

Who Am I To Judge: Responding to Relativism with Logic and Love by Edward Sri

Discussion Guide

Part One

The Challenge

Relativism is the idea that there is no truth, that each individual decides for himself what is true and what is right and wrong. Pope Benedict states that “Having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism.” He further states, “We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive...”

1. Have you ever felt afraid to bring up a moral topic or talk about a moral issue with your friends or family?

Clashing World views

Relativism thrives because Christians have not done a good job of explaining the Christian moral vision. We have left people with the impression that morality is just about random rules.

2. Why is it illogical for relativists to say there is no truth?

Part Two

A New Vision

The Greek philosophers believed that practically every moment is an ethical moment because ethics is fundamentally about a person’s character. In other words, our individual choices really do matter; they lead us in one direction or another.

3. Using the funeral example mentioned in this chapter, which qualities do you want to be remembered for most? What does this tell us about what’s most important in life and the kind of life you want to live?

Friendship & Virtue

Catholicism defines virtue as “a habitual and firm disposition to do good.” The virtuous person does good easily, consistently, and joyfully. When we fail to be the best we can be, we have a negative impact on the people God has placed in our lives.

4. In this chapter we discussed the connection between virtue and living our relationships well. Do you really need virtue to love the people in your life?

Getting Freedom Right

In the classical understanding, freedom is the ability to do certain things with excellence. In the modern world, freedom is simply the ability to choose between different options. It is actually freedom from any person, outside group or law restricting a person. We become slaves to our selfishness. True freedom is freedom for something as opposed to freedom from something.

5. The author uses the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life* as an example of how a person affects the lives of all those around them. Many movies have been made with this same premise: what would your world look like if different choices had been made at certain critical junctures in your life. Have you ever thought about your life through that lens?

Law and Happiness

God’s moral law is an instruction manual for our lives; it is the pathway to our happiness. Moral relativism causes us to see the moral law as an obstacle standing in the way of what we want to do, instead of something that helps us discover authentic happiness.

6. In what ways is God’s moral law more about relationship than rules?

The Art of Living

If the art of living is passed on, more people will be prepared to succeed in life.

7. How does the modern mistrust of tradition hinder us from learning the art of living life well?

Part Three: Seven Keys for Responding to Relativism

1. **Lead with Mercy:** the first aspect of God's mercy is forgiveness, the second is healing. Jesus just doesn't want to pardon us like a judge, He also wants to heal us as a physician.
2. **Relativism Wounds People:** Spell out the sharp contrasts between the two worldviews. What might be the connection between relativism and the loneliness and instability many people experience in relationships today?
3. **Law=Love:** instead of letting our friends paint Catholic moral teaching as something negative-something interfering with people's personal lives-we need to frame each moral teaching within the context of love. When a moral topic comes up with friends or family, how well do you demonstrate that love is at the center of God's moral law?
4. **Making Judgements vs. Judging Souls:** Does "I disagree" mean "I hate you"? Does "I love you" mean "I agree with everything you believe and do"? Have you ever experienced someone assuming you were judging them when you simply happened to disagree with them on some moral issue?
5. **Relativism is Not Neutral:** the viewpoint that there is no right or wrong is being imposed on us and, in itself, is a point of view. If you don't play by these rules, you risk being labeled as judgmental. When accused of being judgmental, let them know that you are feeling judged. Relativism is a way of looking at the world, but it is not the only way.
6. **Relativism is a Mask:** a mask covering up someone's own immoral behavior. Many people use relativism as a way to rationalize their actions to convince themselves that what they are doing is really okay. If a person is not willing to conform to God's moral law, relativism is an attractive option. What is the issue behind the issue?
7. **Taking on the Heart of Christ:** it's dangerous to judge a person's status before God. St. Therese of Lisieux said we should always respond to people's faults with charity. Always remember that we may see certain facts, but we don't always see the whole story.