

# Testing Morality

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if you would turn with me this evening to the Gospel according to Luke, in chapter 10.

The Gospel according to Luke, chapter 10, page 1046. Page 1046 of using the Pew Bible.

With the Lord's help, we'll look at these verses. Luke, chapter 10, and if we read the verses, verse 25 down to the verse Mark 28. And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said to him, What is written in the law? How do you read it? He answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.

And he said to him, You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live. Do this, and you will live.

[ 1 : 30 ] I wonder if you saw the documentary that was on a few weeks ago.

It was a documentary about Down syndrome children. It was a really interesting documentary, and it raised a lot of discussion and a lot of debate.

Not only because the documentary was presented by the actress Sally Phillips, and she has a son who has Down syndrome. But it also caused discussion and debate because Sally Phillips was asking the question that, as a nation, are we trying to produce a society without Down syndrome people?

And Sally Phillips made the documentary on the premise of what kind of society do we want to live in? And who do we think should be allowed to live in it?

And this question was asked because Sally Phillips discovered that when pregnant women in Britain are screened for Down syndrome, she said that nine out of ten terminate their pregnancy.

[ 2 : 38 ] And by law, they're allowed to terminate pregnancy right up until birth. And in the documentary Sally Phillips, she travelled to Iceland because Iceland has a 100% abortion rate for Down syndrome pregnancies.

And of course, the purpose of the programme was to raise awareness of Down syndrome, and that Down syndrome people are still human beings, precious human beings.

But there was one point in the documentary which stuck out for me, and that was when Sally Phillips went to visit a scientist. And this scientist, he had screened his unborn baby's DNA to check for any, what he called, abnormalities, which not only included Down syndrome, but also every disease he could possibly find, so that he could be sure, he wanted to be sure that his son, when he was going to be born, would be healthy.

But more than that, this father now, he confessed that had his son had Down syndrome or any other abnormality, he would have terminated the pregnancy.

But his reasoning behind testing his son's DNA, to see if his son was healthy or not, or ultimately to see if his son would live or die, his reasoning was based upon the principle that science has no morality.

[ 4 : 04 ] And just to quote the father, he said, Science has no morality. Science just tells you, you can do what you want with the science. Science has no morality.

And you know, my friend, that statement, it was frightening. And it's frightening because many people in our 21st century and society, they have made science their God, where they don't believe in God, but they believe in science.

And they claim that science has disproved the existence of God, and that they affirm that the theory of evolution is now fact. But if we make science our God and our compass for life, then we have no morals.

There is no moral compass to follow because science has no morality. And because science has no morality, we can do what we want, we can live the way we want, no one can tell us what to do, no one can stop us in what we're doing because there is no moral standard.

Standard. And sad to say, that's the direction our nation is headed in, and is already in. But what we must be clear on is that science and the Bible are not a demnity with one another.

[ 5 : 22 ] They never are. Science doesn't actually disprove the existence of God, because it actually affirms the existence of God. The wonder of science proves that there is a designer behind it all.

And in fact, there are more scientists in the world who are Christians than scientists who are atheists. It's a myth that every scientist has to be an atheist.

But what every scientist will say is that science has no morality. Because science is just based upon the figures, the facts, the chemistry. And so the reason so many people make science their God, and they claim that they are atheists, or that evolution is the only true explanation of our existence, the reason people want to make all these claims is because they want to suppress their moral conscience.

They want to suppress their moral conscience. But as many of you know, you don't need science to suppress your moral conscience. We can do that with anything.

We can do that by making anything or any person our God. But the question I want us to ask this evening is, if science has no morality, then where does morality come from?

[ 6 : 41 ] If science has no morality, then where does morality come from? And of course, as we continue our study of the Catechism, we'll see that morality comes from God, and that our morality as human beings, it proves the existence of God.

But this evening, we are testing morality. We are testing morality. And I want us to test morality in three ways, because when we test morality, we see that we have a moral conscience, and we have been given a moral command, and it requires a moral commitment.

And so we are testing morality. And we see a moral conscience, a moral command, and a moral commitment.

So we look firstly at a moral conscience. A moral conscience. We read verse 25 again, Luke chapter 10. And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

And so in this passage, Jesus tells us that there was a lawyer who came to Jesus. Luke tells us that there was a lawyer who came to Jesus with a question. And his question was of the greatest importance, because this lawyer raises the subject of eternity.

[ 8 : 10 ] What shall I do to inherit eternal life? But the problem with this lawyer's question was the problem of motive. Because in his mind, he thought that he already knew how to get to heaven.

He thought he already knew how to inherit eternal life. But Luke tells us that this lawyer came to Jesus in order to test him.

