

WitnessKit Class 3

The Human Soul, and Matters of Right And Wrong

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“The Silent Scream of the Asparagus” by

Wesley Smith, from the WEEKLY STANDARD, May 12, 2008

Switzerland added a section to their national constitution a few years ago, “account to be taken of the dignity of creation when handling animals, plants, and other organisms.”

*Reprinted in *Discovery Institute Views*, Spring 2008.

The article was referred to committee.

- Specifically: The Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology.
- This committee has issued its report: **“The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants.”**
- Everything in quotes is directly from their report.

A Biocentric moral view

- A majority of the committee adopted a biocentric moral view,
- meaning that **“living organisms should be considered morally for their own sake because they are alive.”**
- How does this apply to plants?

From “The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants.” a report of The Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology.

“Individual plants have inherent worth.”

“We may not use them (plants) just as we please, even if the plant community is not in danger, or if our actions do not endanger the species, or if we are not acting arbitrarily.”

From “The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants.”

- A farmer was judged **immoral** for lopping off the heads of some wildflowers on his way home from the fields. The panel agreed that his action was immoral.
- The panel disagreed as to why he was immoral – whether his attitude or his action was at fault, or whether he acted against the dignity of the plants.

Why do humans have more worth than plants?

- What makes us human?
- ...We have consciousness. Do we have souls?
- Where are moral standards found?

What makes us human?

- Does biology define us as human? Or are we just a slightly more intelligent animal than a string of other primates?
- Does God define us as human?
- We have a sense of alienation from God and from other people. Can this be resolved?
- We grapple with the problem of evil. Specifically can God be good if evil exists?

What makes us human?

- We face an uncertain future, and eventually, the uncertainty of the grave. Is there a way to have more certainty?
- Is there a way to know truth beyond this life?
- Is religion more than someone's best guess?

“Man is the Cosmic Orphan.” Loren Eiseley

“**Modern man** thought that when he had gotten rid of **God**, he had freed himself from all that repressed and stifled him. Instead, he discovered that in killing God, he had also killed himself. **For if there is no God, then man’s life becomes absurd....** William Lane Craig, REASONABLE FAITH, 2nd ed. page 57.

**“Man is the Cosmic Orphan.” --
Loren Eiseley**

If we blindly accept the assumptions of the university, either the assumptions of **modernism** or **postmodernism**, we are left as orphans.

We must search for spiritual truth in order to find our humanness.

The futility of life without God.

...If God does not exist, then both man and the universe are inevitably doomed to death. ...

"You are the accidental by-product of nature, a result of matter plus time plus chance. There is no reason for your existence. All you face is death." William Lane Craig, REASONABLE FAITH, 2nd ed. page 57.

What Makes Us Human?

Topics: **The existence of the soul and of right and wrong**

We can use reason to find spiritual truth...

1. by carefully thinking about the existence of the soul and
2. by carefully thinking about the existence of right and wrong.

Steps toward
the truth
about the
soul

Everyone can use reason to
find spiritual truth
by following Schaeffer's
three steps.

1. Consider all the options.
2. Evaluate the options.
3. Refine the search within
the best option.

The Human Soul

Consider all the options.

Sources: “In Defense of the Soul,” lecture on CD by J. P. Moreland, Biola University, The Christian Apologetics Program, and “Physicalism, Naturalism, and the Nature of Human Persons” by J. P. Moreland in *To Everyone an Answer*, Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland, eds. IVP Academic, 2004

Options for the existence of the human soul

- Option 1: The soul is illusion. Only the physical is real.
- Option 2: The soul is different from the physical brain and emerges from the chemistry of the brain. When the brain dies, the soul dies.
- Option 3: The soul is inherently different from the physical brain, although it is manifested by brain activity.

Technical names for the 3 options:

Option 1: **Physicalism (Soul=Illusion.** Only physical items are real.)

Option 2: **Property Dualism** (Soul emerges from brain matter. **Brain is substance, soul is property.**)

Option 3: **Substance Dualism** (Soul is real and **different from the brain.** It is manifested in the world through the brain. **Soul and brain are both substances.**)

From the glossary...

Properties are **characteristics of** substances.

Substances are things that are REAL, not illusion, and not properties of other things.

Note of caution for further reading:

- Sometimes philosophers will discuss these matters without even mentioning option 3. The process only works if all the possibilities are accessible.

