

The Standard We All Face

Most of us think we're good people. We compare ourselves with people who have done worse and hope our good deeds outweigh our failures. But what if we're using the wrong standard?

The real question isn't, "**Am I better than someone else?**" but "**How do I measure up to God's standard?**" The Bible gives us a way to find out.

The Law Is a Mirror

Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's will—or failing to do what He commands. The Ten Commandments reveal God's standard and expose sin in our hearts. They're not a ladder for earning heaven, but a mirror showing us what God sees. **So, take an honest look. How do you measure up?**

1. "You shall have no other gods before Me."

Have you always put God first—loving Him above family, money, success, pleasure, and even yourself? If not, you have broken the First Commandment.

2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol."

Have you ever imagined God to be more like you want Him to be—a God who overlooks things He has called sin? If so, you have made a god to suit yourself.

3. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain."

Have you ever used God's name casually, as a curse word, or without reverence? If so, you have dishonored the name of the God who gave you life.

4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Have you always set apart the time God deserves for worship, or have other priorities repeatedly come first? If not, you have broken the Fourth Commandment.

5. "Honor your father and your mother."

Have you always honored and obeyed your parents—with your attitude and words as well as your actions? If not, you have broken the Fifth Commandment.

6. "You shall not murder."

Have you ever hated someone or held onto sinful anger against them? Jesus taught that anger and contempt make us guilty before God (Matthew 5:21–22). Anger that we refuse to release can grow into resentment, bitterness, and unforgiveness. God does not merely judge the outward act of murder—He sees what we harbor in our hearts.

7. "You shall not commit adultery."

Have you ever looked at someone with lust? Jesus said that whoever looks with lust has already committed adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:27–28).

8. "You shall not steal."

Have you ever taken something that wasn't yours—regardless of its value? If so, you have broken God's command against stealing.

9. "You shall not bear false witness."

Have you ever told a lie—even a "small" one—or deliberately deceived someone? If so, you have broken God's command against lying.

10. "You shall not covet."

Have you ever jealously desired something belonging to someone else—their possessions, success, abilities, or relationships? Coveting reveals dissatisfaction with what God has given us.

How Did You Do?

If God judged you by His perfect standard today, would you be innocent or guilty? If these questions revealed that you have broken even one of God's commandments, you are guilty of breaking His Law. This test did not ask whether you have broken these commandments more or less often than someone else. The question is whether you have broken them at all.

Jesus said, "*You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" (Matthew 5:48)

James tells us, "*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*" (James 2:10)

God's Law is like a chain: break one link and the chain is broken. God's standard isn't that our good deeds outweigh our bad ones. His standard is perfect righteousness—and none of us has met it.

Scripture therefore declares, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" (Romans 3:23)

Why Did Jesus Come?

God is loving, but He is also just. Imagine standing before a judge after breaking the law and saying, "**But Judge, I've done**

many good things!” A just judge cannot ignore your crime because of your good deeds. **Breaking the law still carries a penalty.** It is the same with us before God. Our good deeds cannot erase our sin. Scripture says, ***“The wages of sin is death”*** (Romans 6:23).

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Jesus Christ, God the Son, lived without sin, died in our place, and rose from the dead. He bore the judgment we deserve so that those who repent and trust in Him can be forgiven.

But Are You Willing to Forgive?

Jesus warned, ***“If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”*** (Matthew 6:15)

Perhaps someone has deeply hurt you. Forgiveness does not call evil good, erase the hurt, or automatically restore trust. **It releases the debt into God’s hands and trusts Him with justice.** We cannot ask God for mercy while stubbornly refusing mercy to others. Forgiving does not earn salvation, but a heart that receives God’s mercy must be willing to extend mercy.

What Must You Do?

Jesus said, ***“Repent and believe in the gospel.”*** (Mark 1:15)

To repent means turning from sin and self-rule to God—even surrendering the sins we want to hold onto. To believe means

trusting Jesus Christ—who He is and what He has done—as your only Savior. Jesus is the risen Lord and Master. Saving faith receives Him for who He truly is—the One who forgives our sins and has the rightful authority to lead our lives.

You Cannot Earn This Gift

Salvation is not a reward for becoming good enough: ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith...it is the gift of God; not as a result of works.”*** (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Good works are the fruit of salvation—not its price. God does not forgive because we are good enough. He forgives because Jesus is sufficient.

Will You Trust Christ Today?

You can come to Christ now. Confess that you have sinned and cannot save yourself. Turn from your sin, surrender any bitterness or unforgiveness, and trust in Jesus Christ alone. There is no prayer that earns salvation, but you can express your faith to Him:

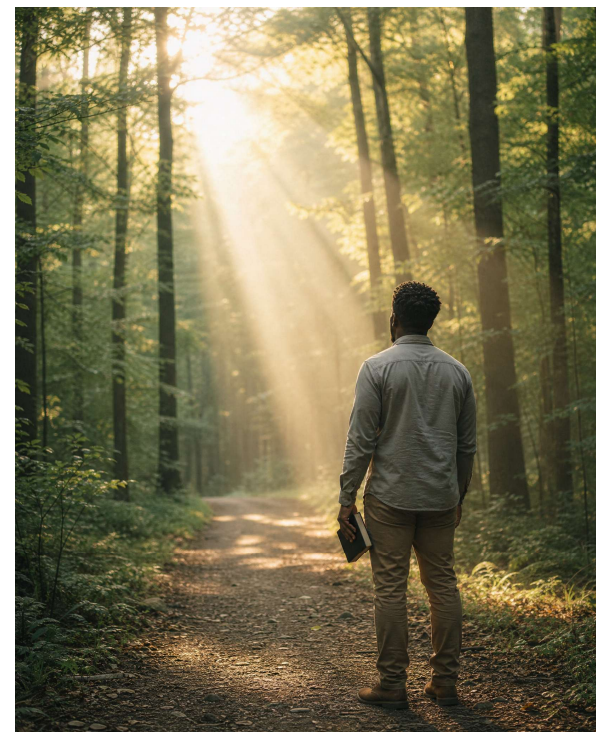
“Lord Jesus, I have sinned and cannot save myself. I turn from my sin and trust in You alone. Please forgive me, make me righteous in Your sight, and take Your rightful place as my Lord. Amen.”

Then begin following Him: read His Word, pray, and become part of a faithful Bible-believing church.



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ARE YOU A GOOD PERSON?



TAKE THIS SHORT TEST TO SEE HOW YOU MEASURE UP

***“Many a man proclaims his own loyalty,
But who can find a trustworthy man? ...***

***Who can say, ‘I have cleansed my heart,
I am pure from my sin’?”***

***—Proverbs 20:6, 9 (All Scripture quotations
are from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 ed.,
NASB.)***