

# Is God about “Black & White” or “Shades of Grey”?

(... or neither ... or both!)

Jdg 21:25 (*the last verse in the book*) In those days there was no king in Israel; **everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

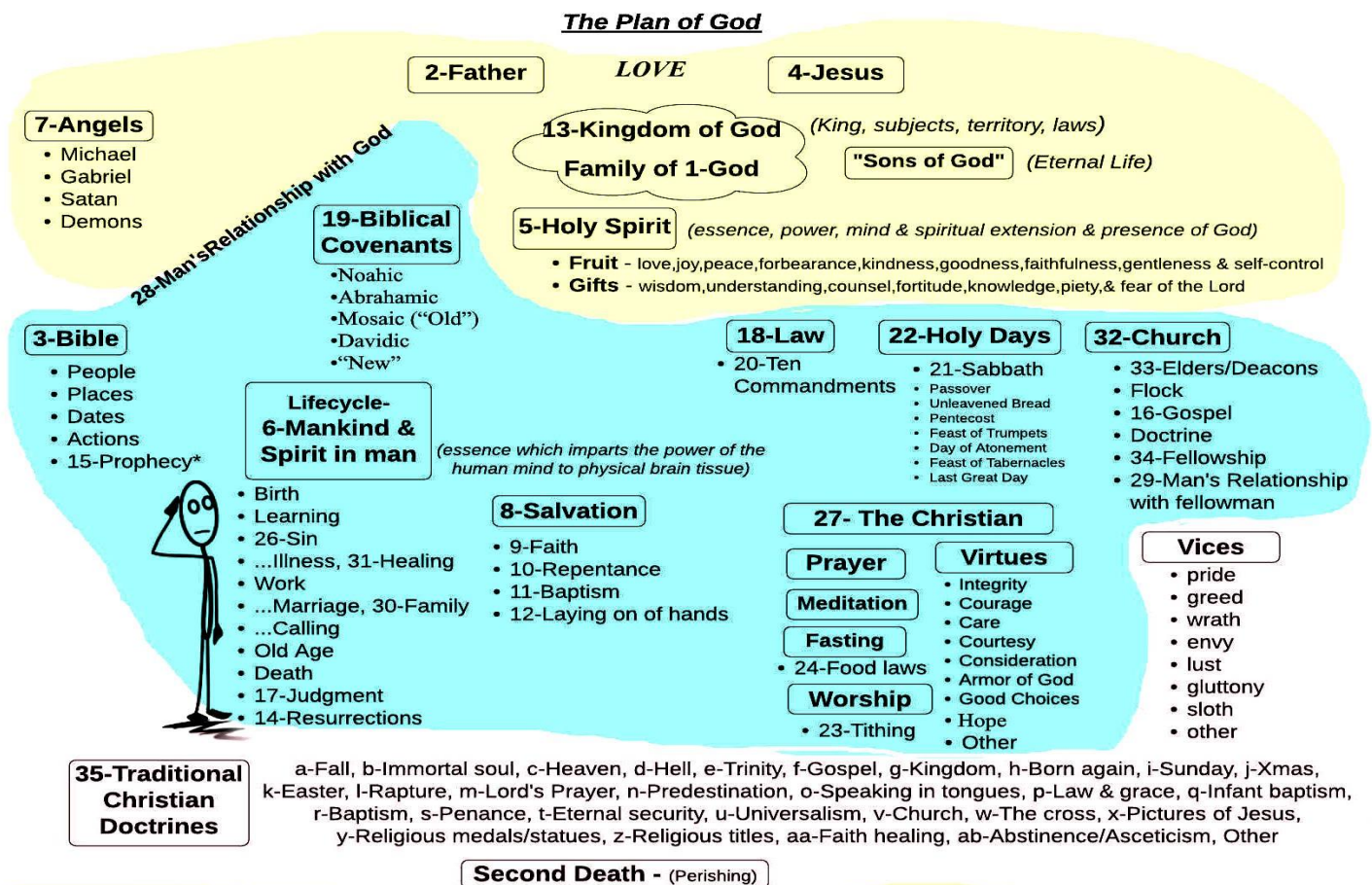
We see many examples of this in society today:

- people deciding what laws they will obey
- Nations deciding what agreements they will honour

**Modern moral relativism is the denial of God’s authority to define right and wrong, replacing revelation from God with what people prefer. It teaches that right and wrong are not objectively defined by God, but are determined by personal preference, cultural consensus, or situational benefit—and therefore can change without moral guilt.**

**Modern moral relativism...** arose when Western culture abandoned God as moral authority—  
 first philosophically → then culturally → then personally

As Christians, we need to be “on guard” to ensure this “poison thinking” does not enter our minds ... or find a home in the Church of God.



