



## ***What A Relief! I Don't Need To Be Good Enough***

*by Randy Becton*

I suppose there have always been people who were confident they are as good as anybody else, and maybe even better than most. Most of us are painfully aware of our shortcomings. Since the 80's, many prominent psychologists have recognized that most of us moderns are remarkably insecure. Thankfully, in Christ, we have reason to still the voice of insecurity.

### **People Who Know Their Brokenness**

In the days of Jesus' ministry, He had gentle words for those whose mistakes had disheartened them, but harsh words for those who were self-proclaimed "righteous" people. When the exacting religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees, complained to Jesus' followers that He spent time with despised tax collectors and other sinners, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" ([Luke 5:31-32](#)).

I'm so thankful Jesus specifically pointed out that those who sense their brokenness most keenly, are those who likely will appreciate His offer of grace and salvation the most. He said to Simon "those who are forgiven little, love little" ([Luke 7:47](#)). Jesus wanted you and me to realize that before any person can appreciate what God has done to reconcile us to Himself, each of us needs to realize how far we had alienated ourselves from God. You ask, "Just how bad was man's estrangement from God in the days before Jesus came to earth?"

The Apostle Paul told Christians in the sophisticated city of Ephesus that humanity had completely separated himself from God. We had no sense of who God was, and to put it bluntly, was “without hope and without God in the world.” He was “dead.” Those who continually rebelled and refused to honor God were “objects of wrath,” and committed enemies against God who had made them. In this position we are sadly “powerless” to do anything about our alienation from God.

Paul then declares the “Good News”: When we were in this “powerless” and “ungodly” position, God chose to act to reconcile us to Himself. At the time of our great despair, God gave us hope! This same hope is available for us today. Paul uses only five words to describe this unbelievably “good news” — “Christ died for the ungodly” ([Romans 5:6](#)). It’s true — Jesus died for you and me, so that we wouldn’t die in our sins and forever be alienated from God.

### **Why Did God Do It?**

People whom I counsel, who suffer from low self-esteem often say, “I just can’t believe Christ died for me. I’m not good enough to be saved. I can’t be a Christian. I fail every time I try to live a good life for God.”

I don’t make light of these statements, because at times I’ve felt this way myself. Sometimes I wonder how God loves a sinner like me.

When these feelings are present, the critical moment comes when I ask honestly: “What does the Bible say about why God sent Jesus to die for my sins?”

Paul tells the Ephesians it is because of who God is. “Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved” ([Ephesians 2:4-5](#)).

I'm not telling you I understand the depth of His love for me, but I'm telling you that I believe it and that I accept it. I'm like Paul who told Timothy, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst." Paul said this is a trustworthy saying that everyone should accept. In other words, we can count on it! Like Paul, our response should be gratitude, for like Paul we know full well that we don't deserve what God has done for us.

I'm like Paul and maybe you are too. We don't deserve God's love and His offer of salvation, but we can surely accept the truth that God personally loves us!

### **But I Keep Falling Down Over and Over Again**

I recently shared with a friend the joyous occasion when he was baptized into union with Jesus Christ, accepting God's offer of love, forgiveness, and friendship. "I'll never forget this day," he said and sighed with relief. "It feels great to know I'm God's friend now because of what Christ has done for me. I love God so much." Less than three days later he burst into my office with tear-filled eyes and proclaimed "I can't do it. I can't live the Christian life. I keep doing the wrong things over and over." He was disappointed and disheartened, confused and felt like a hypocrite. I told him what I honestly believe God's word teaches. I want to share it to perhaps encourage you.

### **Remembering Who Is For You**

To live the Christian life, we must go back to where we started. One becomes a Christian when he recognizes he "can't do it," and places obedient faith in the one who has done it all, Jesus our Lord. Paul told Christians at Philippi that God, who had begun a good work in them, would bring it to completion. In other words, God is for you. Yes, you can choose to walk away but that's not what is happening when you keep falling down when you are trying to walk as

a believer. You need confidence that you can make it. And you can. You will, because with God for you, nothing can successfully stand against you (**Romans 8:38-41**).

Remember that God has given you a family, the church, to encourage you. He has given you His Spirit to encourage you (**Acts 5:32**). He has given His Word to remind you of His promises and to help guide you safely home to Him. Most of all, He has taught you to trust Him daily, seeking strength for that day's challenges through prayer, and remembering that you are His child. Satan cannot destroy you, although he will surely try.

### **What Will You Choose?**

When we really become successful in following God's way, it will be because, like Paul, we remember that we do "not have a righteousness of our own"...but one that comes "through faith in Christ" (**Philippians 3:9**). We will make a conscious daily choice: We will choose to love our dependence on God and the righteousness of Christ we hold on to and not depend upon our fickle hearts and our unsteady ability to do good.

We will choose God's power to give us strength to fight temptation, not our will power. We will be depressed by our sins but like a boxer, we will only be temporality knocked down but never knocked out. We will be disappointed in our unchristian attitudes, but never in despair about them, knowing our Lord forgives us our sins. We will suffer spiritual setbacks, but bounce back because Christ is all-sufficient and ever present. Our emotions may be a roller coaster but our certainty will be the fact that God is for us. After selling 15 million copies of her inspirational books, the noted author Eugenia Price wrote her autobiography *What Really Matters*. In the final chapter, she admitted that the most encouraging Christian reality is that God is for us.

## **An Occasion for Worship**

You, like me, may often feel "I'm not good enough to be a Christian." You may on occasion even tell a friend. What's more important, however, is that you realize that your admission is not an admission of failure but rather an occasion for worship.

We are never closer to our Heavenly Father's love than in those moments when we recognize how magnificent His love is for us, undeserving though we are. Remember that God has always resisted the proud. He has always given grace to the humble. Keep looking at Jesus and He will carry you all the way through. Thank God that we don't need to be good enough to earn His love.