



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Are People Generally Good?

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

I was in college when God began to show me the truth of the Gospel that even if people seem to be living a good life *“both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, ‘there is none righteous, not even one’”* (Romans 3:9b-10), *“for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”* (James 2:10). *“And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things”* (Romans 2:2).

Even if you have sinned only once in your life, or transgressed only “a little,” you are guilty of breaking the whole of God’s Law. So when people say, “I think I’ll go to Heaven because I’m a pretty good person and I’ve done more good than I have bad,” how do you respond to this? Well, a heart surgeon who’s saved the lives of hundreds of people will still be sentenced to death if he murders a homeless man. A just judge will not let him off if he says, “But Judge, I’ve done so much good in my life, doesn’t that outweigh the bad? My life is far more valuable than that man’s life!” He bears the guilt regardless. How much more then is our guilt in our sin before the truly Holy, sinless, justice of God! Because He is infinitely righteous, no amount of limited righteous living can draw us near Him—we are always separated by an unbridgeable gap.

Sometimes, however, we may feel that there are people who are “better” than others, right? We put Adolf Hitler in the category of “really bad people,” and the unbelieving girl down the street who you’ve never seen do anything bad as a “pretty good person.” Shouldn’t God make allowances? How can He sentence both to the same place of judgment in hell? Well,

the capacity or potential for the worst kinds of sin are in us all. The difference between a deranged serial killer and a chronic cereal eater can be boiled down to three things: the Holy Spirit’s restraint in the world, fear of justice, and opportunity. Given the right opportunity, a blind eye by the law, and the Holy Spirit allowing you to do what you want, people everywhere would spiral into the same horrific crimes, driven by the same sin nature inside them. This is why “normal” people can suddenly do horrific things when the right circumstances align. This is also why when the Holy Spirit is removed, the Great Tribulation will begin, *“such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now”* (Matthew 24:21)—the heart of man will be unfettered.

God cares about what’s going on in the eternal spaces of the heart. So, if you entertain wickedness but never have an opportunity to bring it into reality, you are still guilty, because He knows that given the right conditions, you would do that evil—you cannot help yourself, and no man has interceded for you (Isaiah 59:16). God does not let people off of His Judgment if they “avoid” sin, because the potential to do that sin is always there. This is what Adam and Eve proved—given the right opportunity, they revealed in deed what was already in their heart. It is not in our nature to keep ourselves from sin (this is what the Old Testament Law proved through Israel).

God is the only one who can save us from our sin nature because He is the only one Who can intercede for us. He did just that in the form of Jesus Christ, bearing the guilt and judgment for our sin nature. Only through turning to Jesus and putting your full trust in His ability to save you are you made a Child of God, to be raised by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to *“share His Holiness”* (Hebrews 12:10). Even so, amen.

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