



Morality & Ethics

Making Choices That Matter

Urantia University



Morality & Ethics: Making Choices That Matter

Spiritual Living | Urantia University Institute

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Morality & Ethics: Making Choices That Matter

The capacity for moral decision-making is derived from one's unique personality (the "I" that chooses) and the mind function of the Infinite Spirit (Holy Spirit) as a moral agent in the experiential environment of personal relationships and situations. The connection between moral consciousness, soul growth, and character development is dependent on one's awareness of, and willingness to do, the will of God, which means choosing the supreme values of truth, beauty, goodness, and love.

This is a strong challenge that provides stimulation for continued growth in your ability to make moral and ethical decisions. Participants in the Fifth Epochal Revelation, and this class, are the forebears of a Moral Renaissance.

Summary and Objectives

We want this class to be a real growth experience for you, a real expansion of your frame of reference for personal moral decision-making and its relationship to your soul's growth. To that end we encourage you to engage the curated reading assignments during the week of class and think about the questions that are posed for each section. Then come to the live Zoom class better prepared to discuss the important questions that will be raised. The goal of this course is for each of us to become Supremely moral decision-makers!

The significance of morality and moral decision-making is consistently threaded throughout the Urantia Book. As hosts and actors of this Fifth Epochal Revelation, we hope and pray to make the world a better place by the time of our departure. We know the primary effort in doing this is by improving ourselves, having meaningful loving relationships, being positive social examples, and being dutiful to the Supreme Being by bearing the fruits of the spirit.

The learning objectives for students in this course are to:

1. Enhance your understanding of morality and ethics as portrayed in the Urantia Book.
2. Develop an increased awareness and appreciation of the moral decision-making process -- living out one's spiritual convictions (spiritual truth).
3. Practice moral decision-making guided by Jesus' "Rule of Living" (Paper 147).
4. Expand your awareness of the inner life in order to move beyond selfish decision-making (What's in it for me?) toward altruistic decision-making (What's the best for everyone involved?) and how this contributes to soul growth.
5. Improve your ability to balance personal interests (including self-compassion) and group needs (selfless loving service).
6. Become more aware of the thoughts and feelings that influence your moral decisions
7. Develop your own prayer and worship practice to enhance the quality of moral decision-making.

Weekly Outline of the Course

- Week 1: An Introduction to Morality (Buck Weimer and Merritt Horn)
- Week 2: The Rule of Living Taught by Jesus (Elisabeth Callahan)
- Week 3: Morality and Family Life (Arlene & Buck Weimer)
- Week 4: Impediments and Remedies to Higher Moral Decision-Making (Team)
- Week 5: Integration and Further Practice of Complex Moral Decision-Making (Team)

1. Introduction - What is Morality?

The significance of morality and moral decision-making is consistently threaded throughout the Urantia Book. As hosts and actors of this Fifth Epochal Revelation, we hope and pray to make the world a better place by the time of our departure. We know the primary effort in doing this is by improving ourselves, having meaningful loving relationships, being positive social examples, and being dutiful to the evolution of the Supreme Being by bearing the fruits of the spirit.

Morality and ethics can seem simple at one time and complex at another. Both morality and ethics loosely have to do with distinguishing the difference between “good and bad” or “right and wrong.” Many people think of morality as something that’s personal and normative, whereas ethics are the standards of “good and bad” distinguished by a certain community or social setting.

Morality is the individual's growing conscious awareness of right and wrong based on their highest values such as truth, beauty, and goodness. These values guide us in our day-to-day relationships.

Ethics are our evolving social rules, standards, or norms which are guided by the moral values of a group, culture, or society. Ethical decisions incorporate both social rules and personal values.

Our moral decisions are based on our beliefs and values. For example, following rule-based values, such as the Ten Commandments, moral decisions are concrete, unbending, and unchanging. But moral decisions are often relative, which means that moral judgments are true or false relative to some particular culture or historical period.

The capacity for moral decision-making is derived from one's unique personality (the "I" that chooses) and the mind function of the Infinite Spirit (Holy Spirit) as a moral agent in the experiential environment of personal relationships and situations. The connection between moral consciousness, soul growth, and character development is dependent on one's awareness of, and willingness to do, the will of God, which means choosing the supreme values of truth, beauty, goodness, and love.

A Melchizedek tells us about the real nature of religion: "Revelation unfailingly enlarges the ethical horizon of evolved religion while it simultaneously and unfailingly expands the moral obligations of all prior revelations" (101:9.1 (1115.2)).

This is a strong challenge that provides stimulation for continued growth in your ability to make moral and ethical decisions. Participants in the Fifth Epochal Revelation, and this class, are the forebears of a Moral Renaissance.

109:5.4 (1199.5) The great problem of life is the adjustment of the ancestral tendencies of living to the demands of the spiritual urges initiated by the divine presence of the Mystery Monitor. While in the universe and superuniverse careers no man can serve two masters, in the life you now live on Urantia every man must perforce serve two masters. He must become adept in the art of a continuous human temporal compromise while he yields spiritual allegiance to but one master; and this is why so many falter and fail, grow weary and succumb to the stress of the evolutionary struggle.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand morality and ethics and how they are intertwined yet different.
2. To understand morality and ethics as portrayed in the Urantia Book.
3. To develop an increasing awareness and appreciation of the moral decision-making process.

Morality and Ethics (Conventionally Defined)

Major Themes

Morality and Ethics (Conventionally Defined)

Morality in the Urantia Book

Practicing Moral Decision-Making

Ethics

Ethics is viewed as the process of clarifying our moral values and objectives, and then making practical decisions about appropriate behavior based on those values and objectives. This is the same process that any business or organization uses to establish a code of ethics for employees. One of the oldest codes of ethics is the Hippocratic Oath, which is the earliest guideline for medical ethics in the Western world. Today, almost all major organizations have their own internal code of ethics.

Morality

Morality is usually based on notions of duty, obligation, and principles of conduct. It is a doctrine or system of moral conduct.

Rule Based (Ten Commandments)

Morality is often perceived as a religious code of conduct, as in the Judaic Ten Commandments or the Buddhist Eightfold Path. From a religious viewpoint, morality is seen as having divine or spiritual origins and is guided by a set or system of religious values, ones often determined by particular ideologies, beliefs, or doctrines. However strict rules of social behavior and obligatory rituals are not necessarily moral. Rather than defining morality, they are best judged by the morality they espouse. Despite their claim to divine origins, many religious moral doctrines are strongly influenced by social or cultural mores rather than spiritual values.

Moral/Ethical Relativism

Judgments about what is good or bad are guided by our principles—those values, meanings, beliefs, and priorities we uphold. These are typically relative values and the cultures and subcultures in which we were raised will reflect the evolutionary standards of the time. And because values can vary between people, we will always arrive at different assessments of morality.

Extreme philosophical relativism is the view that, because everyone has a different view, there can be no morality as such. But in the Urantia Book, we are taught that, although morality is the recognition of relative right and wrong, there are absolute values (love, truth, beauty, goodness) that can be used as moral yardsticks to guide behavior.

Jesus stripped morality of all rules and ceremonies and elevated it to majestic levels of spiritual thinking and truly righteous living (140:10.5 (1185)).

Morality and Ethics in the Urantia Book

Major Themes

Morality and Ethics (Conventionally Defined)

Morality in the Urantia Book

Practicing Moral Decision-Making

How does the Urantia Book define and interpret morality and ethics?

101:9.1 (1115.2) Revelation unfailingly enlarges the ethical horizon of evolved religion while it simultaneously and unfailingly expands the moral obligations of all prior revelations.

The Urantia Book teaches that, although morality is the recognition of relative right and wrong, there are absolute values (love, truth, beauty, goodness) that can be used as moral yardsticks to guide choosing and behavior.

Additionally, some of the divine values that guide moral behavior are righteousness, fairness, integrity, virtue, and a recognition of social duty. Ideally, moral action is unselfish and altruistic, being guided by enlightened values and spiritual ideals.

Baseline Definitions

Being moral is the conscious awareness of those higher values that we use to guide us in our day-to-day living.

Moral decision-making is based on the highest values of truth, beauty, and goodness, all of which are expressed with love. Therefore, the highest moral decision is to choose to do the Father's will.

Ethical decision-making is applying moral insight to cultural/social situations based on the rights inherent in the existence of any and all other individuals. Thus, to love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethic.

How does a knowledge of divine values affect moral decision-making?

Truth, beauty, goodness and love are attributes of God upon which moral decisions of eternal meaning and value are made. They are divine values.

TRUTH: Truth cannot be defined with words, only by living (132:3.2 (1459.2)).

BEAUTY: The discernment of supreme beauty is the discovery and integration of reality (2:7.8 (43.1)).

GOODNESS: The concept of truth might possibly be entertained apart from personality, the concept of beauty may exist without personality, but the concept of divine goodness is understandable only in relation to personality. Only a person can love and be loved (1:7.3 (31.3)).

The Benefits of Morality

Why does the Urantia Book state that it is important to be moral and to make moral decisions? (What is the meaning and value of it?)

Adds Meaning of Life

While on the way to Rome, Jesus said to Ganid during his Discourse on Reality

The meaning of life is its adaptability; the value of life is its progressability—even to the heights of God-consciousness (130:4.7 (1434.6)).

Adjusting to our ever-changing individual, family, social, political, and environment leads eventually to wisdom. And the quote attributed to Darwin's Origin of the Species: it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself. (added emphasis)

Soul Growth

For the individual, making the highest moral choices leads to soul growth and an enhanced spiritual life. And for civilization at large, the potentially beneficial consequences of morality provide a reasonable explanation for developing an individual sense of high moral conduct.

Every time man makes a reflective moral choice, he immediately experiences a new divine invasion of his soul (196:3.20 (2095.4)).

Only a moral being can make ethical decisions. Moral sensitivity and insight are the basis and inspiration for ethical reasoning which, itself, is the application of moral insight to decisions involving other beings—doing one's duty in the world. Moral reasoning involves the assessment and organization (analysis and synthesis) of the values of which the being is aware and the search for insight into other, higher values which can guide this process.

This search for higher values, being the conscious or unconscious search for the will of God, is a foundational religious experience. The persistent practice of seeking religious insight to inform moral awareness and to conscientiously apply that moral consciousness to decisions in the world constitutes the basis for the acquirement and growth of a noble, righteous character. Such a character will, over time and in eternity, ever more clearly show to the universe a personality revealing the will of God in the world.

Everything nonspiritual in human experience, excepting personality, is a means to an end. Every true relationship of mortal man with other persons - human or divine - is an end in itself (112:2.8 (1228.3)).

Social Growth

For both the individual and society at large, morality functions on differing levels of intellectual and spiritual insight. The degree of morality present in any one person or group determines the substance and tenor of such things as their social interactions, social tolerance, social cooperation, social happiness, and social peace.

It is the people who make a civilization; civilization does not make the people. Moral evolution gave rise to an individual sense of duty to the group as well as developing codes of behavior that benefit the group. Indeed, one definition of morality in the Urantia Book is that it is the recognition of duty, not just to one's family but all the way up the scale to cosmic morality—one's duty to God the Supreme.

Morality is equivalent to the recognition of duty, the realization of the existence of right and wrong (196:3.28 (2096.4)).

The temporal relation of man to the Supreme is the foundation for cosmic morality, the universal sensitivity to, and acceptance of, duty (117:4.8 (1284.4)).

Additional Urantia Book Definitions [paraphrased]

Morality

Morality = the discipline of self by the standards of highest meanings and supreme values — divine and spiritual ideals 92.7.5

Morality = the recognition of duty, the realization of the existence of right and wrong. 196.3.25

Morality = the duty level of reason 5.5.2

Moral consciousness = the recognition and awareness of those ethical and emerging morontial values which duty demands that we shall abide by in our day-by-day control and guidance of conduct. 101.9.5

The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always—in any sphere, in all of them—this is to choose to do the will of God. 39:4:14

[But] ...one's highest moral ideals are not necessarily synonymous with the will of God. 103.4.3

Ethics

Ethics = the philosophy of morals. 92.7.5

Ethical awareness = the recognition by any individual of the rights inherent in the existence of any and all other individuals. 27:3:1

Ethics = the external social mirror which reflects the otherwise unobservable progress of internal spiritual and religious developments. 102:8.4

Evolutionary religion may become ethical, but only revealed religion becomes truly and spiritually moral. 2:6:2

A simple distinction between morals and ethics

- Morality is the distinction between right and wrong actions or intentions.
- Ethics asks - What should we do?
- The first refers to intersubjectivity (our relations to others), while the second refers to one's personal actions-the relation of the subject to himself.

Interpreters of Ethics (27:3) and other angels

Ethics may be more about ways to socially interact in a way that benefits all. Long before reaching the central universe, we are completely moral but we still need to learn about ethical relationships.

This suggests that ethics is always evolving as we extend our relationships to a wider and wider circle of associates. The ethics of Paradise are "neither meaningless formalities nor the dictations of artificial castes but rather the inherent proprieties [the customs and manners of polite society]." (27:4.1)

- "...inherent in this capacity for achievement is the responsibility of ethics, the necessity for recognizing that the world and the universe are filled with a multitude of differing types of beings." 28:6.18
- "As you learn how better to socialize with the univatatia, you will practice such improved ethics in your relations with your fellow morontia progressors." 43:8.12
- "Your sojourn on Edentia and its associated spheres will be chiefly occupied with the mastery of group ethics, the secret of pleasant and profitable interrelationship between the various universe and superuniverse orders of intelligent personalities." 43:8.3

Morality rests on values, ethics on relationships (conduct)

- Man's consciousness of moral duty and his spiritual idealism represent a value level—an experiential reality—which is difficult of symbolization. 0:2:1

- The difference in the religions of various ages is wholly dependent on the difference in man's comprehension of reality and on his differing recognition of moral values, ethical relationships, and spirit realities. 102:8:3
- Jesus' Concept of the Kingdom – 3. It was in itself a new standard of moral values, a new ethical yardstick wherewith to measure human conduct. 170.2.4

Morality is selfless – for the benefit of all

When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is primitive religious experience. 103:2.8

Morality has its origin in the reason of self-consciousness... 5.5.1

Self-consciousness [personality awareness] implies the recognition of the reality of selves other than the conscious self and further implies that such awareness is mutual; that the self is known as it knows. 16:9:4

Quickeners of Morality. On the mansion worlds, you begin to learn self-government for the benefit of all concerned. Your mind learns co-operation, learns how to plan with other and wiser beings. 39.4.10

Morality is a sense of (cosmic) duty.

- The temporal relation of man to the Supreme is the foundation for cosmic morality, the universal sensitivity to, and acceptance of, duty. This is a morality which transcends the temporal sense of relative right and wrong; it is a morality directly predicated on the self-conscious creature's appreciation of experiential obligation to experiential Deity. 117:4:8
- Religion may permeate all four levels of the realization of values and the enjoyment of universe fellowship: the physical or material level of self-preservation; the social or emotional level of fellowship; the moral or duty level of reason; the spiritual level of the consciousness of universe fellowship through divine worship.
- Moral intuition, the realization of duty, is a component of human mind endowment and is associated with the other inalienables of human nature: scientific curiosity and spiritual insight. 16.7.1

The spirit dominates morality

...the spiritual potentiality of religion is dominant over the duty actuality of the morality of evolution. 102.5.3

Morality is the essential pre-existent soil of personal God-consciousness, the personal realization of the Adjuster's inner presence, but such morality is not the source of religious experience and the resultant spiritual insight. 196.3.25

Likewise would moral choosing be futile without that cosmic insight which yields the consciousness of spiritual values. From the standpoint of intelligence, man ascends to the level of a moral being because he is endowed with personality. 16:7:8

The moral zone intervenes between the animal and the human types of mind as morontia functions between the material and the spiritual spheres of personality attainment. 196.3.2



QUESTIONS

What is moral freedom?

The spiritually blind individual who logically follows scientific dictation, social usage, and religious dogma stands in grave danger of sacrificing his moral freedom and losing his spiritual liberty. Such a soul is destined to become an intellectual parrot, a social automaton, and a slave to religious authority. 132:2.4

How does an experience augment moral will?

Moral will embraces decisions based on reasoned knowledge, augmented by wisdom, and sanctioned by religious faith. Such choices are acts of moral nature and evidence the existence of moral personality, the forerunner of morontia personality and eventually of true spirit status. 101:6:3

What is moral self-realization?

Goodness is always growing toward new levels of the increasing liberty of moral self-realization and spiritual personality attainment—the discovery of, and identification with, the indwelling Adjuster. An experience is good when it heightens the appreciation of beauty, augments the moral will, enhances the discernment of truth, enlarges the capacity to love and serve one's fellows, exalts the spiritual ideals, and unifies the supreme human motives of time with the eternal plans of the indwelling Adjuster, all of which lead directly to an increased desire to do the Father's will, thereby fostering the divine passion to find God and to be more like him. 132:2:5

What is the difference between ethical conscience and moral consciousness?

- *In and through all the historic vicissitudes of religion there ever persists that which is indispensable to human progress and survival: the ethical conscience and the moral consciousness. 101:3:1*
- *There really is a true and genuine inner voice, that "true light which lights every man who comes into the world." And this spirit leading is distinct from the ethical prompting of human conscience. 101.0.3*
- *Moral consciousness is just a name applied to the human recognition and awareness of those ethical and emerging morontial values which duty demands that man shall abide by in the day-by-day control and guidance of conduct. 101:9:5*

OTHER

The three basic mind realities of the cosmos: 16:8.15

1. The mathematical or logical recognition of the uniformity of physical causation.
2. The reasoned recognition of the obligation of moral conduct. [Ethics]
3. The faith-grasp of the fellowship worship of Deity, associated with the loving service of humanity.

Morality and Faith

- Faith unites moral insight with conscientious discriminations of values, and the pre-existent evolutionary sense of duty completes the ancestry of true religion. 101:1:6
- Faith becomes the connection between moral consciousness and the spiritual concept of enduring reality. 101:9:9

Morality and golden rule

Wise moral beings are capable of establishing human brotherhood on such a progressing world. Ethical and moral beings can learn how to live in accordance with the golden rule. 50:5:8

Only a moral conscience can condemn the evils of national envy and racial jealousy. Only moral beings will ever seek for that spiritual insight which is essential to living the golden rule. 52:6:5

Golden rule discussion

180.5 The Spirit of Truth

Practicing Moral Decision-Making

Major Themes

Morality and Ethics (Conventionally Defined)

Morality in the Urantia Book

Practicing Moral Decision-Making

115:3.16 (1263.3) Every human decision not only actualizes a new reality in human experience but also opens a new capacity for human growth.

Our task is to become more conscious in our moral decision-making process and to progress in our choices, moving from self-centered ones to selfless ones. We wish to develop an awareness of the guiding principles and divine values contained in the Urantia

Book revelation and to determine how these can be applied to a moral life. All the while being living examples of the Moral Renaissance.

The need for making decisions is based on the inherent capacity of the personality for free will choice. And we are confronted daily with the need for decision-making, some simple, some complex, because of the universe's imperfections and vicissitudes of mortal life. Moral choice entails moral conflict; most often between the self and the selfless, thus creating the human conundrum of knowing what is right but not always doing it.

111:4.11 (1220.10) All conflict is evil in that it inhibits the creative function of the inner life—it is a species of civil war in the personality.

Impediments to Reflective Moral Decision-Making

Moral Dilemma definition (Lawrence Kohlberg): a moral dilemma occurs when a person is confronted with conflicting values to choose from.

For the first moral dilemma, we ask you to parse the dilemma using the approach you normally do in everyday life. Make note of what informs your decisions. In future weeks, we will share different moral decision-making models.

Moral Dilemma Examples

1. How do you respond when a homeless person asks you for something? Discuss your personal experience of thinking, feeling, and doing something in response to a homeless person.
2. Discuss Jesus' going through the process of choosing the needs of his family versus going to higher education in Jerusalem.

Reading Assignment

For this class to be a real growth experience for you, a real expansion of your frame of reference for personal moral decision-making and its relationship to your soul's growth we encourage you to engage the curated reading assignments and think about the questions that are posed for each section.

By doing so, you will be better prepared to discuss the important questions raised in the live Zoom classes. The goal of this course is for each of us to become Supreme moral decision-makers and a living example of the Moral Renaissance.

16.7	Morals, Virtue, and Personality
101.9	Religion and Morality
103.5	The Origin of Ideals
132.2	Truth and Faith
5.5	The Consciousness of God
103.2	Religion and the Individual

Ethics

27:3.1 (300.4) The higher you ascend in the scale of life, the more attention must be paid to universe ethics. Ethical awareness is simply the recognition by any individual of the rights inherent in the existence of any and all other individuals. But spiritual ethics far transcends the mortal and even the morontia concept of personal and group relations.

170:3.6 (1862.3) To thus love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethics.

Moral Choice

39:4.14 (435.7) The keys of the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity. All men have these keys. Men use them—advance in spirit status—by decisions, by more decisions, and by more decisions. The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always—in any sphere, in all of them—this is to choose to do the will of God. If man thus chooses, he is great, though he be the humblest citizen of Jerusem or even the least of mortals on Urantia.

101:6.3 (1111.7) Moral will embraces decisions based on reasoned knowledge, augmented by wisdom, and sanctioned by religious faith. Such choices are acts of moral nature and evidence the existence of moral personality, the forerunner of morontia personality and eventually of true spirit status.

Morality and Religion

92:7.5 (1012.6) Primitive religion was largely a material-value consciousness, but civilization elevates religious values, for true religion is the devotion of the self to the service of meaningful and supreme values. As religion evolves, ethics becomes the philosophy of morals, and morality becomes the discipline of self by the standards of highest meanings and supreme values—divine and spiritual ideals. And thus religion becomes a spontaneous and exquisite devotion, the living experience of the loyalty of love.

103:2.8 (1131.7) When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is primitive religious experience. No animal can make such a choice; such a decision is both human and religious. It embraces the fact of God-consciousness and exhibits the impulse of social service, the basis of the brotherhood of man. When mind chooses a right moral judgment by an act of the free will, such a decision constitutes a religious experience.



156:5.10 (1739.5) Religion is the exclusively spiritual experience of the evolving immortal soul of the God-knowing man, but moral power and spiritual energy are mighty forces which may be utilized in dealing with difficult social situations and in solving intricate economic problems. These moral and spiritual endowments make all levels of human living richer and more meaningful.

196:3.25 (2096.1) Morality is the essential pre-existent soil of personal God-consciousness, the personal realization of the Adjuster's inner presence, but such morality is not the source of religious experience and the resultant spiritual insight. The moral nature is superanimal but subspiritual. Morality is equivalent to the recognition of duty, the realization of the existence of right and wrong. The moral zone intervenes between the animal and the human types of mind as morontia functions between the material and the spiritual spheres of personality attainment.

196:3.27 (2096.3) Morality is not necessarily spiritual; it may be wholly and purely human, albeit real religion enhances all moral values, makes them more meaningful. Morality without religion fails to reveal ultimate goodness, and it also fails to provide for the survival of even its own moral values. Religion provides for the enhancement, glorification, and assured survival of everything morality recognizes and approves.

Morality and Ideals

103:4.3 (1133.3) The sense of guilt (not the consciousness of sin) comes either from interrupted spiritual communion or from the lowering of one's moral ideals. Deliverance from such a predicament can only come through the realization that one's highest moral ideals are not necessarily synonymous with the will of God. Man cannot hope to live up to his highest ideals, but he can be true to his purpose of finding God and becoming more and more like him.

170:2.4 (1859.14) It [Jesus' teaching] was in itself a new standard of moral values, a new ethical yardstick wherewith to measure human conduct. It portrayed the ideal of a resultant new order of human society.

Morality and Personality

103:8.6 (1140.6) Only a philosophy which recognizes the reality of personality—permanence in the presence of change—can be of moral value to man, can serve as a liaison between the theories of material science and spiritual religion.

112:0.11 (1225.11) It [personality] is characterized by morality—awareness of relativity of relationship with other persons. It discerns conduct levels and choosingly discriminates between them.

Morality and Education

132:1.3 (1457.2) Unless the moral insight and the spiritual attainment of mankind are proportionately augmented, the unlimited advancement of a purely materialistic culture may eventually become a menace to civilization. A purely materialistic science harbors within itself the potential seed of the destruction of all scientific striving, for this very attitude presages the ultimate collapse of a civilization which has abandoned its sense of moral values and has repudiated its spiritual goal of attainment.

195:10.17 (2086.3) Even secular education could help in this great spiritual renaissance if it would pay more attention to the work of teaching youth how to engage in life planning and character progression. The purpose of all education should be to foster and further the supreme purpose of life, the development of a majestic and well-balanced personality. There is great need for the teaching of moral discipline in the place of so much self-gratification. Upon such a foundation religion may contribute its spiritual incentive to the enlargement and enrichment of mortal life, even to the security and enhancement of life eternal.

Morality and God

140:10.5 (1585.3) The one characteristic of Jesus' teaching was that the morality of his philosophy originated in the personal relation of the individual to God—this very child-father relationship. Jesus placed emphasis on the individual, not on the race or nation. While eating supper, Jesus had the talk with Matthew in which he explained that the morality of any act is determined by the individual's motive. Jesus' morality was always positive. The golden rule as restated by Jesus demands active social contact; the older negative rule could be obeyed in isolation. Jesus stripped morality

of all rules and ceremonies and elevated it to majestic levels of spiritual thinking and truly righteous living.

140:10.8 (1585.6) In response to a question asked by Andrew, the Master made it clear that the morality of his teaching was inseparable from the religion of his living. He taught morality, not from the nature of man, but from the relation of man to God.

Questions to Ponder

These prompts will be used to stimulate discussion in the live class.

1. In your opinion, what is the most important reason for living a moral life?
2. How does the fifth epochal revelation expand your awareness and understanding of morality beyond the revelation of the life and teachings of Jesus?
3. How do you work through your own struggle(s) between knowing what is right and good and actually doing it?
4. How do moral choices affect soul growth? (See also 111 - The Adjuster and the Soul, and 133:6. At Ephesus - Discourse on the Soul.)
5. Write down any moral and ethical dilemmas you are currently struggling with.

Resources

What's the Difference Between Morality and Ethics?

Encyclopedia Britannica

Generally, the terms ethics and morality are used interchangeably, although a few different communities (academic, legal, or religious, for example) will occasionally make a distinction. In fact, Britannica's article on ethics considers the terms to be the same as moral philosophy. While understanding that most ethicists (that is, philosophers who study ethics) consider the terms interchangeable, let's go ahead and dive into these distinctions.

Both morality and ethics loosely have to do with distinguishing the difference between "good and bad" or "right and wrong." Many people think of morality as something that's

personal and normative, whereas ethics is the standards of “good and bad” distinguished by a certain community or social setting. For example, your local community may think adultery is immoral, and you personally may agree with that. However, the distinction can be useful if your local community has no strong feelings about adultery, but you consider adultery immoral on a personal level. By these definitions of the terms, your morality would contradict the ethics of your community. In popular discourse, however, we’ll often use the terms moral and immoral when talking about issues like adultery regardless of whether it’s being discussed in a personal or in a community-based situation. As you can see, the distinction can get a bit tricky.

It’s important to consider how the two terms have been used in discourse in different fields so that we can consider the connotations of both terms. For example, morality has a Christian connotation to many Westerners, since moral theology is prominent in the church. Similarly, ethics is the term used in conjunction with business, medicine, or law. In these cases, ethics serves as a personal code of conduct for people working in those fields, and the ethics themselves are often highly debated and contentious. These connotations have helped guide the distinctions between morality and ethics.

Ethicists today, however, use the terms interchangeably. If they do want to differentiate morality from ethics, the onus is on the ethicist to state the definitions of both terms. Ultimately, the distinction between the two is as substantial as a line drawn in the sand.

[Read the article online here...](#)

Ethics Unwrapped (University of Texas)

Visit the [website here...](#)

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So go ahead... Grow your moral awareness. Support integrity in all your actions. Encourage others to do the same. Use (and share!) Ethics Unwrapped.

This program has been made possible by generous contributions from the Bob and Ann Pratt Endowment, the Teagle Foundation, the Provost's Office at The University of Texas at Austin, and the McCombs School of Business.

Billy Budd by Herman Melville

By Herman Melville

Read an [online copy here](#) with a free account on the Internet Archive.

Relevant Urantia Book Quotes

For this class to be a real growth experience for you, a real expansion of your frame of reference for personal moral decision-making and its relationship to your soul's growth we encourage you to engage the curated reading assignments and think about the questions that are posed for each section.

By doing so, you will be better prepared to discuss the important questions raised in the live Zoom classes. The goal of this course is for each of us to become Supreme moral decision-makers and a living example of the Moral Renaissance.

Supplemental Quotes from the Urantia Book

156:2.7 (1736.4) Said Jesus: "My disciples must not only cease to do evil but learn to do well; you must not only be cleansed from all conscious sin, but you must refuse to harbor even the feelings of guilt. If you confess your sins, they are forgiven; therefore must you maintain a conscience void of offense."

Morality Quotes

5.5.1	Morality has its origin in the reason of self-consciousness.
196:3 25	Morality is equivalent to the recognition of duty, the realization of the existence of right and wrong.
92:7.5	As religion evolves... morality becomes the discipline of self by the standards of highest meanings and supreme values — divine and spiritual ideals.
101:6.3	Moral will embraces decisions based on reasoned knowledge, augmented by wisdom, and sanctioned by religious faith.
170.2.4	Jesus' concept of the kingdom... was in itself a new standard of moral values, anew ethical yardstick wherewith to measure human conduct.
39:4.14	The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always—in any sphere, in all of them—this is to choose to do the will of God.
101:9.5	Moral consciousness is just a name applied to the human recognition and awareness of those ethical and emerging morontial values which duty demands that man shall abide by in the day-by-day control and guidance of conduct.
16:7.7	The art of relative estimation or comparative measurement enters into the practice of the virtues of the moral realm.
16:7:8	Man's moral nature would be impotent without the art of measurement, the discrimination embodied in his ability to scrutinize meanings.
16:7.9	Morality can never be advanced by law or by force. It is a personal and free will matter...
2:6.5	Righteousness implies that God is the source of the moral law of the universe.
170:2.4	It [Jesus' teaching] was in itself a new standard of moral values, a new ethical yardstick wherewith to measure human conduct.

