


# WHO AM I TO JUDGE

*Responding to Rejection with Logic and Love*

EDWARD SRI

## STUDY GUIDE



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# WHO AM I TO JUDGE?



## SESSION 1

Don't Impose Your  
Morality on Me!



# SESSION 1 Don't Impose Your Morality on Me!

## STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to what is false,  
and does not swear deceitfully.  
He will receive blessing from the LORD,  
and vindication from the God of his salvation.  
Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.  
Amen.

—Psalm 24:3–6



## INTRODUCTION

What is “right” and “wrong”? Is what’s right for you right for me? Is there a right and wrong for everyone, all the time?

These are difficult questions to discuss in our culture. We live in a society that supports the opinion that each person should make up his or her own morality—that there is no moral truth that applies to everyone.

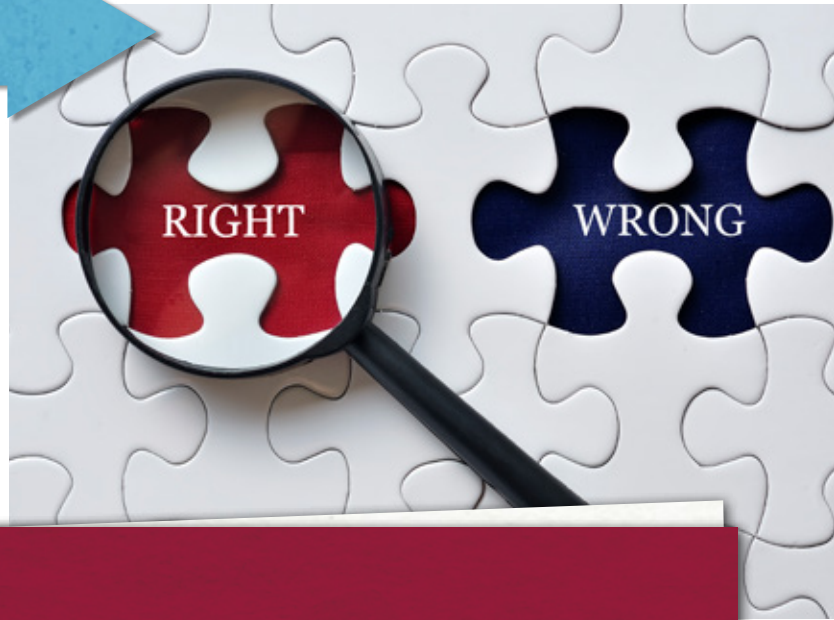
Many of us have been affected by the relativistic outlook that pervades the modern world. Maybe some of us wonder whether there really is an absolute right and wrong for everyone. Or maybe we accept that there is a moral standard for all, but we don’t know how to explain our moral convictions in a convincing way. Maybe some of us are afraid of saying something is immoral because we’re afraid of offending others or of being labeled intolerant. How do we talk about morality in a relativistic world? That’s what we begin to explore in the opening sessions of this study.



## STEP 2: CONNECT

**Imagine the end of your life.  
What would you want people to  
say about you at your funeral?  
For what qualities do you want to  
be remembered most?**

Magnifying Glass On Missing Puzzle piece  
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### DIGGING DEEPER

*"The truth is like a lion; you don't need to defend it. Let it loose; it will defend itself."*  
—St. Augustine

## STEP 3: VIDEO

- I. Challenges in talking about morality in a relativistic age: businessman example
- II. Benedict XVI—dictatorship of relativism
  - A. Relativism: there is no truth to which we are all accountable
  - B. "Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism." (Benedict XVI)
  - C. To say that there is absolutely no truth is itself an absolute truth
- III. Modern view of morality is a question of "what"
  - A. What should I do in some abstract situation?
  - B. What should society do?
  - C. Thinking of issues, not how I personally live my day-to-day life

IV. Classical view of morality is a question of “who”

- A. Who do I want to become? What kind of person do I want to be?
- B. Ethics, from the Greek *ethikos*
  - 1. “Pertaining to character”
  - 2. Character is the disposition to live a certain kind of life
- C. Three features of a classical way of looking at life and ethics
  - 1. Man-as-he-is
  - 2. Man-as-he-could-be-if-he-fulfilled-his-*telos*
    - 1. *Telos* is Greek for “end” or “purpose”
    - 2. What virtues do I need to live out my relationships as I should?
  - 3. Ethics = getting from man-as-he-is to fulfilling our *telos*<sup>1</sup>

### DIGGING DEEPER

*“Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, that is, letting oneself be ‘tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine,’ seems the only attitude that can cope with modern times. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one’s own ego and desires.*

—Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Homily for the Mass for the Election of the Supreme Pontiff*, St. Peter’s Basilica, April 18, 2005

## STEP 4: DISCUSS

- 1. What was one thing from the video that you heard for the first time—a new insight or a new way of thinking about morality for you?**

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<sup>1</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 52–53.

2. Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable talking about morality with people who disagree with you? Why? In your experience, what are some reasons that these conversations can be so difficult?

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3. Let's go back to the funeral example. Think about those qualities for which you want to be remembered most when your life has ended. What's one thing you could do this week to become even more the kind of person you desire to be?

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## STEP 5: COMMIT

Society is full of messages about choosing our own destiny and being whatever and whoever we want to be. But according to a Catholic understanding of morality, we already have a specific purpose. This end or purpose to our lives—our *telos* in Greek—is relationship. God made us for love. He made us for relationship with him and with the people he has placed in our lives.

Morality begins and ends with love. Throughout this study, we will see how the drama of the moral life is played out in these relationships. **What are the most important relationships in your life? Which relationships are you living well? Which ones could use some work? What's something you can do this week to strengthen one of these relationships?** This week prayerfully reflect on the opportunities God is offering you to grow in love.

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## DIGGING DEEPER

*“You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them.”*

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Letter 40*

Family holding hands  
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## STEP 6: WRAP-UP AND CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,  
You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.  
Guide us in the way of your perfect love,  
that we may fulfill your command to love one another as you have loved us.  
Open our hearts and minds to understand your truth,  
that we may be the light of the world and the salt of the earth,  
a city on a hill shining for all to see.  
Keep us ever close to you,  
that by your grace at work in our lives  
we may bear fruit to the glory of your name,  
who lives and reigns in unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

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## FOR FURTHER READING

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1691–1729.*

Peter Kreeft, *Making Choices: Practical Wisdom for Everyday Moral Decisions* (Servant: 1990).

Peter Kreeft, *The Journey: A Spiritual Roadmap for Modern Pilgrims* (IVP Books: 1997).

Edward Sri, “Part I: The Challenge” in *Who Am I to Judge? Responding to Relativism with Logic and Love* (Ignatius Press–Augustine Institute: 2016).

## NOTES

[illegible]

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