



# The Good News

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## *Is a “good person” a “saved person”?*

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Many, even among the semi-religious circles of our society, sometimes refer to others as “good people”. Often, in the minds of the religious, these “good people” are also “saved people”, or at least people they would not condemn. But what is the difference between society’s “good people” and God’s “saved people”?

**Society’s “good people”** – One of the main characteristics that society sees as being “good” is having **good intentions**. In society, good intentions cover a multitude of sins. Another characteristic that society sees as being good goes beyond good intentions to being **law-abiding**. **Morality** is another step beyond law-abiding that people see as being “good”. Beyond morality is someone who is “**religious**” or “**spiritual**” (often considered two different things). These are generally the characteristics that society uses to define a “good person” and unfortunately these are also the same characteristics most use to define a “saved person”. But how does God define a “saved person”?

We read in the Bible that having **good intentions** is good, but that only a “doer of the work” “will be blessed in what he does” (**Jas. 1:25**). As the saying goes, “the path to hell is paved with good intentions”. Unless we allow those good intentions to become good works, God will not be pleased. The Bible most certainly teaches us that we are to be **law-abiding**. **Romans 13:1-7** is just one of many passages that teach us to obey the governing authorities. **Morals** are certainly necessary if we are to be pleasing to God. **Romans 12** one of many passages that teach us how we are to treat other people. Numerous passages throughout the New Testament teach us what is immoral such as idolatry and fulfilling wanton lusts of the flesh. We learn in **Matt. 7:21-23** that even those who consider themselves “**religious**” or “**spiritual**” are not

necessarily saved either, although both concepts are certainly required of us to be pleasing to God.

What we learn from reviewing these four characteristics is that a person can have one or all of them and still not be right with God. Yet, most in our society would probably argue otherwise. Let us consider a man that appears to have had all of these characteristics, was a “good person”, yet was not a “saved person”. In **Acts 10**, we learn of a man named Cornelius. Consider the adjectives used to describe this man in **vs. 1-2** and **22**: he is called a “*devout man*”, “*just man*”, “*one who feared God*”, “*gave alms generously*”, “*prayed to God always*”, and he had a “*good reputation among all the nation of the Jews*”. Let us consider our four characteristics: he certainly had **good intentions** to do what was right; he was most definitely **law-abiding** as he was an officer in the Roman army; it sounds as though he was a **moral** man due to the adjectives “*devout*” and “*just*”; and it sounds as if he was “**religious**” and “**spiritual**” because he “*feared God*” and “*prayed to God*”. Yet, despite these characteristics was he saved? In **vs. 6** we read the angel telling Cornelius what he must do. Must do for what? We read in **vs. 48** that Cornelius and his house were baptized, and then in **Acts 11:18**, it is recognized through the events with Cornelius and his house that “*God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life*”. It took Peter preaching to Cornelius and then baptizing him to make him a “saved person”, despite the “good” characteristics he already had.

So what is the difference between a “saved person” and just a “good person”? The difference is that one obeys the Gospel completely, and the other is simply content to be “good”. Which are you today?