Ethics Quotes

27:3.1	Ethical awareness is simply the recognition by any individual of the rights inherent in the existence of any and all other individuals.
92:7.5	As religion evolves, ethics becomes the philosophy of morals, and morality becomes the discipline of self by the standards of highest meanings and supreme values—divine and spiritual ideals.
170:3.6	To thus love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethics.
112:0.11	Choice – personality - It is characterized by morality—awareness of relativity of relationship with other persons.
1:7.3 (31.3)	The concept of truth might possibly be entertained apart from personality, the concept of beauty may exist without personality, but the concept of divine goodness is understandable only in relation to personality. Only a person can love and be loved. Even beauty and truth would be divorced from survival hope if they were not attributes of a personal God, a loving Father.
103:2.8	When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is a primitive religious experience.
103:4.3	The sense of guilt (not the consciousness of sin) comes either from interrupted spiritual communion or from the lowering of one's moral ideals.
91:7.2	The soul of man requires spiritual exercise as well as spiritual nourishment.
196:3.20	Every time man makes a reflective moral choice, he immediately experiences a new divine invasion of his soul.
101:9.1	Revelation unfailingly enlarges the ethical horizon of evolved religion while it simultaneously and unfailingly expands the moral obligations of all prior revelations.(Emphasis added)

Other

16:6.9 (192.5)	These scientific, moral, and spiritual insights, these cosmic responses, are innate in the cosmic mind, which endows all will creatures.
56:10.21 (648.4)	Love is the desire to do good to others.
112:2.8 (1228.3)	Everything nonspiritual in human experience, excepting personality, is a means to an end. Every true relationship of mortal man with other persons - human or divine - is an end in itself.

Schools of Moral Philosophy

Source: The Philosophy.com

The main branches of Western moral philosophy.

- Formalism or Deontology: Kant's practical philosophy is related to this current. Formalism asserts that the morality of an act depends on the form of the act, and not on its content.
- Individualism: Individualism, in morality, posits the primacy of the individual over the social totality: values emanate from the individual. Nietzsche or Dumont are representatives of moral individualism.
- Eudemonism: According to eudemonism, the goal of action is the search for happiness.
- Pessimism: Pessimism, in morality, consists in thinking evil prevails over good, so man is condemned to act badly.
- Utilitarianism: Utility must be the criterion of action. According to the utilitarians, the principle of utility supposes a calculated search for pleasures (arithmetic of pleasures). In both quantitative and qualitative terms.
- Hedonism: Happiness is immediate pleasure. Happiness is enjoyment.
- Stoicism: It is the concept of destiny (fatum) that governs the morality of the Stoics. The actions of man must be guided by the acceptance of destiny. The man only mastering his view of things, not the things themselves.
- Epicureanism Epicurean morality consists in satisfying only the natural and necessary pleasures.

- Consequentialism: Only the consequences of an act make it possible to qualify it in terms of moral or immoral.
- Cynicism: Cynicism consists of despising morals, conventions or even traditions.
- Ethical Relativism: The relativists consider that no morality can claim to be universal, that the cultures have a proper morality, equivalent to each other.
- Altruism: Altruism affirms that only moral acts guided by disinterestedness and the love of others.
- Nihilism: Nihilism defends a conception according to which there is no absolute, transcendent morality.
- Existentialism: Man invents his way and his morality freely. The bastard, on the contrary, guided by the spirit of seriousness, hides behind a legacy morality.

10 Major Western Philosophers of Morality and their Main Work on Morality

- Plato: It is in Gorgias that his moral philosophy is best illustrated, even if the Republic also presents the main concepts of Platonic moral philosophy.
- Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics
- Rousseau: The origin of inequalities among men
- Kant: Metaphysics of Morals
- Hume: Treatise on Human Nature
- Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals
- Schopenhauer: Aphorisms on wisdom (very easy to read)
- Spinoza: Ethics
- Sartre: Existentialism is a humanism (very easy to read)
- Levinas: Totality and Infinity (difficult work for neophytes)

Read the original online:

<https://www.the-philosophy.com/moral-philosophy-ethics-definitions>

2. Rule of Living Taught by Jesus - A HIGHER GOLDEN RULE

Learning Objectives



1. To comprehend the meaning and value of each of the six levels of the Rule of Living taught by Jesus and be able to explain these levels to others.
2. To compare and contrast the Golden Rule (Do unto others what you would have them do unto you) found across all cultures and religions with the augmented meanings and values in the Rule of Living defined by Jesus.
3. To integrate this understanding of higher moral decision-making and behavior into one's conduct.

A New Way of Living in the Spiritual Family of God

Jesus introduced his apostles and the world to a new Rule of Living, a set of higher spiritual concepts to guide a moral and ethical life, one arising from the realization that every person is a child of God, and that God loves each individual as a child in the heavenly family. The universality of his love brings into being a relationship of the whole, the universal brotherhood, which places every person in a spiritual sister-brother relationship with all personal beings.

When a person realizes and actualizes this truth of the fatherhood of God and the brother/sisterhood of humankind, either through the direct realization of God or by an act of faith, they cannot help but begin to live in accord with the moral obligations of this awareness. A God-conscious person becomes increasingly aware of the rippling effects of their helpful or harmful actions on others. Such a way of life embodies the religion of the spirit as taught by Jesus. It contributes to the progressive growth of the Supreme Being, the Evolutionary Deity of space and time.

12:7.11 (138.6) Brotherhood constitutes a fact of relationship between every personality in universal existence. No person can escape the benefits or the penalties that may come as a result of relationship to other persons. The part profits or suffers in measure with the whole. The good effort of each man benefits all men; the error or evil of each man augments the tribulation of all men. As moves the part, so moves the whole. As the progress of the whole, so the progress of the part. The relative velocities of part and whole determine whether the part is retarded by the inertia of the whole or is carried forward by the momentum of the cosmic brotherhood.

The New Way of Living in the Spiritual Family of God

Whereas traditional religions taught taboos ("Thou shalt not") as a way to overcome evil and sin, Jesus promoted a positive way of living the will of God, free of prohibitions. In the present age of greater self-realization and psychological awareness, people can finally grasp the meaning and value of conducting themselves NOT by resisting evil but by embracing all that is good, true, beautiful, and full of divine love.

By demonstrating love and embracing good, we cooperate with the Thought Adjuster's mission to spiritize our minds, thereby transforming us into the spiritual likeness of God.

To love others as Jesus loves us is to love others as the Father loves his Creator Sons and Creative Daughters and all his universe children. We are compelled by the power of Jesus' love and the Indwelling Spirit to love other people as the Paradise Father loves us. This is the highest, purest form of love, which can best be described as altruistic or selfless love that desires the highest good for another person. And what else could constitute the highest good for another person other than the goal of becoming perfect or God-like in one's sphere, as the Father is perfect in his Paradise sphere?

In living the religion of the spirit, our moral decisions and spiritual choices are rooted in recognizing the spiritual brotherhood of all beings, with the consequent duty to do the highest good for the well-being of others. The religion of the spirit calls us to be loyal in our duties to God and our spiritual brothers and sisters.

We are asked to give every developing person a chance to grow their own religious experience and not to force an experience upon them that is beyond their capacity to understand. "Real educational growth is indicated by enhancement of ideals, increased appreciation of values, new meanings of values, and augmented loyalty to supreme values (100:1.3 (1094.5))".

This last quality, LOYALTY, is crucial to our mortal ascension career. We are reminded that "loyal persons are growing persons, and growth is an impressive and inspiring reality." It is by living loyally to Supreme values today and every day that we slowly and inevitably grow toward God-likeness. As one of the authors of the Urantia revelation reminds us: "The quickest way for a tadpole to become a frog is to live loyally each moment as a tadpole" (100:1.4 (1094.6)).

A New Way of Living in the Spiritual Family of God

1. The Will of God and the Plan of Progressive Perfection Attainment
2. How do we Know the Will of God?
3. The Rule of Living Taught by Jesus
4. Conclusion: Elevating One's Motives and Behavior

The Will of God and the Plan of Progressive Perfection Attainment

We are told in the Urantia revelation that, in the eternal past, God the Father conceived the plan of giving a part of himself to his mortal creatures so that they might become like him in eternity. He issued the command, "Be you perfect even as I am perfect." The Universal Father then bestowed the gift of Thought Adjusters to dwell in the minds of people, enabling them to become like God, and to pilot them all the way home to God in Paradise.



1:0.5 (22.2) Urantia mortals can hardly hope to be perfect in the infinite sense, but it is entirely possible for human beings, starting out as they do on this planet, to attain the supernal and divine goal which the infinite God has set for mortal man; and when they do achieve this destiny, they will, in all that pertains to self-realization and mind attainment, be just as replete in their sphere of divine perfection as God himself is in his sphere of infinity and eternity. Such perfection may not be universal in the material sense, unlimited in intellectual grasp, or final in spiritual experience, but it is final and complete in all finite aspects of divinity of will, perfection of personality motivation, and God-consciousness.

This fact of God's Indwelling Spirit in human beings endows them with the potential to realize the love of God and, ever so slowly, to think, feel, and act like God if they choose to cultivate this discovery and knowledge. We can learn the most about the nature of God the Universal Father by intently studying the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Creator Son of God, for "He who has seen the Son has seen the Father."

At the root of being and becoming God-like is thinking and acting as the Father (and as Jesus) would act were he among us. This means consecrating our will to doing the will of the Father in Paradise as best we can discern it.

How do we Know the Will of God?

God is truth, beauty, goodness, and love and we appropriate these divine qualities into our character by truth-coordinated thinking, compassionate feeling, and consequent acts of love. As we think, so we are. Essentially, the will of God is to love others as God loves each of us and to nurture the goodness inside every person – to want for them what God wants for them.

Let's look at how Jesus instructed Ganid, the young lad from India whom he tutored, about the will of God:

130:2.7 (1431.2) This was a conference which lasted well into the night, in the course of which the young man requested Jesus to tell him the difference between the will of God and that human mind act of choosing which is also called will.

In substance, Jesus said: The will of God is the way of God, partnership with the choice of God in the face of any potential alternative. To do the will of God, therefore, is the progressive experience of becoming more and more like God, and God is the source and destiny of all that is good and beautiful and true. The will of man is the way of man, the sum and substance of that which the mortal chooses to be and do. Will is the deliberate choice of a self-conscious being which leads to decision-conduct based on intelligent reflection.

All attempts to think, feel, and act as the Universal Father does, with the utmost love, mercy, and goodness, means growing from the stage of a self-absorbed child to a selfless parent who, while maintaining their selfhood in a balanced manner, shifts their focus from their own selfish desires to the needs of the child.

103:2.7 (1131.6) Moral choosing is usually accompanied by more or less moral conflict. And this very first conflict in the child mind is between the urges of egoism and the impulses of altruism. The Thought Adjuster does not disregard the personality values of the egoistic motive but does operate to place a slight preference upon the altruistic impulse as leading to the goal of human happiness and to the joys of the kingdom of heaven.

Progressive personality development towards God-likeness requires forward movement from immature levels of self-centeredness to the maturity of a responsible parent, and even higher to ever-progressing stages of identification with God as a Divinely Loving

Parent who created mortal beings to become like him. "Love is the desire to do good to others" (56:10.21 (648.4)).

Jesus gave us a magnificent technique for overcoming evil and becoming God-like through his positive teaching of actively doing good rather than trying to avoid evil.

159:5.10 (1770.2) Jesus did not advocate the practice of negative submission to the indignities of those who might purposely seek to impose upon the practitioners of nonresistance to evil, but rather that his followers should be wise and alert in the quick and positive reaction of good to evil to the end that they might effectively overcome evil with good. Forget not, the truly good is invariably more powerful than the most malignant evil.

The Master taught a positive standard of righteousness: "Whosoever wishes to be my disciple, let him disregard himself and take up the full measure of his responsibilities daily to follow me." And he so lived himself in that "he went about doing good."

Think about this:

Pause for a moment and think about how different it feels energetically to positively live up to a higher ideal than to bear a heavy burden of obligation to do something we are required to do and often would rather not have to do. This helps to explain why the way of Jesus is such an empowering and inspiring path.

The Rule of Living Taught by Jesus

From the time that Jesus called the apostles to follow him, he repeatedly instructed them in the ways of the kingdom of heaven. He told them emphatically that more is required of the citizens of the heavenly kingdom than of the citizens of earthly rule. He expected his apostles and all future practitioners of the religion of the Spirit to abide by those teachings and practices that embody the Creator Son's ideals of living on the evolutionary worlds of time and space.

These ideals were demonstrated in the human bestowal mission of our Creator Son as Jesus of Nazareth, whose primary purpose was to reveal his loving Father in heaven to all people for all time and to show people how to live up to their inherent goodness as faithful children of God.

140:1.6 (1569.3) "Whosoever would become great in my Father's kingdom shall become a minister to all; and whosoever would be first among you, let him become the server of his brethren. But when you are once truly received as citizens in the heavenly kingdom, you are no longer servants but sons, sons of the living God. And so shall this kingdom progress in the world until it shall break down every barrier and bring all men to know my Father and believe in the saving truth which I have come to declare."

But we should not make the mistake of thinking that loving service in the spiritual family of God entails drudgery or being forced to follow a lot of rules and having to comply with a bunch of commands like "Thou should do this" or "Thou should not do that." Not at all. When you hear the word "should," you can be certain that it is a man-made rule!

Rather, divine living is characterized by joyful liberation from "shoulds" and "musts." It manifests as naturally flowing love from God to others and dynamic, joyous, freely-given service, unhindered by fear or punishment. Here's what Jesus had to say about divine living in the Spirit:

143:2.4 (1609.5) "By the old way you seek to suppress, obey, and conform to the rules of living; by the new way you are first transformed by the Spirit of Truth and thereby strengthened in your inner soul by the constant spiritual renewing of your mind, and so are you endowed with the power of the certain and joyous performance of the gracious, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Forget not — it is your personal faith in the exceedingly great and precious promises of God that ensures your becoming partakers of the divine nature. Thus by your faith and the spirit's transformation, you become in reality the temples of God, and his spirit actually dwells within you. If, then, the spirit dwells within you, you are no longer bondslaves of the flesh but free and liberated sons of the spirit. The new law of the spirit endows you with the liberty of self-mastery in place of the old law of the fear of self-bondage and the slavery of self-denial."

So what exactly did Jesus teach about the Rule of Living?



Now we come to the account in Part IV of the Urantia Book which describes the event that led Jesus to expound on the **Rule of Living** in the Father's kingdom – the spiritual family of God. In this brilliant talk to his apostles, Jesus distinguished among the different levels of meaning he attached to the interpretation of the golden rule of living – the admonition to 'do to others that which you desire others to do to you':

147:4.1 (1650.2) On the evening of this same Sabbath day, at Bethany, while Jesus, the twelve, and a group of believers were assembled about the fire in Lazarus's garden, Nathaniel asked Jesus this question: "Master, although you have taught us the positive version of the old rule of life, instructing us that we should do to others as we wish them to do to us, I do not fully discern how we can always abide by such an injunction. Let me illustrate my contention by citing the example of a lustful man who thus wickedly looks upon his intended consort in sin. How can we teach that this evil-intending man should do to others as he would they should do to him?"

147:4.2 (1650.3) When Jesus heard Nathaniel's question, he immediately stood upon his feet and, pointing his finger at the apostle, said: "Nathaniel, Nathaniel! What manner of thinking is going on in your heart? Do you not receive my teachings as one who has been born of the spirit? Do you not hear the truth as men of wisdom and spiritual understanding? When I admonished you to do to others as you would have them do to you, I spoke to men of high ideals, not to those who would be tempted to distort my teaching into a license for the encouragement of evil-doing."

147:4.3 (1650.4) When the Master had spoken, Nathaniel stood up and said: "But, Master, you should not think that I approve of such an interpretation of your teaching. I asked the question because I conjectured that many such men might thus misjudge your admonition, and I hoped you would give us further instruction

regarding these matters." And then when Nathaniel had sat down, Jesus continued speaking: "I well know, Nathaniel, that no such idea of evil is approved in your mind, but I am disappointed in that you all so often fail to put a genuinely spiritual interpretation upon my commonplace teachings, instruction which must be given you in human language and as men must speak. Let me now teach you concerning the differing levels of meaning attached to the interpretation of this rule of living, this admonition to 'do to others that which you desire others to do to you':

1. **The level of the flesh.** Such a purely **selfish and lustful** interpretation would be well exemplified by the supposition of your question.
2. **The level of the feelings.** This plane is one level higher than that of the flesh and implies that **sympathy and pity** would enhance one's interpretation of this rule of living.
3. **The level of mind.** Now come into action the **reason** of mind and the **intelligence of experience**. Good judgment dictates that such a rule of living should be interpreted in consonance with the highest idealism embodied in the nobility of profound self-respect.
4. **The level of brotherly love.** Still higher is discovered the level of **unselfish devotion to the welfare of one's fellows**. On this higher plane of wholehearted social service growing out of the consciousness of the fatherhood of God and the consequent recognition of the brotherhood of man, there is discovered a new and far more beautiful interpretation of this basic rule of life.
5. **The moral level.** And then when you attain true philosophic levels of interpretation, when you have **real insight into the rightness and wrongness of things**, when you **perceive the eternal fitness of human relationships**, you will begin to view such a problem of interpretation as you would imagine a high-minded, idealistic, wise, and impartial third person would so view and interpret such an injunction as applied to your personal problems of adjustment to your life situations.
6. **The spiritual level.** And then last, but greatest of all, we attain the **level of spirit insight and spiritual interpretation which impels us** to recognize in this rule of life the divine command to **treat all men as we conceive God [and Jesus] would treat them**. That is the universe ideal of human relationships. And this is your attitude toward all such problems when your supreme desire is ever to do the Father's will. I would, therefore, that you should **do to all men that which you know I would do to them** in like circumstances."

147:4.10 (1651.4) Nothing Jesus had said to the apostles up to this time had ever more astonished them. They continued to discuss the Master's words long after he had retired. While Nathaniel was slow to recover from his supposition that Jesus had misunderstood the spirit of his question, the others were more than thankful that their philosophic fellow apostle had had the courage to ask such a thought-provoking question.

And one more quick word on the concepts of sin and guilt

Jesus was emphatic in teaching that our missteps and sins are always forgiven by our Universal Father! We must let go of guilt; we need to believe that we are truly forgiven through and through.

156:2.7 (1736.4) Said Jesus: "My disciples must not only cease to do evil but learn to do well; you must not only be cleansed from all conscious sin, but you must refuse to harbor even the feelings of guilt. If you confess your sins, they are forgiven; therefore must you maintain a conscience void of offense."

Conclusion: Elevating One's Motives and Behavior

As you contemplate the sublime Rule of Living taught by Jesus, you might ask yourself, as a child of God, if you can conceive of any possible better way of living, of moral decision-making and behaving, than what Jesus taught us by his words and dynamic living.

If we believe that the Spirit of God lives in us and that God's intention in creating us is for every child of God to gradually mature and become like Him by thinking, feeling, and behaving like Him, to the best of our ability, then isn't Jesus telling us and showing us how to accomplish that goal by actualizing his Rule of Living?

Consider how the Rule of Living serves as a blueprint for mortal ascension, guiding us from a material human life at the level of the senses – the lowest stage of human existence – to progressively higher levels of behavior, where we make more thoughtful decisions based on refined emotions and enhanced intellectual reasoning.

Then, as we grow in awareness of our true nature as sons and daughters of God, we begin to feel a sense of sibling love towards all people and a devotion to the welfare of others.

This brotherly love gradually becomes integrated with a more astute understanding of the rightness and wrongness of our speech and actions.

We see more clearly the effects of helpful and harmful actions upon not only our personal spiritual wellbeing but upon the progress of the whole of humankind towards higher, heavenly levels of civilization. Thus, we take more care in objectively evaluating our thoughts, speech, and actions in terms of the good of the whole (the Supreme).

Jesus's blueprint for progressively perfecting our human/spiritual character points us to the sixth and highest type of behavior in all situations – to treat all people as we conceive God (and Jesus as the Son of God) would treat them. Thus, Jesus states clearly the universal ideal of human relationships. So our personal challenge is to use all of our spiritual and mindal capacity to grow into an understanding of God's infinitely good and loving nature and freely, joyously allow that comprehension to guide us in our spiritual moral decision-making.

180:1.6 (1945.3) Keep in mind: It is loyalty, not sacrifice, that Jesus demands. The consciousness of sacrifice implies the absence of that wholehearted affection which would have made such a loving service a supreme joy. The idea of duty signifies that you are servant-minded and hence are missing the mighty thrill of doing your service as a friend and for a friend. The impulse of friendship transcends all convictions of duty, and the service of a friend for a friend can never be called a sacrifice. The Master has taught the apostles that they are the sons of God. He has called them brethren, and now, before he leaves, he calls them his friends.

In order for us humans to understand and know the nature of God, we are taught that we must first love God with all our heart. Why?

Conversely, at the human to human level, we must first understand another person's experience and motives before we can truly love them. And when most of humankind comes to understand other people from other cultures – their values, concerns, and motivations – then we will witness the widespread spiritual transformation of individuals and planetary civilization. We will experience what it is like to live in a society where every person knows that God IS LOVE and that love is the desire to do good for others.

100:4.6 (1098.3) You cannot truly love your fellows by a mere act of the will. Love is only born of thoroughgoing understanding of your neighbor's motives and sentiments. It is

not so important to love all men today as it is that each day you learn to love one more human being. If each day or each week you achieve an understanding of one more of your fellows, and if this is the limit of your ability, then you are certainly socializing and truly spiritualizing your personality.

Love is infectious, and when human devotion is intelligent and wise, love is more catching than hate. But only genuine and unselfish love is truly contagious. If each mortal could only become a focus of dynamic affection, this benign virus of love would soon pervade the sentimental emotion-stream of humanity to such an extent that all civilization would be encompassed by love, and that would be the realization of the brotherhood of man.

And that is what we want to think about this week and begin to actualize more and more in our moral choices and spiritual decisions.

Reflective Questions List

1. Think about your own life and the six levels of conduct in Jesus' Rule of Living. There may be some episodes in your life – even something of moral significance that happened this past week – that really stand out in terms of how you decided or behaved at these various levels.

Task: Recall a specific moral dilemma that you have faced. Share the thoughts and feelings you had about the situation, and what you ultimately decided to do. Explain which of the six levels of Jesus's Rule of Living you think you were operating from in your decision-making process. What did you learn from this event?

If you're comfortable with it and choose to do so, come to the live class ready to share some examples from your own life. We will share in the context that we are all infinitely far from the perfection of character. By discussing our experiences and moral quandaries with others, we move the discussion of moral decision-making from the theoretical realm to lived experience. We realize our common human condition and challenges. Thus, we can validate each other and compassionately support each other on the spiritual path that Jesus showed us.

What is the wise, loving solution to this moral problem?

2. What do you find challenging in reaching the higher levels of moral discrimination and acting described by Jesus? Think about fear and how a lack of courage and conviction may be an obstacle to behaving at the fifth and sixth levels of spiritual moral conduct. Why do we sometimes fail to do the right thing when we know what the right thing is?

Refer to the vestigial traits listed in Paper 48:5.8.

3. Why do you think the fifth moral level of decision-making is considered superior to the fourth level of brotherly love?
4. Think of a time when you did not do the morally right thing in a given situation, for whatever reason, and you felt **guilt**. What is guilt, and does it have any use in our moral development? What's the harmful side of guilt? Is there a difference between guilt and remorse? Share your thoughts about the difference between these two states of being.

Some things to consider in thinking about this question:

- Refer to Paper 89:10.4 for a perspective on guilt.
- Think about what is meant by "unreasonable guilt," and ask yourself if there is such a thing as "good guilt."
- Look up Jesus' rule of making reparation for wrongdoings.
- What did you think and feel in the moment – and then afterwards – when you did not do the right thing? Did you feel guilty about it? Did you beat yourself up about it or successfully avoid self-flagellation?
- Did you use the event to grow in wisdom about proper moral conduct?
- Relevant passage from the Urantia Book:

89:10.4 (984.7) The possibility of the recognition of the sense of guilt is a badge of transcendent distinction for mankind. It does not mark man as mean but rather sets him apart as a creature of potential greatness and ever-ascending glory. Such a sense of unworthiness is the initial stimulus that should lead quickly and surely to those faith conquests which translate the mortal mind to the superb levels of moral nobility, cosmic insight, and spiritual living; thus are all the meanings of human existence changed from the temporal to the eternal, and all values are elevated from the human to the divine.

5. Ponder the life of Jesus and write about an event in his life that appears to have been a demonstration of the sixth spiritual level of conduct. Do you feel that you have ever behaved in Jesus' sixth-level way of being and doing? How?

Experiential Learning Activity and Meditation

Pick one of the higher levels of Jesus's Rule of Living that would be challenging for you and practice it throughout the week as little situations arise. Keep this higher level of moral reasoning and decision- making in your consciousness and make it your intention to respond appropriately to people and situations in accord with it.

Meditation

We invite you to think about the following spiritual thoughts in your daily meditation this week:

Can you imagine a world in which living the Will and Way of God is not only the basis for all personal moral decisions by people everywhere, but also pervades the ethical systems of every culture and our entire planetary civilization?

Well, that's the long-awaited future we probably all want and hope for – the ages of light and life! In Paper 56 of the Urantia Book, the author describes this distant future time when people will embrace truth, beauty, and goodness as the full revelation of divinity reality.

It will be a transcendent time when the "love-comprehension of Deity finds its spiritual expression in the lives of God-knowing mortals, [and yields] the fruits of divinity: [which are] intellectual peace, social progress, moral satisfaction, spiritual joy, and cosmic wisdom."

This perfecting state of being will gradually lead to the glorious seventh stage of light and life when "...the advanced mortals have learned that love is the greatest thing in the universe — and they know that God is love" (56:10.20 (648.3)).

And that "Love is the desire to do good to others" (56:10.21(648.4)).

Can you see how it all ties together? ...That divine love is the true basis for the highest expression of cosmic morality, of divine moral decision-making and conduct? And that divine love is desiring to do the highest spiritual good for another?

And that is what we invite you to deeply contemplate this week and begin to actualize more and more in your moral choices and spiritual decisions.

Resources

Supplemental Quotes from The Urantia Book Selections from Paper 180 The Farewell Discourse

180:5.5 (1949.7) The golden rule, when divested of the superhuman insight of the Spirit of Truth, becomes nothing more than a rule of high ethical conduct. The golden rule, when literally interpreted, may become the instrument of great offense to one's fellows. Without a spiritual discernment of the golden rule of wisdom you might reason that, since you are desirous that all men speak the full and frank truth of their minds to you, you should therefore fully and frankly speak the full thought of your mind to your fellow beings. Such an unspiritual interpretation of the golden rule might result in untold unhappiness and no end of sorrow.

180:5.6 (1950.1) Some persons discern and interpret the golden rule as a purely intellectual affirmation of human fraternity. Others experience this expression of human relationship as an emotional gratification of the tender feelings of the human personality. Another mortal recognizes this same golden rule as the yardstick for measuring all social relations, the standard of social conduct. Still others look upon it as being the positive injunction of a great moral teacher who embodied in this statement the highest concept of moral obligation as regards all fraternal relationships. In the lives of such moral beings the golden rule becomes the wise center and circumference of all their philosophy.

180:5.7 (1950.2) In the kingdom of the believing brotherhood of God-knowing truth lovers, this golden rule takes on living qualities of spiritual realization on those higher levels of interpretation which cause the mortal sons of God to view this injunction of the Master as requiring them so to relate themselves to their fellows that they will receive the highest possible good as a result of the believer's contact with them. This is the essence of true religion: that you love your neighbor as yourself.

180:5.8 (1950.3) But the highest realization and the truest interpretation of the golden

rule consists in the consciousness of the spirit of the truth of the enduring and living reality of such a divine declaration. The true cosmic meaning of this rule of universal relationship is revealed only in its spiritual realization, in the interpretation of the law of conduct by the spirit of the Son to the spirit of the Father that indwells the soul of mortal man. And when such spirit-led mortals realize the true meaning of this golden rule, they are filled to overflowing with the assurance of citizenship in a friendly universe, and their ideals of spirit reality are satisfied only when they love their fellows as Jesus loved us all, and that is the reality of the realization of the love of God.

180:5.9 (1950.4) This same philosophy of the living flexibility and cosmic adaptability of divine truth to the individual requirements and capacity of every son of God, must be perceived before you can hope adequately to understand the Master's teaching and practice of nonresistance to evil. The Master's teaching is basically a spiritual pronouncement. Even the material implications of his philosophy cannot be helpfully considered apart from their spiritual correlations. The spirit of the Master's injunction consists in the nonresistance of all selfish reaction to the universe, coupled with the aggressive and progressive attainment of righteous levels of true spirit values: divine beauty, infinite goodness, and eternal truth — to know God and to become increasingly like him.

180:5.10 (1950.5) Love, unselfishness, must undergo a constant and living readaptative interpretation of relationships in accordance with the leading of the Spirit of Truth. Love must thereby grasp the ever-changing and enlarging concepts of the highest cosmic good of the individual who is loved. And then love goes on to strike this same attitude concerning all other individuals who could possibly be influenced by the growing and living relationship of one spirit-led mortal's love for other citizens of the universe. And this entire living adaptation of love must be effected in the light of both the environment of present evil and the eternal goal of the perfection of divine destiny.

180:5.11 (1950.6) And so must we clearly recognize that neither the golden rule nor the teaching of nonresistance can ever be properly understood as dogmas or precepts. They can only be comprehended by living them, by realizing their meanings in the living interpretation of the Spirit of Truth, who directs the loving contact of one human being with another.

Selections from Paper 140 The Ordination of the Twelve (the Sermon on the Mount)

140:1.3 (1568.6) "The power of this kingdom shall consist, not in the strength of armies nor in the might of riches, but rather in the glory of the divine spirit that shall come to teach the minds and rule the hearts of the reborn citizens of this heavenly kingdom, the

sons of God. This is the brotherhood of love wherein righteousness reigns, and whose battle cry shall be: Peace on earth and good will to all men. This kingdom, which you are so soon to go forth proclaiming, is the desire of the good men of all ages, the hope of all the earth, and the fulfillment of the wise promises of all the prophets.

140:4.7 (1572.7) "By their fruits you shall know them." Personality is basically changeless; that which changes — grows — is the moral character. The major error of modern religions is negativism. The tree which bears no fruit is "hewn down and cast into the fire." Moral worth cannot be derived from mere repression — obeying the injunction "Thou shalt not." Fear and shame are unworthy motivations for religious living. Religion is valid only when it reveals the fatherhood of God and enhances the brotherhood of men.

140:4.8 (1572.8) An effective philosophy of living is formed by a combination of cosmic insight and the total of one's emotional reactions to the social and economic environment. Remember: While inherited urges cannot be fundamentally modified, emotional responses to such urges can be changed; therefore the moral nature can be modified, character can be improved. In the strong character emotional responses are integrated and co-ordinated, and thus is produced a unified personality. Deficient unification weakens the moral nature and engenders unhappiness.

140:5.1 (1573.3) From the Sermon on the Mount to the discourse of the Last Supper, Jesus taught his followers to manifest fatherly love rather than brotherly love. Brotherly love would love your neighbor as you love yourself, and that would be adequate fulfillment of the "golden rule." But fatherly affection would require that you should love your fellow mortals as Jesus loves you.

