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ABSOLUTES VS. *RELATIVISM*

The art of humanism in today's world

Each person and culture has developed their own definition of what right or wrong is. This theory is morally unacceptable because it implies an act can be right for someone even if it is cruel, hateful or harmful. Culture or ones personal preference does not dictate what is right or wrong. Neither can religions, for each area may have its own religion that came down to them from previous generations. There must be a greater standard, one that is more correct and more sure for us to live by. Otherwise we are left to invent our own opinions that will change in time because of our culture.

The definition of Relative truth- Truth that is true at only one time and at one place. It's true to some people and not to others. It's true now but it may not have been true in the past and it may not be again in the future, it's always subject to change. It is also subject to perspective of people

The definition of absolute truth- Whatever is true at one time and at one place is true at all time's and at all places. What is true for one person is true for all person's. Truth is true whether we believe it or not. Truth is discovered or it is revealed, it is not invented by a culture or by religious men.

There are absolutes, all of reality proves this. What we find is that the Christian world view is the most consistent with reality. There is truth and there is falsehood one cannot find what they are wrong in unless they have an ultimate standard. God believes in objective truth because he is that standard. The difference is that as Christians we believe God determines what is true and right which he has instructed in the Bible. Those who hold to the relative position believe man does and he can change as he wills.

EX: of absolutes - we all need air to breathe, to live we all need food and water. this is true for all people everywhere at all times. Gravity works the same everywhere here on the planet.

EX: one cannot be dry and wet at the same time. Something cannot be true and not true at the same time, one must be false or both, but both cannot be true. One cannot go forward and backward at the same time. One cannot live in the past and the future at the same time. Time goes forward it cannot go backward. No one is getting younger instead of older. You cannot

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have two Mts. Without a valley. You cannot have a stick with one end. You cannot be asleep and awake at the same time.

EX: George Washington was our first president but he no longer is. His being the first president of the US was true for all time and for all people in all places. There will never be a place at any time this is not true. He can never be the 20th president, So it is an absolute truth but for his time.

Believing something that is not true.

What is true for one person is true for all people-If the ancients people believed the earth was flat it is true for all men at all times and places. It will never be false that ancient man believed the earth was flat. It may not actually be true that the earth is flat, but it is true they *believed this*. So this is truth for their time, but that is not a description of absolute truth. If one only believes it to be true then they are not making a truth claim. Belief statements are not truth statements, one is simply declaring their belief. Such as If someone said I can fly. To you that belief may be true, but not the statement itself. Truth is to be a justifiable belief. It needs to be proven at least logically and agree with reality.

A religious ex. God cannot exist and not exist at the same time. Only one of these views is true, because we are dealing with reality. They are contradictory and the world should be consistent with reality.

Relativism cannot be true- claims of relativism depend on which vantage point the observer stands from. Relativism cannot be true- claims of relativism depend on which vantage point the observer stands from. If your standing on the right side or the left side it all becomes the perspective of the viewer. One could actually say an event did not occur from their vantage point while others experienced it.

If relativism were true then the universe could contain actual contradictory conditions and truths, which is impossible. Opposites cannot both be true, its contradictory and denies the laws of non contradiction. This law is undeniable, you can't not use it without using it and you can't deny it without using it, so its literally undeniable. Contradictions both cannot be true at the same time so the relative view is false. Ex. If relativism is true than to an atheist God does not exist, but to a believer he also does exist. Opposites cannot both be true. If relativism is true then nothing could be true. Why? For one cannot claim that it is an absolute truth, that something is only relative truth for him. This is like saying I'm absolutely certain everything is relative. Then everything isn't relative if he is absolutely certain. But if everything is relative to each different person, to this one , and that one , ad infinitum, then its not true at all and everyone is believing falsehood. If relativism were true you can never be mistaken or wrong or learn anything. Because its true to me at that time and it may not be another time , by my own standard even if I'm wrong its true. You can only find out what is wrong if something is true. There has to be a ultimate standard of measure that is truth.

The problem lies in the root of relativism, that there is no absolute truth.

