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From: Steven Reece <reeces@andrews.edu>
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To: Steven Reece
Subject: FA2012-LEAD-645-999: What do we need from God?

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What do we need from God?

by [Steven Reece](#) - Tuesday, October 2, 2012, 03:28 PM

Post 9: What do we need from God?

How do we determine whether our behavior is right or wrong? Although we can recognize good and bad behavior around us, it is my view that we cannot subjectively determine what is right or wrong. Globally we see what is considered taboo in one country may be accepted practice in another. What is our ethical standard? How do we make judgments about right and wrong? Simply stated, I believe that in order for us to be ethical in our dealings with each other, we need God. We need God to show us what he requires from us for ethical living.

We need to understand that as created beings we live in community with God and each other. Consequently, we are subject to God and each other. Dr. Covrig stated in his audio lecture that if we are all subject to one God, then we are subject to each other and we must therefore treat each other accordingly. He highlighted this fact by pointing to what Jesus said, “. . . whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

The Ten Commandments are an excellent ethical standard, which may be summarized and divided into two categories: love of God and love of others. With respect to this understanding, Jesus said, “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:40). I believe that if we love God, we will love and care for others. The Apostle John understood this issue well and wrote, “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen” (I John 4:20). Clearly we see a connection between our love of God and how it is expressed in loving those around us.

As I read through Dr. Covrig’s notes and listened to his lectures, I could see how easily ethical standards could become legalistic, spiritual benchmarks that define good behavior or “righteousness.” By allowing this mindset to flourish in us, we certainly become driven by our own performance and amassing points as a means to please God. I liked how Dr. Covrig balanced this reality with the treatment of grace as seen in the quotes from Brennan Manning and his book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Covrig concludes that we must move past “earning heaven” to grace and forgiveness and then extend that grace and forgiveness to others.

In my own personal journey, I have come to this place. I see that I cannot please God by my own good works. I rest completely and totally in what he has done graciously for me through Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross. Frequently over the past few months, I have considered what Paul wrote in Romans, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). What is essential here is how God demonstrated his love through a concrete and sacrificial act.

I think that this is the critical element for us in our ethical journey of understanding and developing an ethical standard for our lives. Ethics is not something for theoretical living about what we should do. Ethics are applying godly principles to our lives today. We are to act justly -- do what is right no matter what. However, my ethic

should be transformed by my religion, by my worship and adoration of God and especially by how I live my life in subject to others.

If I love God, then I should -- I must love others. How do I apply this understanding today? I see this being fleshed out almost daily in my life as I grow to understand and appreciate mercy – God’s care, his love for me and how I must become a conduit for that love by sharing and extending that same mercy to others.

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