pass on to others cancels out the word of God . . ." Mark 7:8-13 (Good News Bible)

- The New Testament

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

"*sola scriptura*" = Latin = "Scripture alone"

Understanding #2: A Christian's moral choices are guided best when he or she organizes those choices around three levels of Scriptural commands.

Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.
1 John 5:3 (New Living Translation)

- The first level of biblical commands is a biblical rule.

Rules tell believers directly, concretely and specifically what to do and what not to do.

Examples: James 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Corinthians 10:8

- The second level of biblical commands is a biblical principle.

Principles are general expressions of God's moral truth that do not tell us directly and concretely what to do.

Examples: . . . "Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39 (NIV)

See also Philippians 2:4; James 2

- The third level of commands are the biblical convictions we hold about God.

The core theological convictions about the character, activity and will of God.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:44-45 (NIV)