**Time: (Past - History - Creation, 25-Hebrew Calendar ... Present -(World events) ... (Future - 15-Prophecy\*) ... Eternity ...)**

To begin ... let's explore what "**Black & White**" means in a Biblical sense

Definition: In Scripture, "black and white" refers to truths, commands, or realities that are clear, fixed, and non-negotiable, because they flow directly from God's unchanging character and revealed will. These are not simplified "opinions"—they are **revealed absolutes**.

Black & white biblical issues are matters where God has spoken plainly, leaving no moral, doctrinal, or covenantal alternative. They require **obedience**, not **interpretation** to evade them.

### Key Characteristics

A matter is "black & white" when it meets one or more of the following criteria:

#### 1. Explicit Command or Prohibition

- Direct "you shall / you shall not"
- Repeated or reinforced across Scripture

Examples :

- "You shall not murder" (**Exod 20:13**)
- "You shall not commit adultery" (**Exod 20:14**)

#### 2. Grounded in God's Character

- Rooted in who God is, not in culture or circumstance

Examples:

- "Be holy, for I am holy" (**Lev 11:44**)
- "I am the LORD, I do not change" (**Mal 3:6**)

#### 3. Universally Binding

- Applies to all people, all times, all cultures
- Not restricted to a specific covenant administration

Examples:

- "All have sinned" (**Rom 3:23**)
- "There is one mediator..." (**1 Tim 2:5**)

#### 4. Morally Defining

- Scripture labels something as sin or righteousness, not just "a preference"

Examples:

- "Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (**Gal 5:21**)
- "The wages of sin is death" (**Rom 6:23**)

#### 5. Affirmed by Jesus and the Apostles

- Reaffirmed under the New Covenant

Examples:

- "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (**John 14:6**)
- "Flee sexual immorality" (**1 Cor 6:18**)



## What “Black & White” Is Not

- Personal conviction (**Rom 14**) eg I believe in a vegetarian lifestyle (so does God)
- Cultural tradition - **Mark 7:8** For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers & cups, & many other such things you do
- Wisdom timing ... **Ecc 3:3** A time to kill, And a time to heal
- Emotional sincerity ... sincere people can be wrong

God’s Authority ≠ harshness (it is evidence of His Love & Wisdom)

**Black & white biblical truth is what God has clearly defined, permanently established, and universally required—regardless of preference, pressure, or context.**



Diagnostic Test for “Black & White”

Ask:

1. Has God explicitly spoken?
2. Is this tied to His character?
3. Does Scripture ever call this sin or righteousness?
4. Is it reaffirmed in the New Testament?
5. Would redefining this alter the gospel or holiness?

If yes → black & white

**1Cor 5:1-3** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!

1Co 5:2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

1Co 5:3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have **already judged** (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.



Definition: “Grey Area” (Biblical Sense)

In Scripture, a “grey area” is **not** moral uncertainty, but a wisdom-based decision space where God has intentionally not given a universal command or prohibition, requiring believers to apply unchanging truth with discernment, conscience, & love. Grey areas exist within God’s moral boundaries—not outside them.

A biblical grey area is a matter where Scripture grants freedom of action, while still holding the believer accountable to God’s glory, love for others, and spiritual maturity.

Obedience here is measured by faithfulness, not uniform behavior.

## Key Characteristics

A matter qualifies as a **biblical grey area** when all of the following are true:

### 1. No Explicit Command or Prohibition

- Scripture neither requires nor forbids the action itself
- Silence is intentional, not accidental

Anchors:

- **Romans 14:5** – “Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”
- **1 Corinthians 10:23** – “All things are lawful for me...”  
(GW) Someone may say, “I’m allowed to do anything,” but not everything is helpful. I’m allowed to do anything, but not everything encourages growth.

### 2. Moral Boundaries Remain Fixed

- The action must not violate a clear moral command
- Grey areas never override holiness

Anchors:

- **Gal 5:13** For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- **1Pe 1:15-16** but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."  
– Holiness remains mandatory

### 3. Conscience Is *Involved*—but Not Sovereign

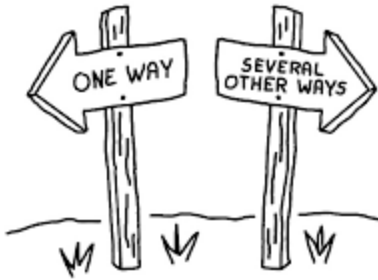
- Personal conviction matters
- Conscience must be shaped by Scripture

Anchors:

- **Rom 14:22** Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for **whatever is not from faith is sin.**
- **1Co 8:7-13** However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.  
1Co 8:8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.  
1Co 8:9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.  
1Co 8:10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?  
1Co 8:11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?  
1Co 8:12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.  
1Co 8:13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.



gray area



#### 4. Love Governs Liberty

- What is permissible may not be beneficial
- The spiritual good of others limits freedom

Anchors:

- **Rom 14:13** Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

**1Co 10:24** Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being

#### 5. Discernment Is Required

- Same action may be right in one context and wrong in another
- Wisdom, timing, and motive matter

Anchors:

