



Discerning Good and Evil

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On every one of our coins appears our nation's motto, "In God We Trust." But, in what God did our founding fathers, and those who led the charge to have this phrase as our National Motto, believe? When you see the words "In God We Trust" or when you recite the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag and say, "One Nation under God," what god are you referring to? Is it the God of the Bible or some other god? The answer is important because there is a difference.

Our country was founded overwhelmingly by men and women who believed in a supreme being as revealed in the sacred Scriptures. They did not just believe in any supreme being. They believed in a specific supreme being--the One revealed in the sacred Scriptures, the Bible. It is the God of the Bible who gave mankind the Ten Commandments, and later Jesus, the exact representation of God in the flesh. It is this God and His moral code that becomes the standard of righteousness by which we evaluate and judge something to be either good or evil, or right or wrong.

Not every god is the same. Just because a person says they believe in god, tells you nothing about the god in whom they believe. When someone says, he/she believes in the God of the Bible, it gives you some understanding about their god. The same is true for someone who says they believe in the god of the Koran or one of the Hindu gods. While there are some similarities between Allah and the God of the Bible, here are two examples of differences: one says Christians are "infidels" and sanctions the killing of such innocent people, and one condemns such actions. One treats men and women equally, and the other does not. The character of the God of the Bible and the god of the Koran are not the same even

though the Koran tells Muslims to say to Jews and Christians, “Our God and your God is One, and unto Him we surrender” (29.46).

Beginning in the 60’s, the God of the Bible started to be removed as the standard and basis for determining good and evil. Moral relativism crept in and started to permeate our thinking. “Moral relativism is the view that moral judgments are true or false only relative to some particular standpoint (for instance, that of an individual, a culture, or a historical period) and that no standpoint is better or uniquely privileged over any other” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Thus, since that time, the God of the Bible was gradually being replaced as the standard to evaluate and determine what is right and wrong in our society. An individual’s view or what he/she “thinks” or “feels” is right or wrong became the acceptable standard and no one’s view is better than the other’s. Thus, every person becomes the judge and arbiter of what is good and what is evil.

Interesting, the Biblical book of Judges describes a time in history when the God of the Bible was pushed aside and, “*Everyone did that which was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 17:6b; 21:25b). History sure does have a way of repeating itself!

However, that is not the end of the story. Following the time of the Judges, Israel’s God, the God of the Bible, through natural decisions and processes, raised up a leader named Samuel. Samuel’s character and policies changed the culture and helped to restore a righteous and moral standard throughout the land. Based on history, there is hope, and the prospect that things can be turned around.

Part of our role as Chaplains is to be like Samuel. As stated in our VFW Charter, the National Chaplain (and by extension) all VFW Chaplains, “by precept and example point the way toward a high moral plane for the organization (Congressional Charter, p. 34).

Blessings as you serve.

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