

Am I good enough to go to heaven?

By Matthew Tague

Most of us think we are pretty good people. If we aren't in prison, if we hold down a job and if we are fairly kind to others, we think we are doing ok. The problem with this type of thinking is found when we look at who we are comparing ourselves to. Think about the comparison above for a second. We compare ourselves to people in prison, the jobless and those who aren't kind to others, usually people "worse" than us, although we would never say such a thing out loud. But how do we know that this is who God will compare us to at the end of our life? For a moment, think about the person you could be. Think about the good things you haven't done, the work you haven't accomplished, and the love you haven't shown to others. What if God compares you to you? That person you always should have been? I can only speak for myself in saying that I am not yet the person I want to be. I honestly don't know if I ever will be. That is bad news for me. If God judges me against the perfect me, then I am in trouble. That leads us to the question, "What standard does God use to judge a person?" Before I answer that question, I want to very briefly address the question of whether God actually judges people after they die.

First, does God really judge people when they die? The Bible says yes. **Hebrews 9:27** says "each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment." Many people believe in an all loving eternal father who won't condemn anyone after they die. Their concept of a loving God comes from the Bible, but they reject the same biblical concept when it comes to the concept of judgment. This might comfort someone emotionally, but it is the wrong path to take if you truly want to get to know what God is like. The Bible says that God will hold all people accountable for their actions. So, if God will really judge us all at the end of our lives, what standard does he use?

The Bible tells us that God's standard is perfection. This might make us a bit uncomfortable. But before we get personal about it, think with me for a moment about why perfection has to be God's standard. If a being such as God actually exists, he must be perfect, for if he were not, he wouldn't be God. That's kind of axiomatic about God. If God exists, he must be perfectly good, perfectly holy, perfectly honest, etc...So, in asking what standard God judges humans with, the answer must also be perfection, for that is what God is. Ok, so God demands perfection of us? NOPE. The Bible tells us that God knew we could not attain perfection because of our sin. Therefore he sent Jesus to stand in our place. All we have to do is follow Jesus and he takes our place as perfect before God. Jesus is the only perfect human to ever live. **John 3:16** tells us that God loved us so much that he sent Jesus for us and anyone who believes in him will have eternal life and won't go to hell. God knew we couldn't stand up against perfection, so he gave us a way out, following Jesus. If we follow Jesus, we stand in his perfection, and not our own sin. Following Jesus begins when you pray and ask him to forgive you of your sins. But it doesn't stop there. The Bible records that Jesus said, "anyone who wants to come after me must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me." **Matthew 16:24**. Following Jesus is not just a decision, but a life path. It's a recognition that Jesus is Lord and living life that follows him. When you follow Jesus, you are "born again" into God's kingdom and you learn how to live by following Jesus.

When you trust in Jesus, you don't have to worry about being good enough to go to heaven. Jesus was good enough and because you follow him, God judges you based on Jesus. Jesus passes the test every time.