140:8.5 (1579.7) He never ceased to warn his disciples against the evil practice of retaliation; he made no allowance for revenge, the idea of getting even. He deplored the holding of grudges. He disallowed the idea of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. He discountenanced the whole concept of private and personal revenge, assigning these matters to civil government, on the one hand, and to the judgment of God, on the other. He made it clear to the three that his teachings applied to the individual, not the state. He summarized his instructions up to that time regarding these matters, as:

140:8.6 (1580.1) Love your enemies — remember the moral claims of human brotherhood.

140:8.7 (1580.2) The futility of evil: A wrong is not righted by vengeance. Do not make the mistake of fighting evil with its own weapons.

140:8.8 (1580.3) Have faith — confidence in the eventual triumph of divine justice and eternal goodness.

140:10.4 (1585.2) This same evening Thomas asked Jesus: "Master, you say that we must become as little children before we can gain entrance to the Father's kingdom, and yet you have warned us not to be deceived by false prophets nor to become guilty of casting our pearls before swine. Now, I am honestly puzzled. I cannot understand your teaching." Jesus replied to Thomas: "How long shall I bear with you! Ever you insist on making literal all that I teach. When I asked you to become as little children as the price of entering the kingdom, I referred not to ease of deception, mere willingness to believe, nor to quickness to trust pleasing strangers. What I did desire that you should gather from the illustration was the child-father relationship. You are the child, and it is your Father's kingdom you seek to enter. There is present that natural affection between every normal child and its father which insures an understanding and loving relationship, and which forever precludes all disposition to bargain for the Father's love and mercy. And the gospel you are going forth to preach has to do with a salvation growing out of the faith-realization of this very and eternal child-father relationship."

140:10.5 (1585.3) The one characteristic of Jesus' teaching was that the morality of his philosophy originated in the personal relation of the individual to God — this very child-father relationship. Jesus placed emphasis on the individual, not on the race or nation. While eating supper, Jesus had the talk with Matthew in which he explained that the morality of any act is determined by the individual's motive. Jesus' morality was always positive. The golden rule as restated by Jesus demands active social contact; the older negative rule could be obeyed in isolation. Jesus stripped morality of all rules and ceremonies and elevated it to majestic levels of spiritual thinking and truly righteous living.

140:10.6 (1585.4) This new religion of Jesus was not without its practical implications, but whatever of practical political, social, or economic value there is to be found in his teaching is the natural outworking of this inner experience of the soul as it manifests the fruits of the spirit in the spontaneous daily ministry of genuine personal religious experience.

140:10.7 (1585.5) After Jesus and Matthew had finished talking, Simon Zelotes asked, "But, Master, are all men the sons of God?" And Jesus answered: "Yes, Simon, all men are the sons of God, and that is the good news you are going to proclaim." But the apostles could not grasp such a doctrine; it was a new, strange, and startling announcement. And it was because of his desire to impress this truth upon them that Jesus taught his followers to treat all men as their brothers.

140:10.8 (1585.6) In response to a question asked by Andrew, the Master made it clear that the morality of his teaching was inseparable from the religion of his living. He taught morality, not from the nature of man, but from the relation of man to God.

140:10.9 (1585.7) John asked Jesus, "Master, what is the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus answered: "The kingdom of heaven consists in these three essentials: first, recognition of the fact of the sovereignty of God; second, belief in the truth of sonship with God; and third, faith in the effectiveness of the supreme human desire to do the will of God — to be like God. And this is the good news of the gospel: that by faith every mortal may have all these essentials of salvation."

Selections from Paper 142 The Passover at Jerusalem

142:1.4 (1596.6) Love is the rule of living within the kingdom — supreme devotion to God while loving your neighbor as yourself.

142:1.5 (1596.7) Obedience to the will of the Father, yielding the fruits of the spirit in one's personal life, is the law of the kingdom.

Paper 110 Relation of Adjusters to Individual Mortals

110:3.2 (1205.6) The success of your Adjuster in the enterprise of piloting you through the mortal life and bringing about your survival depends not so much on the theories of your beliefs as upon your decisions, determinations, and steadfast faith. All these movements of personality growth become powerful influences aiding in your advancement because they help you to co-operate with the Adjuster; they assist you in ceasing to resist. Thought Adjusters succeed or apparently fail in their terrestrial undertakings just in so far as mortals succeed or fail to co-operate with the scheme whereby they are to be advanced along the ascending path of perfection attainment. The secret of survival is wrapped up in the supreme human desire to be Godlike and in the associated willingness to do and be any and all things which are essential to the final attainment of that overmastering desire.

Selections from 188 The Time at the Tomb

Lessons from the Cross

188:5.1 (2017.9) The cross of Jesus portrays the full measure of the supreme devotion of the true shepherd for even the unworthy members of his flock. It forever places all relations between God and man upon the family basis. God is the Father; man is his son. Love, the love of a father for his son, becomes the central truth in the universe relations

of Creator and creature — not the justice of a king which seeks satisfaction in the sufferings and punishment of the evil-doing subject.

188:5.2 (2018.1) The cross forever shows that the attitude of Jesus toward sinners was neither condemnation nor condonation, but rather eternal and loving salvation. Jesus is truly a savior in the sense that his life and death do win men over to goodness and righteous survival. Jesus loves men so much that his love awakens the response of love in the human heart. Love is truly contagious and eternally creative. Jesus' death on the cross exemplifies a love which is sufficiently strong and divine to forgive sin and swallow up all evil-doing. Jesus disclosed to this world a higher quality of righteousness than justice — mere technical right and wrong. Divine love does not merely forgive wrongs; it absorbs and actually destroys them. The forgiveness of love utterly transcends the forgiveness of mercy. Mercy sets the guilt of evil-doing to one side; but love destroys forever the sin and all weakness resulting therefrom. Jesus brought a new method of living to Urantia. He taught us not to resist evil but to find through him a goodness which effectually destroys evil. The forgiveness of Jesus is not condonation; it is salvation from condemnation. Salvation does not slight wrongs; it makes them right. True love does not compromise nor condone hate; it destroys it. The love of Jesus is never satisfied with mere forgiveness. The Master's love implies rehabilitation, eternal survival. It is altogether proper to speak of salvation as redemption if you mean this eternal rehabilitation.

188:5.3 (2018.2) Jesus, by the power of his personal love for men, could break the hold of sin and evil. He thereby set men free to choose better ways of living. Jesus portrayed a deliverance from the past which in itself promised a triumph for the future. Forgiveness thus provided salvation. The beauty of divine love, once fully admitted to the human heart, forever destroys the charm of sin and the power of evil.

Miscellaneous Selections

50:5.8 (577.3) The epoch of philosophy and brotherhood. When mortals learn to think and begin to profit by experience, they become philosophical — they start out to reason within themselves and to exercise discriminative judgment. The society of this age becomes ethical, and the mortals of such an era are truly becoming moral beings. Wise moral beings are capable of establishing human brotherhood on such a progressing world. Ethical and moral beings can learn how to live in accordance with the golden rule

52:5.8 (596.5) The post bestowal Son age may extend from ten thousand to a hundred thousand years. There is no arbitrary time allotted to any of these dispensational eras. This is a time of great ethical and spiritual progress. Under the spiritual influence of these ages, human character undergoes tremendous transformations and experiences phenomenal development. It becomes possible to put the golden rule into practical

operation. The teachings of Jesus are really applicable to a mortal world which has had the preliminary training of the prebestowal Sons with their dispensations of character ennoblement and culture augmentation.

52:6.5 (597.6) Ethical awakening. Only ethical consciousness can unmask the immorality of human intolerance and the sinfulness of fratricidal strife. Only a moral conscience can condemn the evils of national envy and racial jealousy. Only moral beings will ever seek for that spiritual insight which is essential to living the golden rule.

54:1.8 (614.3) There is no error greater than that species of self-deception which leads intelligent beings to crave the exercise of power over other beings for the purpose of depriving these persons of their natural liberties. The golden rule of human fairness cries out against all such fraud, unfairness, selfishness, and unrighteousness. Only true and genuine liberty is compatible with the reign of love and the ministry of mercy.

71:4.16 (804.16) The appearance of genuine brotherhood signifies that a social order has arrived in which all men delight in bearing one another's burdens; they actually desire to practice the golden rule. But such an ideal society cannot be realized when either the weak or the wicked lie in wait to take unfair and unholy advantage of those who are chiefly actuated by devotion to the service of truth, beauty, and goodness. In such a situation only one course is practical: The "golden rulers" may establish a progressive society in which they live according to their ideals while maintaining an adequate defense against their benighted fellows who might seek either to exploit their pacific predilections or to destroy their advancing civilization.

101:5.11 (1111.1) Personally revealed religions are sponsored by the bestowal spirits representing the three persons of the Paradise Trinity and are especially concerned with the expansion of truth. Evolutionary religion drives home to the individual the idea of personal duty; revealed religion lays increasing emphasis on loving, the golden rule.

139:4.6 (1554.4) Those characteristics of Jesus which John most appreciated were the Master's love and unselfishness; these traits made such an impression on him that his whole subsequent life became dominated by the sentiment of love and brotherly devotion. He talked about love and wrote about love. This "son of thunder" became the "apostle of love"; and at Ephesus, when the aged bishop was no longer able to stand in the pulpit and preach but had to be carried to church in a chair, and when at the close of the service he was asked to say a few words to the believers, for years his only utterance was, "My little children, love one another."

142:5.4 (1601.4) "Said the Prophet Isaiah, speaking of these times: 'When the spirit is poured upon us from on high, then shall the work of righteousness become peace, quietness, and assurance forever.' And for all who truly believe this gospel, I will become

surety for their reception into the eternal mercies and the everlasting life of my Father's kingdom. You, then, who hear this message and believe this gospel of the kingdom are the sons of God, and you have life everlasting; and the evidence to all the world that you have been born of the spirit is that you sincerely love one another."

159:1:3 "The Father in heaven loves his children, and therefore should you learn to love one another; the Father in heaven forgives you your sins; therefore should you learn to forgive one another. If your brother sins against you, go to him and with tact and patience show him his fault. And do all this between you and him alone. If he will listen to you, then have you won your brother. But if your brother will not hear you, if he persists in the error of his way, go again to him, taking with you one or two mutual friends that you may thus have two or even three witnesses to confirm your testimony and establish the fact that you have dealt justly and mercifully with your offending brother. Now if he refuses to hear your brethren, you may tell the whole story to the congregation, and then, if he refuses to hear the brotherhood, let them take such action as they deem wise; let such an unruly member become an outcast from the kingdom. While you cannot pretend to sit in judgment on the souls of your fellows, and while you may not forgive sins or otherwise presume to usurp the prerogatives of the supervisors of the heavenly hosts, at the same time, it has been committed to your hands that you should maintain temporal order in the kingdom on earth. While you may not meddle with the divine decrees concerning eternal life, you shall determine the issues of conduct as they concern the temporal welfare of the brotherhood on earth. And so, in all these matters connected with the discipline of the brotherhood, whatsoever you shall decree on earth, shall be recognized in heaven. Although you cannot determine the eternal fate of the individual, you may legislate regarding the conduct of the group, for, where two or three of you agree concerning any of these things and ask of me, it shall be done for you if your petition is not inconsistent with the will of my Father in heaven. And all this is ever true, for, where two or three believers are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them."

159:5.16 (1770.8) The Jews had heard of a God who would forgive repentant sinners and try to forget their misdeeds, but not until Jesus came, did men hear about a God who went in search of lost sheep, who took the initiative in looking for sinners, and who rejoiced when he found them willing to return to the Father's house. This positive note in religion Jesus extended even to his prayers. And he converted the negative golden rule into a positive admonition of human fairness.

178:1.17 (1932.2) Throughout the vicissitudes of life, remember always to love one another. Do not strive with men, even with unbelievers. Show mercy even to those who spitefully abuse you. Show yourselves to be loyal citizens, upright artisans, praiseworthy neighbors, devoted kinsmen, understanding parents, and sincere believers in the brotherhood of the Father's kingdom. And my spirit shall be upon you, now and

even to the end of the world.

180:1.1 (1944.4) After a few moments of informal conversation, Jesus stood up and said: "When I enacted for you a parable indicating how you should be willing to serve one another, I said that I desired to give you a new commandment; and I would do this now as I am about to leave you. You well know the commandment which directs that you love one another; that you love your neighbor even as yourself. But I am not wholly satisfied with even that sincere devotion on the part of my children. I would have you perform still greater acts of love in the kingdom of the believing brotherhood. And so I give you this new commandment: That you love one another even as I have loved you. And by this will all men know that you are my disciples if you thus love one another.

180:1.3 (1944.6) "When I invite you to love one another, even as I have loved you, I hold up before you the supreme measure of true affection, for greater love can no man have than this: that he will lay down his life for his friends. And you are my friends; you will continue to be my friends if you are but willing to do what I have taught you. You have called me Master, but I do not call you servants. If you will only love one another as I am loving you, you shall be my friends, and I will ever speak to you of that which the Father reveals to me.

180:1.4 (1945.1) "You have not merely chosen me, but I have also chosen you, and I have ordained you to go forth into the world to yield the fruit of loving service to your fellows even as I have lived among you and revealed the Father to you. The Father and I will both work with you, and you shall experience the divine fullness of joy if you will only obey my command to love one another, even as I have loved you."

180:2.1 (1945.4) Then Jesus stood up again and continued teaching his apostles: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. I am the vine, and you are the branches. And the Father requires of me only that you shall bear much fruit. The vine is pruned only to increase the fruitfulness of its branches. Every branch coming out of me which bears no fruit, the Father will take away. Every branch which bears fruit, the Father will cleanse that it may bear more fruit. Already are you clean through the word I have spoken, but you must continue to be clean. You must abide in me, and I in you; the branch will die if it is separated from the vine. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abides in the vine, so neither can you yield the fruits of loving service except you abide in me. Remember: I am the real vine, and you are

the living branches. He who lives in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit of the spirit and experience the supreme joy of yielding this spiritual harvest. If you will maintain this living spiritual connection with me, you will bear abundant fruit. If you abide in me and my words live in you, you will be able to commune freely with me, and then can my living spirit so infuse you that you may ask whatsoever my spirit wills and do all this with the assurance that the Father will grant us our petition. Herein is the Father glorified: that the vine has many living branches, and that every branch bears much fruit. And when the world sees these fruit-bearing branches — my friends who love one another, even as I have loved them — all men will know that you are truly my disciples.

180:2.5 (1946.3) When there exists this living connection between divinity and humanity, if humanity should thoughtlessly and ignorantly pray for selfish ease and vainglorious accomplishments, there could be only one divine answer: more and increased bearing of the fruits of the spirit on the stems of the living branches. When the branch of the vine is alive, there can be only one answer to all its petitions: increased grape bearing. In fact, the branch exists only for, and can do nothing except, fruit bearing, yielding grapes. So does the true believer exist only for the purpose of bearing the fruits of the spirit: to love man as he himself has been loved by God — that we should love one another, even as Jesus has loved us.

180:6.1 (1951.2) After Peter, James, John, and Matthew had asked the Master numerous questions, he continued his farewell discourse by saying: "And I am telling you about all this before I leave you in order that you may be so prepared for what is coming upon you that you will not stumble into serious error. The authorities will not be content with merely putting you out of the synagogues; I warn you the hour draws near when they who kill you will think they are doing a service to God. And all of these things they will do to you and to those whom you lead into the kingdom of heaven because they do not know the Father. They have refused to know the Father by refusing to receive me; and they refuse to receive me when they reject you, provided you have kept my new commandment that you love one another even as I have loved you. I am telling you in advance about these things so that, when your hour comes, as mine now has, you may be strengthened in the knowledge that all was known to me, and that my spirit shall be with you in all your sufferings for my sake and the gospel's. It was for this purpose that I have been talking so plainly to you from the very beginning. I have even warned you that a man's foes may be those of his own household. Although this gospel of the kingdom

never fails to bring great peace to the soul of the individual believer, it will not bring peace on earth until man is willing to believe my teaching wholeheartedly and to establish the practice of doing the Father's will as the chief purpose in living the mortal life.

181:2.4 (1955.5) "Once we called you and your brother sons of thunder. You started out with us strong-minded and intolerant, but you have changed much since you wanted me to call fire down upon the heads of ignorant and thoughtless unbelievers. And you must change yet more. You should become the apostle of the new commandment which I have this night given you. Dedicate your life to teaching your brethren how to love one another, even as I have loved you."

181:2.26 (1962.1) And then Jesus went over to Thomas, who, standing up, heard him say: "Thomas, you have often lacked faith; however, when you have had your seasons with doubt, you have never lacked courage. I know well that the false prophets and spurious teachers will not deceive you. After I have gone, your brethren will the more appreciate your critical way of viewing new teachings. And when you all are scattered to the ends of the earth in the times to come, remember that you are still my ambassador. Dedicate your life to the great work of showing how the critical material mind of man can triumph over the inertia of intellectual doubting when faced by the demonstration of the manifestation of living truth as it operates in the experience of spirit-born men and women who yield the fruits of the spirit in their lives, and who love one another, even as I have loved you. Thomas, I am glad you joined us, and I know, after a short period of perplexity, you will go on in the service of the kingdom. Your doubts have perplexed your brethren, but they have never troubled me. I have confidence in you, and I will go before you even to the uttermost parts of the earth."

181:2.30 (1962.5) "But remember my promise: When I am raised up, I will tarry with you for a season before I go to the Father. And even this night will make supplication to the Father that he strengthen each of you for that which you must now so soon pass through. I love you all with the love wherewith the Father loves me, and therefore should you henceforth love one another, even as I have loved you."

181:1.6 (1954.3) "And now, my Father, I would pray not only for these eleven men but also for all others who now believe, or who may hereafter believe the gospel of

the kingdom through the word of their future ministry. I want them all to be one, even as you and I are one. You are in me and I am in you, and I desire that these believers likewise be in us; that both of our spirits indwell them. If my children are one as we are one, and if they love one another as I have loved them, all men will then believe that I came forth from you and be willing to receive the revelation of truth and glory which I have made. The glory which you gave me I have revealed to these believers. As you have lived with me in spirit, so have I lived with them in the flesh. As you have been one with me, so have I been one with them, and so will the new teacher ever be one with them and in them. And all this have I done that my brethren in the flesh may know that the Father loves them even as does the Son, and that you love them even as you love me. Father, work with me to save these believers that they may presently come to be with me in glory and then go on to join you in the Paradise embrace. Those who serve with me in humiliation, I would have with me in glory so that they may see all you have given into my hands as the eternal harvest of the seed sowing of time in the likeness of mortal flesh. I long to show my earthly brethren the glory I had with you before the founding of this world. This world knows very little of you, righteous Father, but I know you, and I have made you known to these believers, and they will make known your name to other generations. And now I promise them that you will be with them in the world even as you have been with me — even so."

191:4.3 (2041.6) "Peace be upon you. You all know that we have one Father in heaven, and that there is but one gospel of the kingdom — the good news of the gift of eternal life which men receive by faith. As you rejoice in your loyalty to the gospel, pray the Father of truth to shed abroad in your hearts a new and greater love for your brethren. You are to love all men as I have loved you; you are to serve all men as I have served you. With understanding sympathy and brotherly affection, fellowship all your brethren who are dedicated to the proclamation of the good news, whether they be Jew or gentile, Greek or Roman, Persian or Ethiopian. John proclaimed the kingdom in advance; you have preached the gospel in power; the Greeks already teach the good news; and I am soon to send forth the Spirit of Truth into the souls of all these, my brethren, who have selfishly dedicated their lives to the enlightenment of their fellows who sit in spiritual darkness. You are all the children of light; therefore stumble not into the misunderstanding entanglements of mortal suspicion and human intolerance. If you are ennobled, by the grace of faith, to love unbelievers, should you not also equally love those who are your fellow

believers in the far-spreading household of faith? Remember, as you love one another, all men will know that you are my disciples.

191:6.2 (2044.3) "Peace be upon you. That which my Father sent me into the world to establish belongs not to a race, a nation, nor to a special group of teachers or preachers. This gospel of the kingdom belongs to both Jew and gentile, to rich and poor, to free and bond, to male and female, even to the little children. And you are all to proclaim this gospel of love and truth by the lives which you live in the flesh. You shall love one another with a new and startling affection, even as I have loved you. You will serve mankind with a new and amazing devotion, even as I have served you. And when men see you so love them, and when they behold how fervently you serve them, they will perceive that you have become faith-fellows of the kingdom of heaven, and they will follow after the Spirit of Truth which they see in your lives, to the finding of eternal salvation.

193:1.2 (2053.4) "Peace be upon you. You rejoice to know that I am the resurrection and the life, but this will avail you nothing unless you are first born of the eternal spirit, thereby coming to possess, by faith, the gift of eternal life. If you are the faith sons of my Father, you shall never die; you shall not perish. The gospel of the kingdom has taught you that all men are the sons of God. And this good news concerning the love of the heavenly Father for his children on earth must be carried to all the world. The time has come when you worship God neither on Gerizim nor at Jerusalem, but where you are, as you are, in spirit and in truth. It is your faith that saves your souls. Salvation is the gift of God to all who believe they are his sons. But be not deceived; while salvation is the free gift of God and is bestowed upon all who accept it by faith, there follows the experience of bearing the fruits of this spirit life as it is lived in the flesh. The acceptance of the doctrine of the fatherhood of God implies that you also freely accept the associated truth of the brotherhood of man. And if man is your brother, he is even more than your neighbor, whom the Father requires you to love as yourself. Your brother, being of your own family, you will not only love with a family affection, but you will also serve as you would serve yourself. And you will thus love and serve your brother because you, being my brethren, have been thus loved and served by me. Go, then, into all the world telling this good news to all creatures of every race, tribe, and nation. My spirit shall go before you, and I will be with you always."

The last words that Jesus uttered before taking final leave of his apostles and ascending to the Father in Paradise after completing the 40 days on his morontia career on Urantia were all about this supreme and all-inclusive gospel of love and service to the family of God:

193:5.2 (2057.4) "I bade you tarry in Jerusalem until you were endowed with power from on high. I am now about to take leave of you; I am about to ascend to my Father, and soon, very soon, will we send into this world of my sojourn the Spirit of Truth; and when he has come, you shall begin the new proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, first in Jerusalem and then to the uttermost parts of the world. Love men with the love wherewith I have loved you and serve your fellow mortals even as I have served you. By the spirit fruits of your lives impel souls to believe the truth that man is a son of God, and that all men are brethren. Remember all I have taught you and the life I have lived among you. My love overshadows you, my spirit will dwell with you, and my peace shall abide upon you. Farewell."

Compassion Meditation

This meditation was developed by the staff at the Greater Good Science Center at Berkeley in order to help individuals to strengthen feelings of concern for the suffering of others.

Duration: 30 mins

Frequency: 1x/day

How to Do It

This exercise draws on a guided meditation created by researcher Helen Weng and her colleagues at the Center for Healthy Minds (CHM) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dr. Weng called this meditation a "compassion meditation," though a similar kind of meditation is also referred to as a "loving-kindness meditation."

We recommend listening to audio of this guided meditation in the player below; you can also download it from the CHM's website. We have included a script of this meditation to help you follow it yourself or teach it to others. In brackets are the lengths of the pauses in the original guided meditation, to give you a sense of how much time to allot to each step.

Settling

Please settle into a comfortable position and allow yourself to relax.

Take a deep breath and release. [2 seconds]

For a few moments, just focus on your breath and clear your mind of worries. Notice when you are breathing in ... and breathing out. Let yourself experience and be aware of the sensations of breathing. [10 seconds]

Loving-kindness & Compassion for a Loved One

Picture someone who is close to you, someone toward whom you feel a great amount of love. Notice how this love feels in your heart.

Notice the sensations around your heart. Perhaps you feel a sensation of warmth, openness, and tenderness. [10 seconds]

Continue breathing, and focus on these feelings as you visualize your loved one. As you breathe out, imagine that you are extending a golden light that holds your warm feelings from the center of your heart. Imagine that the golden light reaches out to your loved one, bringing them peace and happiness. At the same time, silently recite these phrases.

May you have happiness.

May you be free from suffering.

May you experience joy and ease.

May you have happiness.

May you be free from suffering.

May you experience joy and ease. [1 minute]

As you silently repeat these phrases, remember to extend the golden light to your loved one from your heart. Feel with all your heart that you wish your loved one happiness and freedom from suffering.

Compassion for a Loved One

Now think of a time when this person was suffering. Maybe they experienced an illness, an injury, or a difficult time in a relationship. [15 seconds]

Notice how you feel when you think of their suffering. How does your heart feel? Do the sensations change? Do you continue to feel warmth, openness and tenderness? Are there other sensations, perhaps an aching sensation? [10 seconds]

Continue to visualize your loved one as you breathe. Imagine that you are extending the golden light from your heart to your loved one, and that the golden light is easing their suffering. Extend this light out to them during your exhalation, with the strong heartfelt wish that they be free from their suffering. Recite silently to them:

May you be free from this suffering.
May you have joy and happiness.
May you be free from this suffering.
May you have joy and happiness. [1 minute]

Notice how this feels in your heart. What happened to your heart? Did the sensations change? Did you continue to feel warmth, openness and tenderness? Were there other sensations, an aching sensation perhaps? Did you have a wish to take away the other's suffering? [30 seconds]

Compassion for Self

Contemplate a time when you have suffered yourself. Perhaps you experienced a conflict with someone you care about, or did not succeed in something you wanted, or were physically ill. [15 seconds]

Notice how you feel when you think of your suffering. How does your heart feel? Do you continue to feel warmth, openness, and tenderness? Are there other sensations, perhaps an aching sensation? [10 seconds]

Just as we wish for our loved one's suffering to end, we wish that our own suffering would end. We may also envision our own pain and suffering leaving us so that we may experience happiness.

Continue to visualize yourself as you breathe. Imagine that the golden light emanating from your heart is easing your suffering. With each exhalation, feel the light emanating within you, with the strong heartfelt wish that you be free from your suffering. Silently recite to yourself:

May I be free from this suffering.
May I have joy and happiness.
May I be free from this suffering.
May I have joy and happiness. [2 minutes]

Again, notice how this feels in your heart. What kind of sensations did you feel? Did they change from when you were envisioning your own suffering? How is this feeling different from when you wished your loved one's suffering to be relieved? Did you feel warmth, openness and tenderness? Were there other sensations such as pressure? Did you have a wish to take away your own suffering? [30 seconds]

Compassion for a Neutral Person

Now visualize someone you neither like nor dislike—someone you may see in your everyday life, such as a classmate with whom you are not familiar, a bus driver, or a stranger you pass on the street. [5 seconds]

Although you are not familiar with this person, think of how this person may suffer in their own life. This person may also have conflicts with loved ones, or struggled with an addiction, or may have suffered illness. Imagine a situation in which this person may have suffered. [30 seconds]

Notice your heart center. Does it feel different? Do you feel more warmth, openness and tenderness? Are there other sensations, perhaps an aching sensation? How does your heart feel different from when you were envisioning your own or a loved one's suffering? [10 seconds]

Continue to visualize this person as you breathe. Imagine that you are extending the golden light from your heart to them, and that the golden light is easing their suffering. Extend this light out to them during your exhalation, with the strong heartfelt wish that they be free from suffering. See if this wish can be as strong as the wish for your own or a loved one's suffering to be relieved. Silently recite to them:

May you be free from this suffering.
May you have joy and happiness.
May you be free from this suffering.

May you have joy and happiness. [2 minutes]

Again, notice how this feels in your heart. Did the sensations change from when you were envisioning this person's suffering? Did you continue to feel warmth, openness and tenderness? Were there other sensations? Did you have a wish to take away this person's suffering? How were these feelings different from when you were wishing to take away your own or a loved one's suffering? [30 seconds]

Compassion for an Enemy

Now visualize someone with whom you have difficulty in your life. This may be a parent or child with whom you disagree, an ex-girlfriend or boyfriend, a roommate with whom you had an argument, or a co-worker with whom you do not get along. [5 seconds]

Although you may have negative feelings towards this person, think of how this person has suffered in their own life. This person has also had conflicts with loved ones, or has dealt with failures, or may have suffered illness. Think of a situation in which this person may have suffered. [30 seconds]

Notice your heart center. Does it feel different? Do you feel more warmth, openness and tenderness? Are there other sensations, perhaps an aching sensation? How does your heart feel different from when you were envisioning your own or a loved one's suffering? [10 seconds]

Continue to visualize this person as you breathe. Imagine that you are extending the golden light from your heart to them, and that the golden light is easing their suffering. Extend this light out to them during your exhalation, with the strong heartfelt wish that they be free from suffering. See if this wish can be as strong as the wish for your own or a loved one's suffering to be relieved. Silently recite to them:

May you be free from this suffering.

May you have joy and happiness

May you be free from this suffering.

May you have joy and happiness. [1 minute]

If you have difficulty in wishing for this person's suffering to be relieved, you may think of a positive interaction you have had with this person that can help you in wishing them joy

and happiness. Perhaps there were times when you got along, laughed together, or worked well together on an assignment. Continue to silently recite:

May you be free from this suffering.

May you have joy and happiness. [2 minutes]

Again, notice how this feels in your heart. Did the sensations change? Did you feel warmth, openness and tenderness? How were these feelings different from when you were wishing for your own or a loved one's suffering to end? Were there other sensations, perhaps a tightness in the chest? Did you have a wish to take away this person's suffering?[30 seconds]

Compassion for All Beings

Now that we are almost at the end of this meditation, let's end with wish for all other beings' suffering to be relieved. Just as I wish to have peace, happiness, and to be free from suffering, so do all beings. [10 seconds]

Now bask in the joy of this open-hearted wish to ease the suffering of all people and how this attempt brings joy, happiness, and compassion in your heart at this very moment.

You have now finished this compassion meditation session.

Stages of Human Growth and Development

In understanding and applying the meaning and values associated with each of the six levels of moral decision-making articulated by Jesus, it is helpful to study the stages of human development. Animals grow in life stages from birth, which include infancy, childhood, adolescence, and then early, middle, and late adulthood. In addition to stages of physical growth, human beings also undergo stages of personal social-emotional, intellectual, moral, psychological, and spiritual development as they age from childhood to elderhood, as shown in the diagram below.

While this week's lesson is primarily about the six levels of Jesus' Rule of Living, it is helpful to think about these in the context of the stages of human development. If a person has not matured beyond an adolescent or early adult stage of human development and

behavior, they will not have attained a level of maturity required to make moral decisions at the higher levels of Jesus' teaching.

There are many "stage" theories of human development which attempt to account for the complex interaction between genes and the environment ("nature vs nurture"), differences among world cultures, and the question of continuous vs discontinuous growth in human beings. However, all these theories contain broad categories of human development that are universal, covering the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development of humans throughout their lifespan.

These categories include physical development, which encompasses growth and changes in the body and brain, the senses, motor skills, and health and wellness, as well as cognitive development involving language, thinking, reasoning, creativity, learning, attention, and memory. All people undergo a lifelong process of psychosocial development involving emotions, personality, and social relationships.