He didn't come to Jesus with a genuine concern about his soul. He came to Jesus with a desire to show up the ignorance of Jesus. And I say that because this lawyer knew his Bible.

He knew his Bible inside out and back to front. Because he was a lawyer. He was a lawyer of Mosaic law. He was an expert in the field of the first five books of the Bible.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And they're often referred to as the Torah, the law, the law of Moses. Which means that this lawyer, he was very familiar with the laws of God.

[ 9 : 17 ] And yet he comes to Jesus, who was a rabbi, an educated teacher of the Old Testament, and one who teaches the duties which God requires of man.

And what seems to be so absurd is that this lawyer comes and asks the rabbi a question. A question which he already knows the answer to.

And so what we ought to see is that this lawyer was patronizing Jesus. He was speaking to Jesus in a condescending and belittling manner.

And he was testing him. He was testing him. And what this lawyer was testing was Jesus' knowledge of morality. He was testing morality.

He was testing to see how much Jesus knew of the moral law in comparison to himself. Because in his mind, inheriting eternal life meant keeping the moral law.

[10:15] Inheriting eternal life meant being a good person and being a good neighbour and keeping all of God's commandments. But the question we have to ask is, who told him that?

Who told this lawyer to keep God's law? Who told him that if he was a good person and a good neighbour and he kept the commandments of God, he would inherit eternal life?

Who told him that? Well, I want to suggest that his moral conscience told him. His moral conscience told him. But where does that moral conscience come from?

Where does morality come from? Well, the answer is, it's inbuilt in all of us. It's inbuilt in all of us. Because we were all created with a moral conscience.

That's how God created Adam. He created Adam with a moral conscience by writing the moral law upon his heart. And when God did that, he revealed to Adam the rules for his obedience.

[11:27] God revealed to Adam how he ought to think and act as a human being with regard to God and with regard to his fellow human beings.

God told Adam what he could do and what he couldn't do. And God had written it on Adam's heart. And so Adam knew the duty and the obedience which God required of him.

But more than that, Adam had been given God's revealed will in the Garden of Eden. God had given to Adam the moral law. He had commanded Adam saying, you may eat of every tree of the garden.

And it wasn't a narrow command. God's commands weren't narrow or narrow-minded or shallow or restricting in any way putting boundaries on Adam. Adam had been given everything.

Absolutely everything. He was commanded to enjoy it. Enjoy it. He was commanded to enjoy all the blessings which God had given to him. But out of all that Adam was allowed to do, God said to him, one thing.

[12:37] Out of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it. For in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die. And so God gave to Adam and to every human being a moral conscience.

And he also gave to Adam a moral law. Adam knew the duty and the obedience which God required of him. Adam knew that upon his obedience to God's moral law, he would gain eternal life. But as we know, Adam failed. Adam failed in his duty to God and he failed in his obedience to God. And you remember when Adam failed.

He failed by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And as soon as he failed, it says that Adam and Eve hid themselves. But why did Adam hide himself?

He hid himself because when he sinned, he activated his moral conscience. A moral conscience which told him that what he had done was against God's law.

[13:46] And at that moment he realized that he was naked before God, so he went and hid himself. And when God came walking in the cool of the day and asked Adam, where are you?

Why are you hiding? Who told you that you were naked? It was his moral conscience that told Adam that he was naked before God.

that he no longer had any righteousness of his own to cover himself. He was now naked before God and he knew it.

And this is what's remarkable. Adam's moral conscience told him that what he did was wrong and that it was against God's law. And that moral conscience, it's in every single one of us.

Every single one of us. It's inbuilt in us. It's part of our makeup as human beings because we have been made in the image and the likeness of God.

[14:49] Because where else could morality come from but from God? Everyone in the whole world, whether they believe in God or not, they have a moral conscience.

And we hear it all the time on the news. That when there is a disaster or a humanitarian crisis, and they say, it's our moral obligation to help those in need.

And that's true. It is. But where does that come from? Where does the value of another human being come from? Why do we see the preciousness of life?

Why do we have a desire to help other people who are in need? Where does our moral obligation come from? It doesn't come from science. Because science would tell us to leave them because they don't really matter.

And atheism, if you took it to its logical conclusion, it would tell you that our existence has no purpose whatsoever. We are here by chance and therefore we have no value whatsoever.

[ 15 : 57 ] But everyone knows, even the atheist knows, that that's not true. We have value. We are precious. Because we're made in the image and the likeness of God.

And we have this inbuilt morality which tells us that life is precious. Which means that morality and our moral obligation comes from our moral conscience.

which was given to us by God. Because without anyone having to tell us, nobody has to tell us the difference between right and wrong.