EX: $2 + 2 = 4$. But what if someone told you it was 5, $2 + 2$ always equals 4, someone comes along and says it's now 5. You can change it, but it would not be consistent to truth and reality. For something to be true it must be true before, true now, and true in the future. Truth does not change . Because it's absolute , especially when it comes to God. What if you learned $2 + 2$ your whole life were 5 does that make it true? Or were you taught falsely. For one to learn their must be truth, absolutes or all education is a farce. You'd be ever learning and not coming to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim3:7) So if you took 10 years of college education at the end you'd be right back where you started and the no better for it. Because

what you knew when you started, which was a state of ignorance on the subjects you were going to become educated on, 10 years later did not progress you in the pursuit of learning.

The Greek philosopher Protagoras said "*man is the measure of all things.*" This means each person can decide their own standard for right and wrong living. What is morally right for me, may be wrong for another. This is the essence of relativism.

This means cruelty and hate can be right for someone to practice. If society practiced this we would self-destruct. Our culture has community values that are shared to protect harm to others.

If all truth is relative then would you feel safe to let your child play with a child molester since that is his truth. Would you allow someone who does human sacrifices befriend your family? Obviously relative truth can sometimes be harmful.

How do we find out if what we believe is relative or absolute?

There are standards we all use each and every day in science, mathematics. We calculate a space shot by using mathematics. In construction we measure what we cut so it will fit the blueprints of what is being built. All these transfer over into different languages and cultures but we share it as universal. These are not absolute truths since we can change them and still share together the same measurements but they are a standard that we all operate in. But their are other laws if violated have drastic consequences. It doesn't matter what country you're in or what race you are or what religion you practice if you fall off a building you will hit the ground the same. So gravity is a universal principle for man. The same would be for deep sea pressure. If you go down too quick or too far you get the bends. These are *natural laws* we are to respect or we can see drastic results. Nature can't be changed, like mathematics it is constant adhering to laws because nature was made by the creator.

We can't test truth by our feelings. You can't feel error, but you can use your mind to think truth. You cannot distinguish good and evil by your feelings because evil (sin) feels good.

Truth is not the opposite of falsehood it is the absence of falsehood. Evil is not just the opposite of good, it is the absence of good. To decide that something is evil means one must have a standard of truth. Whether it is the Bible or their own they are living by someone's standards.

Our society has become self-deciding what is good, humanism is trying to do what is right without God in the equation. The humanist doesn't need religion because he is *confident that the heart of man is basically good*. Even though humanism as an "ism" shares many common practical values with Christianity (ethics?), but the humanistic concept of "good" is on a collision course with Jesus' view of "good." The humanist's standard of goodness must be low enough for the average person to be able to meet its requirements consistently. God's standard of goodness is perfection. This is why a humanist must make his own standard otherwise he will be unable to meet it. And of course that can all change in a whim. Although humanism can make the world better in some respects its standards still are relative to the culture and time. For example many things were given in the past as cures for sicknesses would be rejected today as harmful. But at the time it was with good intentions. So humanism has no cure for evil nor can it explain it. Christ who is God and the ultimate good is the only answer.

"The heart is deceitfully wicked,(incurably sick). (Jer. 17:9). God the creator is the only one capable of fixing what is broken in man. We need a touch from a divine agency the great physician himself. There is only one universal remedy to restore our alienation from God and cleanse us from guilt. God has given mankind the blood of Christ as the cure to remove the

innate problem of sin. No other religion claims to solve the sin factor because they don't believe it exists, this includes the humanist. Their remedy is education and ethics. I don't believe this is the answer, some of the most depraved people in the world are well educated with Ph.D.s. If one educates a thief, you only increase his capacity to steal, education is not the solution. Neither can we make a sinner look any better with solutions from man. We don't need a cover-up for our falling short, but an uncovering to see our sin that separates us from God.

When we see our sickness and how desperate we are in need of his cleansing from sin. Then we are open to the truth that is found in only one place.

What Jesus does is from the inside out, what man does is from the outside which can never affect our fallen nature inside. Humanism like religion gives us rules and regulations to live by, only Jesus reforms us from the inside.

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