The Human Soul

Evaluate the options.

Option 1=Physicalism: If the soul is illusion...

Then matter and chemical/ electrical combinations and flows in the brain are all that really exist.

Humans are pre-programmed biologically and chemically to make the choices they make, and humans are inherently the same as animals.

Option 1=Physicalism: If the soul is illusion...

And humans are merely animals...

- Why do humans have more value than chickens?
- Is survival of the fittest the ultimate good?
- How can right and wrong be defined?

Option 1=Physicalism: If the soul is illusion...

- How can chemical and electrical reactions make meaningful decisions?
- If we are preprogrammed by our chemical makeup, how can we make valid choices?

Option 1: If the soul is illusion...

- If we ARE our chemistry, why are we any more valuable than a reaction vessel in a chemical plant?
- Or a set of chemical reactions in a living plant?

Physicalism has frightening moral implications.

Physicalism: If survival of the fittest is the ultimate good—the creator of human life—how can that be? How can the violence of the animal world be good? How can the nightmares of being eaten by wild animals be a reflection of **goodness**?

Every intuition about what constitutes Goodness is turned inside out and upside down.

Physicalism has frightening moral implications.

Evolutionary theory says death of the weak brings progress, even defines progress, and THAT is totally immoral.

We know intuitively that life is good and that death is the aberration. Yet evolutionary theory demands the opposite.

(Thank God for writing that intuition on our hearts—civilization **DEPENDS** upon it.)

Option 1: If the soul is illusion...

- Can anyone live happily and consistently with that reality?
- If no one can live happily and consistently with that view, can it really be a match with ultimate reality?
- If the soul is illusion, what is happy?

Option 2=Property Dualism: If the soul emerges from the brain as a property of the brain...

- Then it emerges from the chemistry of the brain, and it dies when the brain dies.
- This means that impersonal matter is able to produce personality. Voila!
- This idea makes us chemically controlled robots.

Option 2=Property Dualism: If the soul emerges from the brain as a property of the brain...

- People who believe this may think that computers can develop consciousness. The movie, *2001 A Space Odyssey* played with this idea in the computer-person gone awry named HAL.
- The absurdity of this idea should give us a clue that this option is not correct.

A Quote from “Robot Rights” by Benjamin Shapiro, WORLDNETDAILY, December 12, 2007

“At the most basic level, there is only one element separating human beings from robots: the soul. Religious people, by and large, believe that God endowed human beings with a spark of Himself. That spark is manifest in free will, the ability to rise above our genetic code and our environment and act morally. Even if some human beings are so constrained by their physical limitations that they cannot manifest that free will, the spark of God remains present.”

Option 3=Substance Dualism: If The Soul and Physical Brain are different entities...

Then the soul lives in the body and is different from the physical brain, though it is manifest in this world through the actions of the brain.

- This is consistent with the Biblical view of the soul as God-breathed into us. It is compatible with the idea that we are His special creation. Job 33:4 and Genesis 2:7, J. P. Moreland in TO EVERYONE AN ANSWER, Beckwith, Craig, and Moreland eds. 2004

Option 3=Substance Dualism: The Soul and Physical Brain are different entities...

This option opens up the possibility that human life continues beyond physical death.

- If our body is a house for our soul, and our soul is who we really are, then life after death becomes a possibility.

Option 3=Substance Dualism: The Soul and Physical Brain are different entities...

- Option 3 is by far the most optimistic possibility.
- It offers the most potential for the existence of spiritual truth beyond mere human speculation.

Option 3=Substance Dualism: The Soul and Physical Brain are different entities...

- If/Since God was the Ultimate Beginning, and our souls are real and separate from our bodies, then communication from God would be a help toward finding spiritual truth, even possibly for eternity.
- This resonates with the most basic human longings and intuitions.
- This idea works in our internal world of the mind.

Step 3:

Refine the search within the best option.

Refine the Search within the Best Option:

Data Search:

- Is there evidence for the existence of the soul apart from the Bible and intuition?

Data Search: Evidence for the Soul as Separate from the Brain

The short answer is “Yes!”

1. Evidence from electrical stimulation experiments on human brains
2. Evidence from our ability to override distracting sensory inputs to select our target of attention and thought.
3. Evidence from near death experiences.

