

Podcast Companion

Is the Bible infallible?

In today's session we're continuing our review of the Bible's infallibility. By way of reminder, the idea for this blog is to *supplement* and *support* as the companion for the [podcast session of the week](#), and also to *expand* on some of the stuff that gets said. This helps me keep the times of the podcast down, but also helps you if you find something particularly interesting and want to look further into it – I've already done the leg work for you!

So, basically, **go and listen to the podcast and *then* come back and read this!**

Now let's get into the nuts and bolts of the podcast, and remind ourselves of why we're here.

Is the Bible infallible? Does it teach us things that aren't true?

Does it matter either way?

Well, if you've listened to episodes 1 & 2 of the new podcast, you should already know where we're going with this!

But, to recap – if the Bible teaches us things that aren't true, then we can't place it as the authority in our lives.

Additionally, if we believe the Bible is both God's Word and the way He has revealed himself to us, we quite naturally try to take it seriously and live how God recommends to us, primarily through trying to live like Jesus. What if this leads us to a worldview that doesn't work? Or has glaring issues that either refute or contradict itself?

That's why we're exploring 3 major elements of the Christian worldview, directly from the Bible, to see if the underpinning teachings are true. If these are true, or more likely true than false, then we can feel *far, far* more confident that the rest is also true.

Let's review the three underpinnings of the Christian faith:

1. Without God, life has no meaning, purpose or value
2. Without God, good and bad, good and evil, right and wrong are all meaningless terms
3. Without God, humanity does not have any inherent value

In today's podcast we looked at #2 – without God, good and bad, good and evil, right and wrong are all meaningless terms.

We began the podcast by exploring the difference between objective and subjective and I gave some examples of both.

But, to recap, subjective means something that is subject-relative, and objective means something that is object-relative.

To go further than the podcast, when we use these terms we're usually referring to truth claims or statements. So, for example, saying "I feel happy that Boris Johnson is prime minister" is a subjective statement about an objective truth claim. The feeling of happiness is the subjective element, and

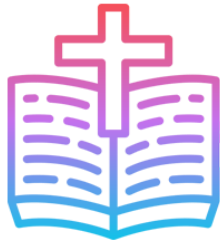
Boris being prime minister is the objective truth claim.

P.S. We should be praying for Boris, he's tested positive for Corona and is already having a desperately tough time given the situation!

So, why does this matter at all?

If something is subjective, there's no obligation to observe it! If something is purely opinion, on what basis can you make a claim that is obligatory, or even worth observing?

We'll come back to this.



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on what basis can you claim
it's obligatory to observe?

Secondly, we looked at something called 'morality'. Here's the dictionary definition of morality:

"Principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour"

So, morality is basically the thing that defines right and wrong, good and bad. It's important to note that there's no explanation here about where the principles or definitions come from, they're just supposed as actual.

We then discussed the ideas of moral *duties* and *values*. Now, I explained this fairly concisely in the podcast so I won't dedicate much time to this now, we'll dissect this in a moment, but just to remind you -

Moral *values* are the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behaviour and choices. Moral *duties* refer to your obligation to observe the moral values, where the inaction would lead to moral failure.

- For a really good, quick and easy explanation of objective moral values and duties, [here's a short clip of William Lane Craig going through it.](#)
- Or you can watch [this interesting exchange between Frank Turek and a young lady at a Q&A](#) discussing how morality seemingly changes.
- [Or this very interesting exchange in a Q&A](#) between Ravi Zacharias and an atheist questioner during a Q&A

So, we have two different things to look at here – moral values and moral duties.

Let's look at each separately.

Moral Values

As we've said already, moral values are that which is right or wrong. This would be considered the absolute base of morality, the foundation of morality, which the dictionary definition we already looked at is alluding to.

Now, for extra clarity, there's another part to the definition I want to draw our attention to:

“The extent to which an action is right or wrong”

This is the tertiary meaning of the word ‘morality’.

Now, you might be wondering why that’s relevant, or even interesting (I told you, I’m a nerd), but here’s the key phrase – “the extent to which”. This is interesting because it implies that there are things that are *more* or *less* morally good/bad. If that’s the case, then there is a ‘scale’ upon which moral actions are measured.

