

# WHO MAKES IT TO HEAVEN?



## TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **KEEP DISCUSSIONS CONFIDENTIAL:** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: *“What is said in small group, stays in small group.”* **Nothing, nobody, never...** *“Share nothing, to nobody, never”* outside of the group.

## Week 4: Do Gooders Don't Go to Heaven

### ICEBREAKER

What is something you consider yourself good at doing? Ex. Skills, talents, passions etc.

### INTRODUCTION

A common belief is that good people go to Heaven. So, if we are good and follow the golden rule to Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Luke 6:31), then we will go to heaven. After all, that seems like a fair, just, and attainable path that supports our desire for a God who only knows and does good. However, when we dig into scripture we find that good is not good enough for heaven. This week we will be looking at who makes it to heaven and confronting the uncomfortable truth from scripture that Do Gooders Don't Go to Heaven.

## READ |

Every Christian wants to get into heaven. We give our lives to Christ in the hope that when we die we hear our Lord say, "**Well done, good and faithful servant!**" However, the bible gives no equation for "'good enough". Instead, Paul insists that whatever we do, our deeds alone will not justify us into heaven:

*"No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law,"  
--Romans 3:20*

Paul's words seem critical, surely Jesus will be more reasonable in His expectations for us to get into Heaven. In His famous sermon on the mount Jesus explains:

*"For I tell you that **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law**, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven"... **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."**  
--Matthew 5:20,48 (NIV)*

It appears as though Jesus is raising the bar on "good enough" by telling the people they must be perfect like God and live more righteously than their pastors. In reality, Jesus is smashing the bar and leveling the playing field for all believers, because if no one is worthy, then everyone is equal in the eyes of God.

**Have you ever felt less worthy than others when you have fallen short of God's standards? How does it make you feel to understand that in Christ, we are all equal in the eyes of God?**

## READ |

God leveled the playing field because he wants us **ALL** to make it into heaven. God made the path foolproof by anointing His Son as our living role model, example and guide to Him. **To show us the way** Jesus had to make the ultimate sacrifice in love.

*When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing."  
--Luke 23:33-34 (NIV)*

According to scripture, **good people are NOT going to Heaven. Forgiven people are.** But not just any forgiveness, the one gifted to us by Christ, which cannot be earned, isn't justified, isn't fair and one that we definitely do not deserve.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes in him** shall not perish but have **everlasting life**.  
--John 3:16 (NIV)*

There is nothing you can **DO** to go to heaven. It is already **DONE** through Jesus Christ, who is the way the truth and the life. Only Jesus is good enough for heaven "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23) so **we are saved not by our good deeds but by the Good News** of our salvation in Christ, which is based on:

1. **FAITH:** The *Justification* of our salvation based on acceptance and belief in the righteousness from God given to us by Jesus.

*"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*  
--Romans 3:28 (NIV)

2. **GRACE:** The *Giving* of our salvation, which we do not deserve and have not earned.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast*  
--Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

3. **MERCY:** The *Receipt* of our salvation despite our sin which was forgiven on the cross.

*He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.*  
--Titus 3:5 (NIV)

**How have these truths of Faith, Grace and Mercy helped you in your walk with Jesus?  
How does the Good News of your salvation motivate you to help others accept  
Christ's gift of salvation?**

## **READ |**

Through Christ's sacrifice we are saved, not **BY** good works, but **FOR** good works. To prepare us in our salvation for His will in our lives He teaches us to do the following:

### **ACCEPT Christ's Righteousness**

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*  
--2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

The only way to be righteous enough to make it into heaven is to accept God's free gift of salvation. When we do, we become righteous to God. In other words, when God sees us, He sees His Son in us and thereby we become "the righteousness of God." This is how we, as imperfect people, get to go to a perfect place...Heaven. The only ticket to heaven is through Jesus' righteousness, not our own.

## **CONFESS our Sins**

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*  
*--James 5:16a (NIV)*

In order to forgive others, we must first be able and willing to confess our sins to each other, so that we may be healed. As we humble ourselves in confession of our sins, we can start to build trust in our relationships.

## **FORGIVE Sin Against Us**

*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*  
*--Matthew 6:14 (NIV)*

The basis of our salvation is forgiveness. So we are called to forgive each other in order to save our relationships and put into practice the Mercy and Grace shown to us.

## **RECONCILE our Relationships**

*“Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”*  
*--2 Corinthians 5:18 (NIV)*

Our reconciliation to God through Christ on the cross allows us to have a relationship with Him. It also models for us how to reconcile and make peace in our relationships.

**Which practice above is easiest and hardest for you to do in your relationships? How does your relationship with God inspire you to do good works for others?**

## **WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

This week, share the Good News of your salvation with others and seek to reconcile relationships and do good for those around you. If you haven't invited Jesus into your heart, pray and ask him to forgive you of your sins and become your Lord and Savior.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):**

- Do the daily devotions this week on the next page.

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank You for making me worthy of eternal life despite my thoughts and actions. Thank You for the grace and mercy You showed the world on the cross when you sacrificed your only son. Help us to remain worthy of this gift through our faith and belief in our salvation which we share with others as the Good News. Allow us to do your bidding in our relationships and to focus our good deeds not on your approval but on the blessing of those around us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



## Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

### Here's an example:

**S:** *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

*--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)*

**O:** Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

**A:** Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

**P:** Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

## SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

### **Day 1:**

***There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

***--Galatians 3:28 (NIV)***

### **Day 2:**

***...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also.***

***--Colossians 3:13 (NASB)***

### **Day 3:**

***Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."***

***--John 14:6-7 (NIV)***

### **Day 4:**

***In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.***

***--1 Peter 5:10 (NLT)***

### **Day 5:**

***and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith***

***--Philippians 3:9 (ESV)***