

What About Good Moral People?

Joe Slater

Comparing the “good moral man” of the world to the flawed child of God can be frustrating! Take Cornelius and Peter for one example. Even before obeying the gospel, Cornelius was a deeply religious man – one who revered God, prayed regularly, helped the poor, and taught his family to do likewise. Then there was Peter, whose prejudice made him hesitant even to associate with Gentiles like Cornelius, much less to evangelize them. It took three miracles to convince him that God loves Gentiles, too.

If you or I had been in charge, we might have sent Cornelius to preach to Peter; but God did it the other way around. Why? In short, it was because Peter was “in Christ” while Cornelius wasn’t. Imperfect though he was, Peter had access to the blood of Christ; Cornelius didn’t (until he obeyed the gospel). God dealt with Peter’s imperfections, but He did so as with a son in covenant with Him, not as one who was alienated from Him.

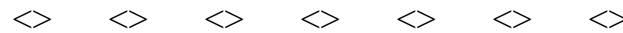
Abraham and Abimelech (Genesis 20) provide another interesting case. Abraham deceitfully implied that Sarah was not his wife, so Abimelech took her to be his own. God told Abimelech in no uncertain terms to give her back to Abraham or die! But the real challenge is where God told Abimelech to have Abraham pray for him (20:7)!

You or I might say, “Abimelech was more honest than Abraham! Abimelech’s error was mostly Abraham’s fault, so Abimelech ought to be the one praying for Abraham.” Why did God do it the other way around? Once again, Abraham was in covenant with God, whereas Abimelech was not. That doesn’t mean God approved of Abraham’s deceitfulness, or that Abraham was not accountable for it. Nevertheless, Abraham’s

relationship with God enabled him to pray for Abimelech.

Consider the good moral people in our own community. It is tempting to say, “They must be pleasing to God; they must be saved; they must be Christians, though they have never obeyed the gospel and their religious beliefs and practices are not Biblical.” Especially when comparing such people to less-than-exemplary Christians, the temptation is strong to conclude that God accepts “good moral people” over brethren who have obeyed the gospel, but whose behavior comes up short.

Remember the key point: Being in covenant with God is absolutely essential! That covenant is not established simply by “good moral behavior,” commendable though such behavior might be. It is established by faith and loving obedience to Him who died to save sinners. All who would be pleasing to God must be in that covenant – even good moral people.



Walking With Wise Men

Moses told the parents of Israel to take the laws which God had given them and “teach them diligently to your children” (Deuteronomy 6:7). But before telling parents to do that, he warned them: “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it” (6:3).

Before we can teach the love of God to our children and others, it must be in our own hearts. May God bless all parents as each strives to do just that. May your life be so filled with a desire to follow God that your children will listen to all you say to them!

Alan Smith (via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart)

Jesus Christ Personified

Inspired men **prophesied**
He came to earth and **complied**
and on God’s will totally **relied**
But by men he was **denied**
unjustly **tried**
and horribly **crucified**.
He **cried**
and **died**.
Blood poured from his **side**.
But death could not **preside**
and was **nullified**.
Now in heaven **glorified**,
He is our eternal **guide**,
through Whom we are **sanctified**,
forever with Him **identified**,
our eternal salvation completely **supplied**.

And now you must **decide**
Do you want His blood **applied**?

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