In terms of Jesus' model of higher moral reasoning, decision-making, and the principles of the religion of the spirit, we can describe personality growth (in the divine sense) as a dynamic process of progressive movement from a starting point of self-absorption, self-centeredness, and self-interest as characterized in infancy and childhood, to a widening range of growth that includes interest in, and care for, others, such as one's family, friends, clan, and community. It can even go beyond this towards an altruistic set of meanings and values that encompasses the good of the whole of humanity and the earth.

Even higher levels of moral involvement, consideration, and decision-making exist which extend beyond the earth and humankind to a broader context of cosmic citizenship and the welfare of the whole universe. At this level of thinking and evaluating, a person has firmly identified themselves with God and God's Plan for the cosmos. They have progressed through the ascending stages of self/ego-consciousness, social consciousness, soul consciousness, and God-consciousness up to transcendent levels of cosmic consciousness of the Supreme and one's duty to the whole family of God.

It could be said that most people during the present stage of planetary civilization will not reach the higher levels of God-consciousness and cosmic consciousness during their mortal life on earth, but such growth remains an aspirational goal. Jesus' model embraces this pinnacle of human personality attainment – the realization and actualization of loving others and treating others in the way that God loves and respects all his universe children.

Sermon on the Mount

The Beatitudes

Source: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Transcript

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they the prophets which were before. Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick. And it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Ken Wilber's Integral Stages of Personality and Moral Growth

GENERAL STAGES	COGNITIVE LINE	<p>Increasing Perspectives Means:</p>  <p>An increasing capacity for love, care, and concern for others</p>	MORAL LINE
Violet & Ultraviolet: Transpersonal, "Self-less"	6 th + Person Perspectives		Transpersonal
Teal: Integral Values, Kosmocentric	5 th Person Perspective		Integrative Kosmocentric
Green: Pluralistic Values, Worldcentric	4 th Person Perspective		Post-Conventional Universal Care, Worldcentric
Orange: Modern Values, Worldcentric	3 rd Person Perspective		Conventional Care, Ethnocentric
Amber: Conformist Values, Ethnocentric	2 nd Person Perspective		Pre-Conventional Selfish, Egocentric
Magenta & Red: Magic Egocentric	1 st Person Perspective Only		
Infrared: Archaic Egocentric			

3. THE FOUNDATION OF MORALITY: Family Life and Wise Love

Introduction - Family Life and Wise Love

Welcome to the 3rd week of Morality and Moral Decision Making.

This week we will focus on family life as the foundation and the first arena of moral development for all children. "Family life is the progenitor of true morality, the ancestor of the consciousness of loyalty to duty." (84:7.30; emphasis added)

The following themes will be explored in our quest to understand the most favorable conditions of family life for a child's moral development.

First, we describe aspects of the Wise parental Love needed to inspire and reinforce good moral decisions and altruistic behavior. Children are naturally positive and altruistic unless taught otherwise.

According to the Urantia Book:

103:2.5 (1131.4) The psychology of a child is naturally positive, not negative. So many mortals are negative because they were so trained. When it is said that the child is positive, reference is made to his moral impulses, those powers of mind whose emergence signals the arrival of the Thought Adjuster."

103:2.5 (1131.5) In the absence of wrong teaching, the mind of the normal child moves positively, in the emergence of religious consciousness, toward moral righteousness and social ministry, rather than negatively, away from sin and guilt. There may or may not be conflict in the development of religious experience, but there are always present the inevitable decisions, effort, and function of the human will.

103:2.3 (1131.2) The first promptings of a child's moral nature have not to do with sex, guilt, or personal pride, but rather with impulses of justice, fairness, and urges to kindness — helpful ministry to one's fellows. And when such early moral awakenings are nurtured, there occurs a gradual development of the religious life which is comparatively free from conflicts, upheavals, and crises."

One example of wrong teaching is overindulgence, which can result in moral undoing and overprotection, often causing a child to be too self-centered and self-conscious (177:2-4 paraphrased). Of course, deception, neglect and abuse can also result in a child being fearful, angry, depressed and having difficulty making moral decisions.

Some of the qualities of wise love will be explored, such as understanding compassion, nurturing early altruistic and cooperative inclinations, appreciating the best in a child, mutual respect, a stable and trustworthy home life, and self-mastery.

177:2.5 (1922.3) "The child must derive his first impressions of the universe from the mother's care; he is wholly dependent on the earthly father for his first ideas of the heavenly Father."

In my own experience, my trust in, and comfort with, people has its roots in my mother's sincere love and her consistent response to my needs. My father was hard working and removed from child rearing. I knew he loved me but at times he expressed rage. Until I

read the Urantia Book, my relationship with God was impersonal and fear based. As a clinical psychologist, I know all too well the truth that, "A human being's entire afterlife is enormously influenced by what happens during the first few years of existence" (177:2.5 (1922.3)).



Second, we will explore Jesus' efforts to become a wise, trustworthy, and loving father to his eight siblings after his father Joseph died when he was 14 years of age. He reflected fatherly as well as brotherly love in his response to the real needs of his siblings. Jesus used a **positive and authoritative** approach to discipline. He used family meetings as a decision-making platform, teaching children negotiation skills and cooperation as well as how to make decisions based on the highest good for each individual and the whole family.

Buck and I were inspired by Jesus's model of family meetings and used this practice in raising our three sons with good results. If it weren't for reading about Jesus as a parent, we would never have had the courage or confidence to raise children. Buck needed a model of fatherhood since his father was absent during his childhood. And I was raised in a Jewish home and did not want to pass on my parents' fears and guilt.

Lastly, we will identify thoughts, feelings and actions about moral dilemmas relating to family life.

The authors of the Jesus papers tell us that it is their “sincere belief that the gospel of Jesus's teaching, founded as it is on the father-child relationship, can hardly enjoy a world-wide acceptance until such a time as the home life of the modern civilized peoples embraces more of love and more of wisdom” (177:2.6 (1922.4)).

Learning Objectives

1. To achieve a better understanding of the qualities of wise parental love and to increase your understanding of how Jesus’s parenting reflected the wisdom of God’s love.
2. To identify Jesus’s approach and methods of discipline, including the use of family meetings. Whether or not family meetings were a part of your personal family, you will be able to identify and use examples of how your early home life influenced your moral and ethical decision-making.
3. To expand awareness of your inner process (self-understanding) in making moral decisions with equal regard to the needs of oneself and others.
4. To be able to identify moral dilemmas and their possible solutions while balancing personal and group needs in the family setting.

Foundation of Morality in the Family

The experience of loving is a direct response to being loved. When parents consistently model moral behavior, the child learns the basics of moral decision-making.

The early family life of a child affects their moral behavior and will continue to influence their moral decisions whenever they are in conflict between taking care of their own needs and helping others. It is important to achieve a balance between self and selfless action.

84:7.30 (942.1) Family life is the progenitor of true morality, the ancestor of the consciousness of loyalty to duty. (emphasis added)

The love and trust between a parent and their child sets the pattern for the child’s future attitudes and relationships towards God and others. Our individual consciousness of being a child of a loving Heavenly Father is often influenced by our human father, which, in turn,

influences our relationship with God and our ability to make altruistic decisions. Our mothers tend to affect our relationships with others and also serve as a model for acts of selfless, loving service. If a mother sufficiently cares for the needs of the wholly dependent child, then the child learns to trust their parents and to trust God (2:5.9-10 (40.1-.2)).

“The Master went on to explain to John how a child is wholly dependent on his parents and the associated home life for all his early concepts of everything intellectual, social, moral...The child must derive his first impressions of the universe from the mother’s care; he is wholly dependent on the earthly father for his first ideas of the heavenly father” (177:2.5 (1922.3)).

Parents have a powerful role in shaping a child’s perspective and behavior, as well as their ability to make moral decisions. They can give a child a good start in life by showing wise love—by being fair, expressing goodness, and responding to the child’s age-appropriate needs and unique personality. Of course, the child has the freedom to choose a different attitude and behavior later in life. Adults can modify the patterns of childhood, thereby influencing that child’s future ability for self-understanding, self-mastery, and wise love. It encourages the child to pursue the will and way of God.

56:10.10 (647.1) Goodness embraces the sense of ethics, morality, and religion—experiential perfection hunger.

Reading Assignment

1. Read the following Urantia Book selections:

Religion and the Individual

103:2.1 (1130.6) Religion is functional in the human mind and has been realized in experience prior to its appearance in human consciousness. A child has been in existence about nine months before it experiences birth. But the “birth” of religion is not sudden; it is rather a gradual emergence. Nevertheless, sooner or later there is a “birth day.” You do not enter the kingdom of heaven unless you have been “born again”—born of the Spirit. Many spiritual births are accompanied by much anguish of spirit and marked psychological perturbations, as many physical births are characterized by a “stormy labor” and other abnormalities of “delivery.” Other spiritual births are a natural and

normal growth of the recognition of supreme values with an enhancement of spiritual experience, albeit no religious development occurs without conscious effort and positive and individual determinations. Religion is never a passive experience, a negative attitude. What is termed the “birth of religion” is not directly associated with so-called conversion experiences which usually characterize religious episodes occurring later in life as a result of mental conflict, emotional repression, and temperamental upheavals.

103:2.2 (1131.1) But those persons who were so reared by their parents that they grew up in the consciousness of being children of a loving heavenly Father, should not look askance at their fellow mortals who could only attain such consciousness of fellowship with God through a psychological crisis, an emotional upheaval.

103:2.3 (1131.2) The evolutionary soil in the mind of man in which the seed of revealed religion germinates is the moral nature that so early gives origin to a social consciousness. The first promptings of a child’s moral nature have not to do with sex, guilt, or personal pride, but rather with impulses of justice, fairness, and urges to kindness—helpful ministry to one’s fellows. And when such early moral awakenings are nurtured, there occurs a gradual development of the religious life which is comparatively free from conflicts, upheavals, and crises.

103:2.4 (1131.3) Every human being very early experiences something of a conflict between his self-seeking and his altruistic impulses, and many times the first experience of God-consciousness may be attained as the result of seeking for superhuman help in the task of resolving such moral conflicts.

103:2.5 (1131.4) The psychology of a child is naturally positive, not negative. So many mortals are negative because they were so trained. When it is said that the child is positive, reference is made to his moral impulses, those powers of mind whose emergence signals the arrival of the Thought Adjuster.

103:2.6 (1131.5) In the absence of wrong teaching, the mind of the normal child moves positively, in the emergence of religious consciousness, toward moral righteousness and social ministry, rather than negatively, away from sin and guilt. There may or may not be conflict in the development of religious experience, but there are always present the inevitable decisions, effort, and function of the human will.

103:2.7 (1131.6) Moral choosing is usually accompanied by more or less moral conflict. And this very first conflict in the child mind is between the urges of egoism and the impulses of altruism. The Thought Adjuster does not disregard the personality values of the egoistic motive but does operate to place a slight preference upon the altruistic impulse as leading to the goal of human happiness and to the joys of the kingdom of heaven.

103:2.8 (1131.7) When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is primitive religious experience. No animal can make such a choice; such a decision is both human and religious. It embraces the fact of God-consciousness and exhibits the impulse of social service, the basis of the brotherhood of man. When mind chooses a right moral judgment by an act of the free will, such a decision constitutes a religious experience.

103:2.9 (1131.8) But before a child has developed sufficiently to acquire moral capacity and therefore to be able to choose altruistic service, he has already developed a strong and well-unified egoistic nature. And it is this factual situation that gives rise to the theory of the struggle between the "higher" and the "lower" natures, between the "old man of sin" and the "new nature" of grace. Very early in life the normal child begins to learn that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

103:2.10 (1131.9) Man tends to identify the urge to be self-serving with his ego—himself. In contrast he is inclined to identify the will to be altruistic with some influence outside himself—God. And indeed is such a judgment right, for all such nonself desires do actually have their origin in the leadings of the indwelling Thought Adjuster, and this Adjuster is a fragment of God. The impulse of the spirit Monitor is realized in human consciousness as the urge to be altruistic, fellow-creature minded. At least this is the early and fundamental experience of the child mind. When the growing child fails of personality unification, the altruistic drive may become so overdeveloped as to work serious injury to the welfare of the self. A misguided conscience can become responsible for much conflict, worry, sorrow, and no end of human unhappiness.

Paper 177 Wednesday, the Rest Day

177:2.2 (1921.6) "I know you will prove loyal to the gospel of the kingdom because I can depend upon your present faith and love when these qualities are grounded upon such an early training as has been your portion at home. You are the product of a home where the parents bear each other a sincere affection, and therefore you have not been over loved so as injuriously to exalt your concept of self-importance. Neither has your personality suffered distortion in consequence of your parents' loveless maneuvering for your confidence and loyalty, the one against the other. You have enjoyed that parental love which insures laudable self-confidence and which fosters normal feelings of security. But you have also been fortunate in that your parents possessed wisdom as well as love; and it was wisdom which led them to withhold most forms of indulgence and many luxuries which wealth can buy while they sent you to the synagogue school along with your neighborhood playfellows, and they also encouraged you to learn how to live in this

world by permitting you to have original experience. You came over to the Jordan, where we preached and John's disciples baptized, with your young friend Amos. Both of you desired to go with us. When you returned to Jerusalem, your parents consented; Amos's parents refused; they loved their son so much that they denied him the blessed experience which you have had, even such as you this day enjoy. By running away from home, Amos could have joined us, but in so doing he would have wounded love and sacrificed loyalty. Even if such a course had been wise, it would have been a terrible price to pay for experience, independence, and liberty. Wise parents, such as yours, see to it that their children do not have to wound love or stifle loyalty in order to develop independence and enjoy invigorating liberty when they have grown up to your age.

Paper 140 The Ordination of the Twelve

Fatherly and Brotherly Love

140:5.1 (1573.3) From the Sermon on the Mount to the discourse of the Last Supper, Jesus taught his followers to manifest fatherly love rather than brotherly love. Brotherly love would love your neighbor as you love yourself, and that would be adequate fulfillment of the "golden rule." But fatherly affection would require that you should love your fellow mortals as Jesus loves you.

140:5.2 (1573.4) Jesus loves mankind with a dual affection. He lived on earth as a twofold personality—human and divine. As the Son of God he loves man with a fatherly love—he is man's Creator, his universe Father. As the Son of Man, Jesus loves mortals as a brother—he was truly a man among men.

140:5.3 (1573.5) Jesus did not expect his followers to achieve an impossible manifestation of brotherly love, but he did expect them to so strive to be like God—to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect—that they could begin to look upon man as God looks upon his creatures and therefore could begin to love men as God loves them—to show forth the beginnings of a fatherly affection. In the course of these exhortations to the twelve apostles, Jesus sought to reveal this new concept of fatherly love as it is related to certain emotional attitudes concerned in making numerous environmental social adjustments

140:5.4 (1573.6) The Master introduced this momentous discourse by calling attention to four faith attitudes as the prelude to the subsequent portrayal of his four transcendent and supreme reactions of fatherly love in contrast to the limitations of mere brotherly love.

140:5.5 (1573.7) He first talked about those who were poor in spirit, hungered after righteousness, endured meekness, and who were pure in heart. Such spirit-discerning mortals could be expected to attain such levels of divine selflessness as to be able to attempt the amazing exercise of fatherly affection; that even as mourners they would be empowered to show mercy, promote peace, and endure persecutions, and throughout all of these trying situations to love even unlovely mankind with a fatherly love. A father's affection can attain levels of devotion that immeasurably transcend a brother's affection.

140:5.6 (1573.8) The faith and the love of these beatitudes strengthen moral character and create happiness. Fear and anger weaken character and destroy happiness. This momentous sermon started out upon the note of happiness.

140:5.7 (1573.9) 1. "Happy are the poor in spirit—the humble." To a child, happiness is the satisfaction of immediate pleasure craving. The adult is willing to sow seeds of self-denial in order to reap subsequent harvests of augmented happiness. In Jesus' times and since, happiness has all too often been associated with the idea of the possession of wealth. In the story of the Pharisee and the publican praying in the temple, the one felt rich in spirit—egotistical; the other felt "poor in spirit"—humble. One was self-sufficient; the other was teachable and truth-seeking. The poor in spirit seek for goals of spiritual wealth—for God. And such seekers after truth do not have to wait for rewards in a distant future; they are rewarded now. They find the kingdom of heaven within their own hearts, and they experience such happiness now.

140:5.8 (1574.1) 2. "Happy are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Only those who feel poor in spirit will ever hunger for righteousness. Only the humble seek for divine strength and crave spiritual power. But it is most dangerous to knowingly engage in spiritual fasting in order to improve one's appetite for spiritual endowments. Physical fasting becomes dangerous after four or five days; one is apt to lose all desire for food. Prolonged fasting, either physical or spiritual, tends to destroy hunger.

140:5.9 (1574.2) Experiential righteousness is a pleasure, not a duty. Jesus' righteousness is a dynamic love—fatherly-brotherly affection. It is not the negative or thou-shalt-not type of righteousness. How could one ever hunger for something negative—something "not to do"?

140:5.10 (1574.3) It is not so easy to teach a child mind these first two of the beatitudes, but the mature mind should grasp their significance.

140:5.11 (1574.4) 3. "Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Genuine meekness has no relation to fear. It is rather an attitude of man co-operating with

God—"Your will be done." It embraces patience and forbearance and is motivated by an unshakable faith in a lawful and friendly universe. It masters all temptations to rebel against the divine leading. Jesus was the ideal meek man of Urantia, and he inherited a vast universe.

140:5.12 (1574.5) 4. "Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Spiritual purity is not a negative quality, except that it does lack suspicion and revenge. In discussing purity, Jesus did not intend to deal exclusively with human sex attitudes. He referred more to that faith which man should have in his fellow man; that faith which a parent has in his child, and which enables him to love his fellows even as a father would love them. A father's love need not pamper, and it does not condone evil, but it is always anticynical. Fatherly love has singleness of purpose, and it always looks for the best in man; that is the attitude of a true parent.

140:5.13 (1574.6) To see God—by faith—means to acquire true spiritual insight. And spiritual insight enhances Adjuster guidance, and these in the end augment God-consciousness. And when you know the Father, you are confirmed in the assurance of divine sonship, and you can increasingly love each of your brothers in the flesh, not only as a brother—with brotherly love—but also as a father—with fatherly affection.

140:5.14 (1574.7) It is easy to teach this admonition even to a child. Children are naturally trustful, and parents should see to it that they do not lose that simple faith. In dealing with children, avoid all deception and refrain from suggesting suspicion. Wisely help them to choose their heroes and select their lifework.

140:5.15 (1574.8) And then Jesus went on to instruct his followers in the realization of the chief purpose of all human struggling—perfection—even divine attainment. Always he admonished them: "Be you perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." He did not exhort the twelve to love their neighbors as they loved themselves. That would have been a worthy achievement; it would have indicated the achievement of brotherly love. He rather admonished his apostles to love men as he had loved them—to love with a fatherly as well as a brotherly affection. And he illustrated this by pointing out four supreme reactions of fatherly love:

140:5.16 (1575.1) 1. "Happy are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." So-called common sense or the best of logic would never suggest that happiness could be derived from mourning. But Jesus did not refer to outward or ostentatious mourning. He alluded to an emotional attitude of tenderheartedness. It is a great error to teach boys and young men that it is unmanly to show tenderness or otherwise to give evidence of emotional feeling or physical suffering. Sympathy is a worthy attribute of the male as well as the female. It is not necessary to be calloused in order to be manly. This is the wrong way to create courageous men. The world's great men have not been afraid to mourn.

Moses, the mourner, was a greater man than either Samson or Goliath. Moses was a superb leader, but he was also a man of meekness. Being sensitive and responsive to human need creates genuine and lasting happiness, while such kindly attitudes safeguard the soul from the destructive influences of anger, hate, and suspicion.

140:5.17 (1575.2) 2. "Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Mercy here denotes the height and depth and breadth of the truest friendship—loving-kindness. Mercy sometimes may be passive, but here it is active and dynamic—supreme fatherliness. A loving parent experiences little difficulty in forgiving his child, even many times. And in an unspoiled child the urge to relieve suffering is natural. Children are normally kind and sympathetic when old enough to appreciate actual conditions.

140:5.18 (1575.3) 3. "Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Jesus' hearers were longing for military deliverance, not for peacemakers. But Jesus' peace is not of the pacific and negative kind. In the face of trials and persecutions he said, "My peace I leave with you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This is the peace that prevents ruinous conflicts. Personal peace integrates personality. Social peace prevents fear, greed, and anger. Political peace prevents race antagonisms, national suspicions, and war. Peacemaking is the cure of distrust and suspicion.

140:5.19 (1575.4) Children can easily be taught to function as peacemakers. They enjoy team activities; they like to play together. Said the Master at another time: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life shall find it."

140:5.20 (1575.5) 4. "Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

140:5.21 (1575.6) So often persecution does follow peace. But young people and brave adults never shun difficulty or danger. "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends." And a fatherly love can freely do all these things—things which brotherly love can hardly encompass. And progress has always been the final harvest of persecution.

140:5.22 (1575.7) Children always respond to the challenge of courage. Youth is ever willing to "take a dare." And every child should early learn to sacrifice.

140:5.23 (1575.8) And so it is revealed that the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are based on faith and love and not on law—ethics and duty.

140:5.24 (1575.9) Fatherly love delights in returning good for evil—doing good in

retaliation for injustice.

Selection from Paper 177 - Wednesday, The Day of Rest

177:2.1 (1921.5) In the course of this day's visiting with John Mark, Jesus spent considerable time comparing their early childhood and later boyhood experiences. Although John's parents possessed more of this world's goods than had Jesus' parents, there was much experience in their boyhood which was very similar. Jesus said many things which helped John better to understand his parents and other members of his family. When the lad asked the Master how he could know that he would turn out to be a "mighty messenger of the kingdom," Jesus said:

177:2.2 (1921.6) "I know you will prove loyal to the gospel of the kingdom because I can depend upon your present faith and love when these qualities are grounded upon such an early training as has been your portion at home. You are the product of a home where the parents bear each other a sincere affection, and therefore you have not been overloved so as injuriously to exalt your concept of self-importance. Neither has your personality suffered distortion in consequence of your parents' loveless maneuvering for your confidence and loyalty, the one against the other. You have enjoyed that parental love which insures laudable self-confidence and which fosters normal feelings of security. But you have also been fortunate in that your parents possessed wisdom as well as love; and it was wisdom which led them to withhold most forms of indulgence and many luxuries which wealth can buy while they sent you to the synagogue school along with your neighborhood playfellows, and they also encouraged you to learn how to live in this world by permitting you to have original experience. You came over to the Jordan, where we preached and John's disciples baptized, with your young friend Amos. Both of you desired to go with us. When you returned to Jerusalem, your parents consented; Amos's parents refused; they loved their son so much that they denied him the blessed experience which you have had, even such as you this day enjoy. By running away from home, Amos could have joined us, but in so doing he would have wounded love and sacrificed loyalty. Even if such a course had been wise, it would have been a terrible price to pay for experience, independence, and liberty. Wise parents, such as yours, see to it that their children do not have to wound love or stifle loyalty in order to develop independence and enjoy invigorating liberty when they have grown up to your age.

177:2.3 (1922.1) "Love, John, is the supreme reality of the universe when bestowed by all-wise beings, but it is a dangerous and oftentimes semiselfish trait as it is manifested in the experience of mortal parents. When you get married and have children of your own to rear, make sure that your love is admonished by wisdom and guided by intelligence.

177:2.4 (1922.2) "Your young friend Amos believes this gospel of the kingdom just as

much as you, but I cannot fully depend upon him; I am not certain about what he will do in the years to come. His early home life was not such as would produce a wholly dependable person. Amos is too much like one of the apostles who failed to enjoy a normal, loving, and wise home training. Your whole afterlife will be more happy and dependable because you spent your first eight years in a normal and well-regulated home. You possess a strong and well-knit character because you grew up in a home where love prevailed and wisdom reigned. Such a childhood training produces a type of loyalty which assures me that you will go through with the course you have begun."

177:2.5 (1922.3) For more than an hour Jesus and John continued this discussion of home life. The Master went on to explain to John how a child is wholly dependent on his parents and the associated home life for all his early concepts of everything intellectual, social, moral, and even spiritual since the family represents to the young child all that he can first know of either human or divine relationships. The child must derive his first impressions of the universe from the mother's care; he is wholly dependent on the earthly father for his first ideas of the heavenly Father. The child's subsequent life is made happy or unhappy, easy or difficult, in accordance with his early mental and emotional life, conditioned by these social and spiritual relationships of the home. A human being's entire afterlife is enormously influenced by what happens during the first few years of existence.

177:2.6 (1922.4) It is our sincere belief that the gospel of Jesus' teaching, founded as it is on the father-child relationship, can hardly enjoy a world-wide acceptance until such a time as the home life of the modern civilized peoples embraces more of love and more of wisdom. Notwithstanding that parents of the twentieth century possess great knowledge and increased truth for improving the home and ennobling the home life, it remains a fact that very few modern homes are such good places in which to nurture boys and girls as Jesus' home in Galilee and John Mark's home in Judea, albeit the acceptance of Jesus' gospel will result in the immediate improvement of home life. The love life of a wise home and the loyal devotion of true religion exert a profound reciprocal influence upon each other. Such a home life enhances religion, and genuine religion always glorifies the home.

177:2.7 (1923.1) It is true that many of the objectionable stunting influences and other cramping features of these olden Jewish homes have been virtually eliminated from many of the better-regulated modern homes. There is, indeed, more spontaneous freedom and far more personal liberty, but this liberty is not restrained by love, motivated by loyalty, nor directed by the intelligent discipline of wisdom. As long as we teach the child to pray, "Our Father who is in heaven," a tremendous responsibility rests upon all earthly fathers so to live and order their homes that the word father becomes worthily enshrined in the minds and hearts of all growing children.

Selection from Paper 68 The Dawn of Civilization

68:2.8 (765.5) Almost everything of lasting value in civilization has its roots in the family. The family was the first successful peace group, the man and woman learning how to adjust their antagonisms while at the same time teaching the pursuits of peace to their children.

Selection from Paper 82 - The Evolution of Marriage

82:0.2 (913.2) While religious, social, and educational institutions are all essential to the survival of cultural civilization, the family is the master civilizer. A child learns most of the essentials of life from his family and the neighbors.

Wise Love as the Foundation for Morality

Definition of Love:

56:10.20 (648.3) Love is the desire to do good to others.

Wise love is doing the highest good for an individual's physical health, emotional well-being, intellectual expansion, social growth and spiritual progress. It strikes a balance between being merciful, compassionate, and forgiving as well as being fair, just, and responsible.

A wise and loving parent withholds overindulgences while allowing a child to act independently according to their abilities and age. The ideal family has rules for the benefit of the whole family as well as for the highest good for each individual member. Parents who reflect the wisdom of God's love, respectfully give their children safe choices that are within their developmental limitations and are relative to each child's unique personality.

143:1.4 (1608.1) A father's love for his son oftentimes impels the father to restrain the unwise acts of his thoughtless offspring. The child does not always comprehend the wise and loving motives of the father's restraining discipline.

John Mark, the lad who often accompanied Jesus and the apostles, was fortunate to have such wise and loving parents as Jesus described here

177:2.2 (1660) You have enjoyed that parental love which ensures laudable self-confidence and which fosters normal feelings of security. But you have also been fortunate in that your parents possessed wisdom as well as love; and it was wisdom which led them to withhold most forms of indulgence and many luxuries which wealth can buy while they sent you to the synagogue school along with your neighborhood playfellows, and they also encouraged you to learn how to live in this world by permitting you to have original experience

Wise Love as the Foundation for Morality

Parental Trustworthiness

Self-Mastery

How We Make Moral Decisions

Parenting Styles

Parental Trustworthiness, Self-Mastery, and How we Make Moral Decisions

A wise parent is **trustworthy**, they are consistent in their behavior and respond to their child's needs. **Being responsive** to a child's needs in a consistent and timely manner is essential to good parenting, and it was of paramount importance to Jesus as shown in the following passage:

138:8.9 (1545.10) The disciples early learned that the Master had a profound respect and sympathetic regard for every human being he met, and they were tremendously impressed by this uniform and unvarying consideration which he so consistently gave to all sorts of men, women, and children. He would pause in the midst of a profound discourse that he might go out in the road to speak good cheer to a passing woman laden with her burden of body and soul. **He would interrupt a serious conference with his apostles to fraternize with an intruding child.** Nothing ever seemed so important to Jesus as the individual human who chanced to be in his immediate presence. He was master and teacher, but he was more — he was also a friend and neighbor, an

understanding comrade. (emphasis added)

28:6.13 (315.6) Trust is the crucial test of will creatures. Trustworthiness is the true measure of self-mastery, character.

Self-Mastery

Wise Love as the Foundation for Morality

Parental Trustworthiness

Self-Mastery

How We Make Moral Decisions

Parenting Styles

Being trustworthy requires some degree of parental self-understanding, selflessness, and self-mastery. Self-mastery is the degree to which we attain self-control over our urges, desires, and emotions. It is acting out our highest concepts of goodness while loving each other as God loves us.

143:2.3 (1609.4) Self-mastery is the measure of man's moral nature and indicator of his spiritual development.

143:2.7 (1610.2) Your secret of the mastery of self is bound up with your faith in the indwelling spirit, whichever works by love.

How We Make Moral Decisions

Wise Love as the Foundation for Morality

Parental Trustworthiness

Self-Mastery

How We Make Moral Decisions

Parenting Styles

The revelators tell us that the moral decision-making process of doing good is the certain path to God-likeness.

111:1.4 (1216) Material evolution has provided you a life machine, your body: the Father himself has endowed you with the purest spirit reality known to the universe, your Thought Adjuster. But into your hands, subject to your own decisions, has been given mind, and it is by mind that you live or die. It is within this mind and with the mind that you make those moral decisions which enable you to achieve Adjusterlikeness, and that is Godlikeness.

Parenting Styles

Wise Love as the Foundation for Morality

Parental Trustworthiness

Self-Mastery

How We Make Moral Decisions

Parenting Styles

It is important to look at what influences our ability and readiness to make reflective moral decisions. Theories and research in psychosocial development indicate that parental style and the stage of a child's cognitive and moral development affect the child's moral decision-making process (see References below).

Parental styles are categorized in two dimensions of parental attitude and behavior as

1. **Responsiveness** and;
2. **Expectations.**

Responsiveness refers to being loving, warm, nurturing, and respectful; practicing two-way communication; and consistently responding to a child's needs.

Expectations refers to parental rules, structure, guidance, communication styles, and levels of control over a child's behavior.

In Urantian terms, these two dimensions are best understood as love and wisdom, both of which have spiritual meanings and values based in truth, beauty, and goodness.

