



P.O. Box 66540  
Albuquerque, NM 87193  
505.890.6806  
E-mail: [irm@liferesource.org](mailto:irm@liferesource.org)  
Website: [www.liferesource.org](http://www.liferesource.org)

**Presentation Transcript**  
**Developing Morality**  
**October 8, 2009**

When Elaine and I started LifeResource Ministries, one of the first projects we undertook was a series called *Spiritual Growth and Human Development*. In that series we demonstrated that, at each developmental stage, human beings can learn something major in the spiritual realm – some major spiritual principle or skill – and they can do it more easily at *that* time than at any other time in their life. And that continues all the way through life – not just in childhood. So the point of it was to show parents how to teach each of these spiritual components to their children when their children are ready to learn them. We also found out that, as adults, there were certain things we could focus on that we could learn better, too. The other point was that, when we do those things that way, then those things are learned easily and naturally, without a lot of banging our heads on the wall and that sort of thing. If you don't remember what those things are, by the way, you could revisit that series – or visit it for the first time. You can download from our Website free of charge. You can also order the CDs from the Website, as well.

I was talking to a friend of mine awhile back. He and his wife met a teenage girl at a large church activity, where there were lots of churches from all over – got together. And they'd see her periodically at different events like that, so they kind of got to know her a little bit. Sometime – I don't know, maybe months or years – after they got to know this girl, she told the man that she'd just found out that she was dying of a disease. I don't remember which disease she said it was. Pretty soon there were all kinds of people concerned about her. There was a Website set up so that people could keep track of her status and could easily send her moral support. People were sending messages and cards. People were praying for her. Really sad. I guess she was sixteen and was dying.

Over time my friend wanted to get more involved so he thought he'd try to talk to the girl's parents. For some reason he found it difficult to get in touch with them. When he did, he learned that her parents knew nothing about any of this. It was a hoax. It was a cruel hoax. This girl had fooled hundreds of people and her distant friends – many of them – for months.

Now there was no money involved. She just did it to see if she could string people along. So you see, right there, a real lack of honesty and empathy. Her parents – when they discovered this – were completely blown away by it. They were speechless. They were

saddened. These folks were normal, hard-working, religious, family-oriented, middle-American people. Somehow, their own morals had not been passed to their child. We see this more and more in society today.

I see lots of kids that come through my office and I talk to them a lot about what they believe and what they think is right and wrong. Most of them learn their values from music and from their friends. It's kind of scary to think that some rap artist could be the high priest of your child's moral development, isn't it?

I was, awhile back, working with a younger girl. She had a single mom for a parent and was having trouble getting along at school with girls. When I asked her who her woman heroes were, she looked at me like I was speaking in a foreign language to her. She didn't have any! So I suggested to her mother that she introduce her daughter to some of her women friends and start including the girl in some of their activities. You can't learn to be a woman from girlfriends, because none of them know how to do that either. You need to be around women to do that.

So, our kids don't spend enough *time* with their parents to absorb their values. That used to happen easily and naturally in our society. You didn't even have to think about it. Kids absorbed it. But *now* we have to concentrate on teaching it, because we don't spend enough time with our kids, in a lot of cases.

Sometimes church is one of the biggest culprits in that, too. Too many activities where they divide the social groups and the age groups up. Doesn't work very well.

So let's talk today about how a child – how people – develop their moral values. The first person that I want to start with is – you've heard me talk about him a lot – his name was Jean Piaget. He was a Swiss philosopher and psychologist. He wrote a book called, *The Moral Judgment of Children*. One of the things that he said in this book is that the way children see their parents eventually gets transferred to God. If parents are loving, then they're going to see God as loving. They'll just assume that He will be. If parents are cruel and dismissing, then it's hard for them to have faith. God won't pay attention to them, won't hear their prayers, etc. So that was one of the things he said in his book.

