

HOW GOOD ARE YOU?

To be good means to be morally honorable. So, what is it that makes you morally honorable or good? Possibly an even better question is this: how good does a person have to be to be truly good?

Several years ago there was a man that lived in a small peaceful town. Everyone seemed to like him. He was tall and handsome, full of life, and had the reputation of always being polite and honest. In fact, he was respected so much for his honesty that people would often ask him for opinions because they knew he would tell them the truth even if it hurt a little. One day he decided to open an orphanage and pay for it himself. He worked hard to support it, and the result was that there were many children that had a home, food and even education because of his charity.

Then one day there was a story in the newspaper that a man had been killed, and the possibilities of self defense or accidental death were completely ruled out. The police had apprehended the suspect and to everyone's astonishment it was the man that was so nice. When the long awaited trial came the courtroom was packed. The room was totally silent when the charges were read, and then the judge asked, "What is your plea?"

True to his reputation, the man was honest when he said, "I am guilty as charged."

What do you think?

- Did the man go to prison for his crime?
- Did any of his honesty and charity help him go free?
- Can he do anything to make up for his crime?
- Would you want this man as a next door neighbor or possibly as your child's school teacher?

It is pretty easy to realize that in spite of all the good qualities this man had, he was not GOOD. Good deeds do not replace nor make up for sin. The fact that the man was honest and charitable did not change the fact that he was also a murderer.

How about you? You might be thinking to yourself, "Well, I never killed anyone!" One day Jesus addressed that very issue. He said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause

shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21-22). Have you ever been angry without a cause? How many good deeds can you do to make up for one wrathful outburst? Jesus continued the same verse with these words, "And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." So Jesus considered unrighteous anger to be the same as breaking the 6th Commandment.

One time Jesus was approached by a man that asked, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus responded by saying, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

How many commandments have you broken? 1 John 3:4 says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." God's law is perfect. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Have you been perfect? God's law tells us not to steal, lie, or even covet. How many times have you lied, stolen, coveted, hated, lusted, and the like? Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34).

Just like the nice man in our story, we cannot do anything good to make up for our sins. It does not matter if we have done good deeds. Only our sinful deeds matter when God comes to judge. That is why Jesus came to earth to forgive our sins when we could do nothing to make up for them. Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." That means that He can remove your sin even when you are not good. Admit that you are not good today, and Jesus can wash away your sins so that when you face God, the Righteous Judge, you can do so without fear of eternal punishment. If you would like to ask Jesus for forgiveness just pray this simple prayer in faith, and God will answer it.

PRAYER: *Father God, I know that I have sinned. I have broken your commandments. I know that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for my sins. I also believe that He died and rose again. Today I repent of my sins, and I ask that you will please forgive me. Come into my life and make me new. I want to serve you for the rest of my life, and I want to go to heaven when I die. Thank you Lord, for saving me. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.*