Love motivates people to manifest positive qualities such as listening with understanding empathy; consistently being warm, nurturing and responsive to a child's needs; respecting a child's unique personality, stage of development and choices; staying calm and forgiving when disciplining a child; and making decisions based on the highest good for the individual child and the family.

Wisdom in action includes showing the child the way to make decisions and behave appropriately by modeling your own moral behavior with structure and guidance, and by setting fair rules and consequences. A child learns to be moral when their parents are empathetically responsive and their expectations are fair.

These two dimensions (love/responsiveness and wisdom/expectations) are used to define the following four parental styles:

The Four Parenting Styles

Permissive	Wise Love
<i>Low Expectations / High Responsiveness</i>	<i>High Expectations / High Responsiveness</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unwise love ➤ Child-driven ➤ Rarely gives or enforces rules ➤ Does not show the child the way to make decisions and behave by modeling moral behavior ➤ Overindulges the child to avoid conflict ➤ Does not make decisions based on the highest good for the individual child and family ➤ Does not solve problems together with the child <p>Add a concluding statement about outcomes (excessive self-importance; narcissistic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflects spiritual wisdom and love ➤ Provides structure and guidance for the child ➤ Shows the child the way to make decisions and behave by modeling moral behavior ➤ Solves problems together with the child ➤ Sets fair and just rules and expectations ➤ Open communication and natural consequences ➤ Responds to the child's input with respect ➤ Is consistently warm, nurturing and responsive to the child's needs ➤ Stays calm and forgiving when disciplining a child ➤ Makes decisions based on the highest good for the individual child and family ➤ Jesus' parenting of his siblings is a model for us <p>A child learns to be moral when the parents are empathetic and fair.</p>

Neglectful	Authoritarian
<i>Low Expectations / Low Responsiveness</i>	<i>High Expectations / Low Responsiveness</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lacks wisdom and love ➤ Uninvolved or absent ➤ Provides little nurturance or guidance ➤ Indifferent to child's social-emotional and behavioral needs <p>Add a concluding statement about outcomes (too little self-respect)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Qualified love and wisdom ➤ Parent-driven ➤ Sets strict rules and punishment ➤ One-way communication, with little consideration of child's social-emotional and behavioral needs <p>Add a concluding statement about outcomes</p>

Authoritative Parenting (Democratic)

This style is high in both dimensions, whether defined by theories of psychosocial development such as demandingness and responsiveness, or in Urantian terms as love and wisdom.

Wise parents set rules and enforce boundaries by being assertive and respectful and by using age-appropriate discipline. They have open two-way discussions, provide guidance and reasoning, negotiate rules and consequences, and teach children values, morals, and goals. When children fail to meet a parent's expectations, these parents are more nurturing and forgiving. They respect their children's autonomy and encourage freedom and independence while administering wise and fair consequences.

Children raised with this style of parenting, as compared with children raised with authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved parents, exhibit higher moral development by being responsible, trustworthy, kind, and loving. These children are more independent and have greater self-control and emotional self-regulation. They demonstrate good self-esteem, interact with peers using competent social skills, and exhibit higher academic performance. Such children experience less depression, anxiety, and addictions, and are less inclined to harm themselves or others.

Authoritarian Parenting (Disciplinarian)

This parenting style is very high in expectations, structure, and control but low in responsiveness to a child's needs. It demands blind obedience (e.g., "Do what I say because I am the parent"), engages in one-way communication through strict rules, and uses fear of punishment to control a child's behavior.

These parents rarely explain the reasons behind their high expectations, strict rules, and resultant punishments. This style of parenting also tends to be rigid and often inconsistent, based on an emotional response to the infraction. These parents talk AT their child rather than discuss things WITH them. Their attitude shows a lack of trust in the child's ability to understand and to reason for themselves.

Jesus taught the better way when he said, "...True, wise fathers may chasten their sons, but they do all this in love and for corrective purposes. They do not punish in anger, neither do they chastise in retribution." 188:4.10 (2017.5)

Authoritarian parents many times justify their punitive approach by saying they are toughening up their child for real life. Their motto is “spare the rod, spoil the child.” Their children make moral decisions based on law and order and fear of punishment and are more likely to lie to avoid punishment. This parental style generally leads to obedient children who rank lower in happiness, social competence, and self-esteem.

Children of authoritarian parents exhibit more behavioral problems and temper tantrums. They are more dependent, perform worse academically, and experience more depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. They have worse coping skills than those children brought up with authoritative parenting styles.

Permissive Parenting (Indulgent)

This parental style is low on demandingness and wisdom, and high on love and responsiveness. Permissive, or passive parents, set very few rules, boundaries, or consequences. They have few expectations of their child. Permissive parents are generally nurturing and communicative, often taking the status of a friend. They allow children to make their own decisions with little guidance.

Children of permissive parents have poor self-control and emotional self-regulation. They struggle to set limits for themselves and have difficulty following rules. They tend to be more self-centered, have more problems in social interactions, and have lower morals.

Neglectful Parenting (Uninvolved or Disengaged)

These parents are low in all dimensions; responsiveness and love, as well as demandingness and wisdom. This parenting style is characterized by low responsiveness and little communication. These parents are dismissive and detached from their child's life. They offer little in the way of guidance, structure, rules or consequences. They may fulfill the child's basic needs, such as food and shelter.

In some cases, these parents are physically or emotionally abusive, and may have mental illnesses such as manic depression or schizophrenia due to chemical imbalances, or have post-traumatic stress disorder due to unfortunate experiences. They are often severely depressed, anxious, or addicted. In other instances, they may put their careers first or, because of lower socioeconomic status, have to work many hours to support their family.

Children of neglectful parents have the poorest outcome in terms of moral development. They struggle in school, are less competent than their peers, have low self-esteem, are more impulsive, and have difficulty controlling their emotions. They are prone to more anxiety, delinquent behavior, addiction problems, and increased suicidal behavior during adolescence.

In summary, decades of research has consistently shown that the authoritative parenting style results in the best outcome for a child's moral behavior, emotional health, as well as intellectual and social competence.

More recent studies show that the most important competencies predicting good parenting outcomes in order of importance are: (refer to article on What Makes a Good Parent by Robert Epstein)

- Love and affection
- Stress management for parents as well as children
- Relationship skills, healthy relationships with spouses and co-parenting
- Respecting the child's autonomy and independence
- Value of education and learning
- Teaching children life skills, preparing them to be financially independent
- Behavior management
- Safety.

Other factors often play a role in determining a child's moral behavior. For example, there could be ethnic and cultural differences. The authoritarian parental style was associated with best academic performance in Asian- American and Black students. A child's temperament and behavior are other factors that can affect a parent's style. For example, if a child has more difficulty in following rules and has aggressive tendencies, a parent who is authoritative may become either more authoritarian or more permissive.

The revelators tell us that in Jesus's life:

196:0.7 (2088.2) Personal faith, spiritual hope and moral devotion were always correlated in a matchless religious unity of harmonious association with the keen realization of the reality and sacredness of all human loyalties – personal honor, family love, religious obligations, social duty, and economic necessity. (Emphasis added)

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Jesus as a Wise, Loving Father

Jesusionian Model

The concept of Jesusionian parenting is closer to the Authoritative model as explained above. It is based on the practice of divine love wherein the child is respected and seen as a child of God and therefore innately deserving of love. Divine parental love is balanced with the responsibility of setting clear rules and fair consequences for any infractions of those rules.

196:0.7 (2088.2) The revelators tell us that in Jesus's life, "Personal faith, spiritual hope and **moral devotion** were always correlated in a matchless religious unity of harmonious association with the keen realization of the reality and sacredness of all **human loyalties – personal honor, family love, religious obligations, social duty, and economic necessity**. (Emphasis added)

As a father-brother, Jesus was responsible for fathering his siblings and helping them to become independent. He was consistent in his actions and dependable in responding to the physical, financial, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual needs of his siblings and mother. Jesus sacrificed his youth for the care of his family, his attitude was not one of dutiful sacrifice but rather one of loving service.

Jesus, as a father to his siblings, reflected the response of wise fatherly love in the following ways:

Selfless Fatherly Love

Jesus was spirit discerning, which is essential to attain the divine selflessness of fatherly love. He was a young man of faith, a truth seeker who wanted to do God's will. Jesus responded to the challenges of family life thoughtfully, patiently, and respectfully by regularly communing with God; asking for guidance to do God's will. The time he spent in prayer and worship helped him achieve balance between Self (human nature) and Selfless (divine nature). He approached practical problems and life situations with moderation in judgments, decisions and actions.

196:0.7 (2088.2) The all-consuming and indomitable spiritual faith of Jesus never became fanatical, for it never attempted to run away with his well-balanced intellectual judgments concerning the proportional values of practical and commonplace social, economic, and moral life situations.

When we are able to achieve a balance between selflessness and selfishness, we base our loving service on God's will—we are inspired by our highest values and enact the greatest good for all personalities involved. When making reflective, sincere, moral decisions about how to balance our lives, we experience more energy, well-being, joy, and peace of mind.

Note: We will discuss this topic further in Week 5, "Selflessness instead of selfishness."

Trustworthiness and Loyalty

Jesus was trustworthy and loyal to his family. These traits were grounded in his superb respect for others, his self-mastery and self-forgetfulness. This quality of being trustworthy/loyal helps children keep their faith.

140:5.14 (1574.7) "Children are naturally trustful, and parents should see to it that they do not lose that simple faith. In dealing with children, avoid all deception and refrain from suggesting suspicion. Wisely help them to choose their heroes and select their lifework."

The quality of being faithful is the basis for our loyalty to others and God. Jesus was consistently loyal to the sacred trust of raising his eight siblings until he was twenty-six years old. Even though he was offered money for the financial care of his family in order to study in Jerusalem, he gave up this offer to be a constant presence to his mother and siblings asserting: "Money cannot love" (127:2.8 (1397.6)).

Responsiveness

Jesus was responsive to the true needs of his family. When children's needs are met they trust in a friendly universe and a caring God who is a guide and comforter.

140:5.16 (1575.1) "...Being sensitive and responsive to human need creates genuine and lasting happiness, while such kind attitudes safeguard the soul from the destructive influences of anger, hate, and suspicion."

As a loving father-brother, Jesus looked for the best in his siblings. He wisely helped them choose a skill and become independent. For example, on one occasion his brother Jude the "firebrand" ran away to fish after being assigned to help his uncle with the harvest. Jesus, respecting Jude's choice, enlisted another uncle in giving Jude work as a fisherman.

140:5.12 (1574.5) "A father's love need not pamper, and it does not condone evil, but it is always anti-cynical. Fatherly love has a singleness of purpose, and it always looks for the best in man; that is the attitude of a true parent."

Jesus responded to the educational needs of his sisters by homeschooling them, since only boys were accepted in the synagogue schools. He provided for their financial needs by being the main breadwinner, working long hours in the repair shop until he was 18 years old.

123:2.5 (1358.2) There were few homes in the gentile world of those days that could give

a child better intellectual, moral and religious training than the Jewish homes of Galilee. [They had]...a systematic program of rearing and educating their children.

Jesus responded to the emotional needs of his siblings by comforting, listening to, and helping them adjust to the new awakening of their intellectual and emotional lives during adolescence. He was tenderhearted and affectionate whenever his sisters confided in him about their childhood troubles.

140:5.16 (1575.1) But Jesus did not refer to outward or ostentatious mourning. He alluded to an emotional attitude of tenderheartedness. It is a great error to teach boys and young men that it is unmanly to show tenderness or otherwise to give evidence of emotional feeling or physical suffering. Sympathy is a worthy attribute of the male as well as the female.

Jesus showed the fatherly response of mercy in his actions to relieve family suffering. He comforted and ministered to his mother after the deaths of Joseph and his six-year-old brother, Amos. Jesus encouraged Mary to smile in order to help the family be hopeful of better days ahead. This adjustment to loss helped his siblings courageously address the problems at hand, which built character.

Jesus was a peacemaker. He was often tested by Jude who had difficulty with rules and authority. In one instance, Jude was angered after overhearing a Roman soldier make a crude comment about a Jewish girl. His outburst landed him in jail for two nights. Jesus stayed with him and argued on his behalf before the magistrate. Jude “never forgot the patience and forbearance his brother-father manifested throughout the whole of this trying experience” (128:6.8 (1416.1)). It was not just what Jesus did for Jude that was remembered, but how he did it. Jesus served with loving loyalty, not grudging duty.

Jesus also encouraged the spirit of cooperation, peacemaking, and teamwork in renting a plot of land for the family to garden together. “Children can easily be taught to function as peacemakers. They enjoy team activities; they like to play together” (140:5.18 (1575.3)).

In response to his siblings' spiritual needs, Jesus encouraged them to develop their personal relationship with God. He took nature walks with the family on the Sabbath helping them to experience the presence of God in the beauty of nature.

Jesus was a true reflection of God's wise fatherly love to his family. He was trustworthy, devoted, loyal, respectful, compassionate, responsive, tenderhearted, merciful, forgiving, and a peacemaker.

Jesus' Approach to Discipline Reflects God's Wise Love

First, Jesus began wisely disciplining his siblings at an early age so that little or no punishment was ever required to secure their prompt and wholehearted obedience.

A child is naturally positive and altruistic. In the absence of wrong teaching, the mind of the normal child moves positively toward religious consciousness, moral righteousness, and social ministry, rather than negatively, away from sin and guilt.

103:2.5 (1131.5) The psychology of a child is naturally positive, not negative. So many mortals are negative because they were so trained. When it is said that the child is positive, reference is made to his moral impulses, those powers of mind whose emergence signals the arrival of the Thought Adjuster.

103:2.3 (1131.2) The first promptings of a child's moral nature have not to do with sex, guilt, or personal pride, but rather with impulses of justice, fairness, and urges to kindness — helpful ministry to one's fellows. And when such early moral awakenings are nurtured, there occurs a gradual development of the religious life which is comparatively free from conflicts, upheavals, and crises.

103:2.6 (1131.5) In the absence of wrong teaching, the mind of the normal child moves positively, in the emergence of religious consciousness, toward moral righteousness and social ministry, rather than negatively, away from sin and guilt. There may or may not be conflict in the development of religious experience, but there are always present the inevitable decisions, effort, and function of the human will.

All the children responded well to Jesus' methods, with the exception of Jude who at times needed to be punished for his self-confessed and deliberate violations of the family rules of conduct. At those times, his punishment was fixed by the unanimous decree of the older children and was agreed on by Jude.

After James and Joseph took responsibility for the family, they wanted to cast Jude out for not earning his share of the family upkeep, Jesus said: "Be patient. Be wise in your counsel and eloquent in your lives, that your brother may first know the better way and then be

constrained to follow you in it." "The wise and loving counsel of Jesus prevented a break in the family: they remained together" (128:7.4 (1417.3)).

Jesus' response to Jude's irresponsible behavior is an inspiration and guide for all parents dealing with a "problem child."

Second, Jesus was always positive and authoritative in his parenting style, rather than negative and authoritarian. Telling the children what to do and showing them the superior way, improved upon the older Jewish method of forbidding them to do evil.

When Buck and I were raising our three sons it was challenging to focus on the positive. However, when we told our boys not to do something, they heard what came after the "Don't!" and usually did what was forbidden.

Jesus "never arbitrarily disciplined his brothers and sisters, and such uniform fairness and personal consideration greatly endeared Jesus to all his family" (127:4.4 (1401.4)).

Third, Jesus had family meetings which included prayer time, to discuss everything relating to family welfare. Family meetings are a decision-making platform, teaching negotiation skills and working cooperatively. It enhances self-respect, self-confidence, and selfless decision making, emphasizing the highest good for the whole family. It also helps to avoid arbitrary discipline.

84:7:29 (941.10) Human society would be greatly improved if the civilized races would more generally return to the family-council practices of the Andites. ... They did not maintain the patriarchal or autocratic form of family government. They were very brotherly and associative, freely, and frankly discussing every proposal and regulation of a family nature.

Regarding Jesus's family meetings: "Prayer time in this household was the occasion for discussing anything and everything relating to the welfare of the family" 127:4.2 (1401.2).

Our family benefited greatly by having family meetings beginning when our sons were five years old, and which we continue today with our adult children when making decisions that will affect everyone in the family. For example, as we downsize and make our end of life plans, we are involving our sons and their spouses in decisions about the best place for us

to settle down and how this transition affects all of us. As one of our son's said, "We will lock arms and support each other during this time of change."

Jesus as a human father was a true reflection of God's wise love. Since the highest concept of God is that of a parent, what greater gift can we as parents receive than knowing Jesus as a human father?

Family Meetings Do's and Dont's

Family Meeting Do's

1. Start on time, and keep meetings short;
2. Select a chairman and secretary to take notes;
3. Attendance is voluntary;
4. All family members must abide by the decisions, even absent members;
5. All ideas are heard and respected;
6. Decisions are made by consensus;
7. All decisions can be review and modified at another family meeting;
8. Make at least one decision;

Family Meeting Don'ts

1. Parents dominate;
2. Parents use meeting to manipulate the children;
3. Inconsistent meeting times;
4. One of the parents avoid attending;
5. Decisions not upheld;
6. Chairman allows a family member to disrespect another's idea;
7. Family member sabotage the meetings, especially when consensus is not reached.

Experiential Learning Activities

Suggested Meditations/Contemplation

Relaxation and Preparation for Meditation:

Get comfortable either sitting or lying down. To relax the body and quiet the mind, take 10 slow deep breaths and yawn 10 times.

Meditate on Wise Love:

Assuming a worshipful attitude, meditate on wise love. When your mind wanders, observe your thoughts with compassion and slowly refocus on wise love.



Meditate on Mercy:

In a similar way, meditate on the following quote in relation to child rearing and its effect on moral decision-making.

28:6.8 (315.1)...You should realize that there is a great reward of personal satisfaction in being just, next fair, then patient, then kind. And then, on that foundation if you choose and have it in your heart, you can take the next step and really show mercy; but you cannot exhibit mercy in and of itself.

Reflective Questions List

- How might the experience of being raised by wise and loving parents affect moral decision making and ethical altruistic behavior?
- Consider an important relationship in your life and evaluate yourself on being trustworthy in regard to a) consistent; behavior over time, b) emotional dependability.
-
- What can you do to make progress in becoming more trustworthy?
-
- How has your experience with your mother, or absence of a mother's care, affected your trust in others with regard to ethical altruistic behavior?
-
- Which approach to discipline did your parents model? Authoritarian, authoritative, passive or a combination of these approaches
-
- How did that affect your moral decision making and altruistic behavior up to the present time? Give examples.

Additional Questions to Think About

- How is morality affected by being brought up with stable, loyal, trustworthy parents, or unstable, disloyal, or untrustworthy parents? parental figures?
- Two qualities of being trustworthy are consistent behavior over time and being emotionally dependable and responsive to other people's needs.
- How does the suspicion and deception of a parent toward a child destroy trust in that child?
- How has your relationship with God the Father been affected by your relationship with your earthly father? Describe how this has influenced the basis of your moral decisions.
- What are some examples of underdeveloped and overdeveloped altruism? How can either extreme be harmful?
- How does having a balance between self and selfless behavior affect one's moral decision making and doing God's will?

Resources

Associations of Parenting Styles with Moral Reasoning

By Martin Pinguart and Anton Fischer

Abstract

The present meta-analysis integrates the results of studies on associations of parenting styles with moral reasoning. The systematic search in electronic databases identified 23 studies that were included in this random-effects meta-analysis. We found a statistically significant, but small positive, concurrent association of authoritative parenting with higher moral reasoning, while the reverse was found for authoritarian parenting. No significant associations were found for permissive parenting, and numbers of studies were too small for identifying significant associations of neglectful parenting with moral reasoning, as well as cross-lagged effects of parenting styles on longitudinal change in moral reasoning. The size of the associations varied, in part, by publication status, educational status, and quality of assessing moral reasoning. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Full Citation: Martin Pinguart & Anton Fischer (2022) Associations of parenting styles with moral reasoning in children and adolescents: A meta-analysis, *Journal of Moral Education*, 51:4, 463-476, DOI: 10.1080/03057240.2021.1933401

Access the full article on [Taylor & Francis Online](#)

What Makes a Good Parent?

A scientific analysis ranks the 10 most effective child-rearing practices. Surprisingly, some don't even involve the kids.

By Robert Epstein on November 1, 2010

Source: [Scientific American](#)

Amazon.com lists an astounding number of dieting books—more than 16,000. But parenting guides far exceed that number: there are some 40,000 of them, including books such as Jane Rankin's *Parenting Experts*, that do nothing but evaluate the often conflicting advice the experts offer. People, it seems, are even more nervous about their parenting than they are about their waistlines.

Why is there such chaos and doubt when it comes to parenting? Why, in fact, do most parents continue to parent pretty much the way their own parents did—or, if they disliked the way they were raised, the exact opposite way? Shouldn't we all just find out what the studies say and parent accordingly?

A growing body of research conducted over the past 50 years shows fairly clearly that some parenting practices produce better outcomes than others—that is, better relationships between parent and child and happier, healthier, better functioning children. And just as we use medical science cautiously and strategically to make everyday health decisions, we can also make wise use of research to become better parents.

A new study I conducted with Shannon L. Fox, a student at the University of California, San Diego, which we presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association this past August, compared the effectiveness of 10 kinds of parenting practices that have gotten the thumbs-up in various scientific studies. It also showed how parenting experts rate those practices and looked at just how many parents actually use those practices. In other words, we compared three things: what experts advise, what really seems to work and what parents actually do.

Our study confirmed some widely held beliefs about parenting—for example, that showing your kids that you love them is essential—and it also yielded some surprises, especially regarding the importance of a parent's ability to manage stress in his or her own life.

Ten Important Competencies

To figure out which parenting skills were most important, we looked at data from about 2,000 parents who recently took an online test of parenting skills I developed several years ago (accessible at <http://MyParentingSkills.com>) and who also answered questions about their children. Parents did not know this when they took the test, but the skills were organized into 10 categories, all of which derive from published studies that show that such skills are associated with good outcomes with children. The 10 skill areas measured by the test were also evaluated by 11 parenting experts unknown to Fox and me, and we in turn were unknown to them (in other words, using a double-blind evaluation procedure).

On the test, parents indicated for 100 items how much they agreed with statements such as “I generally encourage my child to make his or her own choices,” “I try to involve my child in healthful outdoor activities” and “No matter how busy I am, I try to spend quality time

with my child.” Test takers clicked their level of agreement on a five-point scale from “agree” to “disagree.” Because all the items were derived from published studies, the answers allowed us to compute an overall skill level for each test taker, as well as separate skill levels in each of the 10 competency areas. Agreement with statements that described sound parenting practices (again, according to those studies) yielded higher scores.

The 10 kinds of parenting competencies, which we call “The Parents’ Ten,” include obvious ones such as managing problem behavior and expressing love and affection, as well as practices that affect children indirectly, such as maintaining a good relationship with one’s co-parent and having practical life skills.

In addition to asking test takers basic demographic questions about their age, education, marital status, parenting experience, and so on, we also asked them questions about the outcomes of their parenting, such as “How happy have your children been (on average)?,” “How successful have your children been in school or work settings (on average)?” and “How good has your relationship been with your children (on average)?” For questions such as these, test takers clicked on a 10-point scale from low to high.

With scores in hand for each parent on all “The Parents’ Ten,” along with their general assessments regarding the outcomes of their parenting, we could now use a statistical technique called regression analysis to determine which competencies best predict good parenting outcomes. For an outcome such as the child’s happiness, this kind of analysis allows us to say which parenting skills are associated with the most happiness in children.

Love, Autonomy and Surprises

Our most important finding confirmed what most parents already believe, namely, that the best thing we can do for our children is to give them lots of love and affection. Our experts agreed, and our data showed that this skill set is an excellent predictor of good outcomes with children: of the quality of the relationship we have with our children, of their happiness, and even of their health. What’s more, parents are better at this skill than they are at any of the others. We also confirmed what many other studies have shown: that encouraging children to become independent and autonomous helps them to function at a high level.

But our study also yielded a number of surprises. The most surprising finding was that two of the best predictors of good outcomes with children are in fact indirect: maintaining a

good relationship with the other parent and managing your own stress level. In other words, your children benefit not just from how you treat them but also from how you treat your partner and yourself.

Getting along with the other parent is necessary because children inherently want their parents to get along. Many years ago, when my first marriage was failing, my six-year-old son once led me by the hand into the kitchen where his mom was standing and tried to tape our hands together. It was a desperate act that conveyed the message: "Please love each other. Please get along." Children do not like conflict, especially when it involves the two people in the world they love most. Even in co-parenting situations where parents live apart, it is crucial to adhere to practices that do not hurt children: to resolve conflicts out of sight of the children, to apologize to one another and forgive each other (both can be done in front of the kids), to speak kindly about the other parent, and so on.

Stress management is also important for good parenting, just as it is vital in all aspects of life. In our study, parents' ability to manage stress was a good predictor of the quality of their relationship with their kids and also of how happy their children were. Perhaps more telling, people who rated themselves as great parents scored more highly on stress management than on any of the other nine parenting competencies. There is, possibly, a simple lesson here: parents who lose their temper around their kids know that that is bad parenting. Keeping calm is probably step one in good parenting. Fortunately, stress management practices such as meditation, imagery techniques and breathing exercises can be learned, no matter what one's natural tendencies. People can also learn better organizational skills and even ways of managing stressful thinking.

Keeping children safe—a matter of almost obsessive concern among American parents these days—seems to have both positive and negative outcomes. On the bright side, in our new study safety skills did contribute to good health outcomes. But being overly concerned with safety appears to produce poorer relationships with children and also appears to make children less happy. A recent study by Barbara Morrongiello and her colleagues at the University of Guelph in Ontario shows how complex the safety issue can be. In their study, young people between the ages of seven and 12 said that even though they were generally conforming to the safety rules of their parents, they planned to behave like their parents when they grew up, even where their parents were, by their own standards, behaving unsafely. Had they detected their parents' hypocrisy?

Another surprise involves the use of behavior management techniques. Although my own training in psychology (under the pioneering behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner) suggests that sound behavior management—providing lots of reinforcement for good behavior, for example—is essential for good parenting, our new study casts doubt on this idea. Behavior management ranked low across the board: it was a poor predictor of good outcomes with children; parents scored relatively poorly in this skill area; and our experts ranked it ninth in our list of 10 competencies.

In general, we found that parents are far better at educating their children and keeping them safe than they are at managing stress or maintaining a good relationship with the other parent, even though the latter practices appear to have more influence on children. Getting along with one's co-parent is the third most important practice, but it ranked eighth on the parents' list of actual abilities. Even more discouraging, stress management (number two in importance) ranked 10th.

Who Make Good Parents?

Setting aside “The Parents’ Ten” for the moment, our study also shed some interesting light on what characteristics a good parent has.

A general parenting ability appears to exist—something like the “g” factor that exists for intelligence. The g factor for parenting emerged very strongly in our study using a statistical technique called factor analysis, which organizes large amounts of test data by clustering test items into a small number of highly predictive variables. Some people just seem to have a knack for parenting, which cannot be easily described in terms of specific skills.

We also found that a number of characteristics that people often associate with good parenting are probably not very significant. For example, women appear to be only a hair better than men at parenting these days—a huge change in our culture. Women scored 79.7 percent on our test, compared with 78.5 percent for men—a difference that was only marginally significant. Parents who were older or who had more children also did not produce significantly better parenting outcomes in our study. Parents seem to perform just as well whether or not they have ever been married, and divorced parents appear to be every bit as competent as those who are still married, although their children are somewhat less happy than the children of parents who were never divorced.

Neither race nor ethnicity seems to contribute much to parenting competence, and gays and straights are just about equal in parenting ability. In fact, gays actually outscored straights by about 1 percentage point in our test, but the difference was not statistically significant.

One characteristic that does seem to make a difference is education: generally speaking, the more the education, the better the parenting. This might be because better educated people also work harder to improve their parenting skills through parent education programs (confirmed by our data). It is also possible that good parents—those with a high parenting—are also generally competent people who are better educated. In other words, the g for parenting might be the same as the g for intelligence, a matter to be explored in future research.

The bottom line on such findings is that if you really want to know about an individual's competence as a parent, you should measure that competence directly rather than default to commonly held stereotypes. In the U.S., after all, women did not get the vote until 1920 because of faulty assumptions about female limitations. I believe this is one of the main lessons of our study: there is simply no substitute for the direct measure of competence.

Perhaps the best news is that parents are trainable. Our data confirm that parents who have taken parenting classes produce better outcomes with their children than parents who lack such training and that more training leads to better outcomes. Training programs, such as the evidence-based Parenting Wisely program developed by Donald A. Gordon of Ohio University, can indeed improve parenting practices. Programs are available in major cities around the country, sometimes sponsored by local therapists or state or county agencies. The National Effective Parenting Initiative, which I have been associated with since its inception in 2007, is working to make quality parent training more widely available (see <http://EffectiveParentingUSA.org> for additional information).

Where Experts Fail

Although parenting experts do indeed offer conflicting advice at times (perhaps because they don't keep up with the studies!), our experts generally did a good job of identifying competencies that predict positive outcomes with children. There were two notable exceptions: First, they ranked stress management eighth in our list of 10 competencies, even though it appears to be one of the most important competencies. Second, our experts seemed to be biased against the religion and spirituality competency. They ranked it rock

bottom in the list of 10, and several even volunteered negative comments about this competency area, even though studies suggest that religious or spiritual training is good for children.

Historically, clinicians and behavioral scientists have shied away from religious issues, at least in their professional lives; that could explain the discomfort our experts expressed about religious or spiritual training for children. Why they were so far off on stress management is truly a mystery, however, given psychology's long interest in both the study and treatment of stress. I can only speculate that stress management is not widely taught in graduate programs in psychology-related fields as an essential component of good parenting. It should be.

Bringing It Home

Tempering one's parenting with relevant scientific knowledge can truly have great benefits for one's family. It can reduce or eliminate conflict with one's children, for one thing, and that in turn can improve a marriage or co-parenting relationship. It can also help produce happier, more capable children.

I have seen how this works in my own parenting. I am a much better parent with my younger children (who range in age from four to 12) than I was with my older two (now 29 and 31). The more I have learned about parenting over the years, the more loving and skillful I have become, with obvious benefits. These days I really do hug my children and tell them I love them several times a day, every day, without exception. When love is never in question, children are much more understanding and tolerant when a parent needs to set limits, which I do regularly. I have also learned to stay calm—to improve the way I react to things. When I am calm, my children are, too, and we avoid that deadly cycle of emotional escalation that can ruin relationships.

Most important, I am much more a facilitator now than a controller. While building my own competence as a parent, I have also put more effort into recognizing and strengthening the competence of my children, helping them to become strong and independent in many ways. My 12-year-old son is now a calm, helpful role model to his three younger siblings, and before I get out of bed these days, my 10-year-old daughter has sometimes already made scrambled eggs for all of them—and cleaned up, too.

