



Can God Help Me?

I have the sense of being a bad person.

Can God help me understand what's wrong with me?

No, I am not the parent on the nightly news—the mother arrested for badly mistreating her children. But sometimes I am irritated when my baby wakes me up four times in one night, when my toddler throws a tantrum in the grocery store, when my teen defiantly shatters the curfew.

No, I am not the high-profile executive under investigation for embezzling millions from his company's pension fund. But I am also not the philanthropist donating millions to a children's hospital. I am easily irritated by co-workers constantly begging me to buy candy bars to support their children's soccer team. I admit I envy the latest lottery winner from our state.

What is wrong with me? I scan the latest "self-help" books in the library and read "self-esteem" articles in my magazines, but I still do not feel like the "good" person I want to be.

Friend, is your conscience kicking you? We often try to silence that voice of "right" and "wrong" because it condemns us for not living up to God's expectations. We are supposed to be as good as God! But we are not good, not good enough for God.

The truth is that all people fail to live perfect lives.

Unfortunately, everyone else's failures will not excuse me for becoming angry, for being greedy, for failing to keep all of God's commands. Fortunately, God has loved all people so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to save us from the punishment we deserve for all our failures.

How did Jesus save us? Throughout his life, Jesus perfectly obeyed every one of his Father's commands. Despite his absolutely innocent life, Jesus was put to death on a cross, where God punished his Son for our sins. Jesus suffered the death we deserved for our disobedience. Amazingly, God now considers us "perfect" because Jesus lived perfectly as our substitute. Mercifully, because Jesus died as our substitute, God declares us "forgiven."

The Bible tells us, "When our hearts condemn us"—if we sense that we are not as good as we should be—"God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything." God knows "Jesus Christ laid down his life for us." God knows he traded Jesus' goodness for our not being good enough. God knows he put Jesus to death to give us life—life that will last forever. Now, whenever our mistakes get us down, we can turn to God, who assures us that through Jesus, we are forgiven and perfect.