

## ARE YOU A TRULY GOOD PERSON?

or

### **(Do You Just Compare Yourself Against Others And Think You Are Good?)**

If you ask the average person on the street if they are a good person the typical answer is a confident YES! Most people like to grade themselves on the curve (i.e. comparing themselves to others). God's law [The Ten Commandments] set forth God's perfect standard for living, but the problem is that no person can obey it completely and thus every person is a sinner; *Romans 3:23* "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." Failure to perfectly obey everything in the law of God is sin; **James 2:10** "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." In summary, the Ten Commandments shows us God's standard of perfection to enter heaven, but by showing us that standard it also shows us that we can never reach that standard.

#### **Romans 3:19-20:**

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; <sup>20</sup>because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Maybe you are one who considers yourself a good person. If you are not a Christian, you will be judged by all of your deeds in light of the perfect law of God. (Revelation 20:11-15, Jude verses 14-15, Romans 2:5-16). Do you think you have kept the Ten Commandments? Let's take a short test and see if you are truly as good as you might think:

1. Have you ever lied before? What does that make you?  
[Answer: a liar – Exodus 20:16]
2. Have you ever taken anything that did not belong to you? (Remember it does not matter if it was of a small value or it was a long time ago.) What do you call someone who has stolen?  
[Answer: a thief – Exodus 20:15]
3. Have you ever used God's name in vain or said Jesus as a swear word? What do you call one who does that?  
[Answer: a blasphemer – Exodus 20:7]  
(You are guilty of blasphemy when you take the name of the God who made you and say it in an irreverent way or reduced it to the level of a filth word that you use to vent disgust.)
4. Have you every look at another person with lust? What does Jesus say about one who does that?  
[Answer: Jesus says the one who looks upon another in lust has committed adultery in their heart – Matt. 5:28].
5. Have you every hated anyone?  
[Answer: The Bible says that your hatred is equivalent with murder.  
*1 John 3:15* "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."] (Jesus also said if you call someone a fool you are guilty enough to go into fiery hell – Matt. 5:22)  
Remember that we are being compared with God's perfect standard and not the standard we have set up.

The questions above involved only five of the Ten Commandments. There are five more that you will eventually answer before God someday. Do you still think you are a truly “good person”? If you were to die in the next five minutes would you be judged as innocent or guilty based on the Ten Commandments? Do you think you would go to heaven or hell? Let’s look at what the Bible states is the punishment for having lied:

Revelation 21:8 “... and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

When one judges themselves by God’s standard, that person quickly understands that they are not the person they would like to think they are. Remember eternity is not just another lifetime...it is forever and ever. Will you spend it in heaven with a loving God or will you spend it in hell because God judged you honestly for what you are (one who rebelliously rejects His Law - The Ten Commandments.)

Even though there is an escape from the judgment to Hell by putting your faith in Jesus’ sacrificial death on the Cross, many will neglect or even reject such salvation. In **Hebrews 2:3** it states “*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?...*” For example, say you were convicted of a terrible crime and were justly sentenced to death row. According to the law, only one person has the authority to pardon you of that sentence. How would you respond if that person actually granted you a pardon? Would you just ignore it or grab onto it like your life depended on it (because it does!). Let’s look at a real United States Supreme Court case that involves those issues.

In 1833, during the January term of the United State Supreme Court the case of United States v. George Wilson was decided.<sup>1</sup> One of the pertinent facts of the case is that Wilson had a Federal conviction that resulted in a death sentence.<sup>2</sup> Although doomed by the death sentence, he was saved when he was issued a pardon from the only person who could grant it, the President of the United States (Andrew Jackson).<sup>3</sup> One must understand that the pardon was sent directly to Wilson himself and not to the sentencing court. The Supreme Court stated that a pardon is a private communication by the President to the defendant, and not to the court.

A bizarre turn of events occurred when Wilson refused to formally make the Court aware of his pardon! Technically the Court was aware that the pardon was floating around out there, but Wilson would not actually produce it so that the Court could stop his execution. With that as the factual background, one can see that the issue before the Supreme Court was whether the Court can force a pardon upon a person. In answering that question, the United States Supreme Court first explained what a pardon is:

“A pardon is an act of grace, proceeding from the power intrusted with the execution of the laws, which exempts the individual, on whom it is bestowed, from the punishment the law inflicts for a crime he has committed.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNITED STATES v. GEORGE WILSON 32 U.S. 150, 7 Pet. 150, 8 L.Ed. 640 (UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT January 1833 term).

<sup>2</sup> Id. 32 U.S. at 151

<sup>3</sup> President Andrew Jackson granted Wilson a pardon on June 14, 1830. Id at 153.

<sup>4</sup> Id. at 160

The Court went on to explain that the pardon has no effect unless it is accepted by the criminal:

“A pardon is a deed, to the validity of which, delivery is essential, and delivery is not complete without acceptance. It may then be rejected by the person to whom it is tendered; and if it be rejected, we have discovered no power in a court to force it on him.”<sup>5</sup>

You are like George Wilson. You know you are guilty of violating God’s law and that eternal judgment is coming soon. The only person in all creation, The Son of God, has paid for your penalty on the Cross. He offers you a complete pardon because of His love for you. Will you, with great joy and appreciation, embrace that pardon and tell others? If not, you can be like Wilson and say “yes I may have done some things wrong, I will admit that, but I am a tough guy and I will take what’s coming.” Wilson’s response of rejecting his pardon shows that he was little more than an ungrateful stubborn imbecile. He did not have a clue of the judgment in fiery hell that awaited him for all eternity!

It is not your good works of baptism, communion, or helping the poor that grants you forgiveness of your sins. To obtain forgiveness you must repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross as the full and complete payment for your sins. **Mark 1:14-15** *“And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”* We need to understand that He did not die on the cross as a martyr or a great example of love, etc. He died to pay the penalty of others’ sins. One either puts their faith in the work of Christ on the cross or they will be judged for their own sins.

Will you come to Christ and joyfully receive the pardon Jesus promises? Jesus said:

**John 6:37-40** *All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.<sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.<sup>39</sup> And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.<sup>40</sup> For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.*

Those in Christ are no longer under the judgment of the Law because Jesus was the fulfillment of the law:

**Romans 8:1-4** *THERE is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.<sup>3</sup> For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,<sup>4</sup> in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

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<sup>5</sup> Id at 161

It is my hope that you pray to God right now, confessing and repenting of your sin and asking Him to grant you forgiveness. God promises that he will forgive you!

*1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

If you have done that, start learning the truth about the God that saved you by reading His Word, The Bible. Start in the New Testament book of John.

May God richly bless you as you grow in your Christian life.

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