Another thing he said was “moral development starts with respect for rules” – simple rules for kids. He watched his daughter play marbles with the other kids in the yard and he was thinking about all this – or where he got started thinking about it. He said, “If parents hold firm boundaries lovingly, then this is a great foundation for moral development, because children learn to respect rules. But if they are lax or inconsistent, children tend to have less respect for them.” So the time of toddlerhood is the time to instill respect for rules – early on.

One of the advantages I have in seeing so many children is the perspective that it gives. When a child and a parent walk into my office, the parent knows more about the kid than I ever will, probably, because they live with them everyday and I see them for forty-five minutes a week. But I see so many different children that I kind of have a much better picture of what normal is, and what abnormal is and that kind of thing. And I see some kids who have little respect for the toys in my office, kids who try to cheat when they

play games, kids who lie when there isn't much at stake – you know, they're just so much in the habit of doing it, it's what they do. And sometimes these kids come from very proper-looking families, too. The parents have values, but they're not getting passed on to the child.

I currently have a little client who is eleven. I started working with her when she was nine. So it's been almost two years – or maybe a little more than that. She always asks if she can play with the different things. I mean, she's been coming for two years. She knows it's okay, but she still is so polite that she'll ask me if she can play with this or that. She says, "Thank you," when I give her things. We've divided our session up into three kinds of activity, and she always respects those boundaries and is ready to do the next thing when it is time. Her mother is a single mom who works at a call center and has three kids. That is *not* an easy life. But she has taught her daughter to respect rules. I think that one of the things that she has done is to be a boundary follower herself. She told me sometime ago that she had nearly six months of sick time accumulated, because she *always* goes to work, is never late and never skips out. So she has this huge backlog of time because she is so punctual. She gets her daughter to school on time and is on time to pick them up. She's always on time for the sessions. I think, in two years, they've been late twice and one of those was because an auto accident stopped traffic. And her daughter is punctual, as well.

So I think Piaget is, pretty much, on target there as far as rules and moral development. And this girl – besides being really polite – she's very modest and proper in the way she carries herself and the way she dresses. I worked in an elementary school for six years and some of the things you see these little girls wearing is just enough to make you wonder what their mothers were thinking! This one – she looks good. She's modest and appropriate. So that's kind of an example of how that all plays together. Piaget also said that children develop their morals like everything else – in stages, which is interesting to think about.

Okay, so let's move on then from Piaget to a guy named Kohlberg, who was a Harvard professor and who studied moral development all his life. He based his work, in the beginning, on Piaget. He said that people develop in stages – their morality. And he said that there were six stages of moral development. See which one you're at – okay? – as we go through here. Now all of these stages are good. Okay? Anything that is moral is good, but there are some things that are better than others, as you'll see.

So six stages of moral development – and he divided the six into three categories. The first category he called *pre-conventional*. He said that this first stage, more often, we see in children, but also in some adults, who haven't advanced past that too much. He said the first one of the six is what he called *obedience and punishment orientation*. "The last time I did tht I got spanked, so I'm not going to do it again." So the motivation is to avoid punishment. That can lead to things like, "It's okay as long as I don't get caught," Sometimes people that are stuck in this orientation – or are at this developmentally – think that the worse the punishment is, that means the worse the act is perceived to be by them. Because of this, it is possible to infer that even innocent victims are guilty in proportion to their suffering. Have you ever heard somebody say, "He must have done

something really bad to get into that kind of trouble?” That’s kind of what goes along with that punishment orientation.

I’ve had people tell me that they just knew the hammer was going to drop – that they could just feel like God was getting ready to blast them because they had been having so much fun or things were going so smoothly. Sometimes that goes along with this kind of moral development. Then there is always the deference to superior power or prestige - people that are sycophants around the boss and playing up to him, or people that are really impressed with position in government, or at church or whatever. Those are the kind of people that are stuck on this level. They really kind of gravitate toward the power or are impressed by it.

I had a client once who had a long standing problem. What drove him into therapy was the fear of getting caught. I noticed that he didn’t express any regret about how it affected the people that he victimized. He was just worried about staying out of jail! Now it’s a good thing, isn’t it? That’s a good thing to worry about. None of us wants to go in the lake of fire, right? So that’s a motivator. But there are other ways to be motivated to do the right things, too.

