

# UNDRINK THE KOOL-AID



## UNDRINK THE KOOL-AID, PART 3: THE BEST MORALS ARE CROWD-SOURCED

How can you tell what's right and what's wrong? Fortunately, many would say, we live in an age where objective truth has disappeared. What's true for you isn't true for others, and what's wrong for you isn't wrong for others. But is it truly good for us when morals change from generation to generation and you can write your own? Or, are we missing something?

**BIG IDEA: Subjective morality leads to chaos and confusion. Objective morality leads to life.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are there any moral standards you wish you could rewrite? Which ones, and why?
2. Have your moral standards changed and evolved over time? How?
3. History often comes full circle. Over 3,000 years ago, the Hebrew scriptures noted that "In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." *Read through Judges 21:1-25.*

<sup>1</sup> The Israelites had vowed at Mizpah, "We will never give our daughters in marriage to a man from the tribe of Benjamin."<sup>2</sup> Now the people went to Bethel and sat in the presence of God until evening, weeping loudly and bitterly.<sup>3</sup> "O LORD, God of Israel," they cried out, "why has this happened in Israel? Now one of our tribes is missing from Israel!"<sup>4</sup> Early the next morning the people built an altar and presented their burnt offerings and peace offerings on it.<sup>5</sup> Then they said, "Who among the tribes of Israel did not join us at Mizpah when we held our assembly in the presence of the LORD?" At that time they had taken a solemn oath in the LORD's presence, vowing that anyone who refused to come would be put to death.<sup>6</sup> The Israelites felt sorry for their brother Benjamin and said, "Today one of the tribes of Israel has been cut off.<sup>7</sup> How can we find wives for the few who remain, since we have sworn by the LORD not to give them our daughters in marriage?"<sup>8</sup> So they asked, "Who among the tribes of Israel did not join us at Mizpah when we assembled in the presence of the LORD?" And they discovered that no one from Jabesh-gilead had attended the assembly.<sup>10</sup> So the assembly sent 12,000 of their best warriors to Jabesh-gilead with orders to kill everyone there, including women and children.<sup>11</sup> "This is what you are to do," they said. "Completely destroy all the males and every woman who is not a virgin."<sup>12</sup> Among the residents of Jabesh-gilead they found 400 young virgins who had never slept with a man, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.<sup>13</sup> The Israelite assembly sent a peace delegation to the remaining people of Benjamin who were living at the rock of Rimmon.<sup>14</sup> Then the men of Benjamin returned to their homes, and the 400 women of Jabesh-gilead who had been spared were given to them as wives. But there were not enough women for all of them.<sup>15</sup> The people felt sorry for Benjamin because the LORD had made this gap among the tribes of Israel.<sup>16</sup> So the elders of the assembly asked, "How can we find wives for the few who remain, since the women of the tribe of Benjamin are dead?"<sup>17</sup> There must be heirs for the survivors so that an entire tribe of Israel is not wiped out.<sup>18</sup> But we cannot give them our own daughters in marriage because we have sworn with a solemn oath that anyone who does this will fall under God's curse."<sup>19</sup> Then they thought of the annual festival of the LORD held in Shiloh, south of Lebonah and north of Bethel, along the east side of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem.<sup>20</sup> They told the men of Benjamin who still needed wives, "Go and hide in the vineyards.<sup>21</sup> When you see the young women of Shiloh come out for their dances, rush out from the vineyards, and each of you can take one of them home to the land of Benjamin to be your wife!"<sup>22</sup> And

when their fathers and brothers come to us in protest, we will tell them, 'Please be sympathetic. Let them have your daughters, for we didn't find wives for all of them when we destroyed Jabesh-gilead. And you are not guilty of breaking the vow since you did not actually give your daughters to them in marriage.'" <sup>23</sup> So the men of Benjamin did as they were told. Each man caught one of the women as she danced in the celebration and carried her off to be his wife. They returned to their own land, and they rebuilt their towns and lived in them. <sup>24</sup> Then the people of Israel departed by tribes and families, and they returned to their own homes.

<sup>25</sup> In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

Judges 21 (NLT)

4. Is the loss of a moral compass somehow related to the horrible nature of the story about the tribe of Benjamin?
5. What do you think the following quote by means to you?

*The line between good and evil runs through the middle of every human heart.*

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

6. In the message, Chris told the story of the trial of Adolf Eichmann and how one of his former concentration camp prisoners described him. "He was an ordinary man, just like anyone else. I was afraid about myself. I saw that I was capable to do this... exactly like he. Maybe there is a little bit of Eichmann in all of us." Chris argued that all of us have the capacity to be a guard in a death camp in Nazi Germany, and that if we don't believe we have that capacity, we don't know ourselves well enough. That's a harsh position. What do you think about it?
7. Jesus clarified the moral standard by which God operates, and shared it as the standard by which the world should run. Read through John 13:34-35 and Galatians 5:1, 13-24.

<sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. <sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

John 13:34-35 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. <sup>13</sup> For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another. <sup>16</sup> So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. <sup>17</sup> The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. <sup>18</sup> But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. <sup>19</sup> When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Galatians 5:1, 13-24

8. What parts of this 'objective' morality do you wish you had more of in your own life? In the world?
9. In your view, is an objective understanding of morality ultimately freeing or disempowering? Why?

## MOVING FORWARD

Ask yourself, at a deeper level, what happens when everyone does whatever seems right in their own eyes. More specifically, what happens in your world when you do? Then start running your decisions and actions through the moral filter of John 13:34-35 and Galatians 5:1, 13-24. You will likely need the Holy Spirit's help to root your decisions and actions in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.