Could this be the case?

Well, let’s look at two different scenarios.

Imagine there’s a couple who are having a hard time at home, and one day the husband flies into a rage and hits his wife. That’s morally bad, we all know that. It would be morally *worse* for him, in the same situation, to fly into a rage and shoot her.

Conversely, imagine you’re at a train station waiting for your train and you see a disabled man struggling up the stairs. It would be morally good for you to get someone to help him, it would be morally *better* to go and help him yourself.

Does that make sense? Do we all see that there’s a scale upon which we rank moral actions?

Let’s take this a step further – if morality is on a scale, where does a scale get its meaning? In its measurements. Meaning for something to be *better* it is *closer to the top*, for something to be *worse* it is *closer to the bottom*.

I’m sure you can see where this is going.

What might be at the top of the scale?

The epitome of goodness! Moral perfection! That’s what’s at the top of the scale – the moral perfection by which all other moral actions are measured.

A scale is meaningless without a reference point or standard of measurement.

If we have a scale, a measurement, and a pinnacle of objective moral perfection, then moral values are objective.



If we have a scale, a measurement,
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Moral Duties

Now, as we said already, moral duties are the obligations you have to observe and follow the moral values.

That is to say, if moral values exist, then we are obliged to follow them.

“Now, hang on”, you may think, “who do I owe a duty to?!”

And that’s a spot on observation which we’re about to tackle – how perspicacious you are!

Moral duties are not owed in isolation, you don’t have a duty to yourself alone, and you don’t have duties to things. Duties are something that you owe to *someone* else.

But who could that possibly be?

The only person to whom you could possibly owe something to, in a moral sense, is a perfectly moral being. The only morally perfect being in existence is God, because if He wasn’t morally perfect He couldn’t be God (boom – mind blown).

Some might counter this by saying we have a moral obligation to one another, to look after each other and not just be outright destructive to human flourishing, and on the face of it that seems like a legit thing to say!

However, as I said before, duties do not exist in isolation. So, whilst we may have a duty to care for, say, our families, it's not because we owe *them*, but rather we owe God. We owe our moral duties to a morally perfect being. Additionally, the idea of it being *good* to care for the family can't come from the family or people themselves, it's the *value* of it being good to care for your family that informs the duty.

Then, as I said in the podcast, they may appeal to evolution as the thing to take the place of God in this instance... but this doesn't work!

I won't go through all the reasons I detailed in the podcast, because you can just listen to that, but I'll summarise some here and then just give resources for you to follow up on.

If evolution was the origin of our moral duties, it would still not be able to account for the *values* of morality. There is no reason, on evolution, to state why these are good.

The morality we observe doesn't all necessarily benefit survival of the race – for example, being self-sacrificial is morally good, but doesn't often help the human race survive.

The survival of the species, on evolution, is the survival of the fittest. This does not lend itself at all to the objective morality we observe, because the survival of the fittest inherently comes at the expense of the weak.

Another issue you might raise is the argument that morally good actions are morally good because evolution says they're good and our morality has been created through evolution is circular reasoning and thus inadequate to explain...anything!

Additionally, evolution doesn't have any filtering or selecting for *truth*! There's every reason to believe that we could evolve to do or believe something that is untrue, because evolution is concerned with survival, not truth.

If you want more on this, here are some resources for you to look into!

- Greg Koukl, author of the fantastic book 'Tactics', has written [this very good article on evolution and morality](#)
- [Here's a wonderfully short but impactful article](#) by Frank Turek discussing the issues faced by someone pushing evolution as the creator of morality
- Or [this great short video of Brett Kunkle on the One-Minute Apologist](#) giving some quick-fire notes on evolution and morality

So, let's move back to our discussion of the podcast as I move now to the super brief discussion of the moral argument, which goes thusly:

P1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist

P2. Objective moral values and duties do exist

C1. Therefore, God exists

As I said in the podcast, this is something I'm intending to go through in great detail in a future youth session, but we can have a short look at it here.

