

Does God Exist?



Are Moral Values Relative?

Video: “How to handle a hardcore relativist?” (Greg Koukl)

The arguments for moral relativism fail.

1. Argument #1: (1) moral values differ from culture to culture, person to person, (2) if moral values differ then cultures/person must have different moral standards, (3) if they accept different standard, then objective moral do not exist, (4) THEREFORE, objective moral values do not exist (i.e. they're relative)

RESPONSES:

Premise #2: People might simply differ on application of the same objective standards

Premise #3: disagreement alone doesn't entail absence of truth (e.g. politics, grade-school math)

Premise #3: we KNOW some objective moral values exist, so premise must be false

2. Argument #2: (1) in ethics (just like science) there is widespread disagreement, (2) if there is disagreement then this is because there is no objective moral truth to know, (3) therefore, there is no objective truth to know in ethics (i.e. ethics is relative)

RESPONSES:

Premise #1: there is widespread agreement on basic ethical issues (just as in science)

Premise #1: it is the difficulty of KNOWING ethical truth, not the fact of it, that is the problem

Premise #2: disagreement alone does not entail there is no truth

3. Argument #3: (1) if morality is objective we should be able to prove at least some of this, (2) we can't prove ethical views to be true, (3) therefore, there is no objective truth in ethics (i.e. it's relative)

RESPONSES:

Premise #1: Proof is overrated, even a lot of scientific truths cannot be proven

Premise #1: You can know things you cannot prove (e.g. love, certain memories)

Premise #2: We can still give strong evidence for moral truths, even if not proof

4. Argument #4: (1) to know about something it must exist, (2) for it to exist it must be scientifically detectable, (3) objective moral values are not scientifically detectable, (4) if so, objective moral values do not exist, (5) Therefore, objective moral values do not exist (i.e. morality is relative)

RESPONSES:

Premise #1: We can know about things (e.g. Santa Claus) that do not exist

Premise #2: This rules out numbers, thoughts, feelings, angels, God, etc.

Premise #4: Something can be known in ways other than science

BIGGEST PROBLEM: this entire argument is self-refuting. It says only things scientifically detectable can be known, but this argument itself is not scientifically detectable. You can't put it under a microscope. It is a truth ABOUT science not the object OF science.

Moral relativism has other serious problems.

Relativism is unlivable, the definition of “culture” is arbitrary, there is nothing to MAKE morality relative except our arbitrary declarations (so nihilism follows), it doesn't follow from disagreement alone, it makes reformers immoral, it undermines law.

Objective moral values do exist

Some principles are clearly, objectively, morally wrong: “torturing babies for fun”

We can discover objective moral principles (e.g. women's rights, slavery), so they must exist to be discovered!