

# John q: basic principles of christian morality in the movie

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Basic morality is defined as “ conformity to the rules of right conduct.” The basis of this definition is used in moralities around the world. In the basic morality, one person can decide their own moral standards based off of what is right and wrong. They get their beliefs from society and what they believe in both spiritually and philosophically. Although there are many moralities in today’s society, they all have similar themes in which their beliefs are based upon. Basic morality is a way of life that all persons should follow that allows people to use their own beliefs and virtues to steer life in the right direction. Christian morality takes everything a step further in determining the morality of what is right and wrong.

“ Christian Morality is the science of knowing what one ought to do by the virtue of being a human” (Sherbondy). All beliefs in Christian morality are based off of the moral virtues that Christ taught, hence the name Christian. Christian morality is a specific form of morality that looks at the life that Christ lived while on earth and the lessons he taught, and tries to translate these teachings into real life happenings. It teaches the difference between right and wrong, and teaches of the acceptance God has for all human beings. These specific teachings of Christian Morality play a huge role in society, and the basic virtues are shown through every aspects of life. A specific way that Christian Morality speaks to the youth of today is through movies and television (Phelan). There are many movies that hold the basic teachings of Christian Morality, especially the constant battle between what is right and wrong.

John Q is one of the many movies that include basic principles of Christian Morality and what Christians stand for. It is the story of a dad's love for a child, and shows the true compassion one holds for their own children. John Q and his family do not have very much money, but they do what they can to survive. While playing baseball one day, John's son Michael collapsed on the field. He is immediately rushed to the hospital, where his parents begin to fight for the life of their beloved son. After running many tests, doctors come to the conclusion that Michael has an enlarged heart, and if he does not receive a heart transplant soon, his probable death is imminent (John Q).

John loves his son very much, and will do anything he can to save Michael. However, once he began making the decisions that would dictate if Michael would live or not, John had to decide between what is right and wrong. The news of his son's heart defect rocked his world, and they began take the necessary steps towards getting a heart transplant. John and his wife meet with the financial director of the hospital to discuss insurance policies and how they would pay for the transplant. The financial director informs them that the procedure would cost 250, 000 dollars, and in order to get on the transplant list the hospital would need a down payment of \$75, 000 (John Q). After speaking with his insurance company, he comes to the realization that his insurance will not cover the procedure, and that he would have to pay for his son's new heart with his very low income. Knowing that John cannot afford the transplant, he takes matters into his own hands. This is when John begins to make immoral decisions that were needed to save his son's life.

The hospital notifies John, telling him that his son Michael would be released if they could not afford the transplant. This is when John puts his heart before his morals, and walks into the emergency room with a handgun. He gathers eleven hostages, and makes his one and only demand. He states that he will hold the hospital under lockdown until his son's name is placed on the transplant list. Although being held hostage, the eleven people that John holds begin to form a special bond with each other and even John. After John informs them that they will eventually receive the medical help they need, the hostages begin to support John's actions (John Q). Through many twists and turns while the hospital is being held under lockdown, John keeps pursuing his goal of getting his son's name on the transplant list.

After many hours of holding hostages and a member of the SWAT team, John was granted his wish. His initial plan was to kill himself so that his son could have his heart, but as he is about to pull the trigger when his wife comes barging in. A woman with the same blood type as Michael was killed in a car accident. Michael has the transplant and hopefully becomes healthy. John goes to court to get his sentence for holding a hospital under his jurisdiction (John Q). The movie then ends, leaving many explanations up in the air. This leaves the audience thinking, leading to the question of whether or not what John did was morally right.

John Q is a terrific movie to preview Christian Morality and perfectly shows the difference between what is morally right and what is morally wrong. John makes many immoral actions in the movie. Although his actions are for a good purpose, he could have definitely gone about helping his son in a

different manner. It was morally wrong for him to break into the hospital, hold hostages at gunpoint, and threaten to shoot. Not only is all of this illegal and very dangerous, it is in direct violation of the 10 commandments. The fifth commandment states "Thou Shall Not Kill". Although he doesn't intend to shoot anyone, this can still be shown as an offense against the commandment because he held people hostage underneath gunpoint. Our Life in Christ states directly: "Major violations of the fifth commandment includes scandal and serious violations of fundamental human rights like kidnapping, hostage taking, torture of prisoners, and terrorist acts" (Pennock). Therefore, hostage taking is in direct violation of the fifth commandment, showing that John made a very immoral decision in taking the hostages. This was one of the many immoral actions shown in the movie John Q.

Besides holding hostages under gunpoint, John threatened to kill himself. According to Christian Morality, killing oneself is morally evil. "Suicide, the taking of one's own life, is a serious evil that shows a total lack of self-love and a rejection of the God of life" (Pennock). Only God should decide when one's life is ending, and by attempting suicide, one is blatantly ignoring God and is ultimately a very selfish action. John was only threatening suicide because he wanted to help his son. However, in the long run killing himself would have done nothing good. He would maybe be helping his soon physically, but emotionally Michael would feel empty. Not only is killing oneself immoral, John would have made it even worse because it could set a very bad example to his child. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "

If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law. Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide" (CCC 2282). Therefore, killing himself for his child could have set a very bad example, resulting in a very immoral action that completely goes against Christian Morality.

Although John's actions are very immoral, his intentions are for the better good. He wants his son to live, and shows that he will do anything in the world for his son. John tried many different ways to help his son. Not only did he get one job, he found multiple places of employment so that he could make enough money to have the transplant take place. He did not succeed in making enough money, but he found other means. John made an immoral decision, but it ultimately saved his son's life. If he had not gone into the hospital and made the threats that he did, his son would not have received the treatment he needed and probably would have died. John's love for his son is selfless and very giving. This type of love is known as agape and is the love that Jesus showed through his death (Pennock). Therefore, John loves Michael the hardest way he could, and totally sacrificed himself for his only son. The love shown in this movie is beautiful and pure, and is a perfect and primary example of the love a parent has for their child.

John Q was an amazing movie that shows the basic principles of Christian Morality. It beautifully portrays the story of John Q's family and their fight for Michael's survival. Through many tough situations, John perseveres and

saves his son. However, he made many immoral and illegal decisions along the way. He violates the fifth commandment several times, and threatened to commit suicide. Although John does not make the best decisions, they are ultimately for the better goods. The end does not justify the means, but he does save his sons life. John shows true agape love throughout the movie, and presents the love and compassion that a father has for his son. John Q is an unforgettable movie that shows the human perseverance in times of trouble.