

Why Can't I Just be Good Enough to Get to Heaven

Intro:

1. Response to your witness: "I'll just take my chances", "I don't think the Man upstairs would condemn a good person to hell" or "I'm as good a person as the next guy".
2. The assumption is that God grades on the curve.
3. Where did they come up with that! That idea is not in the Bible.
4. Instead you will find:
 - a. "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." - Rom 3:10-11.
 - b. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . . - Rom 3:23.
5. So - why can't you be accepted by God into heaven by just being a good ole boy?

Philippians 3:1-11

- I. v1-6 - Because God's Minimum Standard for Acceptance is Perfection!
 - A. v4 - If anyone could have achieved salvation by being good, it would have been the Apostle Paul!
 - B. v4a - Paul had the right background.
 1. You say, "I'm a Christian - I was born in America wasn't I?" Does being born an American (or any other nationality) automatically make you a Christian?
 2. You say, "I came from a Christian family, so I guess I'm a Christian, right?".
 - a. Paul came from the nation of Israel.
 - b. If anyone could claim a relationship with God based on his nationality, it could have been him.
 - c. Israel was God's chosen people - so Paul was racially pure.
 3. You say, "Dad was an elder in the church & mom sang in the choir, so I guess I'm alright".
 - a. "But - God don't have no grandkids"! If anyone came from the right family, it was Paul.
 - b. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, the only son of Jacob born in the promised land & the child of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife.
 - c. From Benjamin came Israel's 1st king - Saul - from whom Paul was named.
 - (1) As a Roman citizen, Paul Παῦλος was his Roman name helping him to relate better in the Gentile world.
 - (2) Saul שָׂאֵל was his original Jewish name.
 - d. Benjamin & Judah were the only tribes to remain faithful to the original kingdom when it divided. From these tribes came the nucleus for rebuilding Israel after the exile.
 - e. Mordecai - Esther's uncle (also Esther herself) - came from this tribe.
 - f. So - Paul belonged to the elite tribe of Israel!
 4. You say, "I was baptized as an infant & have been raised in the church ever since".
 - a. Paul was circumcised on the 8th day according to the Law (Gen 17:12), so he was born into the Jewish faith.
 - b. So Paul had been raised in the "church" of his day too!
 - C. v5b-6 - Paul had the right achievements.
 1. You say, "But I'm one of the most active members of my church!"
 - a. Although Paul grew up in Tarsus (a city in another country), he remained loyal to his faith.
 - b. Whereas most Jews learned the local language & forgot Hebrew, Paul learned Hebrew as well as the local languages (Act 21:40).
 - c. Loyalty & involvement in your church will not provide you salvation. You can't earn salvation by being a good church worker!

2. You say, **“But mom sat us on her knee & taught us the Bible every night & I won a perfect attendance pin in Sunday School”**.
 - a. Paul was a trained Pharisee - he kept the Law of God to the letter!
 - b. He was a well educated person:
 - (1) Earned his BA at the University of Tarsus.
 - (2) Went on to seminary in Jerusalem where he was a student of the world famous Gamaliel - the most prominent theological scholar of his day (**Act 5:34; 22:3**).
 - c. Paul practiced his faith to the most demanding degree.
 - d. But - the Lord says, **But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. - Matt 7:26.**
3. You say, **“But I’m real zealous for my church!”**
 - a. Paul was so fanatical for his faith that he persecuted the church. He though he was on God’s side.
 - b. King Philip of Spain was zealous for his faith - he started the Inquisition.
 - c. Mohammed was zealous for his faith - he started his own religion.
 - d. You can be very sincere & be very sincerely wrong!
4. You say, **“But I’m a good moral person; certainly not as bad as some of those hypocrites in the church!”**
 - a. No one could accuse Paul for omitting anything that the Law of Moses required.
 - b. But - he called himself “the worst of sinners”! **I Tim 1:15 - Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.**

II. v7-11 - Because a Personal Relationship with Jesus is the Only Way to Heaven

- A. **Jn 14:6 - Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ILL: “Stay with the King”**
- B. **v7 - Paul considered all of his achievements & ancestry in the flesh of no consequence.**
 1. **Is 64:6 - All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.**
 2. **Tit 3:5 - he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.**
- C. **v8 - Paul lost everything - but considered it of no consequence compared with his experience with the Lord.**
 1. The relationship with Lord Jesus is the only permanent relationship you will ever have. Everything else is temporary! Everything!
 2. There is only one event in the future that we all know is going to happen. Every other future event is only a guess at best.
 3. That for sure future event is the Lord’s Second Coming & you better be ready for it!
 4. Nothing else really matters compared to living with God forever!
- D. **v9 - Your greatest desire needs to be simply to be found in Him.**
 1. Your salvation isn’t based upon what you do - but where you stand! - your trust in Jesus.
 2. Your transformed life (**Rom 12:2**) becomes the result of the renewing of your mind, the Holy Spirit producing fruit & your appreciation for your salvation.
- E. **v10-11 - Paul’s first priority in life needs to be your first priority!**
 1. You need to experience God’s transforming power in your life.
 2. You have the opportunity to share in the Lord’s life & death so you can share intimately with Him in His resurrection.

Forget trying to please God by being good. Please Him by trusting Lord Jesus for your salvation. Then surrender your life to His lordship. Then - your life will be good enough!