

Are You a Good Person?

When I was a new Christian, working as an electrician, one of the workers said to me, "I know you probably look at me and think, 'What a big sinner.'" The fact is, it was just the opposite. As a new Christian I didn't look at others a big sinners, but I began to see myself as a sinner and yet apparently, this man thought of himself as a good person. So many people accuse Christians of being judgmental because they think they are better than others when the reality is, true Christians recognize that all people are sinners, including themselves, while non-believers typically think they are basically good, even as they continue to violate God's laws, getting drunk, looking at pornography, telling 'white' lies, using God's name as a cuss word and so on.

In fact, many people think they are better than others because they protest war, stand up for animal rights, campaign to save the earth, or join activist groups condemning those who do not adhere to their ideology. As a result, they flatter themselves like the Pharisee, saying, "I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust" (Luke 18:11). While many think they are good because they protest the so-called evils in society, there is a sense of pride, rebellion, and self-righteousness in activism. Whether you are a Christian yelling, "God hates fags," or an activist yelling, "You racist, homophobe, misogynistic pig," you are acting in the wrong spirit. The rising spirit of activism in society is not fueled by love, but hatred and Jesus warns, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of" (Luke 9:55). Modern activism is inspired more by a spirit of hatred and intolerance than by love.

Removing the Planks

The appeal of Christ to the Christian and the pagan is the same. "First, remove the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5). Those who shout out threats of hatred and violence against the evils of society are often

the in the wrong, not only in their attitude, but also in the very causes they fight. The fact is, much of the activism today is actually in violation of God's will. Those who campaign to legalize marijuana, fight to make animals equal with humans, promote the homosexual lifestyle, support abortion, go topless for women's rights and more think they are doing good while the Bible condemns these things. That is why the Bible warns, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14:12). Just because something feels right does not make it right.

While we may claim to be standing up for things that are good and right, Isaiah 64:6 says, "all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags." That means, our goodness is not really good at all. On the contrary. Most people who claim to be good continue to get drunk, tell lies, have sex outside of marriage, look at pornography, use God's name as a cuss word, smoke marijuana, and so on. While living in sin, they claim to be good simply because they are politically correct. This goodness then gives birth to pride, giving them the right to call others, "homophobe, xenophobe, Islamophobe, racist, misogynist" and so on while they act just like the Pharisees saying, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men" — homophobes, xenophobes, Islamophobes, racists, and misogynists (Luke 18:11)! Isn't it ironic that people will tell lies, steal, post hateful comments on social media, objectify the opposite sex by looking at porn and by posting nude pictures of themselves while claiming to live on some moral high ground, calling others racists, misogynists, and homophobes? They claim to live on some moral high ground while they continue to spew hatred, label people, and defy God.

In tearing down others we are really saying, "I'm better than you." This was the same attitude of the religious leaders in Jesus' day who claimed to be better than others, but are we really better than others? According to the Bible, all of us are sinners. "There is none who does good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:12). Those who claim to be good and moral are no better than those people they

condemn and this mindset does not promote love, but pride. When we reason by our own moral standard, we become proud and self-righteous, as foretold in God's word. The Bible says that "in the last days" people would be proud, unholy, unforgiving, disobedient, "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Don't you see the irony in this. The Bible predicted that a movement would rise up in the last days in which people would claim to have a form of goodness while being proud, rebellious, and disobedient. This outward form of goodness is not really good at all.

Conflicting Standards

Today, there are two different standards warring against each other in society; God's standard of the Bible is warring against man's standard of political correctness. Man says it's okay to get drunk as long as you drink responsibly or tell a lie as long as it's a 'white' lie. Man says homosexuality is an acceptable practice and abortion is a woman's right. Man says it's okay to pose nude or look at nude images, but God says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil" (Isa. 5:20). What man considers good, God considers evil and one day Christ is going to return and inspect our characters to see if we are good by our standard or according to His standard. Those who reject God's standard of goodness will then see what a terrible mistake they made, but it will be too late. As they cry, "Lord, look at all the good things we did," and He will simply reply, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:23)!

Unless we are living by God's standard, our goodness is nothing but "filthy rags," as in the following story. There was once a cleaning man who offered to clean everyone's house for free before a neighborhood inspection. All the people said, "No thanks, my house is already good," except one lady. Her house was terribly messy and she knew it would never pass the inspection, so she consented to have it cleaned. Well, the cleaning guy did such a great job that all the other

houses in the neighborhood which seemed clean before now looked filthy in comparison. Ironically, the only house that passed the inspection was the dirty house that was cleaned by the cleaning man. Similarly, those who claim to be good without seeking God's help to clean up their lives will not make it to heaven. Their houses will not pass the inspection because trying to become good enough for heaven on our own is impossible. The good news is, Jesus is offering to clean up your life for free! No charge. Salvation is a "free gift" (Rom. 5:15).

The fact is, none of us are good. Because we are born with a sinful nature and our "heart is deceitful" (Jer. 17:9). That means it can trick us into thinking it is good when it is actually corrupt. That is why there are so many people claiming to be good while they are acting contrary to God's will, being proud, divisive, and rebellious. Of course, all of us are in the same boat. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), but the good news is that God can change us. Perhaps you have begun to see that your goodness is not real good, but "filthy rags." Perhaps you have been tricked into thinking you were good, but now you see that there is a higher standard; God's standard. The good news is that if you will simply invite Jesus into your heart, asking Him to clean up your life, He will take the responsibility of changing you and He will make you truly good! Why don't you invite Jesus into your heart today. Say, "God, I'm a sinner. I see my goodness is not really good, so please come into my life and change me," then let put your faith in Him, trusting the He will begin to make the necessary changes in your life.

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