Access the article on Scientific American's Website here:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-makes-a-good-parent/>

Further Reading

- The Encyclopedia of Parenting Theory and Research. Edited by Charles A. Smith. Greenwood Press, 1999.
- The Positive Parent: Raising Healthy, Happy, and Successful Children, Birth-Adolescence. Kerby T. Alvy. Teachers College Press, 2008.
- The Process of Parenting. Eighth edition. Jane B. Brooks. McGraw-Hill, 2010.
- To take the author's parenting test, visit <http://MyParentingSkills.com>

ROBERT EPSTEIN, senior research psychologist at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology in Vista, Calif., is a contributing editor for Scientific American Mind and former editor in chief of Psychology Today. His latest book is Teen 2.0: Saving Our Children and Families from the Torment of Adolescence (Linden Publishing, 2010).

Baumrind Parenting Style: Definition, Advantages, and Disadvantages

Definition, Advantages, and Disadvantages

How many parenting styles do you know? Which style are you demonstrating to raise your kids? There are some popular styles recognized these days like permissive, authoritative, free-range, and many more. Do you know that some of those popular methods are based on the work of Diana Baumrind? These styles are later known as Baumrind parenting style.

Diana Baumrind Parenting Styles: Why and How They Matter to Your Child

<https://insights.gostudent.org/en/diana-baumrind-parenting-styles>

By Clarissa Joshua

October 14, 2021

You probably won't be surprised to hear that how you parent your child will impact their development and behaviour. Diana Baumrind is considered a pioneer in this field. Baumrind categorised parenting styles and studied their impacts. You'll find many Baumrind parenting styles PDF documents and articles online but we're going to break down the essentials for you and share the most important findings.

How did Diana Baumrind come up with parenting styles?

Diana Baumrind was a clinical and developmental psychologist. Her most famous study was about parent-child behaviour. She conducted this research in the early 1960s by following more than 100 preschool-age children.

Even though the study took place decades ago, the parenting styles that Baumrind uncovered are still widely used as benchmarks today. Baumrind's theory was that different parenting styles had a correlation with a child's behaviour, happiness, and success.

How did Baumrind study parenting styles?

Baumrind studied parenting styles by using 2 metrics: parental responsiveness (or unresponsiveness), and parental demandingness (or undemandingness).

Responsiveness relates to how sensitive and open parents are to their child's needs. Some examples include the level of affectionate interaction, interest in a child's daily activities, and respect for a child's point of view.

Demandingness relates to the amount that parents control their child's behaviour. Some examples include how much monitoring takes place over a child's activities and whether a parent has expectations of more responsible and mature behaviour from their child.

Baumrind and her research team used observation, analyses, and interviews in order to ultimately identify the distinct parenting styles. Some of the dimensions studied included communication styles, disciplinary strategies, communication styles, and expectations of maturity and control.

How many parenting styles did Baumrind identify?

Baumrind identified 3 parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive. These were widely accepted and used over the next 20 years until 2 researchers, Maccoby and Martin, famously introduced a 4th parenting style: Neglectful.

Today, all 4 parenting styles are usually included when referring to the Diana Baumrind parenting styles. Occasionally, they are also referred to as the Maccoby and

Martin parenting styles (in case you hear this bandied around). Either way, the 4 categories are the same.

What are the 4 parenting styles according to Diana Baumrind?

Now that you know there are 4 parenting styles, let's look at each of them in more detail.

Authoritative parenting

Authoritative-style parenting is sometimes referred to as “democratic”. It's known as democratic because parents listen to their children and provide warmth as well as fair discipline and positive reinforcement. This style of parenting embodies high expectations matched with high responsiveness where parents support their kids to enable them to succeed.

As well as the general characteristics we just mentioned, Baumrind determined some of the typical traits shared by authoritative parents as being the following:

- Listening and allowing their children to express their opinion
- Encouraging their children to be independent
- Placing limits, expectations, and consequences on behaviour
- Being more flexible and adjusting their responses to suit circumstances and situations
- Setting clear rules
- Having high but reasonable expectations of their children

Authoritarian parenting

Authoritarian-style parenting is sometimes referred to as “disciplinarian”. It is known as disciplinarian because these parents punish mistakes harshly, often without giving a reason to their child, rather than opt for positive reinforcement. In contrast to authoritative parenting, less love and warmth are displayed too.

As well as the general characteristics we just mentioned, Baumrind determined some of the typical traits shared by authoritarian parents as being the following:

- Expecting total obedience

- Not giving their children choices or options
- Having high expectations and often being highly critical
- Imposing strict rules that are not clearly laid out and sometimes change
- Hovering over their children to make sure they don't make mistakes

Permissive parenting

Permissive-style parenting is sometimes referred to as "indulgent". It is known as indulgent because these parents rarely discipline their children and offer an abundance of freedom. Expectations and demands of their children aren't as high as the former 2 styles of parenting either.

As well as the general characteristics we just mentioned, Baumrind determined some of the typical traits shared by permissive parents as being the following:

- Being warm and loving towards their children
- Imposing very few rules or a schedule to follow and little structure
- Asking their children's opinions even on important decisions
- Sometimes using bribery as in toys or food to get a child to do something
- Often behaving more as a friend instead of as a parental figure

Neglectful parenting

Neglectful-style parenting is sometimes referred to as "uninvolved". It is known as uninvolved because their responsiveness is low as is their demandingness. As with permissive parents they set few rules, if any, however, they provide little to no affection or warmth.

As well as the general characteristics we just mentioned, some of the typical traits shared by neglectful parents can be described as

- Being cold and unresponsive towards their children
- Showing little involvement or interest in their children's school-life or activities
- Setting few or no expectations on their children
- Spending little time with their children
-

As you can see, each of the parenting styles has its own quirks and common behaviour patterns. There is also some overlap with some of the dimensions and characteristics between the styles.

The examples we listed above are the extremes of each parenting style. There is also a sliding scale within each category. For example, one parent who is authoritative can have different or stricter rules than another who would also be considered authoritative under the Diana Baumrind parenting styles.

Impact of parenting styles on child development

Each parenting style usually impacts a child's development differently. However, sometimes a child can display qualities or behaviours not associated with their father or mother's parenting style/s.

Let's look at what are the typical impacts of each parenting style on children as a rough guide.

Authoritative parenting

- More happy and active
- More independent and have better self-esteem
- Perform better academically
- Have better social skills
- Have fewer mental health issues or drug and alcohol abuse issues

Authoritarian parenting

- Have an unhappy temperament
- Have more mental health issues or drug and alcohol abuse issues
- Have worse academic results
- Less independent and have lower self-esteem
- Have poorer social skills

Permissive parenting

- Less happy

- Have bad self-control and are more likely to have problems with authority
- Have more problems in social settings
- Perform poorly at school
- Aren't able to follow rules

Neglectful parenting

-
- Are stressed or anxious
- More likely to have issues with drug and alcohol abuse
- Won't perform as well at school
- More likely to display delinquent behaviour as adolescents
- Have more mental health problems

Authoritative: is this the way forward?

- Authoritative parenting is generally considered to produce the most positive outcome for children and the style of parenting to aim for. This makes sense given that the impacts of this parenting style on children are good and tend to lead to a happy and well-balanced person.
- Authoritative parents use positive reinforcement which is also used in positive parenting techniques. The term "positive parenting" stemmed from Austrian psychologist Alfred Alder's work. It's also sometimes referred to as strength-based parenting.
- Like authoritative parenting outcomes, it improves children's development and helps them cope better in different situations. These impacts can benefit them later in life too.
- The evidence is clear, if you can rely on authoritative-style parenting and use positive reinforcement to try and avoid punishment and provide a warm and nurturing environment, your child has a better chance of success and happiness.

- Of course, some children are naturally more of a challenge to their parents. If you need support dealing with difficult behaviour the NHS offers some advice and links to positive parenting strategies to help you.

Observations about Diana Baumrind parenting styles

- While the Diana Baumrind parenting styles guidelines are still widely used today, there have been some criticisms or observations over the years about their shortcomings.
- One is that not all parents fall neatly into one archetype. While you may see yourself following many characteristics of one of the parenting styles, you might feel like your behaviour is more aligned with a different style in other aspects. Different days and different challenges may affect your own behaviour and parenting style too.
- Also, in two-parent households it's not uncommon that each parent will have a different style of parenting. Some kids respond better to freedom or discipline depending on their nature too. You may have siblings who require slightly different extremes of one of the parenting dimensions. There is also some evidence that children's behaviour can shape parenting styles and it's not just a one-way system that you as parents impact your children.
- As we mentioned earlier, not all children will develop the attributes and behaviour that is supposedly predicted by their parents' style either. There are many other factors to take into consideration including cultural nuances, a family's financial situation, schooling, and other environmental impacts.
- However, the Diana Baumrind parenting styles are useful for you to understand and consider what kind of parent you are. The positive and negative points attributed to the different styles can help you determine areas you might want to change or work on, and those points that you should keep doing exactly the same as you already are.
- We're sure you're doing everything you can to be the best parent possible. The fact that you're on this page and interested in different parenting styles is testament to that so don't worry you're doing great. Just remember that love truly is the way with

your little one and no parent is perfect or ever will be but you probably are in your child's eyes anyway.

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Moral Development of Preschool Children Mediated by Children's Attachment

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<https://www.sid.ir/paper/997371/en>

Abstract

Objective Family is like a school where parents teach the lessons of humanity and morality, which are the foundation of human happiness, to their Children. Moral development is an essential part of children's understanding of moral rules and principles. The lack of Moral development, along with anxiety, and depression exposes Children to antisocial and suicidal behaviors. Moral development is associated with Parenting styles and Attachment. This study aims to investigate the relationship between Parenting styles and moral development of preschool Children mediated by Children's Attachment.

Materials & Methods This descriptive correlational study was conducted on 128 Children (64 girls and 64 boys) selected from 8 preschools in Tehran Province, Iran, in 2020 using a cluster sampling technique. The study data were collected using three questionnaires: Baumrind Parenting styles Questionnaire (PSQ), the Kinship Center Attachment Questionnaire (KCAQ), and Lotfabadi moral development Questionnaire (MDQ). The first two tools were completed by mothers of Children, while the MDQ was completed by Children. The Kolmogorov-Simonov test, correlation test (Enter method), analysis of variance, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis in SPSS v. 21.

Results The regression analysis results showed that Parenting styles had a significant relationship with Moral development ($R=0.74$, Adjusted $R^2=0.54$, $P=0.000$). Also, Attachment had a significant association with Moral development ($R=0.71$, Adjusted $R^2=0.49$, $P=0.000$). With one unit change in permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative Parenting styles, the Moral development of preschool Children can be predicted by 43.5%, 19%, and 37.6%, respectively. Moreover, with one unit change in positive adjustment/

development, negative behavior, emotional reactivity, and distancing from caregiver support dimensions of Attachment, the Moral development of preschool Children can be predicted by 33. 6%, 38. 4%, -26. 4%, and -11. 4%, respectively. Also, the results of the Sobel test showed that the Attachment variable was the mediator of the relationship of Parenting styles with Moral development ($z=2.29>1.96$). 2

Conclusion The Moral development of Children is related to permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative Parenting styles. Besides, children's Attachment can mediate the relationship between Parenting styles and Moral development. More planning and follow-up are needed to improve the Moral development of preschool Children. When parents are consistent in their Parenting styles, they provide their Children with assertive and trusting behaviors. They should listen to their Children and promote dialogue with them. Their discipline should be accompanied by warmth, logic, and flexibility and give their children the freedom to some extent. This treatment can help Children develop their social behavior.

How Parents Influence Early Moral Development

By Jill Suttie, September 29, 2015

Source: [Greater Good Magazine Science-based Insights for a Meaningful Life](#)

A new study finds that the key to raising moral kids lies with the parents' sense of empathy and injustice.

Parents: Do you want to raise a child with a strong sense of right and wrong? You might want to start by cultivating your own morality—as well as your own empathy.

A new study from the University of Chicago suggests that parents' sensitivity to both other people's feelings and to injustice may influence early moral development in their children.

Developmental neuroscientist Jean Decety and his colleague, Jason Cowell, brought a group of one year olds into the lab to test them on their reactions to moral situations. The seventy-three toddlers watched animated videos in which characters engaged in helping and sharing (prosocial) behaviors or pushing, tripping, and shoving (antisocial) behaviors while the researchers monitored the toddlers' eye movements and measured their brain wave patterns using an electroencephalogram, or EEG.

Afterwards, the researchers offered the children toy figures representing the two “good” and “bad” onscreen characters and noted which the toddlers preferred, based on their reaching behavior. The toddlers also played a sharing game, in which they were given two toys to play with and then asked to share one.

Prior to the experiment, the children’s parents filled out questionnaires measuring their values regarding empathy, justice, and fairness. The parents also answered questions about their children’s observed temperaments, as well as giving general demographic information.

Results of the researchers’ analyses showed that all the toddlers experienced different brain-wave patterns when witnessing pro-social versus antisocial behavior, and they tracked pro-social characters with their eyes longer—a finding that replicates other studies suggesting that kids, even from a young age, seem to prefer moral characters.

Yet, those differences in brain wave patterns for good and bad characters didn’t translate into toddlers reaching for the pro-social toy figure—in fact, just as many reached for the antisocial toy.

Instead, the toddlers who preferred the “good” toy had a distinct brain wave pattern in their EEG—one that included larger spikes of activity at the 400-millisecond-mark post-witnessing the animated good and bad behavior. And, in later analyses, the researchers discovered that this distinct spike in activity was predicted by the parents’ sensitivity to justice—a finding that surprised Decety.

“All babies make a distinction between good and bad—this has been shown by many studies,” he says. “But, this second response in the brain, the one that’s sensitive to a parent’s views toward justice, we think it is connected with more complex types of reasoning.”

The spike in brain activity seems to indicate that the toddlers are appraising, rather than just paying attention to, the good and bad behavior they’ve seen, says Decety. Still, how a parent’s views could impact that process isn’t clear at all. Decety speculates that it may be because of genetics and biology, or perhaps a combination of influences from the baby’s social environment and the genes passed down to them.

“As we’ve learned over the last 50 years of research, it’s almost never just one or the other,” says Decety. “It’s almost always an interaction between the two.”

Parental dispositions also seemed to impact sharing in the toddlers. The researchers found that higher levels of parental cognitive empathy, or the ability to take someone else’s perspective, as well as higher levels of baby self-regulation—their ability to soothe themselves, for example—predicted increased sharing behavior in the sharing game. While it makes some sense that babies who can self-soothe would be better at sharing—after all, says Decety, sharing is hard for babies, so soothing themselves could mitigate the emotional upset—it’s less clear how parental empathy impacts this behavior. Again, it could be genetic, or socially-influenced, or both.

Either way, it appears that the building blocks of moral behavior—reaching out to good people and being willing to share with others—are somewhat idiosyncratic and not equal in all kids. This goes against some of the current thinking on moral development, says Decety.

“Usually when you read developmental studies, it seems as if all babies are alike,” he says. “But our study shows that how morality develops is a little more sophisticated, more nuanced than we thought. Even at this very early age, we see these individual differences.”

Perhaps surprisingly, parental emotional empathy—the ability to share the emotions of another person—did not seem to influence sharing behavior in their toddlers. However, this finding does mirror some of Decety’s other research with adults, which found cognitive rather than emotional empathy predicts their sense of morality, justice, and fairness.

Of course, this is only one study. But Decety will soon be analyzing results from another study measuring brain wave patterns in toddlers witnessing acts of fairness and unfairness. And he hopes to analyze DNA samples from parents to see if there may be a genetic component that accounts for differences in how babies react to moral situations.

His goal is to better understand the mechanisms involved in moral development so that, eventually, we might shape its trajectory in positive ways.

“If we want our kids to be sensitive to justice—which I believe we do, if we want to live together in peace—and it turns out that the way that we handle or care for our kids can affect their sense of justice from very early on, then we will want to pay attention to that,” he says. “That’s good for everybody, for the world.”

Read the article online at:

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_parents_influence_early_moral_development

Organized by Topic

Foundation of Morality in the Family

84:7.30 (942.1) Family life is the progenitor of true morality, the ancestor of the consciousness of loyalty to duty. The enforced associations of family life stabilize personality and stimulate its growth through the compulsion of necessitous adjustment to other and diverse personalities. But even more, a true family—a good family—reveals to the parental procreators the attitude of the Creator to his children, while at the same time such true parents portray to their children the first of a long series of ascending disclosures of the love of the Paradise parent of all universe children.

2:5.9 (40.1) The Father's love follows us now and throughout the endless circle of the eternal ages. As you ponder the loving nature of God, there is only one reasonable and natural personality reaction thereto: You will increasingly love your Maker; you will yield to God an affection analogous to that given by a child to an earthly parent; for, as a father, a real father, a true father, loves his children, so the Universal Father loves and forever seeks the welfare of his created sons and daughters.

2:5.10 (40.2) But the love of God is an intelligent and farseeing parental affection. The divine love functions in unified association with divine wisdom and all other infinite characteristics of the perfect nature of the Universal Father. God is love, but love is not God. The greatest manifestation of the divine love for mortal beings is observed in the bestowal of the Thought Adjusters, but your greatest revelation of the Father's love is seen in the bestowal life of his Son Michael as he lived on earth the ideal spiritual life. It is the indwelling Adjuster who individualizes the love of God to each human soul.

177:2.5 (1922.3) For more than an hour Jesus and John continued this discussion of home life. The Master went on to explain to John how a child is wholly dependent on his parents and the associated home life for all his early concepts of everything intellectual, social, moral, and even spiritual since the family represents to the young child all that he can first know of either human or divine relationships. The child must derive his first impressions of the universe from the mother's care; he is wholly dependent on the earthly father for his first ideas of the heavenly Father. The child's subsequent life is made happy or unhappy, easy or difficult, in accordance with his early mental and emotional life, conditioned by these social and spiritual relationships of the home. A human being's entire afterlife is enormously influenced by what happens during the first

few years of existence.

68:2.8 (765.5) Almost everything of lasting value in civilization has its roots in the family. The family was the first successful peace group, the man and woman learning how to adjust their antagonisms while at the same time teaching the pursuits of peace to their children.

82:0.2 (913.2) While religious, social, and educational institutions are all essential to the survival of cultural civilization, the family is the master civilizer. A child learns most of the essentials of life from his family and the neighbors.

Wise Love as the Foundation of Morality

100:4.4 (1098.1) In physical life the senses tell of the existence of things; mind discovers the reality of meanings; but the spiritual experience reveals to the individual the true values of life. These high levels of human living are attained in the supreme love of God and in the unselfish love of man. If you love your fellow men, you must have discovered their values. Jesus loved men so much because he placed such a high value upon them. You can best discover values in your associates by discovering their motivation. If someone irritates you, causes feelings of resentment, you should sympathetically seek to discern his viewpoint, his reasons for such objectionable conduct. If once you understand your neighbor, you will become tolerant, and this tolerance will grow into friendship and ripen into love.

84:7.1 (939.4) Sex mating is instinctive, children are the natural result, and the family thus automatically comes into existence. As are the families of the race or nation, so is its society. If the families are good, the society is likewise good. The great cultural stability of the Jewish and of the Chinese peoples lies in the strength of their family groups.

123:2.5 (1358.2) There were few homes in the gentile world of those days that could give a child a better intellectual, moral, and religious training than the Jewish homes of Galilee. These Jews had a systematic program for rearing and educating their children. They divided a child's life into seven stages:

1. The newborn child, the first to the eighth day.
2. The suckling child.
3. The weaned child.
4. The period of dependence on the mother, lasting up to the end of the fifth year.

5. The beginning independence of the child and, with sons, the father assuming responsibility for their education.
6. The adolescent youths and maidens.
7. The young men and the young women.

177:2.2 (1921.6) "I know you will prove loyal to the gospel of the kingdom because I can depend upon your present faith and love when these qualities are grounded upon such an early training as has been your portion at home. You are the product of a home where the parents bear each other a sincere affection, and therefore you have not been over loved so as injuriously to exalt your concept of self-importance. Neither has your personality suffered distortion in consequence of your parents' loveless maneuvering for your confidence and loyalty, the one against the other. You have enjoyed that parental love which insures laudable self-confidence and which fosters normal feelings of security. But you have also been fortunate in that your parents possessed wisdom as well as love; and it was wisdom which led them to withhold most forms of indulgence and many luxuries which wealth can buy while they sent you to the synagogue school along with your neighborhood playfellows, and they also encouraged you to learn how to live in this world by permitting you to have original experience. You came over to the Jordan, where we preached and John's disciples baptized, with your young friend Amos. Both of you desired to go with us. When you returned to Jerusalem, your parents consented; Amos's parents refused; they loved their son so much that they denied him the blessed experience which you have had, even such as you this day enjoy. By running away from home, Amos could have joined us, but in so doing he would have wounded love and sacrificed loyalty. Even if such a course had been wise, it would have been a terrible price to pay for experience, independence, and liberty. Wise parents, such as yours, see to it that their children do not have to wound love or stifle loyalty in order to develop independence and enjoy invigorating liberty when they have grown up to your age.

126:3.3 (1389.6) During this year Jesus first formulated the prayer which he subsequently taught to his apostles, and which to many has become known as "The Lord's Prayer." In a way it was an evolution of the family altar; they had many forms of praise and several formal prayers. After his father's death Jesus tried to teach the older children to express themselves individually in prayer—much as he so enjoyed doing—but they could not grasp his thought and would invariably fall back upon their memorized prayer forms. It was in this effort to stimulate his older brothers and sisters to say individual prayers that Jesus would endeavor to lead them along by suggestive phrases, and presently, without intention on his part, it developed that they were all using a form of prayer which was largely built up from these suggestive lines which Jesus had taught them.

Jesus' Approach to Discipline and Family Meetings

127:4.2 (1401.2) By the beginning of this year Jesus had fully won his mother to the acceptance of his methods of child training—the positive injunction to do good in the place of the older Jewish method of forbidding to do evil. In his home and throughout his public-teaching career Jesus invariably employed the positive form of exhortation. Always and everywhere did he say, “You shall do this—you ought to do that.” Never did he employ the negative mode of teaching derived from the ancient taboos. He refrained from placing emphasis on evil by forbidding it, while he exalted the good by commanding its performance. Prayer time in this household was the occasion for discussing anything and everything relating to the welfare of the family.

127:4.3 (1401.3) Jesus began wise discipline upon his brothers and sisters at such an early age that little or no punishment was ever required to secure their prompt and wholehearted obedience. The only exception was Jude, upon whom on sundry occasions Jesus found it necessary to impose penalties for his infractions of the rules of the home. On three occasions when it was deemed wise to punish Jude for self-confessed and deliberate violations of the family rules of conduct, his punishment was fixed by the unanimous decree of the older children and was assented to by Jude himself before it was inflicted.

103:2.1 (1130.6) Religion is functional in the human mind and has been realized in experience prior to its appearance in human consciousness. A child has been in existence about nine months before it experiences birth. But the “birth” of religion is not sudden; it is rather a gradual emergence. Nevertheless, sooner or later there is a “birth day.” You do not enter the kingdom of heaven unless you have been “born again”—born of the Spirit. Many spiritual births are accompanied by much anguish of spirit and marked psychological perturbations, as many physical births are characterized by a “stormy labor” and other abnormalities of “delivery.” Other spiritual births are a natural and normal growth of the recognition of supreme values with an enhancement of spiritual experience, albeit no religious development occurs without conscious effort and positive and individual determinations. Religion is never a passive experience, a negative attitude. What is termed the “birth of religion” is not directly associated with so-called conversion experiences which usually characterize religious episodes occurring later in life as a result of mental conflict, emotional repression, and temperamental upheavals.

103:2.2 (1131.1) But those persons who were so reared by their parents that they grew up in the consciousness of being children of a loving heavenly Father, should not look askance at their fellow mortals who could only attain such consciousness of fellowship with God through a psychological crisis, an emotional upheaval.

103:2.3 (1131.2) The evolutionary soil in the mind of man in which the seed of revealed religion germinates is the moral nature that so early gives origin to a social

consciousness. The first promptings of a child's moral nature have not to do with sex, guilt, or personal pride, but rather with impulses of justice, fairness, and urges to kindness—helpful ministry to one's fellows. And when such early moral awakenings are nurtured, there occurs a gradual development of the religious life which is comparatively free from conflicts, upheavals, and crises.

103:2.4 (1131.3) Every human being very early experiences something of a conflict between his self-seeking and his altruistic impulses, and many times the first experience of God-consciousness may be attained as the result of seeking for superhuman help in the task of resolving such moral conflicts.

103:2.5 (1131.4) The psychology of a child is naturally positive, not negative. So many mortals are negative because they were so trained. When it is said that the child is positive, reference is made to his moral impulses, those powers of mind whose emergence signals the arrival of the Thought Adjuster.

103:2.6 (1131.5) In the absence of wrong teaching, the mind of the normal child moves positively, in the emergence of religious consciousness, toward moral righteousness and social ministry, rather than negatively, away from sin and guilt. There may or may not be conflict in the development of religious experience, but there are always present the inevitable decisions, effort, and function of the human will.

103:2.7 (1131.6) Moral choosing is usually accompanied by more or less moral conflict. And this very first conflict in the child mind is between the urges of egoism and the impulses of altruism. The Thought Adjuster does not disregard the personality values of the egoistic motive but does operate to place a slight preference upon the altruistic impulse as leading to the goal of human happiness and to the joys of the kingdom of heaven.

103:2.8 (1131.7) When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is primitive religious experience. No animal can make such a choice; such a decision is both human and religious. It embraces the fact of God-consciousness and exhibits the impulse of social service, the basis of the brotherhood of man. When mind chooses a right moral judgment by an act of the free will, such a decision constitutes a religious experience.

103:2.9 (1131.8) But before a child has developed sufficiently to acquire moral capacity and therefore to be able to choose altruistic service, he has already developed a strong and well-unified egoistic nature. And it is this factual situation that gives rise to the theory of the struggle between the "higher" and the "lower" natures, between the "old man of sin" and the "new nature" of grace. Very early in life the normal child begins to learn that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

103:2.10 (1131.9) Man tends to identify the urge to be self-serving with his ego—himself. In contrast he is inclined to identify the will to be altruistic with some influence outside himself—God. And indeed is such a judgment right, for all such nonself desires do actually have their origin in the leadings of the indwelling Thought Adjuster, and this Adjuster is a fragment of God. The impulse of the spirit Monitor is realized in human consciousness as the urge to be altruistic, fellow-creature minded. At least this is the early and fundamental experience of the child mind. When the growing child fails of personality unification, the altruistic drive may become so overdeveloped as to work serious injury to the welfare of the self. A misguided conscience can become responsible for much conflict, worry, sorrow, and no end of human unhappiness.

140:5.2 (1573.4) Jesus loves mankind with a dual affection. He lived on earth as a twofold personality—human and divine. As the Son of God he loves man with a fatherly love—he is man's Creator, his universe Father. As the Son of Man, Jesus loves mortals as a brother—he was truly a man among men.

140:5.3 (1573.5) Jesus did not expect his followers to achieve an impossible manifestation of brotherly love, but he did expect them to so strive to be like God—to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect—that they could begin to look upon man as God looks upon his creatures and therefore could begin to love men as God loves them—to show forth the beginnings of a fatherly affection. In the course of these exhortations to the twelve apostles, Jesus sought to reveal this new concept of fatherly love as it is related to certain emotional attitudes concerned in making numerous environmental social adjustments.

140:5.4 (1573.6) The Master introduced this momentous discourse by calling attention to four faith attitudes as the prelude to the subsequent portrayal of his four transcendent and supreme reactions of fatherly love in contrast to the limitations of mere brotherly love.

140:5.5 (1573.7) He first talked about those who were poor in spirit, hungered after righteousness, endured meekness, and who were pure in heart. Such spirit-discerning mortals could be expected to attain such levels of divine selflessness as to be able to attempt the amazing exercise of fatherly affection; that even as mourners they would be empowered to show mercy, promote peace, and endure persecutions, and throughout all of these trying situations to love even unlovely mankind with a fatherly love. A father's affection can attain levels of devotion that immeasurably transcend a brother's affection.

140:5.6 (1573.8) The faith and the love of these beatitudes strengthen moral character and create happiness. Fear and anger weaken character and destroy happiness. This momentous sermon started out upon the note of happiness.

140:5.7 (1573.9) 1. "Happy are the poor in spirit—the humble." To a child, happiness is the satisfaction of immediate pleasure craving. The adult is willing to sow seeds of self-denial in order to reap subsequent harvests of augmented happiness. In Jesus' times and since, happiness has all too often been associated with the idea of the possession of wealth. In the story of the Pharisee and the publican praying in the temple, the one felt rich in spirit—egotistical; the other felt "poor in spirit"—humble. One was self-sufficient; the other was teachable and truth-seeking. The poor in spirit seek for goals of spiritual wealth—for God. And such seekers after truth do not have to wait for rewards in a distant future; they are rewarded now. They find the kingdom of heaven within their own hearts, and they experience such happiness now.

140:5.8 (1574.1) 2. "Happy are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Only those who feel poor in spirit will ever hunger for righteousness. Only the humble seek for divine strength and crave spiritual power. But it is most dangerous to knowingly engage in spiritual fasting in order to improve one's appetite for spiritual endowments. Physical fasting becomes dangerous after four or five days; one is apt to lose all desire for food. Prolonged fasting, either physical or spiritual, tends to destroy hunger.

140:5.9 (1574.2) Experiential righteousness is a pleasure, not a duty. Jesus' righteousness is a dynamic love—fatherly-brotherly affection. It is not the negative or thou-shalt-not type of righteousness. How could one ever hunger for something negative—something "not to do"?

140:5.10 (1574.3) It is not so easy to teach a child mind these first two of the beatitudes, but the mature mind should grasp their significance.

140:5.11 (1574.4) 3. "Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Genuine meekness has no relation to fear. It is rather an attitude of man co-operating with God—"Your will be done." It embraces patience and forbearance and is motivated by an unshakable faith in a lawful and friendly universe. It masters all temptations to rebel against the divine leading. Jesus was the ideal meek man of Urantia, and he inherited a vast universe.

140:5.12 (1574.5) 4. "Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Spiritual purity is not a negative quality, except that it does lack suspicion and revenge. In discussing purity, Jesus did not intend to deal exclusively with human sex attitudes. He referred more to that faith which man should have in his fellow man; that faith which a parent has in his child, and which enables him to love his fellows even as a father would love them. A father's love need not pamper, and it does not condone evil, but it is always anticynical. Fatherly love has singleness of purpose, and it always looks for the best in man; that is the attitude of a true parent.

140:5.13 (1574.6) To see God—by faith—means to acquire true spiritual insight. And spiritual insight enhances Adjuster guidance, and these in the end augment God-consciousness. And when you know the Father, you are confirmed in the assurance of divine sonship, and you can increasingly love each of your brothers in the flesh, not only as a brother—with brotherly love—but also as a father—with fatherly affection.