Evidence for the Soul as Separate from the Brain: Electrical stimulation studies...

have shown the individual's ability to override brain stimulation.

For example, a patient was told to keep his arm still while the portion of the brain that moved the arm was electronically stimulated.

The patient was able to hold the arm still with the other hand. Thus **the person** is separate from the stimulation to his brain.

- This information is documented in THE CASE FOR A CREATOR, a good subject for a later course.

2. Evidence from our ability to override distracting sensory inputs to select our target of attention and thought.

- Scientists are presently searching for control mechanisms in the brain that make possible the selection of an action to perform. Many sensory inputs come into our brains all the time, yet we can choose to think about one certain thing at a time—and that sorting out of distractions is also necessary for deciding to do one thing. Scientists are researching the brain activity that makes such decisions possible.
- But here is the point. If the brain's mechanism makes that selection possible, an entity must exist to select which thing the brain chooses to focus on. It is not a random process.
- <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-08-brain-refutes-results-earlier-free.html>, New Brain Research Refutes Results Of Earlier Studies That Cast Doubts On Free Will, August 7, 2012 by Bob Yirka in *Neuroscience*

Evidence for the Soul as Separate from the Brain: As reported in THE CASE FOR A CREATOR...

3. Near death experiences have common elements of the person seeing himself or herself from above.

In one instance a patient reported seeing a tennis shoe on the roof of the hospital prior to return to the body. The shoe was actually on the roof.

In one study, about 10% of people ruled brain dead and then returning to life reported full cognition during the time of brain death.

Is real life evidence of the soul consistent with the Biblical information?

Yes. The evidence from

1. electrical stimulation of the brain
 2. and from our ability to focus attention in spite of distracting sensory inputs –
- both point toward the Biblical idea of real human choices. There must BE a human soul who makes the choices.**

Is real life evidence of the soul consistent with the Biblical information?

The Bible teaches that we make real choices that have real consequences, even eternal consequences, and that part of our value as humans comes from the responsibility to make good choices. The physical information from brain studies is much more limited in scope, but is perfectly coherent with that view.

Is real life evidence of the soul consistent with the Biblical information?

- **The evidence from near death experiences** fits the Biblical concept that we go from this life to judgment – not directly to heaven or hell.
- Thus, experiences that are similar for believers and non-believers are consistent with that same idea. “It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment...”.Hebrews 9:27.

Is real life evidence of the soul consistent with the Biblical information?

- In addition, the sense of being escorted on by a benevolent being are consistent with Jesus' words in John 14:3, *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."*
- Once again, the evidence from this life is limited, but is coherent with the Biblical information.

Is real life evidence of the soul consistent with the Biblical information?

Because the Bible has very solid evidence for its truthfulness and its information beyond human knowledge, it deserves more weight than subjective near death experiences.

- Nevertheless, those experiences strongly support the existence of the soul.

We live in uncertain times.

- We have a Source of stability in uncertainty.
- Isaiah 33:5-6 says "The LORD is exalted for He dwells on high. He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. And He shall be the stability of your times, a wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear of the LORD is his treasure."
 - We need the certainty of the Bible's answers. We need the LORD.

We live in uncertain times. One source of uncertainty is diversity of world opinion about good and evil.

If powerful people define us as worthless, their idea about good and evil can kill us. (The Biblical worldview says that is a TERRIBLE moral failure.)

Is the concept of good and evil OBJECTIVE or SUBJECTIVE?

- Can we know the difference between good and evil?
- Can we convince others that we have the correct answer for this vital issue?

Steps to find spiritual truth about good and evil.

Everyone can use reason to find spiritual truth

- by following Schaeffer's three steps.
 - Consider all the options.
 - Evaluate the options.
 - Refine the search within the best option.

Good and Evil

Consider all the options. This problem is a bit more complicated than the question of the Ultimate Beginning.

Can a Biocentric Moral View

Help us find objective right and wrong?

The Problem of Evil and Moral Universals, which are standards that are the same for everyone equally.

“When the atheist speaks of human rights, therefore, he cannot speak of rights unique to human beings – he must speak of rights that extend to animals or even robots. (or plants) Nothing separates human beings from animals in the atheist view, beyond our higher level genetic ordering....”

A Quote from “Robot Rights” by Benjamin Shapiro, [WORLDNETDAILY](#),

December 12, 2007

The Problem of Evil and Moral Universals, which are standards that are the same for everyone equally.

