

# Amoral Faith

Revised 10/25/2008

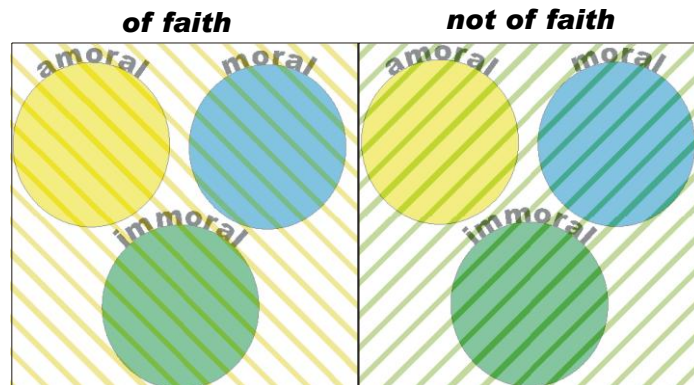
Not everything that is of faith is morally acceptable nor must everything we do be classified as an example of morality or immorality. There is another category: amorality. Rom 14:22-23 presents us with these three possibilities. This passage is addressed to the strong versus weak believers' enjoyment of things which may be considered **amoral**. Eating meat may be regarded as an amoral action. On the other hand, just because a believer condones a certain practice because he believes it to be permissible, this does not mean that he may not be condemning himself in what he condones by faith. Constable elaborates on *amoral practices*:

Paul evidently wrote this verse [14:22] with the strong in view primarily (cf. v. 23). He did not want his readers to force their convictions ("faith") about **amoral** practices on others. The strong believer can be happy in his private enjoyment of **amoral** practices because he knows that he is neither violating the will of God nor the conscience of a weak brother.

This verse [14:23], in contrast to verse 22, seems addressed particularly to the weak. The weak brother who eats something that he believes he should not eat stands condemned by his own conscience and by God (cf. Gal. 2:11). His action is contrary to what he believes is right....If a person does what he believes to be wrong, even though it is not wrong in itself [and is thus normally amoral or moral], it becomes sin for him. He has violated what he believes to be God's will. His action has become an act of rebellion against God for him. (Emphasis Added)<sup>1</sup>

Range of options for Rom 14:22-2

Of Faith	Not of Faith
May or may not be sinful	Is sinful
May or may not be misthological	Is misthological
May be positive, negative, or neutral	Is negative
May be amoral, moral, or immoral	Is immoral



Paul said that if (A) the action is not of faith, then (B) it is sin. It may be concluded, therefore, that when an action which is normally morally neutral or positive is not of faith it is of sin. Consequently, an amoral or moral action can be done in an immoral manner and thus be regarded as an immoral action. On the other hand, if A then B does not prove if not A then not B. In other words, just because something is of faith does not mean that it is not of sin, as Paul implies in 14:22. Or in terms of logic,  $(A \Rightarrow B) \Rightarrow (\sim A \Rightarrow \sim B)$  is not necessarily true. Therefore, the picture on the left has amoral<sup>2</sup> and moral categories with neutrally yellow strips passing through them. In contrast, the actions on the right have green strips passing through them to represent their being misthologically riddled with sin since they are not of faith.

The richness of Paul's thought should help guard against simplistic attitudes which might assume: "Because I believe what I am doing is right it must be alright." Sincerity is a poor substitute for accuracy. One may be sincerely wrong. Saul believed he was doing the right thing when he was persecuting the Christians. Such faith, however, was not a fruit of the Spirit nor were the actions performed in this faith a fruit of the Spirit. It is likewise erroneous to assert that just because in some passages a gift is passively received by faith (and would thus be misthologically neutral and marked as yellow) that in other passages (where works are actively performed by faith) faith could not be misthologically marked as blue. The symmetry does not rule out neutrality or misthology.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Constable's Bible Study Notes, 2004 ed., *Romans*, 149-150. Available at <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion of misthological amorality, see [Doxological Versus Misthological Morality](#).

For further explanation, see my upcoming book *The Outer Darkness*.

Marty A. Cauley © Copyright 2007

[Misthologist@misthology.org](mailto:Misthologist@misthology.org)