

SO MANY QUESTIONS

Question 11: "Can't we just be good enough to please God?"

Think about it

1. What kind of question is this?
 - a. Knowing (needing evidence)
 - b. Meaning (knowing what 'the truth' about God is)
 - c. Living (moral issues / how we ought to live)

2. What are some of the reasons someone might have for asking this question?

3. How would you go about answering this question? Jot down the kinds of things you think could be included in an answer.

Summarize your answer

In your own words, using three or four simple points, write down how you would answer the question "Can't we just be good enough to please God?"

Do not turn page over until after you complete this side! ☺

For further thought:

Can't we just be good enough to please God?

- The problem is that we don't live good lives. If we are honest, we don't live up to our own moral codes. We don't always have a clear conscience. And if we don't live up to our own moral code, how will we go at living up to God's standards?
- Jesus summarized what God wants of us into two commandments. The second of the commandments is to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Jesus says your neighbour is everyone, including your enemies. How many people love their enemies?
- But then, for most people, it gets even worse, because he says that's not even the great commandment. The really big commandment is that we are to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul and all our strength. God has to occupy first place in our life. But we all ignore God, and very often reject him outright.
- If we could really be good enough to please God, why did Jesus die? The cross would have been unnecessary. Jesus himself, on the night before he died, prayed to his Father that, if there was any other way other than him dying, God might make it happen. But there was no other way to be acceptable to God.

Other approaches:

There are two issues here. One is that we aren't good. We all reject and ignore God, and fail to love those around us. But secondly, we can't repay the debt we owe or ward off the judgement we deserve simply by doing the good that is expected of us as God's creatures. Doing good does not build up a positive balance in some divine bank account that can offset the bad things we do (just like we can't avoid a fine for exceeding the speed limit because, on other occasions, we travel below the speed limit). That's why we need Jesus—both to face judgement in our place (so that we don't have to) and to change us (so that we can begin to live a genuinely good life).

Further reading

- John Chapman, *A Fresh Start*, Matthias Media, Sydney, 1997, chapter 11.
- Kel Richards, *Defending the Gospel*, Matthias Media, Sydney, 2006, chapter 3.