The second area of moral development that Kohlberg observed.... He did a lifetime of research around this and had a lot of resources. He did a *lot* of surveying and testing and like that. So he had a lot of research to back this stuff up. He called the second one, which is what he also calls *pre-conventional*, is the *what’s in it for me position* or the *self-interest orientation*. Right behavior is defined by whatever is in the individual’s best interest. So this allows for some interest in the needs of others, but only to the point where it affects me. So it’s also a rather self-centered approach. So concern for other people is *not* based on loyalty or intrinsic respect, but it’s sort of a “I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine. If you’re not willing to scratch my back then I really don’t care about you one way or the other.” That kind of goes with it, doesn’t it? So it is really self-centered and a self-orientation.

I have a little guy – probably my youngest client – he just turned five – and he likes to play Nerf basketball in my office with me. He changes the rules of the game so that he always wins. You kind of forgive that at five years old, you know, because that serves a purpose for him. He has a very gradual sense of self and it is hard for him to lose. Of course, we’re working on that. That’s not going to stay that way. And sooner or later, he’s going to learn how to play by the rules – and that will be good for him.

When I was thinking about that, I remember participating in a softball tournament years ago hosted by our neighboring Church of God congregation. They advertised this tournament they were hosting, and they sent invitations to all the churches around, and they published a set of tournament rules – you know, that everybody got sent so they’d know what to do. As it happened, we wound up playing the host church for the championship – not because we were that good of a team – most of the teams we played were physically superior to us – but we had a good coach, we played smart ball and we got lucky. So we wound up in the final championship game at the end of the afternoon. Well, this host church, that we were going to play, had a very big, strong minister and a

really strong associate pastor. And both of those guys could hit a softball like you wouldn't believe – as in out of sight! So the teams they had played all day long – up to the finals – had walked both of them all day long – like in three or four games, each of them might have gotten one at bat without getting walked. They never saw a good pitch all day. So they were pretty frustrated. Well, just before the championship game was to start, the host pastor – all six-foot-six of him – gathered the referees and our coach and me and announces that there will be no intentional walks in the final game. He was changing the rules – just like the five year old! Even his own teammates were off to the side shaking their heads. We didn't let them get away with it, but that is an example of that kind of moral development. So you have a church pastor stuck on level two – at least, in that situation. Maybe we can say that he regressed for the afternoon – or as the afternoon wore on, I don't know. Just to back up to that again, once we called him on it, he immediately had to back off, because he knew that he had no leg to stand on – because I'm holding the rules up for him to read! He tried it. He did. It was pretty interesting.

Okay, those are the first two – punishment is the motivator in the first one, and then self-interest. Kohlberg called those *pre-conventional*. Now the second category...you can guess what he called that, right? He called it *conventional*. Right? It's not *pre-conventional*. It comes *after* pre-conventional, so it's conventional. But both categories in this conventional – what do we call it? – category contain people who reason in a conventional way and judge the moral actions by comparing them to social views and expectations. This kind of reasoning is seen in teenagers and some adults. So he started out with little kids and adults that were stuck at child-like moral development, and now he's up to teenagers and adults that are stuck at teenage moral development.

The first one he calls *desire for interpersonal accord* and he says that that is *conformity-driven*. "Let's all get along and let's just all be the same." People in this stage seem to focus on filling social roles. "I'm a teacher." "I'm a doctor." "I'm a student. I do what students do." "I do what teachers do." People at this stage are receptive to approval or disapproval from others, as it reflects what society thinks is okay. Now, that's not bad – to be receptive to approval or disapproval from other people, right? Of course, that depends on what they think is correct, right? If everybody thinks it is okay to look at pornography or commit fornication, then that's not a good place to be, is it? But, if society says that virtue is a good thing, then that would be okay. So that's kind of on shifting sand, isn't it?