On the first premise, this is basically the summary of what I've been discussing here and in the episode itself – without a transcendent, morally perfect, law-giver we have no explanation for anything other than subjective morality. There is no objectivity to be found in evolution, or each other.

The world this presents is simply unliveable, which is why no one lives that way, as we've already

discussed.

Consider this – if someone stole your wallet, would you claim that’s unjust? If you stole someone’s wallet, would they claim it was wrong to do so?

Do you think this changes for atheists? Unlikely. Despite not believing in there being a ‘higher plane’, as Plato had it, they borrow from it to justify their moral opinions.

This ties nicely into the second premise – everyone lives as though morality is objective, regardless of if they believe it to be otherwise.

Our entire society revolves around the idea that some things are bad and some are good.

People might argue that we live according to the law because it’s better for us... but you may ask “how is it *better*?”

To which they may respond that you are doing the best for society by not breaking its rules and a strong society is best for us. You might ask “what’s *the best* for society?”

Again, they may respond and say anything that causes no harm to come to others, allowing flourishing. You could ask “why is it *good* to not cause harm?” or “why is it *good* for people to flourish?”

This can go on and on, as they never have an actual standard to which to tie their beliefs, they simply have to run down this rabbit hole of “well, I think it’s better if...” without ever getting to a definite. Additionally, if you disagree that objective morality exists, then there’s no validity to your claims of injustice, unfairness, evil, anything!

Richard Dawkins once famously denied that objective morality exists... then proceeded to harangue Christians for ‘persecuting gay people’, which I didn’t think we did much of, quite honestly, but that’s another story.

Does he have a leg to stand on? Not really. It’s just his opinion, according to his own worldview.

We all know and act as though morality is objective – some things are just *wrong* and some are just *right*.

We as Christians would argue this is rooted in God’s goodness as the moral standard, but a world without God has nothing to base this in.



Christians can base objective morality in
God’s goodness, but a world without
God has nothing to base it in

We could find swathes of scripture to back this claim up, but for the sake of brevity here’s three great examples of God’s moral standards:

Romans 2:15 – *“They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them”*

Matthew 5:48 – *“You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”*

Acts 5:29 – *“But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men”*

As we can see, there is a definite teaching that God’s requirements, His laws, transcend that which mere mankind can concoct or create. Furthermore, this shows our duty to observe these moral laws. We also see God’s moral perfection and credentials to give out moral duties.

My favourite of the three, however, is Romans 2:15 – the exclusive claim that we all have a

knowledge of objective moral values and duties, as God has written them on our hearts, regardless of our ideology.

Which leads us, inescapably, to the conclusion – therefore, God exists.

As I say, I'll deal with this in more thorough detail in the future, but that's an easy introduction to one of the best arguments for the existence of God – the moral argument!

If you would like to pre-empt further sessions on the moral argument, then here's some resources for you!

- [This short Zangmeister video](#) introducing the basics of the moral argument
- [This article from Reasonable Faith on the moral argument](#) – this is a lot more in-depth so tread carefully here. This is also part 1 of a series, so prepare to commit some time to this!
- Or [this longer but worthwhile article from Stand to Reason](#), going through multiple facets of the moral argument from a perspective of speaking to another person.

Hopefully this will utilise your time well as you continue to explore God, the bible and its claims!

So, we'll wrap up here.

The Bible affirms that good and evil, moral values and duties, exist. We, in our everyday experiences, can rationally and justifiably believe that objective moral values and duties exist. If God did not exist, this would not be true. Therefore, it's reasonable to also assume that God exists...

But more on that in future.

Hopefully you've found this companion helpful!

Make sure you check back on [Chawn Hill's Connect page](#) every Sunday to see what has been uploaded, and follow along with these companions.

If you're on Instagram then follow Chawn Youth @chawnyouth, and if you're on WhatsApp we'd love to have you in the youth chat so we can keep in-touch through all this.

Continue checking in on one another, keeping in-touch (figuratively, not literally – 2metres minimum please) and praying for one another.

Speak to you all next week.