- We have already seen the way a “survival of the fittest” mentality works out in the real world. That perspective is called “Social Darwinism” and it was the perspective of the Third Reich. They used the idea of survival of the fittest to justify the murder of the handicapped, and eventually of the races they deemed inferior.

Social Darwinism played out in Germany before and during WWII.

Social Darwinism degrades into horrific evil, because it has no over-arching source for moral universals, which are moral standards that apply to everyone equally. Survival of the fittest = “death is good applied to the unfit.”

Social Darwinism degrades into “Might makes right.” The group in power does as it pleases.

Moral Universals Must Exist for Objective Right and Wrong to Exist.

If moral universals do not exist, right and wrong are subjective and changeable.

If moral universals DO exist, right and wrong are objective and enduring standards.

If moral universals do exist, right and wrong are standards that apply to everyone equally. They are not group-based, but reflect the same individual responsibilities which apply to each person.

This means that good and evil are illusions or mere opinion, unless a source exists for moral universals.

In all the diverse opinions of human beings,

Where is a source to be found to define universal moral standards that are the same for everyone?
To find the answer, we have to go back to the beginning.

Step 1: Consider all the options.

- Option 1: An impersonal beginning = no source for moral universals.
- Option 2: A Personal Beginning who has not communicated with us = no source for moral universals.
- Option 3: A Personal Beginning who has communicated with us=a source for moral universals if and only if that Person is GOOD. If the ultimate Personal Beginning is both good and evil, good and evil are relative and impossible to define objectively.

Step 1: Consider all the options.

For a Personal Beginning to be the source for moral universals, that Person must be good.

- Then good can be defined as that which is in keeping with His character.
- Evil is defined as that which goes against His character.
- So the issue of good and evil is a two part problem – the existence of a Source for moral universals, and the goodness of that Source.

This point reveals

A basic difference between Enlightenment Theism and Traditional Islam. Traditional Islam defines God as unknowable, and His will as absolute and as the only thing which can be known about Him. His will is known by what happens.

Enlightenment Theism claims that God IS knowable, that He wants us to find Him, and that His good character is unchanging, immutable, and worthy of trust. This point of difference is enormously important.

A little thought question:

If two concepts of God exist, and

- One concept says God is totally good, totally perfect in character.
- The other concept says God is both good and evil and the source of both good and evil.
- Which concept is morally right to worship?

Good and Evil

Step 2

Evaluate the options.

Option 1: An impersonal beginning.

The atheists and pantheists, have enormous difficulty finding any source for moral standards.

This provides some of the attraction of atheism and pantheist religions— no standards? Do what you please. Make your own rules.

But since real standards DO exist, this is a dangerous mistake.

Option 1: An impersonal beginning.

This lack of standards (due to belief in an impersonal beginning) fails to protect human rights because it has no framework for defining them.

In both modernism and postmodernism, the fallback position becomes “Moral standards are defined by the group to which one belongs.”

Option 1: An impersonal beginning.

But this has obvious difficulties, because then **no one has a right to criticize group action.** Injustices practiced by one group against another or against a sub-group have no arbitrator.

- This becomes a form of “Might makes Right.”
- And that opens the door to all kinds of evil.

Make your own rules becomes might makes right....

For example, if the group is defined as a governing council that oppresses women, and the group has the right to make the rules, then...

the oppressed women have no recourse to protect their rights,
and others who believe in group-defined standards refuse to help them from outside.

Option 1: An Impersonal Beginning...

- Has no source for human rights. It has no source for objective right and wrong.
- It does not work in the real world. It **enables tyranny by the group** or by their accepted leader.
 - It has no basis to take a moral stand against oppression.

Make your own rules becomes might makes right....

You can see that our American founders' sense of inalienable human rights came from their belief in God, and in human equality before God.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with certain unalienable rights...” –the Declaration of Independence, 1776

Option 2: A Personal Beginning who has NOT communicated

This option has the same problems as the first.

If the Personal Beginning has not communicated, we cannot know the moral universals. An uncommunicative source cannot provide moral universals.

We NEED communication from God.

Without communication from God, we are as much cosmic orphans as with the other options, because who can help us when we are oppressed? The oppressors get to make the rules if they are stronger than we.

We are foolish indeed if we fail to recognize our need for a good God.