One of the examples I thought of for this is that for years I've heard my own kids and other ministers' kids say – so all the PKs have this complaint about their parents - because their parents always tell them to set a good example, which otherwise could be interpreted as saying, "Don't embarrass me." Right? We want to conform to what everybody thinks a minister should be like – right? – and a minister's family should be like. Of course, my kids...they kind of didn't do that, right? There was some embarrassment for us. All the ministers' kids correctly read that – that the ministers were embarrassed and they wanted to conform, but they used the excuse of setting a good example. And that's partly – a little bit in there – but that wasn't the main motivator for most of us, because we were all kind of stuck in that interpersonal accord and conformity-driven thing. I mean, the church that we were in years ago...that was where

we were. They said, “Don’t be like a yellow pencil,” but if you were another color, you got pulled out of the bin. So everybody was concerned about looking good before others and it was a very *judgmental* environment. There’s a lot that goes with this kind of thing. Those who are in this conformity-driven mode try to be a good boy or a good girl, to live up to the expectations of the group, and they see there are certain inherent benefits to doing that. That can be a good thing, depending on the group.

This kind of reasoning – this stage three reasoning – the interpersonal accord and conformity-driven thing – tends to be judgmental and it also tends to evaluate according to whatever happens as a result – things like the golden rule, and liking to be respected, and to show gratitude and receive gratitude. If you tell lies, people aren’t going to trust you. That kind of goes with this. And that’s true, too, isn’t it? But this is all about getting along, right, and fitting in. “I want to be liked and thought well of.” Deacons support the pastor. Sometimes “they mean well” can count something for this group. God tells us that He judges the heart, but He also tells us that actions come out of the heart. Right? So, there is some amount of awareness at this level.

The next one that he had is also in the conventional area – and also has to do with judging by societal rules – is what he called *obedience-driven* morality, where there is a lot that has to do with social order and authority. It’s important to obey laws and social conventions because of their importance in maintaining a functioning society. So this is a step past the need for individual approval in stage three, because society is more important than individual needs. I mean, we’re all going to water three days a week this summer so there will be water in the aquifer for this fall. Right? That’s putting society ahead of the individual. Is that a bad thing? No, it’s not. That’s kind of a better thing than just operating out of conformity, because, in this case, nobody would *know* if you watered. So it isn’t an issue of conformity here, is it? You could water all night long, if you want to, and nobody will catch you – especially if you have the drip system like mine. So there are times when conformity doesn’t really work for morals because nobody else is going to see it. In this case, watering three days a week is, if you think about it from a societal need point of view, then that works better. It’s more important that we have water to drink than my yard getting all the water at once.

Kohlberg noticed in this view that sometimes there was a central ideal that prescribed what right and wrong is. “I’m just going to follow what the church teaches. I’m going to do what the church does. I’m going to do what the church tells me to do. I’m going to be loyal to the church.” So that’s like, if we all work together and do the same thing, then it is going to be better for the group. Sometimes that is very important to do that, too, isn’t it? So I’m not saying that’s a bad thing. I’m just saying that’s better than just thinking about it from obedience or the conformity thing.

People at this level think, if one person violates a law, then maybe everybody would. So there’s an obligation and a duty to uphold laws and rules. I mean, all of us in Albuquerque complain about people that are always running the red light. They don’t even know what yellow means – unless it’s hammer down. So at this level, when somebody violates a law, it’s morally wrong.

I had a client once who told me that he always obeyed the law. Later he was telling me that after his second divorce, he sabotaged his wife's ability to get a job. He didn't tell me how he did that, but he said it was legal. And he told me that, if it wasn't legal, he wouldn't have done it. But since it was legal, it was okay. And he felt no remorse whatsoever about it. It was like she didn't matter. It was just about what the rules were. Have you ever met anybody like that? Oh yeah! Those people tend to wind up in power positions in companies, governments – usually not at the very top, but just underneath the upper layer where they have lots of control.

Kohlberg said that most people in society remain at stage four, where morality is predominantly dictated by an outside force – the rules, conformity, obedience, “What's in it for me?” – what's in it is outside of me – and punishment.

