

Always Be Ready to Give a Defence (7)

Background

In previous weeks, we've considered reasons to believe in God based on the existence, beginning and fine-tuning of the universe. Today we're going to consider a reason to believe in God based on objective moral values and duties.

Questions

Moral values describe whether something is good or bad; moral duties describe our obligation to act in a certain way.

- What *could* form the basis for moral values and duties? For a Christian, what *should* they be based upon?

To say that there are objective moral values is to say that something is good or bad no matter what people think. Similarly to say that there are objective moral duties is to say that some actions are right or wrong no matter what people think.

- Which of these actions do you think are objectively wrong: rape, torture, and child abuse? Which of these actions do you think are objectively right: love, generosity, and self-sacrifice?

Almost everyone will accept that objective moral values and duties do exist. But there would be no basis for such values and duties if God did not exist. Putting this another way, if human beings were merely the result of a purposeless evolutionary process, we could not say whether our actions were really right or wrong. We could only say whether they were socially or biologically beneficial.

This is not to imply that *belief in God* is necessary for someone to do good. It is to say that *the existence of God* is necessary for something to be more than just socially beneficial.

Conclusion

Since most people are convinced that there really is good and bad, and right and wrong, this is a useful argument for the existence of God.

Matthew 5:17-48

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. ¹⁸For assuredly, **I say to you**, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For **I say to you**, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹“**You have heard that it was said** to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ ²²**But I say to you** that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. ²³Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny...

⁴³“**You have heard that it was said**, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴**But I say to you**, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.