

# BreakPoint - What We Can't Not Know



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[Do we know implicitly God's moral truths?] Apologetics

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## BreakPoint - What We Can't Not Know

BreakPoint with Charles Colson

### Your Neighbors May Know More Than They Admit

Once if you mentioned **basic moral rules like the Ten Commandments, everyone would agree that they were right**. Not only were they right for all, but they were also known to all. Everyone knew that honoring parents, telling the truth, and acknowledging God is right for everyone. And everyone knew that deliberately taking innocent human life, sleeping with your neighbor's spouse, and mocking God is wrong for everyone. **Today all of that has changed.**

[This is the question being asked. Is that statement true, that what is right and wrong has changed?]

Or has it? According to J. Budziszewski, professor of government and philosophy at the University of Texas, it really hasn't -- at least not in the way you might think.

In his new book, What We Can't Not Know, Budziszewski explains that **there are certain basic moral truths that all of us really know, even if we pretend to ourselves that we don't**. The murderer knows the wrong of murder; the God-mocker knows the wrong of blasphemy; and the adulterer knows the wrong of adultery. They may say that they don't know these things, but according to Budziszewski, they really do.

[Is this a true statement?  
Have examples to support your view.]

The Apostle Paul confirms this when he says in Romans 2 that God's law is "written on the heart" -- everyone's heart, even the hearts of nonbelievers. **People who pose as moral skeptics are playing make-believe**, and they are doing it badly. They are only pretending that they don't know because deep down inside they do.

[They really know and are in denial?  
On purpose or is it possible to be subconscious?]

But how can this be true? Haven't anthropologists told us that morality is different in every culture? Budziszewski points out that different cultures disagree only about the details of morality, not about the basics. The great Christian writer C. S. Lewis gave a good example when he remarked that although some cultures say you **can have four wives and some say you can have only one, every culture recognizes the sacredness of marriage.**

[A good example of pulling the basic moral truth OUT of the larger principle or code of conduct. So often we would argue on the plane of "number of wives" and miss the commonality between them.

Other examples?]

That there are moral basics you literally "can't not know" is important for many reasons.

1. One is that if you keep these moral basics in mind, it's much easier to keep from going wrong about the details.
2. Another is that if you keep them in mind, it's harder to lie to yourself about your sins.
3. Third, the moral basics provide a common ground for talking with our nonbelieving neighbors.

Budziszewski admits that it's a slippery common ground, however, because somebody can know the moral basics deep down and yet not recognize that he or she really does know them. Paul said in **Romans 1** that we "suppress" the truth because of our sins. But if the knowledge is really down there, then it can be dredged back up, no matter how deeply suppressed.

That's what Paul tried to do. And that's what we should try to do. And Budziszewski shows why and how we can do it.

If you want to learn what is written on your neighbor's heart, read this great new book *What We Can't Not Know*. During the next few days I will be talking about Budziszewski's analysis of what our neighbors and we can't not know about the moral law.

Don't forget:

People know more about God's moral requirements than they ever let on. And you can learn how to get past their denials in order to remind them of the truth that they cannot not know.



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