Option 3: A Personal Beginning who HAS communicated

This is a necessary condition for knowing
actual, objective moral universals.

It is **not** a sufficient condition.

The Personal Beginning must also be
GOOD in order to provide a source for
moral universals.

Option 3 provides the best possibility for finding moral universals.

So the next thing is to **refine the search within the possibility that God exists and is GOOD.**

The difficulty with knowing that God is good occurs

- because of the existence of evil in the world
- and the existence of evil in human choices.

How can God be Good

If evil exists in this world?

Refine the search within the best option.

Francis Schaeffer defined the possibilities this way.

Either people started out as they are now, with both nobility and evil found in human choices – in which case

- Moral universals are hard to define...
- And God's goodness is in question...

OR, people started out good *and changed* to become as they are now.

How can God be Good if evil exists in this world?

If people started out good, and chose evil, then **evil is defined as choosing against God's character**, and God remains the source for all that is good. Then real moral standards do exist and are found in God's character.

The UNBIBLICAL idea that God CAUSED people to do evil would negate the goodness of God.

Real human choices are a necessary part of the equation.

God is always a Source for GOOD. Evil is the absence of His goodness. Choosing to go away from His goodness causes evil.

The Importance of the Fall...

Free human choice away from God is the Biblical view. This underscores the importance of the first few chapters of Genesis, explaining the fall of humankind from the good state of their creation. Without a real fall of humankind from innocence, as **a real event** that actually took place, we are left as cosmic orphans with no way to find what is truly good.

If God is Good and has communicated, what are the moral universals?

The Ten Commandments are accepted by all three monotheistic world religions. The source for them is the Bible, in Exodus chapter 20. Only monotheism has any answer at all to this question.

This means that the Ten Commandments should be considered both as standards which apply to all individuals equally
And as communication from God.

The Bible teaches a Law behind the Ten Commandments

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

- Love is the domain of moral law.
- This resonates with our understanding that God is GOOD.

The Bible teaches a Law behind the Ten Commandments

It is **right** to love what is good and to hate what is evil. If God is GOOD, it is RIGHT to love Him more than anything or anyone else. If God were not good, it would not be right to love Him supremely. (Psalm 97:10 "Hate evil, you who love the LORD.")

- **The Law behind the law rests upon the foundation of God's goodness.**

Conclusion: The need for moral universals and a Source leads us...

Back to the Bible's explanation.

For right and wrong to exist objectively,

- God MUST be Personal and
- GOOD and
- NOT the source for evil.
- Human choices must be real, not pre-determined.

This is exactly the picture the Bible gives us, and no other holy book gives this picture.

The Bible has amazing answers.

This is one reason Schaeffer says the Bible has the ONLY answer, and no other worldview has answers at all. There are other big questions the Bible answers as well...

The Bible has amazing answers.

- The Source of unity and diversity in creation – the Trinity is both unity and diversity. God Himself is the Source for both unity and diversity in creation.
- We see unity in the elementary particles that make up the material world and the ways they interact, diversity in their expression as various elements and compounds.
- We see unity in the physical laws of nature, diversity in chance events.

The Bible has amazing answers.

- We see unity in white light, but diversity in the colors of the spectrum making up white light.
- We see examples of both unity and diversity in the complex way our world functions.
- An infinite God must be ONE GOD, yet a singular being would not explain diversity in creation. Trinity is both. Trinity explains both.

The Bible has amazing answers.

- Multiple gods could not be infinite. They would be finite, and could not be a source for moral universals, which are infinite in that they apply to every person past, present, future. The ancient Greeks, who discovered the idea of universals, had gods who could not be a source for them. The Greeks were in tension, trying to decide whether the Fates were further back than their gods or vice versa. Trinity solves the problem: One Infinite God in 3 Persons.

The Bible has amazing answers.

- God's goodness is a possibility our minds can grasp, except regarding justice and mercy. Among people, justice and mercy are seen as mutually exclusive.
- A human can be just at the expense of mercy, or merciful at the expense of justice.
- How can God be both just and merciful?

Justice and Mercy

- The reason God can be both perfect in Justice and perfect in Mercy – the Atonement of the cross.
- God remains just when He extends mercy, because Messiah paid the entire price demanded by justice when He died in our place. Justice is satisfied. God can extend mercy without negating justice.