140:5.14 (1574.7) It is easy to teach this admonition even to a child. Children are naturally trustful, and parents should see to it that they do not lose that simple faith. In dealing with children, avoid all deception and refrain from suggesting suspicion. Wisely help them to choose their heroes and select their lifework.

140:5.15 (1574.8) And then Jesus went on to instruct his followers in the realization of the chief purpose of all human struggling—perfection—even divine attainment. Always he admonished them: “Be you perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” He did not exhort the twelve to love their neighbors as they loved themselves. That would have been a worthy achievement; it would have indicated the achievement of brotherly love. He rather admonished his apostles to love men as he had loved them—to love with a fatherly as well as a brotherly affection. And he illustrated this by pointing out four supreme reactions of fatherly love:

140:5.16 (1575.1) 1. “Happy are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” So-called common sense or the best of logic would never suggest that happiness could be derived from mourning. But Jesus did not refer to outward or ostentatious mourning. He alluded to an emotional attitude of tenderheartedness. It is a great error to teach boys and young men that it is unmanly to show tenderness or otherwise to give evidence of emotional feeling or physical suffering. Sympathy is a worthy attribute of the male as well as the female. It is not necessary to be calloused in order to be manly. This is the wrong way to create courageous men. The world’s great men have not been afraid to mourn. Moses, the mourner, was a greater man than either Samson or Goliath. Moses was a superb leader, but he was also a man of meekness. Being sensitive and responsive to human need creates genuine and lasting happiness, while such kindly attitudes safeguard the soul from the destructive influences of anger, hate, and suspicion.

140:5.17 (1575.2) 2. “Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Mercy here denotes the height and depth and breadth of the truest friendship—loving-kindness. Mercy sometimes may be passive, but here it is active and dynamic—supreme fatherliness. A loving parent experiences little difficulty in forgiving his child, even many times. And in an unspoiled child the urge to relieve suffering is natural. Children are normally kind and sympathetic when old enough to appreciate actual conditions.

140:5.18 (1575.3) 3. “Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of

God." Jesus' hearers were longing for military deliverance, not for peacemakers. But Jesus' peace is not of the pacific and negative kind. In the face of trials and persecutions he said, "My peace I leave with you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This is the peace that prevents ruinous conflicts. Personal peace integrates personality. Social peace prevents fear, greed, and anger. Political peace prevents race antagonisms, national suspicions, and war. Peacemaking is the cure of distrust and suspicion.

140:5.19 (1575.4) Children can easily be taught to function as peacemakers. They enjoy team activities; they like to play together. Said the Master at another time: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life shall find it."

140:5.20 (1575.5) 4. "Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

140:5.21 (1575.6) So often persecution does follow peace. But young people and brave adults never shun difficulty or danger. "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends." And a fatherly love can freely do all these things—things which brotherly love can hardly encompass. And progress has always been the final harvest of persecution.

140:5.22 (1575.7) Children always respond to the challenge of courage. Youth is ever willing to "take a dare." And every child should early learn to sacrifice.

140:5.23 (1575.8) And so it is revealed that the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are based on faith and love and not on law—ethics and duty.

140:5.24 (1575.9) Fatherly love delights in returning good for evil—doing good in retaliation for injustice.

Additional Resources

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4. IMPEDIMENTS TO MORAL DECISION-MAKING

Introduction - What is moral dilemma?

133:7.12 (1480.4) The human mind does not well stand the conflict of double allegiance. It is a severe strain on the soul to undergo the experience of an effort to serve both good and evil. The supremely happy and efficiently unified mind is the one wholly dedicated to the doing of the will of the Father in heaven. Unresolved conflict destroys unity and may terminate in mind disruption. But the survival character of a soul is not fostered by attempting to secure peace of mind at any price, by the surrender of noble aspirations, and the compromise of spiritual ideals; rather is such peace attained by the stalwart assertion of the triumph of that which is true, and this victory is achieved in the overcoming of evil with the potent force of good.

180:5.8 (1950.3) But the highest realization and the truest interpretation of the golden rule consists in the consciousness of the spirit of the truth of the enduring and living reality of such a divine declaration. The true cosmic meaning of this rule of universal relationship is revealed only in its spiritual realization, in the interpretation of the law of conduct by the spirit of the Son to the spirit of the Father that indwells the soul of mortal man. And when such spirit-led mortals realize the true meaning of this golden rule, they

are filled to overflowing with the assurance of citizenship in a friendly universe, and their ideals of spirit reality are satisfied only when they love their fellows as Jesus loved us all, and that is the reality of the realization of the love of God.

In the first week of this course, we learned about the meaning of morality and ethics and how they are conventionally defined and interpreted according to evolving human mores. Then we went on to explore the augmented meaning of morality as it is described and interpreted in the Urantia Book and how the knowledge of divine values and new meanings uplift personal moral decision-making towards the level of cosmic wisdom.

In Week 2, we considered the ramifications of the new and higher way of living in the reality of the spiritual family of God. We explored the six levels of the Golden Rule taught by Jesus, stretching from the lowest level of decision-making, which is based on seeking selfish, personal pleasure and gain, to the highest level of meaning and value found in the sixth spiritual level of conduct, which is to treat all people as we conceive that God (or Jesus) would treat them. Jesus taught morality, not as knowledge arising from the animal-origin nature of man, but from the divine personal relationship that exists between persons and a personal God.

In the third week, we looked at family life as the foundation of morality and the first arena of moral development. We viewed different styles of parenting and studied a model of divine parenting, incorporating the selfless, fatherly love that Jesus exhibited in his family role as a father-brother. The authors of the Urantia Book declare that our highest concept of God is that of an unconditionally loving parent. Jesus as a human father was a true reflection of God's wise love and the deep, spiritual intimacy that can be experienced in a loving, parent-child relationship.

Impediments to Making Higher Spiritually Moral Choices

And now in the fourth week of class, we will explore what gets in the way of actually doing the right thing in any given situation, doing it for the right reasons, and doing it for the highest good of everyone involved. Sometimes, even when we know better, we stop short of making the best moral decisions. So, what are some of the factors that interfere with our moral decision-making?

We all have insights to share about the many different types of impediments, or inner personal conflicts, that come up in the process of making a difficult moral decision, such as whether or not to tell the boss that a co-worker and friend of yours is stealing from the company. Although there are many great novels, short stories, and movies that are based on moral dilemmas, we will ask you to pick situations from your own life, if possible, as case studies of challenging or vexing moral decisions that you have had to make.

You will see that there are all kinds of impediments that may impair or interfere with making higher spiritual choices for the highest good. Our families of earthly origin may not have fostered a higher moral, spiritual culture, or we may have developed certain negative or self-protective patterns of thinking and feeling in childhood that are doing more harm than good to ourselves and others, and undermine our ability to view situations from the highest levels of Jesus's Rule of Living. Or we may suffer from stressful factors of living that cloud or compromise our moral choices.

We will explore these and many other factors that affect our moral decision-making capacity for the purpose of seeing ourselves and our moral conflicts more clearly to the end that we might make personal spiritual progress toward consistently higher moral choices and actions.

What is a moral dilemma?

The experience of moral conflict and difficulty in deciding and acting on the highest moral and ethical good is common to all people.

The need for making decisions is based on the inherent capacity of the personality for free will choice. We are confronted daily with the need for decision-making, some simple some complex, because of the universe imperfections and vicissitudes of mortal life. Moral choosing entails moral conflict.

We are cautioned about attempting to serve two masters and yet, to some degree, we must serve the unending needs of our two natures – the self-seeking (human nature) and our higher (divine) selves. This creates within each of us an ever-present conflict. These conflicts can be personal, family, social, racial, etc., and, when unresolved, these conflicts can cause much unhappiness (109:5.4).

This can result in physical disease, emotional disturbance, intellectual confusion, and mind disruption; even anti-social behavior and/or separation from our relationship with God and other spirit helpers.

“All conflict is evil in that it inhibits the creative function of the inner life—it is a species of civil war in the personality.” (111:4.11)

But...because of this marvelous gift of personality with free-will, we can choose to grow along with the universe scheme of things, or we may choose to not do so. Again, we can easily avoid these decisions by procrastinating, ease-seeking, or just plain fear.

However, experiencing unresolved conflict could result in a failure to adapt to life’s difficulties. Consequently, dampening the measure of achieving a newer more meaningful life. And thereby missing the opportunity for the possibility of growth and experiencing the values of life.

Conflict continues only in our refusal to adopt those higher values implied in greater meanings.

Impediments to Making Good Moral Choices

Impediments to Making Good Moral Choices

Childhood Conditions and Experiences

The Six Animal Vestigial Traits We Carry to the Mansion Worlds

Distorted Thoughts and Negative Feelings

Selfish or Selfless?

We do not choose our parents, the time and place we were born, or the cultural milieu in which we were raised.

Every evolving person is a result of “nature” – the combination of their parents' DNA – and “nurture” – the ever-changing conditions and influences of their family of origin as well as the circumstances of their childhood upbringing. Factors affecting nurture could include friends, teachers, school life, community, the world situation (zeitgeist), or the presence or absence of a religious upbringing.

Some children are fortunate to be raised by parents who give them a balanced blend of love and wisdom during their childhood, regardless of their material circumstances. Such children are likely to be more self-confident and prepared to deal with the challenges of life.

Other children are born to relatively immature parents who themselves were conditioned by a relative lack of wisdom and love in their own childhoods, or were deprived of opportunities for growth due to an inadequate education, or suffered traumatic events in their home lives. These traumatic experiences or stressors are often passed from one generation to the next.

Traumatic wounds may be inflicted on children who witness or experience physical violence or suffer parental neglect or some form of emotional or verbal abuse. Psychological trauma can lead to physical and mental health problems as well as social and emotional difficulties like anxiety or depression, trouble trusting others, or the inability to form intimate relationships.

Despite our childhood experiences, we can grow up to be adults who learn to do better because we choose to do better.

Though we may not have had great role models in our childhood, we can find inspiring role models as adults. We can become more self-aware. When we start to see and identify negative or harmful reaction patterns from our childhoods, we can correct them. We have insight that gives us an opening in our psyche to replace old, harmful patterns with new, helpful patterns that promote personal growth, cultivate wisdom, and develop the capacity to love and be loved.

Jesus spoke with great insight to young John Mark when comparing the lad's relative maturity and trustworthiness with that of John Mark's friend, Amos, who was considerably less mature due to his parents' over-protectiveness.



Jesus explained that "... a child is wholly dependent on his parents and the associated home life for all his early concepts of everything intellectual, social, moral, and even spiritual since the family represents to the young child all that he can first know of either human or divine relationships. The child must derive his first impressions of the universe from the mother's care; he is wholly dependent on the earthly father for his first ideas of the heavenly Father. The child's subsequent life is made happy or unhappy, easy or difficult, in accordance with his early mental and emotional life, conditioned by these social and spiritual relationships of the home. A human being's entire afterlife* is enormously influenced by what happens during the first few years of existence." 177:2.5 (1922.3)

Note: Contrary to ordinary usage, the "entire afterlife" as used here does not mean our eternal life. In the Urantia Book, this term is used only to indicate the subsequent years of a mortal life.

For more on this topic, read Paper 177 Early Home Life.

The Six Animal Vestigial Traits We Carry to the Mansion Worlds

Impediments to Making Good Moral Choices

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Distorted Thoughts and Negative Feelings

Selfish or Selfless?

One of the purposes of the morontia career is to effect the permanent eradication from the mortal survivors of such animal vestigial traits as **procrastination, equivocation, insincerity, problem avoidance, unfairness, and ease-seeking**. The mansonia life early teaches the young morontia pupils that **postponement is in no sense avoidance**. After our life in the flesh, time is no longer available as a technique of dodging situations or circumventing disagreeable obligations (48:5.8 (551.3)).

These vestigial traits can all be boiled down to techniques of problem avoidance, which are common to all human beings.

A worthy goal is to replace these [negative or harmful] habits with a better way of behaving, by living in accord with the way and will of God.

Below are brief descriptions of each of the six vestigial traits, followed by a real-life example of a moral dilemma involving each vestigial trait. Most of us can likely relate to some of these examples. Each example is followed by an explanation of how the hindrance operates in the way that people act, and some questions to help us consider the implications of these actions.

Procrastination:

This is a tendency all mortals have to some degree. Because we each have our own time frames to live by, it is typically easy to manipulate our schedules; to put something off until later. If we use procrastination as a means of delaying moral decision-making, our inaction could have serious repercussions in our lives and the lives of others.

Example of a moral dilemma involving procrastination: "The Unspoken Apology"

Derek knows he seriously hurt his brother's feelings two months ago with a careless remark at a family gathering. He's thought about calling to apologize many times, but always finds a reason to wait — it's not the right moment, he's too busy, he'll do it next

week. His brother has grown distant and withdrawn. Meanwhile, the relationship quietly erodes.

The hindrance at work: Derek is using time itself as a dodge — postponing a moral obligation until "later" becomes never.

- What does Derek owe his brother, and when?
- At what point does delay become a moral decision in itself?
- What does "do it in a timely fashion for the good of all concerned" require of him right now?

A good habit to cultivate is: "Do it in a timely fashion for the good of all concerned."

Problem avoidance:

The act of avoiding something, usually an unpleasant situation, or an unwillingness to face a problem and make a decision to resolve it. However, as we are reminded in the motto, postponement is not necessarily avoidance, but more about choosing the best timing.

Example of a moral dilemma involving problem avoidance: "The Troubled Employee"

Renata manages a small team at work. She has noticed for weeks that one of her employees, Luis, seems deeply distressed — making errors, arriving late, looking exhausted. She suspects something serious is wrong at home. But confronting it feels awkward and uncomfortable, so she keeps hoping it will resolve itself. Luis's performance continues to decline, and his colleagues are picking up the slack, growing resentful.

The hindrance at work: Renata is avoiding an unpleasant situation, mistaking inaction for neutrality.

- What is Renata's moral obligation to Luis — and to the rest of her team?
- How does avoiding the problem create new problems?
- What would setting priorities and maintaining a sense of proportion look like here?

A good habit to cultivate is setting priorities and maintaining a sense of proportion.

Equivocation:

We often hesitate to communicate what we think in order to avoid conflict. We use equivocation to avoid commitment to an action or telling the truth. We are deliberately ambiguous to avoid disagreement or disapproval. It can be presented as a vague or unclear statement, like a parent who says "Maybe later, or we'll see" to a child who wants to do something.

Example of a moral dilemma involving equivocation: "The Maybe Parent"

For months, twelve-year-old Sophie has been asking her father, Paul, if she can join a youth group that meets on Friday nights. Each time, Paul says "maybe" or "we'll see," never giving a real answer. The truth is, Paul is uncomfortable with the group's religious orientation but doesn't want to have that conversation. Sophie keeps hoping, keeps asking, and is slowly losing trust in her father's word.

The hindrance at work: Paul is deliberately vague to avoid a difficult but necessary conversation.

- What harm is Paul's equivocation doing to Sophie — and to their relationship?
- What would it mean to communicate "clearly, accurately, and tactfully" in this situation, even if the answer is no?
- Is a kind "no" more loving than an endless "maybe"?

A good habit to cultivate is to communicate clearly, accurately, and tactfully.

Insincerity:

Insincerity is the act or practice of saying or doing something that you do not really mean or believe. It involves dishonesty, pretense, and even self-deception. When we live a sincerely good life in our inner and outer experiences, we are being genuine. Because we often surrender to unreasonable fears and anxieties, we may be insincere and not say what we mean. Jesus taught that sincerity and more sincerity are the keys to the kingdom.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity. All men have these keys. Men use them — advance in spirit status — by decisions, by more decisions, and by more decisions. The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always — in any sphere, in all of them — this is to choose to do the will of God (435.7) 39:4.14.

Example of a moral dilemma involving insincerity: "The Hollow Praise"

Miriam's close friend, Grace, has spent a year writing a novel and is excited to share the first three chapters. Miriam reads them and can see the writing has serious problems — it is unfocused and unlikely to find a publisher. But not wanting to hurt Grace, Miriam gushes with praise. Grace, energized by Miriam's response, quits her part-time job to write full-time. Six months later, Grace's submission is rejected everywhere.

The hindrance at work: Miriam's kind-seeming insincerity was actually a failure of genuine love.

- Did Miriam's insincere praise serve Grace's real good?
- What would sincere, tactful honesty have looked like?
- Jesus taught that sincerity — not comfort — is the key to moral growth. What does that ask of us in friendship?

A good habit to cultivate is to be honest in thought, feeling, speech, and action.
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Unfairness:

The Father has endowed all personalities with the self-determining power of choice. A Mighty Messenger reminds us in Paper 54, when writing about the Lucifer Rebellion, that there is no greater error than that type of self-deception that leads one mortal to exercise power over another, thus depriving them of freedom of choice. The same could be said when a group of mortals does this to another group of mortals. The revelatory teaching to love and serve is an anecdote to unfairness.

Example of a moral dilemma involving unfairness: "The Invisible Volunteer"

A community service committee consistently assigns the most visible, rewarding tasks — the public presentations, the leadership roles, the appreciation dinners — to a small circle of favorites. Meanwhile, a quiet, hardworking member named Tomás does the unglamorous behind-the-scenes work week after week and is never acknowledged or given greater responsibility. The committee leaders tell themselves that everyone is treated fairly.

The hindrance at work: Self-deception enables one group to exercise quiet power over another, depriving Tomás of equal opportunity and dignity.

How does this subtle unfairness harm Tomás?

How does self-deception — telling themselves it's fair — make the harm worse?

What does "doing the highest good for others" require of the committee leaders?

A good habit to cultivate is to do the highest good for others.

Ease seeking:

During our long evolutionary struggles, mortals have earned the right to rest and relaxation; we even get a ten-day “vacation” upon awakening on Mansion World #1. And the deities have wisely patterned our eternal careers divided between service and relaxation, work and play. At the same time, our ascension has been made relatively difficult, requiring reflective moral decision-making as the pathway to growth - to soul growth and Supreme growth.

Example of a moral dilemma involving ease seeking: "The Good Enough Friend"

Jenna's neighbor and longtime friend, Carol, has just received a serious medical diagnosis and is overwhelmed and frightened. Jenna genuinely cares, but accompanying Carol to doctors' appointments, researching her options, and sitting with her in her fear would be hard, time-consuming work. Jenna sends a few warm texts, drops off a meal once, and tells herself she's done her part. Carol navigates the frightening weeks largely alone.

The hindrance at work: Jenna chose the comfortable level of caring rather than the costly level that love actually required.

Where is the line between legitimate rest and ease-seeking that fails others?

The text reminds us that "effort does not always produce joy, but there is no happiness without intelligent effort."

What does that mean for Jenna's friendship?

What would accepting the day's challenge look like here?

A good habit to cultivate is accepting and acting on the challenges of the day.

Effort does not always produce joy, but there is no happiness without intelligent effort 48:7:10 (556.10).

The Adjuster remains with you in all disaster and through every sickness which does not wholly destroy the mentality. But how unkind knowingly to defile or otherwise deliberately to pollute the physical body, which must serve as the earthly tabernacle of this marvelous gift from God. **All physical poisons greatly retard the efforts of the Adjuster to exalt the material mind, while the mental poisons of fear, anger, envy, jealousy, suspicion, and intolerance likewise tremendously interfere with the spiritual progress of the evolving soul 110:1.5 (1204.3).**

Distorted Thoughts and Negative Feelings

Impediments to Making Good Moral Choices

Childhood Conditions and Experiences

The Six Animal Vestigial Traits We Carry to the Mansion Worlds

Distorted Thoughts and Negative Feelings

Selfish or Selfless?

Distorted thoughts and negative feelings can sabotage our moral decisions and acts. Such thought patterns could be learned in our childhoods and, thereby, habitually repeated during our lifetime.

When our thinking is distorted, we are telling ourselves something about ourselves or others that is NOT true. Some examples of thinking errors or cognitive distortions are:

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- All-or-none thinking, Things are either all good or all bad, never grey or balanced. (e.g. My friend didn't listen to me when I called today.. She never listens.)
- Future fearful thoughts - fortune telling - (e.g. I'll fail my test next week because I didn't study every day for the last week.)
- Overgeneralizing from one experience to all similar experiences. (e.g. My husband left me. I'll never find someone to love me.)
- Self-blaming. You blame yourself for things outside of your control. (e.g. My son is angry, I must have done something that made him angry. It's my fault.)

- Jumping to conclusions - you believe you know what other people are thinking without asking them. (e.g. My friend didn't want to have dinner with me. She must not like me.)
- Labeling and Mislabeling - you often define yourself and others with negative labels. (e.g. I'm "stupid" because I can never get more than a C on a math test,)
- Emotional reasoning (e.g. I feel worthless, therefore I am worthless)

David Burns, *The Feeling Good Handbook* (New York: Plume, 1999).

These negative distortions ("stinking thinking") trigger negative feelings such as guilt which is related to believing you are DOING something wrong; shame which is feeling that you are bad or worthless ("I'm not loveable"); and hopelessness, all of which can manifest as depression, anxiety, and feelings of helplessness. Such distorted thinking can result in isolation, the loss of self-respect, and paralysis of will.

Self-destructive and self-sabotaging behaviors are often driven by negative self-talk, particularly relating to shame. The Shame Cycle perpetuates self-sabotaging thoughts and behavior. In this cycle a person does something that is harmful, then feels shame, and then attempts to numb the pain of shameful feelings by means of addictive patterns of behavior which then reinforce the feelings of shame. When these distorted thoughts and negative feelings are triggered, it is difficult to think clearly and to make and act on reflective moral decisions.

Selfish or Selfless?

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Selfish or Selfless?

How do we identify selfish motives? Selfish people live self-centered lives that ignore the needs of others. They often try to take advantage of others or avoid responsibilities to their families, friends, business associates, and communities.

2:6.4 (41.2) Selflessness is inherent in parental love.

In any human society, selfish behavior is neither reasonable nor ethical. Living together requires working together and it requires respecting the rights of others. One way to overcome selfishness is by contemplating the selfless nature of a caring God who administers the universe with love and compassion. And it is good to keep in mind that there is no such thing as selfishness in the spirit world.

52:6.4 (597.5) Brotherhood is impossible on a world whose inhabitants are so primitive that they fail to recognize the folly of unmitigated selfishness.

99:7.4 (1093.2) Man can never wisely decide temporal issues or transcend the selfishness of personal interests unless he meditates in the presence of the sovereignty of God and reckons with the realities of divine meanings and spiritual values.

Moral Dilemmas

Pick a moral issue pertaining to Immigration, Human Dignity, and the Ethics of Law Enforcement. You are asked to examine the dilemma from the viewpoint of the impediments to moral decision-making while also keeping in mind the six levels of Jesus' Rule of Living (see below for the text from Paper 147:4).

The Moral Issue: Determine how you think you would act if you witnessed someone in your neighborhood, the mother of three children, being seized by I.C.E. agents who suspect she is illegal. She is seized on the sidewalk outside her home. Her children are on the porch and watch their mother being taken away in a van.*

Task: Identify your thoughts, feelings, and possible actions you might take in such a morally complex situation. Describe the whole situation, the people who are involved, and the different perspectives on the dilemma for the I.C.E. agents, the mother, the children, and yourself.

Consider what actions you might take at Levels 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 of Jesus' Rule of Living (see below).

What impediment(s) besides fear might block you from acting at a higher moral level?

* This is not an imaginary incident. You may read about one such recent situation in a New York Times article published April 5, 2026,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/05/us/ice-arrests-texas-families.html>

Contemporary Ethical Question: Immigration, Human Dignity, and the Ethics of Law Enforcement

This topic is particularly powerful for this class because it sits at the intersection of law, compassion, justice, national identity, and human dignity — and it requires students to reason carefully rather than react politically. The Urantia Book's framework, which insists on the worth of every personality and consistently identifies with the vulnerable and the stranger, gives students a strong spiritual foundation from which to think it through.

The issue of immigration and the ethics of law enforcement is well-suited to this kind of moral reasoning, precisely because it doesn't flatten difficult questions into easy answers. It holds together things that are hard to hold together — justice and mercy, free will and responsibility, personal integrity and brotherhood. These questions don't have tidy answers, and that's the point — working through them with care and humility is the soul growth the Urantia Book describes.

Below are 15 questions that can be asked regarding this complex ethical issue in contemporary society. The ethical issues surrounding immigration, human dignity, and law enforcement are endemic to almost every world culture. Jesus' Rule of Living prompts us to think more deeply about these questions than an ordinary citizen might — from a spiritually illuminated mind.

On the Dignity of Every Person

The Urantia Book teaches that every human being possesses a God-given personality of infinite worth, regardless of their legal status, nationality, or circumstances. How should

that foundational belief shape the way a society treats people who are present within its borders without legal authorization?

Jesus ministered to outcasts, foreigners, and those whom society had marginalized — the Samaritan, the Roman centurion, the woman at the well. What does his example suggest about how we ought to regard and treat undocumented immigrants as human beings?

If we applied Jesus' Rule of Living literally — imagining ourselves in the position of a person who crossed a border out of desperation, fear, or love for their family — how would that change the policies we would consider acceptable?

The Urantia Book describes the family as the fundamental unit of civilization and one of God's greatest gifts to humanity. What moral weight should family unity carry when immigration enforcement decisions are made — particularly when children are separated from parents?

On Law, Justice, and Civil Obedience

Laws are human constructs, and the Urantia Book acknowledges that human institutions are imperfect and evolving. When a law — or its enforcement — produces outcomes that seem to violate higher moral principles, what is the citizen's moral obligation? What is the Christian's?

There is a long tradition of distinguishing between legal and moral — something can be legal but immoral, or illegal but moral. Is unauthorized immigration in that second category for some people in some circumstances? How do we reason about that carefully without sliding into "anything goes"?

Romans 13 and similar texts are often cited to argue that Christians must obey governing authorities. But the Urantia Book presents a more nuanced picture of the relationship between spiritual law and civil law. How do we think through that tension honestly?

A society has a legitimate interest in knowing who is within its borders and in maintaining orderly processes of immigration. How do we honor that legitimate interest and the dignity of every person simultaneously? Is that tension resolvable, or is it a permanent moral challenge we must manage?

On the Conduct of Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers operate within a chain of authority, following orders from supervisors and policies from governments. At what point does following orders become a

moral failure? The Urantia Book holds individuals personally accountable for their moral choices — does that accountability extend to agents acting on behalf of the state?

If ICE agents or other law enforcement officers conduct seizures in ways that bypass due process, enter spaces without proper warrants, or use deception to apprehend people — even if directed to do so — what does the Urantia framework say about individual moral responsibility in that chain of command?

Jesus said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." If an enforcement agent imagined their own family being seized without warning, separated, or held without clear legal recourse, how might that change their sense of what tactics are morally permissible — regardless of what is legally authorized?

How do we hold simultaneously two truths that are both real: that law enforcement agents are often doing a difficult and dangerous job in good faith, and that some tactics used in immigration enforcement cause profound human suffering? Does the Urantia framework help us avoid demonizing individuals while still insisting on moral accountability for systems and actions?

On Our Collective Moral Responsibility

The Urantia Book teaches that we are not only individually moral beings but members of a human family with collective responsibilities. If a government acts in our name in ways we believe are unjust, what is our moral obligation as citizens — to protest, to vote, to resist, to pray, or something else?

Many undocumented immigrants have lived in communities for years or decades — working, raising families, contributing to common life. What does the concept of the brotherhood of man require of the neighbors, employers, and communities who have shared life with them when those people are suddenly at risk?

How do we have this conversation — which is politically charged and deeply divisive — in a way that models the Urantia ideal of truth-seeking, brotherly love, and respect for every person's dignity, including those we disagree with? What does a morally mature public conversation about immigration actually look like?

Jesus' Rule of Living (147:4)

The level of the flesh. Such a purely selfish and lustful interpretation would be well exemplified by the supposition of your question.

The level of the feelings. This plane is one level higher than that of the flesh and implies that sympathy and pity would enhance one's interpretation of this rule of living.

The level of mind. Now come into action the reason of mind and the intelligence of experience. Good judgment dictates that such a rule of living should be interpreted in consonance with the highest idealism embodied in the nobility of profound self-respect.

The level of brotherly love. Still higher is discovered the level of unselfish devotion to the welfare of one's fellows. On this higher plane of wholehearted social service growing out of the consciousness of the fatherhood of God and the consequent recognition of the brotherhood of man, there is discovered a new and far more beautiful interpretation of this basic rule of life.

The moral level. And then when you attain true philosophic levels of interpretation, when you have real insight into the rightness and wrongness of things, when you perceive the eternal fitness of human relationships, you will begin to view such a problem of interpretation as you would imagine a high-minded, idealistic, wise, and impartial third person would so view and interpret such an injunction as applied to your personal problems of adjustment to your life situations.

The spiritual level. And then last, but greatest of all, we attain the level of spirit insight and spiritual interpretation which impels us to recognize in this rule of life the divine command to treat all men as we conceive God [and Jesus] would treat them. That is the universe ideal of human relationships. And this is your attitude toward all such problems when your supreme desire is ever to do the Father's will. I would, therefore, that you should do to all men that which you know I would do to them in like circumstances."

5. Practices to Enhance Reflective Moral Decision-Making

Introduction to Week 5

100:1.8 (1095.3) Religious habits of thinking and acting are contributory to the economy of spiritual growth. One can develop religious predispositions toward favorable reaction to spiritual stimuli, a sort of conditioned spiritual reflex. Habits which favor religious growth embrace cultivated sensitivity to divine values, recognition of religious living in others, reflective meditation on cosmic meanings, worshipful problem solving, sharing one's spiritual life with one's fellows, avoidance of selfishness, refusal to presume on

divine mercy, living as in the presence of God. The factors of religious growth may be intentional, but the growth itself is unvaryingly unconscious.

100:4.1 (1097.5) Religious living is devoted living, and devoted living is creative living, original and spontaneous. New religious insights arise out of conflicts which initiate the choosing of new and better reaction habits in the place of older and inferior reaction patterns. New meanings only emerge amid conflict; and conflict persists only in the face of refusal to espouse the higher values connoted in superior meanings.

Last week we examined some of the impediments to making reflective moral decisions. Many of these attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors arose from our childhood experiences and conditioning. We may remain stuck in some of these unconscious patterns until we begin to examine them and decide to make new and better habits to replace them.

This week we will turn our attention to some personal practices that we can develop into strong habits that will enable us to think, decide, and act at higher moral levels of conduct in our everyday lives. In this regard, we are concerned with both our inner lives—our personal spiritual experiences of being in a relationship with God—and our outer lives—how we express our relationship with God in our relationships with other people and even with ourselves.

We are reminded in the Urantia Book that we can develop a spiritual predisposition to act in a higher, more aware, and spiritually moral way in the commonplace conflicts of daily life. This is called a conditioned spiritual reflex. Some of these practices are a daily regimen of prayer, meditation, and worship which cultivate God-consciousness and higher spiritual thinking.

