

## Bedrock Principles of Liberty

### PRINCIPLE TWO

#### The Declaration of Independence upholds the idea that absolute truths exist and are knowable.

Emphasize the second principle: Absolute truths exist and are knowable.

Summarize or read this account of Alan's Journey, or role play it with a participant.

#### Alan's Journey

Alan his way home from college to talk to his pastor about how tough it had been to keep his faith on campus. During his first semester, Alan Wilson experienced an all-out assault on his Christian beliefs. In fact, his faith even was shaken to a certain degree. He wanted to know how he could be certain God is real and the Bible is true.

In particular, Alan saw his fellow students make major decisions on the basis of the assumption that no one ever can know the difference between right and wrong. *Right and wrong don't even exist, Alan! Today everybody makes up his own truth!* He'd heard those lines quite a few times, for sure.

Free sex, LGBT pride, abortion, and numerous other attitudes and practices pervaded the culture of the campus. Moreover, a great deal of what Alan heard in the classroom justified this "liberated" approach to life. This included theories of origins that said life on earth came into being as a result of random forces at work over millions of years. As a member of a family who regularly had attended church since before he was born, Alan had been brought up to believe that many of the things he'd seen on campus were immoral and wrong.

*Hey, Alan! Come on, man! You're your own man now! Live it up!* Yes, the temptations were strong, but so were Alan's reservations. *If right and wrong don't exist, Alan wondered, can God really exist? After all, He's the one who gave us the Ten Commandments!*

Alan and his pastor, Matt Thomas, had a long conversation Alan found to be extremely helpful. Among other things, Pastor Matt helped Alan see the big picture on moral truth and right and wrong. Relativism teaches that each individual can make up his or her own truth, but as we soon will see, relativists don't always practice what they preach.

After Alan told Matt about the pressures he was facing and about the ideas that were assaulting his faith, Pastor Matt responded thoughtfully. He began by advising Alan to make sure that in assessing his situation he didn't see issues simply in bits and pieces. "In other words," Matt said, "the conflict you're experiencing isn't merely a clash of differing perspectives on a lot of separate things like homosexuality, abortion, premarital sex, cohabitation, or whatever. You're witnessing a clash of two very different *belief systems*. Sometimes we call a belief system a worldview. It's the lens through which a person sees life and reaches conclusions about it. On one side is a worldview that assumes God doesn't exist, and on the other is the one your upbringing has encouraged you to embrace. That one assumes God *is*—that He does exist, is personal, and will hold people accountable for how they live."

Matt continued, "It's important to remember that a worldview can't be proved beyond a shadow of a doubt. Worldviews require faith. People may think they are really throwing their weight around when they ask you how anyone can be certain a particular lifestyle choice or action is wrong, but on what authority do they base *their* conclusion that no one can speak with such certainty? Their belief that that no objective standard of right and wrong exists rests on his assumption that God doesn't exist—or at least on their adherence to a belief system that assumes God's nonexistence. Sure, they may *say* they believe in God, but think about it—the God in which they believe permits people to do whatever they feel like doing. That doesn't sound like much of a God, does it?" Alan nodded, indicating to Matt that what he was saying made a great deal of sense.

"Alan, here's the reality," said Matt. "It is because God exists, and it is because of who He is — His holy character — that absolute truths exist and that He cares about how people live. Notice that in Exodus 20:1-17 where God gave Israel the Ten Commandments through Moses, the very first thing God said was this: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (v. 2). So, God's expectations of people are rooted *in His own character!* Right is right because it is consistent with God's character, and wrong is wrong because it conflicts with it."

Matt also helped Alan understand that claims that evolution is based solely on science are misleading. "Evolutionists may say that natural selection and evolution are pure science and that all objections to them are totally religious and therefore invalid—but many of them cling to their belief in Darwinism with *religious* fervor. Just as theism is a religious belief, so is atheism."

Matt went on to point out that those who say they don't believe in right and wrong actually don't live that way. They may say absolute truth doesn't exist, but if someone steals from them, they will be the first ones to appeal to a standard, and on the basis of that standard, object. "All people," said Matt, "appeal to various values and standards, even if they never realize they are doing so. Innately, each person has a standard of fairness he or she is quick to advocate."<sup>1</sup>

So, we already see some glaring inconsistencies in the secular worldview. All people, even people who claim to be able to make up their own truth, *know and even appeal to an external, unchanging standard of right and wrong!*

<sup>1</sup>adapted from *Adult Leader Guide, KJV Family Bible Study*, Spring 2005, (Nashville: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2004), 125-126.