Okay, then he moves to *post-conventional*. Have we passed you yet? Are you stuck somewhere along the way? When we get past you, you might find it harder to understand what we're talking about. I know I did.

So the post-conventional level also has two categories in it. He called this *social contract* motivated. I call it *inclusive*. In this category, individuals are viewed as holding different opinions and values. That's, pretty much, always true, isn't it? Except, in different organizations, where it looks like everybody believes the same thing because they can't say what they really think, because they'd get kicked out or fired or whatever. So, at this level of morality, people are viewed as holding different opinions and values and laws are regarded as, what he calls, social contracts rather than rigid dictums. A social contract is where we voluntarily give up freedoms for the benefit of everybody – like we all agree not to run a red light, so that we can all get where we want without getting killed. It's not necessarily seen as a moral thing. It's seen as something we participate in – we give up certain freedoms – so that we can all get there safely. He said that, in this kind of thinking, rules that don't promote the general welfare can be changed easily when necessary to meet the greatest good for the greatest number of people. That's a good thing, isn't it? Yeah. We've all seen laws on the books that are so old they don't make any sense anymore. Sometimes you have some people that are willing to make those changes, and other times you've got some really rigid people that want to hang on to what is antiquated. So they are stuck at a lower level.

In this way of thinking, these kind of decisions – about what's good for everybody – are derived, or decided, through majority opinion and compromise. So democratic government is pretty much based on stage five reasoning. The problem here is that all kinds of businesses and organizational books espousing this kind of leadership are available, but there are very few companies that actually are run this way. Usually, when it gets down to it, if the guy at the top isn't a total controller, usually some of the people under him are. You hear people talking all the time about how they have these great leadership seminars and then everything goes right back to tight control and nobody gets to participate in the decision-making. And he said that everybody is, pretty much, stuck at level four, so you don't see much of this when it gets right down to it.

I was thinking about all of this. If a church were to really *use* and *emphasize* and *teach* to use their spiritual gifts, which come from God through the Holy Spirit – and there's no way anybody else can determine who is going to get what gift and how it should be used – how much of it – so it's, pretty much, outside the control of leadership – I don't think you could have a church that was functioning at level four that would really be excited about that kind of function. So what that means is companies, churches, governments can actually *stunt* our moral development, because we not allowed to function in a democratic fashion. We're not allowed to participate in decision-making and we're not allowed to use the gifts that we have – that kind of thing.

Now we've talked a lot about spiritual gifts and one of the things that we said is, it's not supposed to be chaos or anarchy. And how did we say that gifts should be used? Well, based on feedback from other people, which is this decision-making by consensus kind of approach. Right? So a real world application, where a lot of people in order to really benefit from their spiritual gifts, would probably have to change church organizations in order to do that.

I think I've told this story a lot, but I love to tell it because it was so hilarious. I was still on the learning curve about being an independent Christian and just starting to understand what freedom in Christ meant. Guy Swenson and I went to a large, metro area and we had a very large group of people there – by our standards – to learn about the eight qualities of church health. We had gotten, pretty well, into the spiritual gifts thing and this lady raised her hand. She was from one of the more traditional Church of God organizations, where everything comes from the top down – God the Father, Jesus Christ, the boss, then the boss's three or four guys – like that. So she was sitting there listening about the free flow of the Holy Spirit and all of that stuff and she raised her hand, and she said, "Can you tell me *how* we could do this stuff in the organization we're in?" Guy looked at her and said, "Well, Bill and I wouldn't be the ones to ask about that." The answer to the question really is that, in some organizations, you actually *can't* do what the Bible says to do, because they are not morally advanced enough to do it. I'm not trying to put anybody down, or make fun of anybody, or say I'm better than anybody, because I was at that level for years. Years! I'm just thankful to God that I kind of blundered my way around and found my way into something more important, I think.