What are the requirements to receive mercy?

The individual must

Repent of sins and recognize God's right to make the rules because God is good.

Believe in the atonement supplied for him by God through Messiah.

Believe in the resurrection.

Believe strongly enough to confess with his mouth these truths.

Pray, asking to receive the Holy Spirit into his life,

Recognizing that God is King,

Trusting in God because He is good,

Entrusting his life and future into God's good hands.

Here on earth, very often

- We don't see justice OR mercy.
- The good news is that in this life, we can CHOOSE mercy. We can receive mercy.
- If we do, eternity for us will be where mercy wins.
- If we don't, eternity will be where God's perfect justice will be carried out.

The Bible's answers resonate in our souls.

- We hold these truths to be self-evident.--
The US Declaration of Independence.
- "Jesus is the light that enlightens every person."—John 1
- God has written His law on our hearts.—
Romans 2:15, Jeremiah 31:33.

These answers are not just comfortable sentiments that we can choose for our convenience. We NEED these answers.

The Bible says that God has

Written information about Himself in our hearts, and we are responsible to live consistently with that information.

We all have a sense of moral universals. We all say “That’s not fair” if someone violates our natural rights, because we know an external standard of right and wrong exists.

The Bible certifies that right and wrong, good and evil are objectively real and knowable. This Biblical answer matches what we know.

One additional factor should be mentioned.

One of the cries of the human heart is WHY? Why does evil continue? Why does God allow so MUCH evil in this world? Why does He intervene in obvious ways so seldom?

The Bible's answer in part is that God is optimizing for eternity—that He delays justice to allow more time for mercy. 2 Peter 3:9—"The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

The cries of the human heart...

From the midst of persecution, the Apostle Paul said, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”—I Corinthians 15:19

God can be good while the world is full of evil ONLY if this life is NOT all there is. Eternity will be the scene of ultimate Justice, ultimate Mercy, ultimate Transformation—Job chapters 21 & 24.

Another part of the Bible's Answer

Is that God intervenes, quietly and almost invisibly all the time, through human beings who are courageous enough to do what is right.

When we receive His Holy Spirit in our lives, we receive extra help in doing what is right, and we receive promptings toward doing what is right. Romans 8:14 says "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." The chapter goes on to tell us that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed to us.

The Problem of Evil in this world...

Only has an answer if God is good.

It only has an answer if God has communicated
with us.

It only has an answer if human choices are real.

It only has an answer if eternity is real.

Only the Bible gives us those answers. It is the
best place to search for spiritual truth.

Our study

Should have increased our confidence in the Bible.

- It should have encouraged us that the Bible has the only answers to the longings of our human hearts, and the only certainty of our human worth.
- For those longings and need for certainty to be universal, and only one Book to have answers, and to also teach us we that have a good God who wants to answer—that Book has to be the place to search for spiritual truth.
- Practical suggestion: Spend time in the Bible!

Job 33:4

The Spirit of God has made me
And the breath of the ALMIGHTY
Has given me life.

Homework Topic

Class 3 Set 1

Universals and How We Know Things:
Why does Francis Schaeffer say we need
universals in order to have real
knowledge?

Universals and Epistemology

Epistemology is the science of how people know things.

