

## Good—or upright ?

I recently came across an interesting verse that fits with the theme of goodness. I had read it before, but this time it made more of an impression on me.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul says, “Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.”<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version uses “righteous” instead of “upright.”

That got me thinking. What’s the difference between an upright or righteous person and a good one? Theologian John Gill suggests Paul meant that the former is someone who is outwardly moral and keeps to the letter of the law, whereas a good person goes beyond their duty.<sup>2</sup>

I think the secret is simply that goodness is righteousness mixed with genuine concern for others. Without God’s love to motivate us, we can’t be good, but with it, we’re able to go beyond simply doing the right thing, and make a more lasting difference.

Of course, Jesus is the only one who is fully good, but He expects us to try to imitate Him in our lives and actions. He said, “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart.”<sup>3</sup> If we fill ourselves with His goodness and His love, we will be able to pass that on to others as well, to do good to all, whenever we have the opportunity.<sup>4</sup>

1. Romans 5:7 NLT

2. See <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gillsexposition-of-the-bible/romains-5-7.html>

3. Luc 6:45 NIV

4. Cf. Galates 6:10.

## Practice, practice, practice

*By Henry Drummond, adapted*

Life is not a holiday, but an education. What makes a person a good tennis player? Practice. What makes a person a good artist, a good sculptor, a good musician? Practice. What makes a person a good linguist? Practice. What makes a person a good person? Practice. Nothing else. If a person does not exercise his arm he develops no biceps muscle; and if a person does not exercise his soul, he acquires no muscle in his soul, no strength of character, no vigor of moral fiber, no beauty of spiritual growth.

Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character—the Christlike nature in its fullest development. And the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice.

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