

Mainline Protestant Denominations Link Morality with Spirituality; Morality v. Integrity: Historical Downtrends: Loss of Morals, Manners, & Courtesy

7. Unfortunately, Catholic and Protestant theologies have made the dreadful error of assuming that establishment morality is the same as Christian integrity.
8. Consequently, morality has been erroneously linked with one's spiritual advance. But it is God's desire for all mankind to be moral. Morality is subscription to the natural law, or what Dr. Kirk refers to as the "permanent things."
9. To equate establishment morality with spiritual advance misleads a congregation regarding their duties as a believer.
10. The Bible has an abundance of instructions that are designed to bring the believer into a status of morality. But such instructions are primarily intended as restraints on the sin nature.
11. In order for a person to maintain status quo spirituality he must avoid sin. When free of sin, through rebound, he is filled with the Holy Spirit and his observance of establishment morality is divine good and therefore referred to as establishment integrity.
12. But the filling of the Spirit is just the "on switch" to the spiritual life. It is through the mentorship of the Spirit that the believer is enabled to advance spiritually and acquire Christian integrity.
13. Our Lord drew the distinction between the two in:
Matthew 22:21b - Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Give to Tiberius the things that are Tiberius's [submission to the laws of divine establishment producing establishment morality], and to God the things that are God's [submission to the mandates of Scripture producing establishment integrity and Christian integrity]."
14. Human good produced by means of loyalty to establishment truth provides an environment of freedom, privacy, and safety for all the citizens of a client nation.

IV. Morality versus Integrity:

1. Morality plus positive law equals justice. Justice plus loyalty to positive law equals freedom. Positive law is society's written chronicle of its moral beliefs.
2. Further, each culture develops certain manners and customs which, although not incorporated into law, are observed and respected by society. These are traditions that form an invisible FLOT line that supports, defends, and protects the nation's positive laws: "standards of conduct dictated by validly enacted laws, rather than principles of natural law" (Gifis, 362).
3. When a nation must pass laws in order to solicit respect for traditional standards of morality, that nation is in a historical downtrend due to great disorder within the souls of its citizens.
4. The glue that holds a client nation together is the advance by its corpus of believers to the high ground of Christian integrity.

5. Morality requires good manners and courtesy. But these concepts change over time as cultural trends in our society demonstrate. But personal relationships for a believer are managed from his inventory of biblical wisdom.
6. The advanced believer functions from a disposition of personal integrity. His manners are not performed as rote ritual but motivated by kind consideration. His courtesies are not expressed as shallow pleasantries but are motivated by unconditional love.
7. These characteristics do not necessarily imply complete agreement with the opinions and lifestyle of others but simply recognize the right that each person possesses to live his life from the dictates of his own norms and standards.
8. The advanced believer remains composed under stress imposed by people or circumstances, while at the same time using his doctrinal wisdom to discern what is right and what is wrong in every situation and the moral status of the people involved.
9. Integrity demands loyalty to truth, and the motivational virtue for one's loyalty to truth is personal love for God.