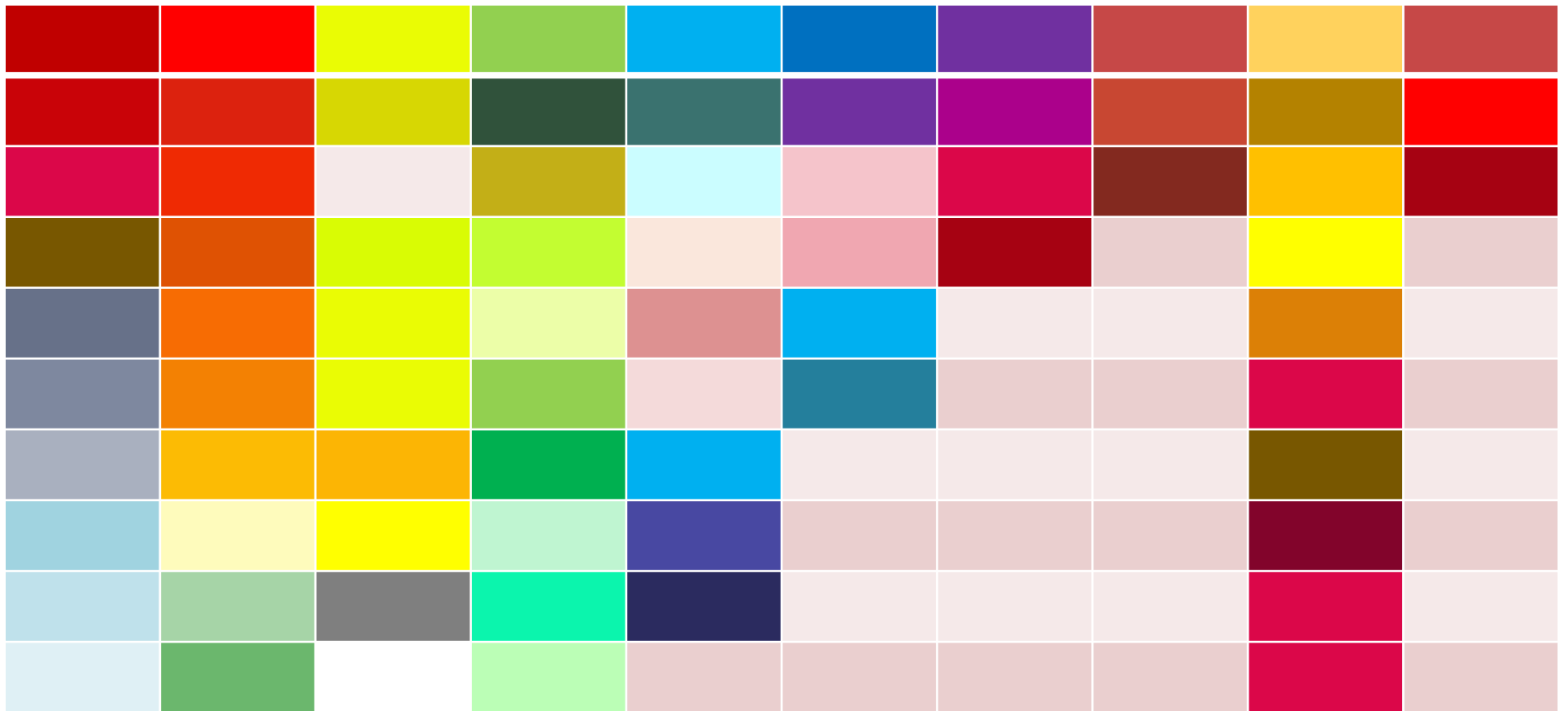
- Why do we need universals to exist in order to know truth?

Postmodernists claim that no universals exist.

Postmodernists claim that people are in a “prison house of language” because their minds are controlled by the language they know.

Postmodernists claim that people cannot really have knowledge outside their language group, so there is no real unity among groups. Individuals are then defined by their group affiliation, with no fixed identity, because they can change group affiliation.

Color Perception:



Every language has color names

--For the crayons in the 8 color box.

When we look at the 128 color box, we can sort the crayons into general categories under the 8 color names.

But different language groups might sort them into different stacks –

Some of the in-between shades might be placed in a different column.

In Between Shades...

- Think of “Robin’s egg blue.” It is sometimes called aqua, and it is sometimes considered a shade of green instead of blue.

To be able to know what color an object is, we have to know

Where the light it reflects is located on the color spectrum.

- Universal colors exist in the spectrum—physical reality we can describe with words (and numbers).
- Names for those universals help us know the truth about the object.
- The core certainty is the same for all language groups, even though fine differences exist around the boundaries of each color name.

Universals as Categories...

- The division of light into color categories is not simply arbitrary. Even that division into categories reflects something of universal experience – the blue of the sky, the green of leaves, the shades of brown in earth, the white of clouds, the black of night, the bright reds and yellows and oranges and purples of fruit and flowers and vegetables.

Universals as Categories...

- Certain languages may have more color categories than others. For example, French has many fine color distinctions that come from a long history of the fashion design industry – think of mauve, chartreuse, taupe, sable.
- One would not expect the aborigines of Australia to have exactly the same set of fine color categories, but one would expect them to have names for the colors in the 8 color box.

If it were true that no universals exist...

We would not be able to translate a **color** from one language to another. We could **not know the truth** about someone else's word for a color.