- **Pro 26:4-5** Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. Pro 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- **Ecc 3:1** To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven
- **Heb 5:14** But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

#### 6. Accountability to God Remains

- Freedom does not remove judgment
- Every choice is lived before God

Anchors:

- **Rom 14:10-12** But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.
- **2Cor 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

What a Grey Area Is Not

- A hidden sin
- A cultural loophole
- A preference elevated to doctrine
- A rejection of biblical authority
- "Whatever feels right"

Grey ≠ vague

Grey ≠ evolving

Grey ≠ subjective truth

**A biblical grey area is a morally bounded freedom where Scripture allows multiple faithful responses, each evaluated by love, conscience, wisdom, and God's glory.**

**Black & white** defines the fence; **grey areas** define how we walk inside it.


# Modern Moral Relativism IS NOT the same as “Grey areas” in Scripture

Modern Moral Relativism is:

- Moral truth defined by personal preference, culture, or outcome
- Denial of absolute moral authority
- Ethics detached from God’s character
- “Right” determined by feelings, consensus, or power

Relativism exists because truth is rejected, not because it is complex.

Key Scriptures:

- **Joh 17:17** ... Your word is truth.  
Relativism says: Truth **evolves**.  
Scripture says: Truth **endures**.
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- **Proverbs 14:12** – “There is a way that seems right...”  
Conscience Is Not Supreme. It can be weak, wounded, or defiled (**1Cor 8:12, Titus 1:15**)  
Grey areas require **educated conscience**, not autonomous conscience.
  - **Isa 5:20** Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!  
  
Love is defined, not invented
  - **John 14:15** – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”  
Relativism says love excuses sin. Scripture says love restrains sin.
  - **Rom 1:18-25** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **Professing to be wise, they became fools**, & changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who **exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
  - **2Tim 4:3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; & they will turn their ears away from the truth, & be turned aside to fables.

**Biblical grey areas exist inside God’s truth; moral relativism exists instead of God’s truth.**

Examples of “current Church debates” ... Is each issue “Black & White” or “Grey Area”?

**1. Sexual Ethics & Marriage ... Black & White or Grey Area**

- Genesis 2:24
- Romans 1:24–27
- Hebrews 13:4
- Matthew 19:4–6
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Modern relativism move: “Love, consent, and commitment *redefine* morality.”

Biblical response: Love is defined by obedience (John 14:15).

Compassion addresses people, not definitions of sin.

**2. The Uniqueness of Christ ... Black & White or Grey Area**

- John 14:6
- 1 Timothy 2:5
- Acts 4:12



Relativistic move: “Jesus is a way, not the way.”

Biblical response: Pluralism contradicts Christ’s own words.

**3. Repentance & Moral Transformation ... Black & White or Grey Area**

- Luke 13:3
- Acts 17:30
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Relativistic move: “The gospel affirms people without calling for change.”

Biblical response: Grace saves; grace **also** transforms ... **Titus 2:11-12** For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age

**4. Worship Style & Musical Expression ... Black & White or Grey Area**

- Psalm 150
- John 4:23–24
- Romans 14:5–6

Legalistic danger: “True worship must look like our tradition.”

Relativistic danger: “Anything goes as long as it’s sincere.”

Biblical balance: Freedom under the lordship of Christ, constrained by reverence & edification

**5. Christian Liberty Issues (Alcohol, Food, TV/Movies) ... Black & White or Grey Area**

- Romans 14
- 1 Corinthians 8–10

Legalistic danger: “Holiness = abstinence in all cases.”

Relativistic danger: “Freedom = no limits.”

Biblical balance: Liberty guided by love, conscience, and witness.

**6. Political Engagement ... Black & White or Grey Area**

- Micah 6:8
- Romans 13:1–7
- Acts 5:29

Error on one side: “The church must endorse specific parties.”

Error on the other: “Politics is morally neutral.”

Biblical balance: Clear ethics, diverse strategies, no gospel replacement.

## 7. May Christians attend weddings or events involving unbiblical lifestyles?

... **Black & White** or **Grey Area**

- Presence ≠ endorsement
- Scripture distinguishes association from approval ... **1Co 5:9-11** I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 1Co 5:10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 1Co 5:11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

Biblical Boundaries:

- No affirmation of sin
- Clear allegiance to Christ
- Honest conscience

Faithful Options:

- Attend relationally with clarity
- Decline out of conviction

Motives and message matter.

**Grey areas do not ask, “What can I get away with?” They ask, What best honours Christ here?**

### **What Faithful Churches (members) Must Do**

1. Refuse to call sin “complex”
2. Refuse to call preference “doctrine”
3. Teach discernment, not slogans
4. Apply truth to redeem
5. Guard liberty without surrendering truth

**The church doesn’t need *softer* truth or *harder* rules—**

**—it needs *wiser* shepherds & members**

**Grey areas exist because wisdom is needed; black & white exists because truth is given.**