Without anyone having to inform us, we know that it's wrong to steal. We know that it's wrong to murder. We know that it's wrong to commit adultery. We know that it's wrong to lie. We know that it's wrong to covet.

And we know all these things because at the point of committing any one of them, our moral conscience will be going off like a siren in our heart telling us not to do it.

[ 17 : 00 ] Don't do it. But it's when we suppress the moral conscience and seek to do what we want to do and not what God has created us to do, which is to glorify Him and to enjoy Him forever.

It's when we suppress the moral conscience and ignore it and silence it. That's when we commit sin. That's when we transgress God's law.

And was that not what Jesus said? What comes out of a man defiles a man. For from within, for from within the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

All these things, says Jesus, they come from within and they defile a person. But they only come from within when we suppress our God-given moral conscience.

And a world that removes God or a person that removes God and suppresses their moral conscience becomes more and more and more and more and more and more and more and more immoral.

[ 18 : 20 ] And that's the world we live in today. But as Solomon reminds us, there is nothing new under the sun.

Nothing at all. So what does God do with a world that suppresses their moral conscience? Well, he provides a moral command to stir up and awaken the moral conscience.

And that's what we see secondly. We've considered a moral conscience but secondly, a moral command. A moral command. If you read again verse 25.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said to him, What is written in the law?

How do you read it? And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.

[ 19 : 25 ] And so this lawyer and Jesus, they continue to have a conversation with one another.

And as we said, this lawyer was testing Jesus. He was belittling Jesus and testing Jesus' knowledge of morality.

He was testing to see how much Jesus knew of the moral law in comparison to himself. But Jesus knew this. And Jesus knew his intentions because Jesus knew his heart.

Which is why Jesus turns the question back on the lawyer and he asks him, What is written in the law? How do you read it? What's your interpretation of inheriting eternal life?

What's your understanding of how to get to heaven? And with this, the lawyer proceeds to tell Jesus how to get to heaven. The audacity and pride of this man that he would tell Jesus Christ how to get to heaven.

And he says to Jesus that the only way to heaven is if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbour as yourself.

[ 20 : 34 ] And as we read earlier, the lawyer is actually repeating the words of Deuteronomy chapter 6. Where these words they were said to the children of Israel when they were on the banks of the river Jordan.

They're just about to cross over into the promised land to inherit this great promised land. And it's at that point in the book of Deuteronomy that Moses reminds the children of Israel all about God's law and the need to be faithful to the Lord as they go in to possess the promised land.

And Moses, he reiterates to the children of Israel all the laws of God and he re-emphasizes the need to be faithful to the Lord and to be faithful to his laws.

And in these words as we read here in verse 27 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your strength with all your mind and your neighbour as yourself.

In these words Moses gives to the children of Israel a summary of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments which is the moral law. And as you know the Ten Commandments they were first given to Moses when he was on the top of Mount Sinai.

[ 21 : 52 ] And they're recorded for us in Exodus chapter 20. We'll come to them in a few weeks time. But the first reason God had to give the moral law the Ten Commandments the first reason God had to issue them to the children of Israel is because they were broken at the fall.

Because as we said Adam was created with a moral conscience he knew the duty and obedience which God required of him and Adam knew what God required from him because God had given to him the moral law.

God had written the moral law upon Adam's heart. of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

But when Adam fell from the estate wherein he was created his moral conscience was distorted and the moral law written on his heart was broken. And because the moral law written on Adam's heart was broken God had to reissue it in written form.

And that's what happened. God wrote with his own finger the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. And when God reissued the moral law he reissued the same exhortation that our duty as God's creation is obedience and faithfulness to the Ten Commandments.

[ 23 : 22 ] But the second reason God had to reissue the moral law and to the children of Israel and to the rest of mankind was because our default position is to suppress the moral conscience.

Our moral conscience or Adam's moral conscience was marred at the fall. It became dysfunctional. And it wasn't working correctly because it could now be suppressed and ignored.

And that's another reason why God had to reissue the moral law. Because without the moral law the moral conscience would never be challenged in the fullest sense. Without the moral law being written down and read to the children of Israel they would suppress their moral conscience and do as they please.

And that's what happened. because you remember when Moses he went up to the top of Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments and Moses had no sooner reached the top of Mount Sinai when the children of Israel had built a golden calf at the bottom.

And the reason they had built the golden calf and participated in idolatry is because they didn't have the moral law. They had suppressed their moral conscience and they did as they pleased.

