



**GO DEEPER**

## SESSION 4: CAN YOU BE GOOD WITHOUT GOD?



### Aim

To explore how we decide what makes someone good or bad, and whether that is relevant to knowing God.



### Starter

See page 4 for cards to use for this activity. One by one, go through the cards and after a group discussion place them on a scale that ranges from good to bad.

Once you have done this give more information for some of the cards and ask if the group would change where the card goes on the scale. Examples:

- ◆ The murderer was a woman who killed her husband after he had abused her for 20 years
- ◆ The boy who helped at home did their brother's chores so that he could get the pocket money instead
- ◆ The person who lied to their close friend told them they really suited a shaved head after they shaved off their waist length hair for charity

We all have different views on what is good and bad.



### Video

Watch the video [Can you be good without God?](#) (Running time 4:06)



### Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



### Exploring the Bible

In his biography of Jesus' life, Mark records this incident. Read Mark 3:1-6.

The religious people in the synagogue and the Pharisees were considered good people. They kept all the rules, which included those about the Sabbath. For the Jewish people the Sabbath was a day of rest – a day to set work aside and focus on God and on enjoying his creation.

But these very 'good' people took those rules so seriously, they would not let anybody

do *anything* on the Sabbath, just in case they broke the rules. They waited to accuse Jesus of being a bad person for healing a man with an injured hand on the day of rest. When he did so, they plotted to kill him.

#### Discuss

**Can you think of any examples of how Christians today are so anxious to keep the rules that they end up standing in God's way?**

*The Bible says, 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world...' (Romans 12:2 NIV). Therefore, we might only spend our time with Christian friends because we are worried that being with people who are not Christians will pull us away from obeying God. How though do people who are not Christians get the opportunity to meet God?*

Jesus goes on to say that a person's outward rule keeping is not what is important. Read Mark 7:20-23.

Jesus teaches that what is inside a person makes them good or bad. We all like to think of ourselves as good. However, in Jesus' list there are things we all do like being jealous of others, greedy and nasty that means by Jesus' standard, none of us are good. It sounds very offensive for Jesus to say all people are sinful, so sometimes we avoid this when we share the good news.

#### Discuss

**How can it be good news for Jesus to say people cannot be good enough?**

*This means there is no pressure to earn your salvation by doing more good things than bad. Everyone is in the same position, and nobody can boast they are better than anyone else (Ephesians 2:8-9). When we think we are good, we do not look for help. When we know we are sinful, we know we need a Saviour.*

In the video Andy Bannister explained that although God does not think people are good enough, God has a solution to that.

'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Mark 10:45 NIV)

Here, the Son of Man is a title for Jesus. God is sending Jesus to earth to die and give his life in a swap. People will get Jesus' goodness, and Jesus will get the punishment for their badness.

#### Discuss

**Jesus does not just pay the price for our sins – he also gives us his perfect record of obedience. Why is this important?**

*If we are 'only' given the forgiveness of sins we are not good enough for God. We also need to be perfectly holy. Knowing we also get Jesus' perfect holiness means we avoid the incorrect idea that we need to add lots of good deeds to be good enough before God to earn his love.*

*Additionally, now that we have died to sin Jesus lives in us (Galatians 2:20).*



## Reflection

Allow a time for reflection that is most appropriate to your group.  
You may wish to pray and reflect on the following:

- ◆ Ask God to reveal if you are either obsessing over rules or missing the truth of who he is and what he wants you to do
- ◆ Consider the fact that you do not need to earn God's love for you, shown in the sacrifice of his only son

Alternatively, an active response could be made by group members completing these statements on card to take away:

- Today I want to commit to...
- One aspect of God's love I want to remember is...



## Further resources

The following books may be helpful:

**The Imperfect Disciple: Grace for People Who Can't Get Their Act Together** by Jared Wilson (Baker Books)

**The Prodigal God** by Tim Keller (Hodder & Stoughton)

**The Ragamuffin Gospel** by Brennan Manning (Multnomah Press)



## Starter Activity Cards



Running ahead of a person with visual impairment so you get the last seat on the bus	Helping an old granny over the road
Murder	Hacking your mate's social media account and posting a fake crush
Teasing someone because they are ginger	Doing something to help at home
Not sharing your box of Miniature Heroes	Forgetting to feed your hamster
Not sharing your jelly babies	Forgetting to feed your little sister
Telling your parent / carer you love them	Lying to a close friend