Okay, so here we come to the final level of moral development that Kohlberg discovered. Now Kohlberg...I bet some people might call him a *godless* psychologist, right? He just does testing, and what does that have to do the Bible? and that kind of thing. Listen to what he said was the highest level of moral development. That's where people are driven by universal, ethical principles. *Universal*. Decisions are not reached hypothetically in a conditional way, but instead in an absolute way. It's either right or it's wrong. That's what he said was the highest level of morality. The reason that he said that this was so important was because it involves individuals imagining what they would do in somebody else's shoes, if they believed what the other person imagines to be true. He said that, for people that live by absolute moral principles, action is never a means to an end, but always an end in itself. The individual acts because it is right, not because it is instrumental, expected, legal, previously agreed upon or beneficial. It's done because it's the right thing to do. This is where real courage of convictions comes from.



We were reading in Revelation today about the church eras. God told one of the churches to be faithful unto death. So, when you get to that point, it's all about the action being what you are trying to accomplish. We've said that in the church for years. It's really all about moral character development, isn't it? And that's about the action itself.

It's interesting, too, that Kohlberg insisted that stage six exists, but he never really found any large group of individuals who consistently operated at this level. It's just really hard for humans to function on moral principles – at least, *universal* moral principles.

So, as Christians, we have the ultimate code of conduct. There is no moral relativism with us. Right action is not a means to an end. It's the end goal, godly behavior, the lived Christian life, Christian character. It's just too bad we don't function at that level very often.

Okay, so we can be motivated by punishment. If that's all you've got, that's good. You can be motivated to do right by self-interest. If that's all you've got, that's good. You can be motivated by conformity. If that's all you've got, that's a good thing. You can be motivated by obedience. And if that's all you've got, that's good. You can be motivated by inclusiveness – to pull everybody together. If that's all you've got, that's good. But the highest thing of all is God's universal law. It's really interesting that a lot of mainstream Christianity has downed the law of God so much, and yet a godless psychologist comes up with the highest level of morality a human can have is to follow universal, ethical principles and be driven by them.

So, what do you think about those principles? Do you think that's just pie-in-the-sky stuff? He just ate too big a burrito late at night, got up, and had a dream, and there it was? Or do you think that might be how people operate? He said that you had to start at the bottom – when you're a little kid – and work your way up. There was no skipping stages. Just like with child development, if a kid gets stuck at any stage, they have to finish that stage and move to the next before they can grow or they'll just stay there. They stay stuck.

I have an eleven-year-old who pitches horrendous tantrums. I mean, he should have gotten over that at three. But he's stuck there. Kohlberg said that the same thing happens to people with their moral development. Well, I'm not completely sure that that's exactly how God would say that's how He designed us, but that's a lot closer than anybody else I've heard. I think it's a very keen observation about how people operate. We start out obeying to avoid punishment, but in the end, a Christian is supposed to end up fully committed to the law from the inside out, right? It becomes what we internally believe and live by and do, isn't it? So, we don't do it because we *have* to. We do it because it is the way we *are*.

Let's go to Hebrews 8. This is what God says He is trying to do with us.

**Heb. 8:10** – *“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I’ll be their God and they’ll be My people.”* There it is! That's what He's trying to do.

Now every other thing that He tries to do with us – spiritual development, human development – He does in stages. So it certainly makes sense that this would happen as well. It is a process. And if we know what a child can learn at each stage, then we have a leg up on instilling godly morals in our children.

Let's talk about some other elements of moral development. One is the bedrock of morality – “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” It's so important to know how other people are feeling and what they are going through. And until we know that, we can't really ask, “What would I want done to me if I were in that situation?”

Talking about that little girl that follows the rules, we were talking one day about a vacation she was going on and the session that she was going to miss. She asked me if it would hurt my feelings when she didn't come to that session. Isn't that sweet? I mean, she's thinking about me and would I experience a loss, because I wouldn't get to see her while she is off having fun? She was putting herself in my shoes, wasn't she? So I was thinking that she might think it might hurt her feelings, if I wasn't there when she came for a session. So, it was then logical for her to ask if I felt the same way about it. Well, we had a really nice little talk about our relationship, and what we meant to each other, and how it was always nice to see her, and that I cared about her, but I also liked it when I knew she was having a good time in doing fun things.