As it is, we **can** translate the core truth about a color with common words, and we may have to use more words to describe an in-between color.

This is one explanation for the color of the robe described ...

In Matthew 27:28 as Scarlet – kokkinEn, meaning crimson or scarlet, and

In Mark 15:17 and John 19:2 as a Purple robe put on after scourging – porphuran,

Luke 23:11 Herod and his soldiers dressed Him in a gorgeous robe at the middle trial– there could have been two robes, one from the Roman soldiers' game and the other from Herod. Or one robe could have two colors.

Or...

Scarlet and Purple

The explanation may be in the color names. The Greek word *kikkinē* means a section of the color spectrum from crimson (a deep purplish red) to scarlet. That color was a dye made from an insect's eggs. The Greek word *porphuran* for Purple comes from a dye made from a shellfish. If the robe was a deep purplish red, different observers could place the same color in different categories.

Conclusion: the universal is the core concept.

- The core concept is **not** merely the definition. It includes a **set of boundaries** as well, which tell what the word is NOT. Logic is involved.
- We have to understand that A is not Non-A. A cannot be both A and Non-A at the same time and in the same sense.

So the conclusion is

That to know something someone is trying to say in words,

- You must know the universals that are involved. You must know the core concept that each word stands for.
- So universals exist in order for communication **of truth** to take place.

The Hegelian Dialectic

- Is thought by many modern people to have discredited logic.
- Hegel said the world can be explained using “Thesis plus Antithesis produces Synthesis.”
- When Hegel threw logic out, he lost the boundaries of the categories, and made the facts blur into opinion. This made knowledge unknowable.

Universals, Knowledge, and Logic

- The Hegelian dialectic, by discrediting logic, set the world awash in a sea of opinion.
- However, the opinion that universals do not exist is an erroneous opinion, because logic does work and the dialectic does not work in the real world in matters of truth. The dialectic only works in matters of opinion.

Example

You might have one committee suggest a color to paint a building, and another group of people suggest a different color. The groups can get together and come to a synthesis of ideas. The dialectic works regarding opinion.

However, you would not expect the same kind of process for deciding whether a new building needs to include a roof. The practical **truth** of the weather would make logic the guiding principle.

Homework

Class 3 Set 2

Class 3 Set 2

Read John 8:12-59. This chapter examines in more detail the way people know spiritual truth.

In verse 13, why did the Pharisees think Jesus' witness about Himself was not valid?

Who did Jesus remind them was another witness?

What second issue was brought up in verse 19 and again in verse 48?

In verses 31-32, what did Jesus say they needed to do to learn the truth about Him?

Class 3 Set 2

- Read Appendix A in HE IS THERE AND HE IS NOT SILENT. This appendix deals with background issues about the possibility of revelation from God through language.
- If God is infinite, personal, and eternal, is it possible for an infinitely powerful Mind to communicate with human beings?
- What is the difference between true communication and exhaustive communication from God?

Class 3 Set 2

- Is such a claim—verbal communication from God—theoretically possible?
- Is it theoretically possible for God to use language to communicate with individuals about what He would wish them to write in a book?
- If the things God wanted to communicate were given in story form, and involved historical events, would it still be possible for the writing to be a true account of those events?
- Would the accuracy of the history within the book be a clue about its spiritual claims?

Homework

Class 3 Set 3

Class 3 Set 3

- Read I Peter 3:15 and I Corinthians 15:1-11.
- How many witnesses listed here saw Jesus after the resurrection?
- How many of those listed wrote parts of the New Testament?
- Which New Testament authors were not listed specifically?
- Read Appendix B of HE IS THERE AND HE IS NOT SILENT.
- What are the two kinds of faith discussed here, and which is the form the Bible talks about?

Homework

Class 3 Set 4

Class 3 Set 4

- Read Matthew 21:28-32.
- Does Jesus hold people accountable for the witness of changed lives? Does that kind of evidence for His Deity and power count?
- By this time, you should have received the second textbook: The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict. It will be the textbook for the rest of the course.
- Read THE NEW EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT section called "He Changed My Life."
- List three of the changes God made in Josh MacDowell's life.

Class 3 Set 4:

- How long was the time frame Josh mentioned for making these changes in his life?
- How long was the time frame for the changes in his father's life?
- Should we demand instant change from new believers? Should we expect SOME change from new believers?