[ 24 : 48 ] And that was the history of the children of Israel repeated again and again that every time they drifted away from the Lord it was because they neglected the moral law.

They had neglected God's word put it to one side suppressed their moral conscience and did and lived as they pleased. But what brought them back what made them see their need of the Lord the Lord was the moral law.

What made them see the state they were in and their need for repentance and to seek the Lord in forgiveness was the moral law. Because as soon as they read the moral law their conscience the moral conscience was pricked and it was stirred up within them to repentance.

And that was the history of the children of Israel all the way through even through the period of the judges there was this cycle of rebellion and restoration and it was the history of the children of Israel under Josiah when they found the law in the temple it brought the people back.

The history of Hezekiah was the same that every time they drifted away from the Lord it was because they put the word of God to one side and therefore they suppressed their moral conscience.

[ 26 : 09 ] and that's why our nation is in the state it's in today. The land of the book has disposed of the book and it has suppressed its moral conscience to the point that anything goes.

Anything goes because if our moral conscience is suppressed and there is no moral standard to follow then we make up our own moral conscience and we set our own moral standards and we dictate as to what's accepted and what's not accepted and if someone doesn't agree then that's their opinion that's their choice that's what they want to believe that's what they want to think and everyone is entitled to their own opinion everyone is allowed to do what's right in their own eyes according to what they think no one is to be questioned no one is to be undermined everyone is to

be on the same level but my friend that is not order that's chaos that's absolute chaos that's why our nation is in the moral state and mess it's in today and the only way for our nation to turn to God again is if it's confronted by the word of

God and applied by the Holy Spirit and we need to pray for that to happen we need to pray that the Lord would turn us again as a nation to himself that the word would become the priority because that's the reason the Lord gave the moral law so that every time we drift from him every time we begin to do our own thing we will be reminded of our moral obligation that our moral obligation is to love the Lord our God with all our heart with all our mind with all our soul with all our strength and our neighbor as ourselves and that's what the book of Deuteronomy was all about Moses was preaching to the children of Israel and emphasizing and reemphasizing the importance of God's moral commands and the need to have an active moral conscience but you know

I was thinking how could I illustrate all this how could I illustrate the importance of all this and I thought to myself a battery powered smoke alarm a battery powered smoke alarm because when there's a battery in the smoke alarm all the sensors are active and if they're triggered by the smoke it will sound the alarm to alert everyone to the fire but if the battery is removed obviously the sensors are deactivated and the alarm will not sound if there is a fire and you know I was thinking that the moral law is the battery the moral law is the battery and the moral law activates the moral conscience and if the moral conscience is triggered it will be alerted to error and wrongdoing we will know that we are doing wrong and disobeying

God and we know how to respond by seeking the Lord's forgiveness by confessing our sin but as soon as we remove the battery as soon as we remove the moral law or ignore the moral law or put the moral law God's word to one side in our lives as soon as we do that we deactivate the sensors of our moral conscience and there will be no alarm to alert us to our sin or wrongdoing and the result is we will be left in the fire of God's judgment and my friend that's why God has given to us the moral law so that our moral conscience will be activated and alerted to the problem the problem of our sin and that in turn we will seek the

[ 30 : 41 ] Lord's forgiveness and commit our life to Jesus Christ and that's what I'd like us to see thirdly this evening we've considered a moral conscience a moral command but lastly a moral commitment a moral commitment read again in verse 25 behold a lawyer stood up to put him to the test saying teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life he said to him what is written in the law how do you read it and he answered you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your strength with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself and he said to him you have answered correctly do this and you will live do this and you will live as we said this lawyer came to Jesus not out of a genuine concern to inherit eternal life but to test Jesus testing to see how much of the moral law

Jesus knew he was testing morality because in his mind inheriting eternal life meant keeping the moral law that was his interpretation that's what he told Jesus he told Jesus that the only way to get to heaven and inherit eternal life was by loving the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your strength with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself and so for this lawyer inheriting eternal life meant being a good person and being a good neighbor and keeping all of God's commandments and as far as he was concerned he had done all that he was already on course for eternal life on his way to heaven and as we said it was his moral conscience that told him that it was his moral conscience which affirmed to him that his duty and his responsibility was to be obedient to God's word it was his moral conscience the moral conscience of this lawyer that told him that by keeping God's law being a good person being a good neighbor he would inherit eternal life but you know thinking about it that doesn't really make sense because the moral conscience of a person when confronted with the law was meant to alert them to the fact that they're wrong like the smoke alarm tells you that there's something wrong that they're disobeying God's word and that they're transgressing the law the moral conscience is meant to tell people that they are corrupted to the core and that they fail to keep