16:7.8 (193.7) Man's moral nature would be impotent without the art of measurement, the discrimination embodied in his ability to scrutinize meanings. Likewise would moral choosing be futile without that cosmic insight which yields the consciousness of spiritual values. From the standpoint of intelligence, man ascends to the level of a moral being because he is endowed with personality.

Other practices entail mindfulness of our inner thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Greater self-awareness contributes to the goal of self-mastery by seeing our entrenched ways of reacting to people and life situations, recognizing old patterns of selfish behavior, and choosing to change our habitual modes of response. The sincere effort to practice the

presence of God is of great assistance to the Indwelling Spirit which is involved in the continuous process of spiritizing our minds.

When we are stuck in a moral decision-making conflict within ourselves, we can choose to enter a state of worship with the intention of seeking the highest and best way to think about our problem and resolve it. For example, we can simply ask for spiritual guidance about how Jesus would think and act in the situation we are facing.

48:6.26 (553.7) Even on Urantia, these seraphim teach the everlasting truth: If your own mind does not serve you well, you can exchange it for the mind of Jesus of Nazareth, who always serves you well.

Choosing to do the Will of God

We co-create our souls through the small and large moral choices and spiritual decisions that we make day in and day out. The more our moral decisions are imbued with the truth, beauty, goodness, and love of God, and the whole spiritual family of God—which includes everyone regardless of their imperfections—the more we grow in God-consciousness, even to the heights of cosmic consciousness while yet living our earthly life. We are turning our personal moral practices into the loving discipline of ourselves by embodying divine and spiritual ideals in our thinking, speaking, and decision-actions.

The highest ethical choice is to love your neighbor as yourself. The highest moral choice is to love your neighbor as Jesus does.

39:4.14 (435.7) The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always — in any sphere, in all of them — this is to choose to do the will of God.

Mindfulness – Awareness and Exploration of Thoughts and Feelings

Practices for Enhancing Reflective Moral Decision-Making

Mindfulness – Awareness and Exploration of Thoughts and Feelings

Reflective Thinking

Prayer - Ask for Spiritual Guidance and LISTEN for the Response

Worship

Self-mastery – Letting the Spirit Lead You
Choosing truth, beauty, goodness, and love
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Balance between Selflessness and Selfishness
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Seeking wise counsel from others through socializing

Watch your thoughts, they become your words;
Watch your words, they become your actions;
Watch your actions, they become your habits;
Watch your habits, they become your character;
Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.
— Lao Tzu

48:7.26 (557.10) 24. The destiny of eternity is determined moment by moment by the achievements of the day by day living. The acts of today are the destiny of tomorrow.

Raising our thinking to higher moral and spiritual levels requires not only higher knowledge and study but also a higher degree of self-knowledge and self-awareness. This entails making a conscious effort to observe our thoughts and feelings. Then it requires choosing to actively interrupt our habitual ways of thinking and reacting to life situations, particularly those that trigger harmful responses of anger, revenge, intolerance, fear, or jealousy. These are normal human reactions that we are capable of modifying and eventually overcoming through self-awareness and self-mastery.

When we learn to take a pause before reacting, we are capable of making a conscious decision to consider our thoughts and feelings. By stopping for a moment, we can think further about the situation and the effect our response will have on others, as well as our own well-being. By being mindful and taking a pause to breathe and think more clearly, we can exercise our free will to modify our words and actions with the intention of achieving a better result for everyone involved.

The practice of mindfulness helps us to strengthen our ability to pay attention, curb distractions, and focus our thinking on the matter at hand. We are the captain at the helm of our ship's experience. To become a master captain and achieve a higher degree of

self-mastery, we must be alert and able to control our attention and reactions to life situations. At the same time, we must keep developing our capacity to think and reason, while strengthening our free will to purposefully live at a higher level of awareness and make higher, better moral decision-actions. Thus we grow in God-consciousness.

Reflective Thinking

Practices for Enhancing Reflective Moral Decision-Making

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The process of reflective thinking involves being in a state of RELAXED attention, contemplating the different aspects of the decision to be made, compassionate self-understanding of thoughts, feelings, motivation, and purposive critical thinking.

Every time man makes a reflective moral choice, he immediately experiences a new divine invasion of his soul (196:3:20 (2095.4)).

133:6:5 (1478.4)The soul is the self-reflective, truth-discerning, and spirit-perceiving part of man which forever elevates the human being above the level of the animal world.

Reflective thinking is made possible by the adjutant mind spirit. We achieve wisdom through experience.

Prayer - Ask for Spiritual Guidance and LISTEN for a Response

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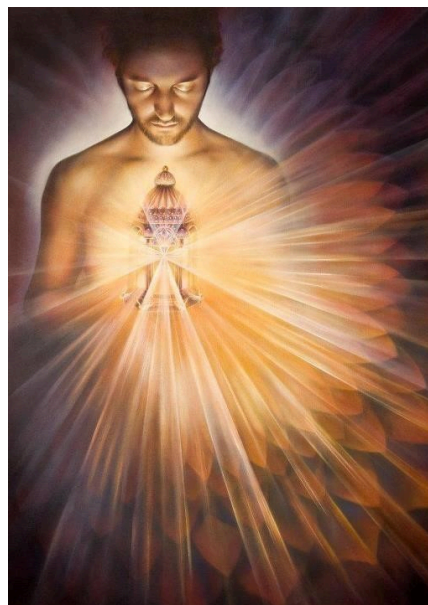
Balance between Selflessness and Selfishness

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Prayer is petitioning God for some kind of assistance—an appeal to spiritual forces for help, either for ourselves or for others. All acts of prayer imply a belief in the existence of intelligent spirit beings or forces who can hear us, understand us, and help us.

Prayer is best viewed as a way to change your mental attitude. Enlightened prayer is the psychological process of exchanging the human will for the divine will.



91:2.5 (996.3) True prayer... always stands for man's communion with a personal and superior being.
91:2:3 (996.1) The truest prayer is in reality a communion between man and his Maker.
91:8.2 (1001.6) Prayer is the effort to adjust the personality to the will of Deity.
143:7.4 (1616.6) Prayer is designed to make man less thinking but more realizing; it is not designed to increase knowledge but rather to expand insight.

Listening

146:2.7 (1639.2) Jesus taught his followers that, when they had made their prayers to the Father, they should remain for a time in silent receptivity to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul.
168:4.5 (1848.5) When a prayer is apparently unanswered, the delay often betokens a better answer, although one which is for some good reason greatly delayed.
See 144:2-4 The Discourse on Prayer, The Believer's Prayer, More About Prayer.
See also 91:9 Conditions of Effective Prayer

Worship

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Worship is a loving reverence for a divine being or a supernatural power. It is a humble act of adoration, praise, veneration, devotion, glorification, or exaltation. Worship is an expression of heartfelt love—an affectionate reverence for the eternal Source and all that it represents.

5:3:3 (65.5) Worship is for its own sake; prayer embodies a self- or creature-interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer.
5:3:8 (66.4) Worship is, therefore, the act of the material mind's assenting to the attempt of its spiritualizing self, under the guidance of the associated spirit, to communicate with God as a faith son of the Universal Father.
27:7:1 (303.5) Worship is the conscious and joyous act of recognizing and acknowledging the truth and fact of the intimate and personal relationships of the Creators with their creatures.
143:7:8 (1616.10) Worship is the act of a part identifying itself with the Whole; the finite with the Infinite; the son with the Father; time in the act of striking step with eternity. Worship is the act of the son's personal communion with the divine Father, the assumption of refreshing, creative, fraternal, and romantic attitudes by the human soul-spirit.
143:7:7 (1616.9) Worship is effortless attention, true and ideal soul rest, a form of restful spiritual exertion.

Self-mastery – Letting the Spirit Lead You

Practices for Enhancing Reflective Moral Decision-Making
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Self-mastery is the degree to which we as humans have self-control over our human and animal urges and emotions and act out of our higher spiritual nature in loving each other even as God loves us. "Self-mastery is the measure of man's moral nature and indicator of his spiritual development" (143:2.3 (1609.4)).

Self-mastery enables us to do better when we know better and make decisions based on reflective moral, spiritual decision-making (the highest good for all).

What is the process of mastering ourselves?

A. Faith in a loving God is the foundation of true self-mastery as we look toward God for guidance in doing God's will. When we have done everything humanly possible to control our negative patterns that result in immoral thoughts and actions, we can choose to let go of our ways and let God guide us in doing his will.

143:2.7 (1610.2) Your secret of the mastery of self is bound up with your faith in the indwelling spirit, whichever works by love.

The attributes of God are the very basis of self-mastery as we attempt to become more and more perfect in thinking, feeling, and acting morally and ethically.

196:0.2 (2087.2) The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the "will of the Father in heaven.

Jesus talking to his apostles about self-mastery said: "If, then, the spirit dwells within you, you are no longer bound slaves of the flesh but free and liberated sons of the spirit. The new law of the spirit endows you with the liberty of self-mastery in place of the fear of self-bondage and the slavery of self-denial" (143:2.4 (1609.5)).

B. Self-understanding is an important step in changing the negative thoughts, feelings, and patterns of behavior that impede us from acting morally. As we make a habit of

mindfully understanding ourselves with compassion we become more masters of ourselves.

The Mind Planners on the Mansion worlds help us “see yourself as others see you” and “to know yourself as angels know you ” 48:6.25. Others can see us from our actions and may be more objective than ourselves in recognizing our characteristic traits. Asking several people who know us well what they see are our strengths and weaknesses can often be revealing. The angels understand our motivations with true compassion.

C. Self-conquest with compassion is the next step in moving toward self-mastery after self-understanding. The most difficult thing we have to do in this life is to change ourselves. Our negative thoughts, feelings, and actions, some of which are based on our animal heritage, childhood experiences, and environmental stressors, result in not acting in ways that we know are morally the highest good. It takes practice to control those deterrents which eventually become habits that eventuate in self-mastery.

Jesus talking to his apostles about self-mastery said: “Verily, verily, I say to you, he who rules his own self is greater than he who conquers a city” (48:6.25 (553.6)).

D. Self-forgetfulness is the key to self-mastery/self-control.

When we are aware of and with compassion understand our thoughts, feelings, and actions, in that moment we can choose to act out of love and the highest good.

Andrew asked Jesus: “Master, are we to practice self-denial as John taught us, or are we to strive for the self-control of your teachings? Wherein does your teaching differ from that of John? Jesus answered: “ John indeed taught you the way of righteousness in accordance with the light and law of his fathers, and that was the religion of self-examination and self-denial. But I come with a new message of self-forgetfulness and self-control. I show to you the way of life as revealed to me by my Father in heaven” (143:2.2 (1609.3)).

When we examine ourselves, we have a limited subjective perspective and are more likely to use self-denial and force ourselves to be moral by suppressing and repressing feelings and thoughts. It’s like putting up a dam to hold back the waves in the ocean (i.e waves are symbolic of negative feelings and thoughts). Eventually the dam breaks and there is a flood of negative feelings and thoughts which at that point are difficult to control. and master.

E. Bearing the Fruits of the Spirit is the mark of true self-mastery.

Jesus talking to his disciples about self-mastery said, "...and the fruits of the spirit are the essence of the highest type of enjoyable and ennobling self-control, even the heights of terrestrial attainment - true self-mastery" (143:2.8 (1610.3)).

And the fruits of the divine spirit which are yielded in the lives of spirit-born and God-knowing mortals are loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unfailing goodness, forgiving tolerance, and enduring peace" (193:2.2 (2054.3)).

Self-mastery is evidenced by bearing the fruits of the spirit and living a God-revealing.

Choosing Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Love

Practices for Enhancing Reflective Moral Decision-Making

Mindfulness – Awareness and Exploration of Thoughts and Feelings

Reflective Thinking

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The Golden Rule – Jesus' 6 Levels

Balance between Selflessness and Selfishness

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This concept of love generates in the soul of man that superanimal effort to find truth, beauty, and goodness; and when he does find them, he is glorified in their embrace; he is consumed with the desire to live them, to do righteousness (196:3.2 (2096.8)).

The qualities of God's nature that we can most easily recognize and experience in our mortal existence are truth, beauty, goodness, and divine love. These qualities are correlated in the ministry of the Spirit (truth), the grandeur of Paradise (beauty), the mercy of the Son (goodness), and the experience of the Supreme (love). We have our life in God the Supreme who is truth, beauty, and goodness (117:1.7 (1279.5)).

To the degree that we recognize and identify with these qualities and actualize them in our thinking, feeling, choosing, and acting, we are becoming God-knowing and God-like. Out of our decision-actions, our moral conduct, the Thought Adjuster is actually weaving the patterns of our eternal nature, our soul.

When we base our moral choices and spiritual decisions on the highest spiritual truth, we are doing the will of God. As we become ever more sensitive to divine truth, beauty, goodness, and love, we are living the will of God.

When we are inwardly illuminated by worship, motivated by love and mercy toward others, and outwardly devoted to the wholehearted service of the universal brotherhood of all personalities, then the divine qualities of truth, beauty, goodness, and love are being progressively unified in our ever-evolving personality. In this manner, we ascend to higher and higher levels of cosmic wisdom, self-realization, God-finding, and Father worship (106:9.12 (1175.1)).

It is out of the very reality of the Supreme that the Adjuster, with the consent of the human will, weaves the patterns of the eternal nature of an ascending son of God. When we dedicate our free will to doing the will of the Creator, we do not lose our personal identity. Rather do we more actively participate as progressively more spiritual and God-conscious persons in the great adventure and evolution of the Supreme Being in the universes of space and time (117:5.2 (1285.5)).

The Golden Rule - Jesus' Six Levels

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When you’re in a challenging life situation that calls for your best response, remind yourself of the six levels of the Golden Rule that Jesus taught his apostles. Think about which level you may be operating from and how you might operate from a higher level:

1. The level of the flesh
2. The level of feelings
3. The level of mind
4. The level of brotherly love
5. The moral level
6. The spiritual level

In reflecting on your initial response and the path towards higher moral, spiritual decision-making, ask yourself if you need to direct your thinking and response to higher levels based on the circumstances and the kind of moral decision that’s required.

Recognize that you are a beloved child of God, as is every other person, and we are each deserving of wise, loving, and respectful treatment. At the same time, keep in mind that God loves the sinner, but does not condone the sin.

God loves the sinner and hates the sin: such a statement is true philosophically, but God is a transcendent personality, and persons can only love and hate other persons. Sin is not a person. God loves the sinner because he is a personality reality (potentially eternal), while towards sin God strikes no personal attitude, for sin is not a spiritual reality; it is not personal; therefore does only the justice of God take cognizance of its existence. The love of God saves the sinner; the law of God destroys the sin. This attitude of the divine nature would apparently change if the sinner finally identified himself wholly with sin just as the same mortal mind may also fully identify itself with the indwelling spirit Adjuster. Such a

sin-identified mortal would then become wholly unspiritual in nature (and therefore personally unreal) and would experience eventual extinction of being. Unreality, even incompleteness of creature nature, cannot exist forever in a progressively real and increasingly spiritual universe (2:6.8 (41.6)).

When we become wholeheartedly devoted to living as a member of God's spiritual family, we recognize everyone as our spiritual brother or sister, and we strive to live at the highest level of spiritually moral conduct, which is to treat all persons as we conceive God would treat them. This is the universe ideal of human relationships, to love others as the Father in Paradise loves us.

This transcendent love of the Father is parental in nature and is the divine source of that great and pure love that mortal parents can feel and show to their children. Divine love desires to do good for others, to seek the highest spiritual good of another being.

Jesus teaches us that this attitude of loving and doing good for others should be our go-to attitude toward people and the basis for our moral decision-making. He is asking us to spiritualize our moral decision-making to the highest level possible, which is that of a divinely loving parent. And he is telling us that this way of conducting ourselves in our everyday affairs is the act of doing the Father's will and living the Father's Way.

Balance Between Selflessness and Selfishness

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The balance between selfishness and selflessness is challenging to achieve and ever-changing. To be truly selfless we need to practice self-care by responding to our own

physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual needs. At the same time, we recognize the needs of others by making moral decisions based on doing God's will.

As we help ourselves, we help each other since we are all connected in being human and divine. Most of us have experienced thinking of someone we know and then we see or hear from them. According to more than 25 years of research, emotions are contagious and can influence other individuals, groups, and even organizations in positive or negative ways. For more information, see <https://www.inverse.com>.

There is a spectrum between selfishness and selflessness. At one end is the experience of being overly selfless—caring about others with little respect and compassion for yourself. The Urantia Book warns "...the altruistic drive may become so overdeveloped as to work serious injury to the welfare of the self" (103:2:10 (1131.9)).

Unwise selflessness can result in doing too much for others. It can manifest in the overly selfless individual as feeling angry, guilty, anxious, powerless, exhausted, and not being true to oneself. In this case, moral decisions are not based on wise love.

On the opposite extreme is selfishness—being self-absorbed, self-centered, withdrawing love, and acting without considering or respecting other people. There are underlying physical and psychosocial reasons why people act in this way. However, selfishness is not the basis for moral decisions motivated by wise love. The Urantia Book reminds us that "Brotherhood is impossible in a world whose inhabitants are so primitive that they fail to recognize the folly of unmitigated selfishness" (52:6:4 (597.5)).

But, in the middle of the spectrum lies a healthy balance between respecting and caring for oneself as well as others. When we are able to achieve a balance between selflessness and selfishness, we base our loving service on God's will—we are inspired by our highest values and enact the greatest good for all personalities involved. When making reflective, sincere, moral decisions about how to balance our lives, we experience more energy, well-being, joy, and peace of mind.

110:6.4 (1209.4) When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, over spiritual development tends to produce a fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller. Lack of spiritual capacity makes it very difficult to transmit to such a material intellect the

spiritual truths resident in the higher superconsciousness. It is to the mind of perfect poise, housed in a body of clean habits, stabilized neural energies, and balanced chemical function — when the physical, mental, and spiritual powers are in triune harmony of development — that a maximum of light and truth can be imparted with a minimum of temporal danger or risk to the real welfare of such a being. By such a balanced growth does man ascend the circles of planetary progression one by one, from the seventh to the first.

Therefore, when we balance selflessness and selfishness, we are more aware and expressive of living truth, beauty, and goodness. Our moral decisions are then more likely to be based on God's will.

Personal Integration (Unity) – Focus of Personality Powers

100:7:1 (1101.5) The unique feature of the Master's personality was not so much its perfection as its symmetry, its exquisite and balanced unification.

195:10:17 (2086.3) The purpose of all education should be to foster and further the supreme purpose of life, the development of a majestic and well-balanced personality.

Balance is having the right amount—not too much or too little—of any quality, which leads to harmony or evenness. Balance has to do with the harmonious arrangement or relation of parts with one another. For example, we might admire the balance someone has achieved between work and play.



When the parts of something are correctly **proportioned** to each other, the result is **beautiful**. The parts may even seem to be in opposition to each other but when they exist in a balanced reciprocal relationship, they can achieve a **harmony** of expression. Think of the symmetry of the symbols for yin (feminine) and yang (masculine) within a circle.

As a verb, balance means putting things into equal measures so that they are evenly weighted. For example, we must put equal weight upon each foot to maintain our balance. The act of standing erect is a dynamic state of being which requires constant physical effort.

Jesus is a superb example of a strong, temperate, and unified personality. His decision-actions resulted from a mature melding of spiritual values (feelings) and intellectual judgments. It could be said that he cultivated and achieved a mind of perfect poise wholly led by spiritual truth and a body of clean habits and stabilized neural energies. In developing and maintaining this balance of physical, mental, and spiritual potentials and powers in himself, he was able to achieve a maximum of spiritual light and truth, as well as enhancing personality growth.

Cosmic Awareness and Cosmic Citizenship

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The bestowal of the Father's free gift of personality automatically grants us the status of cosmic citizens. With this wonderful gift come responsibilities and a heightened sense of morality allowing for the progression of our reflective choices from the perspective of a small child to that of a cosmic citizen. At the same time, joyful acceptance of this citizenship will grow into the recognition of our obligation to the Supreme Being – of the interdependence of mortals and the evolving Deity – the birth of cosmic morality. Cosmic morality is derived from a sense of our duty to the growth of the universe and assures our path to Paradise.

The Urantia Book defines cosmic awareness as the realization of the Supreme Being and the consequent sense of universal duty to the Supreme. We have the help of seraphim with cosmic citizenship and with moral development, indicating cosmic citizenship and universe citizenship as the same.

From our very first moral decision we grow in our expertise of right and wrong for ourselves, others, and society as a whole. We choose to follow the family rules, social systems, and regulated laws; locally, nationally, and/or internationally. But then we may encounter a situation when the law may be bad, outdated. Then what?

101:9.1 (1115.2) Revelation unfailingly enlarges the ethical horizon of evolved religion while it simultaneously and unfailingly **expands** the moral obligations of all prior revelations. (Emphasis added)

Auto-revelation in combination with epochal revelation can transcend mortal law. Every time you act with your Thought Adjuster, expect your moral horizons to expand along with the enlargement of your ethical obligations to others.

With the teachings of Jesus, we are asked to bear “the fruits of the spirit.”

117:2.1 (1280.1) The Supreme is God-in-time; his is the secret of creature growth in time; his also is the conquest of the incomplete present and the consummation of the perfecting future. And the final fruits of all finite growth are: power controlled through mind by spirit by virtue of the unifying and creative presence of personality.

The culminating consequence of all this growth is the Supreme Being.

110:3.10 (1206.8) 4. Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship—honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.

Therefore, when we balance selflessness and selfishness, we are more aware and expressive of living truth, beauty, and goodness. Our moral decisions are then more likely to be based on God’s will.

Seeking Wise Counsel from Others through Socializing

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As we look back upon this tragedy, we conceive that Judas went wrong, primarily, because he was very markedly an isolated personality, a personality shut in and away from ordinary social contacts. He persistently refused to confide in, or freely fraternize with, his fellow apostles (193:4.2 (2055.5)).

193:3.2 (2055.2) "Peace be upon you. I have asked you to tarry here in Jerusalem until I ascend to the Father, even until I send you the Spirit of Truth, who shall soon be poured out upon all flesh, and who shall endow you with power from on high." "And I wish that you would love and trust one another. Judas is no more with you because his love grew cold, and because he refused to trust you, his loyal brethren. Have you not read in the Scripture where it is written: 'It is not good for man to be alone. No man lives to himself? And also where it says: 'He who would have friends must show himself friendly'? And did I not even send you out to teach, two and two, that you might not become lonely and fall into the mischief and miseries of isolation? You also well know that, when I was in the flesh, I did not permit myself to be alone for long periods. From the very beginning of our associations I always had two or three of you constantly by my side or else very near at hand even when I communed with the Father. Trust, therefore, and confide in one another. And this is all the more needful since I am this day going to leave you alone in the world. The hour has come; I am about to go to the Father."

By sharing our inner, authentic life with wise, loving, trustworthy, accepting friends, and through confessing some of our negative thoughts and feelings, we grow in self-understanding, compassion, self-mastery, and self-forgetfulness. In the act of sharing intimately, we realize we are not alone which helps normalize our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

A loving friend can help us widen our perspective and give us objective feedback and advise which can help in our moral decision-making process.



The old Cherokee story about human nature

The story goes that a grandfather is teaching his grandson about life: "There is a fight going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil—he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."

He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed." The response that would take over in high-stress situations is the one you feed, which becomes your habitual way of being. We may have a tendency toward selfishness or unselfishness, but at any moment we are always free to make a different choice.

Resources

A Moral Evaluation

Your values are important because they serve as your moral yardsticks for measuring and evaluating all situations. Whenever in doubt as to the credibility of a moral decision, you can always ask yourself seven vital questions.

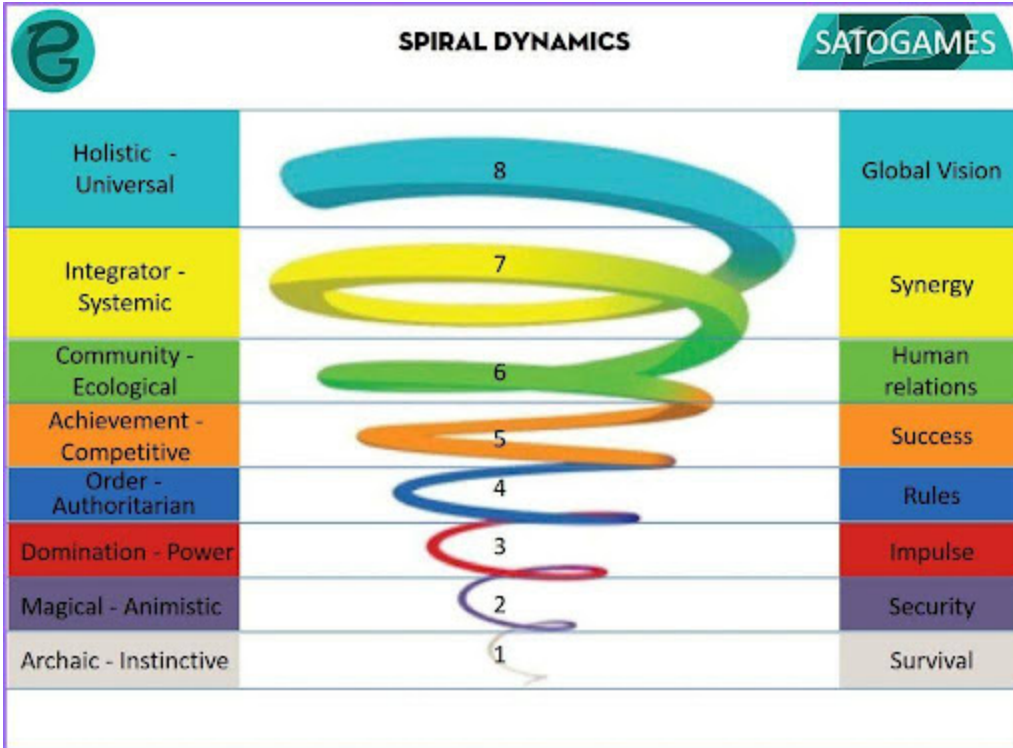
1. Is it true? Are you being truthful with others and honest with yourself? Do you have ulterior motives that obscure the truth? Have you considered all evidence?
2. Is it good? Is your decision beneficial, productive, and positive? Have you considered all consequences?
3. Is it beautiful? Is it attractive, appealing, and charming? Is it graceful, elegant, and strong?
4. Is it loving? Is it affectionate, friendly, and caring? Is it personable, kind, and respectful?
5. Is it compassionate? Is it merciful, sympathetic, and comforting? Is it forgiving and tolerant?
6. Is it fair? Is it just, impartial, and objective? Is it open-minded and virtuous?
7. Is it helpful? Does it help or hinder others? Is it truly beneficial to your family, friends, and acquaintances? Is it for the greater good?

Positive Progress

It's good to look back and see that we have grown; that we have done better as we learn what is better.

Use the image of a spiral of gradual, progressive awareness ... we almost never get to the end of old patterns of behavior. Sometimes we think we have dealt with the problems of our past, but in fact, we have not. We get frustrated, thinking we're going in circles. However, over time we can see that we have been making progress in overcoming old patterns through greater awareness in a spiral-like fashion.

The importance of seeing our progress; identifying what has helped us along the path as well as what has gotten in the way.



Spiral Dynamics

the eight-stage spiral of development

Second Tier "Being" valueMEMES

TURQUOISE Holistic MEME – starting 30 years ago

- Basic theme:** Experience the wholeness of existence through mind and spirit
- The world is a single, dynamic organism with its own collective mind
 - Self is both distinct and a blended part of a larger, compassionate whole
 - Everything connects to everything else in ecological alignments
 - Energy and information permeate the Earth's total environment
 - Holistic, intuitive thinking and cooperative actions are to be expected

YELLOW Integrative MEME – starting 50 years ago

- Basic theme:** Live fully and responsibly as what you are and learn to become
- Life is a kaleidoscope of natural hierarchies, systems, and forms
 - The magnificence of existence is valued over material possessions
 - Flexibility, spontaneity, and functionality have the highest priority
 - Differences can be integrated into interdependent, natural flows
 - Understands that chaos and change are natural

"What I am proposing is that the psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiraling process, marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behavior systems to newer, higher-order systems

First Tier "Subsistence" valueMEMES

GREEN Communitarian/Egalitarian MEME – starting 150 years ago

- Basic theme:** Seek peace within the inner self and explore, with others, the caring dimensions of community
- The human spirit must be freed from greed, dogma, and divisiveness
 - Feelings, sensitivity, and caring supersede cold rationality
 - Spreads the Earth's resources and opportunities equally among all
 - Reaches decisions through reconciliation and consensus processes
 - Refreshes spirituality, brings harmony, and enriches human development

ORANGE Achievistic/Strategic MEME – starting 300 years ago

- Basic theme:** Act in your own self-interest by playing the game to win
- Change and advancement are inherent within the scheme of things
 - Progresses by learning nature's secrets and seeking out best solutions
 - Manipulates Earth's resources to create and spread the abundant good life
 - Optimistic, risk-taking, and self-reliant people deserve success
 - Societies prosper through strategy, technology, and competitiveness

BLUE Purposeful/Authoritarian MEME – starting 5,000 years ago

- Basic theme:** Life has meaning, direction, and purpose with predetermined outcomes
- One sacrifices self to the transcendent Cause, Truth, or righteous Pathway
 - The Order enforces a code of conduct based on eternal, absolute principles
 - Righteous living produces stability now and guarantees future reward
 - Impulsivity is controlled through guilt; everybody has their proper place
 - Laws, regulations, and discipline build character and moral fiber

RED Impulsive/Egocentric MEME – starting 10,000 years ago

- Basic theme:** Be what you are and do what you want, regardless
- The world is a jungle full of threats and predators
 - Breaks free from any domination or constraint to please self as self desires
 - Stands tall, expects attention, demands respect, and calls the shots
 - Enjoys self to the fullest right now without guilt or remorse
 - Conquers, out-foxes, and dominates other aggressive characters

PURPLE Magical/Animistic MEME – starting 50,000 years ago

- Basic theme:** Keep the spirits happy and the tribe's nest warm and safe
- Obeys the desires of the spirit being and mystical signs
 - Shows allegiance to chief, elders, ancestors, and the clan
 - Individual subsumed in group
 - Preserves sacred objects, places, events, and memories
 - Observes rites of passage, seasonal cycles, and tribal customs

BEIGE Instinctive/Survivalistic MEME – starting 100,000 years ago

- Basic theme:** Do what you must just to stay alive
- Uses instincts and habits just to survive
 - Distinct self is barely awakened or sustained
 - Food, water, warmth, sex, and safety have priority
 - Forms into survival bands to perpetuate life
 - Lives "off the land" much as other animals

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