

# Our Moral Compass

I have had the same conversation with many people over the years. The state of our world and the human condition and it all boils down to our moral compass.

## Introduction

The world is full of troubles. You may not agree with us, but we believe it is because we are living in a lost and dying world. The state of our world is a direct result of the original sin; man's disobedience to God. Whether you agree with us on the cause or not, we are sure we agree on the fact that humanity is heading down a path that is getting more inward-focused, more selfish, and more decadent, every day. What can we do as Christians and ambassadors of Heaven?

## Be True Disciples of Christ

First and foremost, we must truly follow Christ. We must truly be his disciples. That means we make Jesus our Lord and our teacher, not someone else. We must study his teachings and apply them to our lives each day, not just once a week, or twice a year. Our moral compass must be founded in our faith and love of God through Jesus Christ.

We know Jesus turned the world upside down when he started his ministry 2000 years ago. Jesus was being called Rabbi, that is master or teacher. In Jewish tradition at the time, to be called a rabbi you had to study under a rabbi who was your teacher or master. He would teach you what he knew and how to teach what he knew. You devoted your life to this rabbi and his teachings. To be a rabbi, you had to study under one and were ordained, so to speak, to teach.

Jesus did the unthinkable. He called disciples to himself and started teaching them. He taught with authority and really upset the teachers of the law, or the rabbis and Pharisees. He taught differently. Let's read Matthew 23:8-12

### Matthew 23:8-12

(8) "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. (9) And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. (10) Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. (11) The greatest among you will be your servant. (12) For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Jesus is instructing his disciples that he is the teacher, not them. Even though they will teach what he has taught them, it is all to point back to him. Jesus is the only teacher, the only master. The disciples were all equal, none more important than any other. As others joined them, the same held true.

## The World's Way

Today the world's ways have entered the church so much and at such a foundational level that we are not much better than the Pharisees 2000 years ago. People are more interested in titles and who is in charge, than coming together, honoring each other as valuable members of the body, and working together in each person's strengths. There is bickering and jealousy which lead to church splits and



pushing people away from Christ. I believe this is what Jesus is referring to when he is recorded in Matthew 16:21-23.

#### Matthew 16:21-23

(21) From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. (22) Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" (23) Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Peter was thinking like the world; everyone else. He wasn't thinking like a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was reacting and speaking out of human wisdom, and emotion. His thoughts were not focused on Jesus, they were focused on his own desires. He didn't want to lose Jesus and he did not yet understand what Jesus came to accomplish and how it had to be accomplished. Jesus rebuked him for thinking like everybody else, not like a disciple of Christ.

To think like Christ means to see the world as Christ sees the world. It means to love people and have compassion for people as Christ loves people and has compassion for people. Jesus needs to be our moral compass.

Our laws and customs cannot replace what we know to be true in Christ.

#### Legislating Morality

We have tried to legislate morality for generations. Without a moral compass, you cannot legislate anything that is agreeable to anyone. When we each decide what is right and wrong for ourselves, we cannot find common ground.

What is our moral compass? It is the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as Jesus teaches them. But here is the difficult part. We cannot make it black and white. We cannot make laws to meet every single circumstance. People must be taught to understand the teachings of Jesus, so they can make decisions and choices that are honoring to God with or without legislation forcing it.

Trying to legislate morality always falls short. Look at what Jesus says recorded in Matthew chapter 5.

#### Matthew 5:21-22

(21) "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' (22) But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

#### Matthew 5:27-28

(27) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' (28) But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.



### Matthew 5:38-41

(38) "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' (39) But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. (40) And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. (41) If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

### Matthew 5:43-48

(43) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) that you may be children 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. (46) If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? (47) And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? (48) Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

### Conclusion

There used to be a popular commercial on television for a credit card and the tagline at the end of the commercial is always, "What's in your wallet?" Our question for you today is, "What's in your heart?"

You can meet the letter of the law and still miss God completely. Loving God and following his commandments as it says in Ecclesiastes is more than memorizing a list of dos and don'ts and making sure you don't miss any. It is about examining your heart.

Your heart is where Jesus takes up residence when you ask him to be your Lord and savior. Your heart is with you every moment of every day. Your moral compass is not only with you when you are attending a traditional church service or worship service. Jesus and his teachings are your moral compass, and they need to be with you all day every day.

If all the world followed Jesus and put others first before themselves, we would not need any laws. If everyone loved the Lord with their whole heart and trusted him with everything, written laws would be meaningless.

Ultimately remember what Jesus teaches us the greatest commandment is in Matthew 22:36-40.

### Matthew 22:36-40

(36) "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" (37) Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

We must keep Jesus' teaching first and foremost in our hearts. We must love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and love others as we love ourselves. If we can do that, everything else, every other law, every other rule, and regulation, will all fall into place.

What's in your heart? Let Jesus be your moral compass.