God's law at every level but the reason this lawyer's moral conscience told him that by keeping God's law being a good person being a good neighbor the reason it told him that he would inherit eternal life was because his moral conscience was also corrupted and dysfunctional and that's what we said at the fall the moral law was broken and at the fall the moral conscience was marred it became dysfunctional it wasn't working correctly because it could now be suppressed and ignored and this lawyer only shows how corrupted and how dysfunctional our moral conscience can be that

even when we are confronted with the moral law God's word when we are confronted with the Bible we are able to suppress our moral conscience and create our own moral conscience a moral conscience that will tell us you are not that bad it will tell us you are a good person our moral conscience will tell us you are a nice person you are an upstanding member of society you are a great contributor to the community you are a good neighbor you go to church you read your Bible you are in a good standing with God therefore you will inherit eternal life and this is why Jesus said to the lawyer do this and you shall live but the reason Jesus said it wasn't because he thought that this lawyer could actually keep all the commandments perfectly and inherit eternal life by his own efforts the reason Jesus said this was because Jesus knew that this lawyer needed to be shown that even his moral conscience was leading him astray and that's why Jesus went on to tell the well-known parable of the good Samaritan the parable of the good Samaritan about a Samaritan who helped a Jew but the Jews hated Samaritans and this lawyer hated Samaritans and the parable of the good Samaritan revealed to the lawyer that he didn't love God with all his heart his mind his soul his strength because he didn't love his neighbour as himself and you know my friend we are so like him we're so like him because even when we are confronted with God's word and his moral law our dysfunctional moral conscience suppresses and ignores the truth we ignore the truth and we create our own moral conscience which tells us we're not that bad it's okay just now the problem isn't too big yet I don't need to do anything about it right now but the problem for the lawyer and the problem for us is that we're not really looking at the moral law and we're not really looking at ourselves we say that we are we tell ourselves that we are we convince ourselves that we are we're looking at God's word we're seeing what God's word says but the reality is if we can't see the problem that we're in because of our sin and our transgression of God's law a law that we are going to be judged against if we can't see the depravity and the poverty that we are in because of our sin if we can't see the ruin that we are in my friend we will never seek the remedy we will never seek that remedy and my unconverted friend the reason you are not a committed

[ 37 : 18 ] Christian tonight is because you do not see the ruin that you are in you do not see what your sin is doing to you you do not see the outcome of dying without Christ you do not see it the battery is dead the alarm is silenced the fire is burning and yet you can't see it you cannot see it but like this lawyer it's only when Jesus points it out it's only when Jesus points it out to us and when Jesus points it out to us he recharges the battery and we are immediately made aware of the mess we are in and when that alarm of our moral conscience starts to sound we know that we have nowhere else to go but to Jesus my friend you have a moral conscience you have been given a moral command and because you fall short of that moral command we all do you need to make a moral commitment a proper commitment seeking the

Lord in repentance confessing your sin so we said to the kids this morning if you confess your sin he is faithful and he is just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness we need to make a moral commitment by trusting in Jesus because he is the only way to inherit eternal life may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee that thou art one who does not leave us in the ruin that we are in but thou art a gracious and merciful God one who loved us so much that he provided the remedy and enable us we pray to see Jesus as the great remedy to our ruin as the great antidote to our problem that we might embrace it fully and see that Jesus is the great physician the one who is able to cleanse us to forgive us our sins to grant us peace with God to give to us the promise of eternal life O Lord bless thy word to us impress it upon our hearts that our conscience would be awakened that we O Lord would respond that we would respond while there is yet time that whilst we are still on mercy's ground that we would seek the Lord with all our heart bless us Lord we pray bless us in the week that lies ahead a week O Lord that is unknown to us and how often we are reminded of that fact that thou wouldst keep us keep us we pray thee and do us good for Jesus sake Amen we'll conclude in Psalm 119 Psalm 119 page 402 singing from verse 33 down to the verse marked 38 Psalm 119 from verse 33 teach me O

Lord the perfect way of thy precepts divine and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline give understanding unto me so keep thy law shall I yea e'en with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully down to the verse marked 38 of Psalm 119 to God's praise teach me O Lord the perfect way of thy presence divine and true of heaven through the earth I shall my heart incline understanding unto me so keep thy law shall I hear hear in with my heart

I shall observe it carefully in thy lost path make me to go for I delight therein my heart unto thy testimonies and not to great incline thou thou away my sight and eyes from pure humanity and in thy good and holy way me please to quicken me fall firm to me thy gracious word which [ 44 : 06 ] I did gladly hear into thy thy serve and Lord who is devoted to thy fears the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore Amen