Well, she was the same one, who, later, when I went on vacation, called me the morning of the first day, which was to be her session. She was checking to see if she was supposed to come that day – that's what she told me. She said she'd gotten confused about it. I think, maybe, she just wanted to check in. I told I was on my vacation. She said, “Where are you?” I said, “I'm in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the moment.” And she said, “Is it fun there?” I told her it was as fun as it can be when you're gassing up your car. She said, “Oh, you're at a gas station. When are you coming back?” Well, that really kind of clued me in that she was missing me a little bit. So I said, “I'll be back next week, and then you and I can see each other and have some fun together. I can't wait to see you.” She said, “I can't either.” So, a very caring, empathic child. She doesn't want to hurt others, because she has this sense of empathy. That characteristic is the foundation of moral development. The rules about how to treat other people are powered by that. The roots of godly love are based in empathy, as well.

We talked, in the beginning of this series, about that man who was in his seventies struck down in a crosswalk back in New England – went down on the concrete in rush hour. And I think he said nine cars drove by – drivers looking out at him laying there on the concrete bleeding – and then drove on. They couldn't connect with his pain and with his fear and his confusion – lack of empathy – just like the guys who walked by the guy in the parable, right? He was robbed and beaten. And Jesus asked the lawyer who was brother to the one who had been hurt? And he said, “The one that helped him.” Right! That's what connects people.

There is what is called the *last phase of empathy*. Late in teenage it is possible for people to take another step up on the empathy ladder. That is to alleviate the suffering of other

people. At this stage, people can feel empathy for an entire group – like the poor, or the disabled.

I have a client who is just finishing up her therapy. She's eighteen. And every summer since she was fourteen, she has gone with a group to another nation to do humanitarian work. And one of her most cherished memories is that of helping a disabled child learn how to jump on a trampoline. Do you think that that desire and that memory are in line with the values of Jesus Christ? I sure do. I think that she is going to have a leg up on some of us – at least, in that area.

Then, the last thing I wanted to talk about is the issue of *attuning*. Attuning is where we experience what other people experience. It's not just that we understand their experience, it's that we *experience* what they're experiencing. Paul said in Romans 12:15, *Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn* – right there, feeling what they feel. It's only when we know *how* others feel that we can understand their experience. So this attuning thing that we do with babies, and should do with older children, too, is how we develop a sense a empathy. And that's how we know what people need. We have to *attune* if we're going to help people.

So where are you? Where are you in all of this? One of the benefits of this kind of material is that we get to see where we are along the growth spectrum. What drives you morally? Is it fear of punishment? Is it getting what you want? Is it conformity? Is it obedience? Is it democratic process? Or is it because the law is deeply engrained in you so much that you are never tempted to break it? No, I don't think too many of us are there all the time, are we? Maybe we get there once in awhile and we think that covers us for the whole time. No, it doesn't. It's only covering us while we're there.

I mentioned the man who came in with the fear of getting caught. He was stuck at a very childish stage of development – the lowest, right? But I noticed, as his therapy progressed, his moral development progressed, as well. He came in worried about getting caught and wanting to avoid prison, but at one point, he wondered out loud what life would be like for him, if he couldn't do that anymore. So now it's the self thing. And then, he talked about his wife and losing their social relationship – their marriage. Then he started to develop some feelings for his victims and expressed regret about what he had done. I didn't have anything to do with this, but the last thing he did was to start reading his Bible and wondering out loud what *God* thought about what he had done. I don't know if he hit every stage along the way, but I know he's headed in the right direction. And I know, too, that once he was freed up from that stuck position and that very elementary level of moral development, he grew quickly. He grew very fast from that point on.

Okay, that's what we know about the development of morals in humans. Next time we're going to look at how to use these stages to teach children morals in an age appropriate manner. Don't have any kids? Well, do you think that you might need to teach children in the kingdom? It's never a bad idea to learn more skills, is it?

Page 12

So don't forget to check out the series on the development of spirituality over the lifespan. The title again, *Spiritual Growth and Human Development*. We'll see you then.