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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **Can moral values be legislated?**

A common proverb which is popular today is: *"You can't legislate moral values."* This is so popular you hear school teachers say it, politicians, radio talk-show hosts and even some religious leaders say this – *"You can't legislate moral values."* This is said so often by so many people that no one bothers to question its validity. It is said in such a way that people think it is axiomatic. Axiomatic means obvious, self-evident. An axiom is believed to be so self-evident that there is no need to offer proof because everyone knows it to be truth already. But is this really the truth? Is it really true that moral values cannot be legislated?

When this statement is made, people are usually talking about things like homosexuality, teenage sexual activity, extra-marital sex between consenting adults, or abortion. In other words, most of the time when people say, *"You can't legislate moral values,"* what they mean is: When it comes to sexual activity and sexual choices, you cannot tell people what to do; you cannot force people to behave in a way that is considered moral.

Now ... I'm asking you if this is correct. Is it true that moral values cannot be legislated? Is it true that it is wrong and impractical and impossible to make laws regarding moral issues? Let's see what the Bible says.

Let me read the last six of the original "ten commandments" and then let's ask the question, "Can moral values be legislated?"

**Commandment #5:** *"Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother"* (Ex 20:12). This means to financially support your parents when they get old and the penalty was the death penalty for violating this command (Mt 15:1-6). Is this a moral value? Yes it is. Can it be legislated? God thought it could and God gave this legislation. But Americans today would argue that God had no right to make this law. Americans would say you cannot make children honor their parents. So, in spite of what the Bible says, many Americans would say this law is impractical – it won't work, you can't make a law that says children should honor their parents. Okay ... let's go to the next one.

**Commandment #6:** *"Thou shalt not murder"* (Ex 20:13). Is this a moral value? Yes it is. Can it be legislated? God thought it could be and all Americans think it can be as well! Even NEA school teachers believe this moral value can be legislated. Even politicians believe this moral value can be imposed upon others. Isn't this amazing? Let's continue.

**Commandment #7:** "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*" (Ex 20:14). Is this a moral value? Yes it is. Can it be legislated? God thought it could be – that's why He gave this law. But the majority of Americans would argue with God. If they could speak to God face to face they would try to explain to Him that He should not have made this law, because it's impossible to legislate moral values. They would explain to Him that it was no one's business what two consenting adults do with each other in privacy. But let me ask this question: Suppose an adult male decided to rape a woman against her will. Is that a moral issue? Can that be legislated? Of course it can. Should it be legislated? Of course it should be. Suppose an adult male or female decided to molest a 10 year old child. Is that a moral issue involving sex? Can that action be legislated? Of course it can be. My point is ... we legislate on moral issues every day and we wouldn't have it any other way.

**Commandment #8:** "*Thou shalt not steal*" (Ex 20:15). Is that a moral value? Yes it is. Can it be legislated? Yes. Not only does God think it can be legislated, but all Americans would agree – this moral value can be legislated – it must be legislated.

**Commandment #9:** "*Thou shalt not bear false witness*" (Ex 20:16). Bearing false witness means lying under oath in a court of law. Is this a moral value? Yet it is. Can it be legislated? Yet it can. God thought so and all Americans think so as well. We have laws in our government against perjury and we fine people and send some of them to jail if they violate this moral law. This moral value must be legislated.

**Commandment #10:** "*Thou shalt not covet*" (Ex 20:17). Is this a moral value? Certainly it is. Can it be legislated? Of course it can. God thought so and that's why He gave this law.

My friend, do not let anyone convince you that moral values cannot be legislated. Do not let anyone say that it is wrong to impose your moral values on others. The Bible imposes the moral values of God upon men every day. If no moral values can be imposed upon others, then we must discard all laws that speak of rape, murder, incest, or even terrorism.

Senator John Kerry, during the 2004 Presidential Debate argued that he personally believe abortion was wrong, but he did not have the right to impose that personal religious belief on others who did not share his same values. My friend, this is a popular belief, but where will this sort of reasoning stop? What will we say one day when a Presidential candidate says, "*I personally believe rape and murder are wrong, but I do not believe I have a right to impose my personal, religious beliefs upon others*"? Will we just sit there and shake our heads in agreement, or will we finally think for ourselves and say, "This is non-sense. Of course moral values can be legislated."

Thanks for listening. Think about these things.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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