

QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD

IF GOD IS SO GOOD WHY ARE CHRISTIANS SO BAD?



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The question of why Christians can sometimes behave badly, even while professing belief in a good and loving God, is a challenging and thought-provoking one. It strikes at the heart of the Christian faith and the nature of human behaviour.

How can those who claim to follow a God of love, mercy, and righteousness sometimes act in ways that are unloving, unmerciful, and unrighteous? This eBooklet will explore this question by examining the nature of God, the nature of humanity, and the transformative process that Christians undergo according to the Bible.

The Nature of God

To begin with, the Christian understanding of God is foundational to addressing this question. According to Scripture, God is inherently good, loving, and holy. Psalm 34:8 declares, "***Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.***"



God's goodness is central to His character and is displayed throughout the Bible. From the creation of the world (Genesis 1:31), where God saw everything He had made and called it "very good," to the ultimate expression of His love through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (John 3:16), God's goodness is unmistakable.



Moreover, God's holiness sets Him apart from all that is sinful or evil. Isaiah 6:3 records the angels around God's throne declaring, "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.*" God's holiness is absolute, meaning that He is completely pure and righteous in all His ways (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The Nature of Humanity

In contrast to God's perfect goodness and holiness, humanity is depicted in the Bible as inherently flawed and sinful.



After the fall of Adam and Eve, sin entered the world, and with it came a fundamental corruption of human nature. Romans 3:23 states, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* This verse underscores the universal nature of sin, affirming that every person, regardless of their religious affiliation, is subject to the brokenness that sin brings.



The Bible describes the human heart as *"deceitful above all things and beyond cure"* (Jeremiah 17:9), indicating that apart from divine intervention, people are inclined toward evil. This inherent sinfulness explains why even those who believe in a good and holy God can act in ways that are inconsistent with His character.



The Struggle Between the Spirit and the Flesh

When a person becomes a Christian, they undergo a profound spiritual transformation. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* This verse emphasises the radical change that occurs in a believer's life, where they are given a new nature that reflects the character of Christ.



However, this transformation does not immediately eliminate the presence of the sinful nature. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, describes the internal conflict that Christians experience: *"For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing"* (Romans 7:19). Paul's struggle highlights the tension between the new nature in Christ and the old sinful nature, often referred to as the "flesh."

Galatians 5:17 further explains, *"For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."*

This ongoing battle within every Christian is a significant factor in why believers can still act in ways that are "bad" or contrary to God's goodness.



The Process of Sanctification

The Christian journey is not one of instant perfection but of gradual growth and transformation. This process, known as sanctification, is the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, shaping them more and more into the likeness of Christ. Philippians 1:6 reassures believers of God's commitment to this process: *"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*



Sanctification is a lifelong process. While a Christian's position before God is one of righteousness because of Christ's sacrifice (2 Corinthians 5:21), their daily lives still involve a process of overcoming sin and growing in holiness. This means that even though Christians are being transformed, they will still occasionally fall short, make mistakes, and even sin. However, the presence of this struggle does not negate the reality of God's goodness or the truth of the Christian faith.

Hypocrisy and the Call to Authenticity

One of the most common criticisms against Christians is the charge of hypocrisy—claiming to follow God while living in a way that contradicts His teachings. Jesus Himself condemned hypocritical behaviour, especially among the religious leaders of His day.

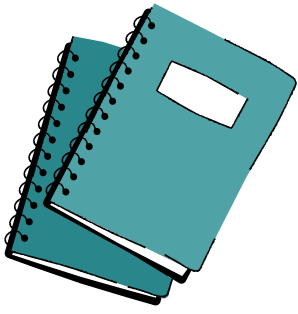


Hope of Redemption

The reason why Christians can still behave badly, despite following a good God, lies in the ongoing struggle between the sinful nature and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. Christians are not perfect; they are people in the process of being redeemed. This process involves both victories and failures, moments of righteousness and times of stumbling.



However, the goodness of God is not negated by the imperfections of His followers. Instead, it is magnified in His willingness to continue working in and through flawed human beings. The Christian life is ultimately a journey toward becoming more like Christ, with the hope that, by His grace, believers will increasingly reflect His goodness.



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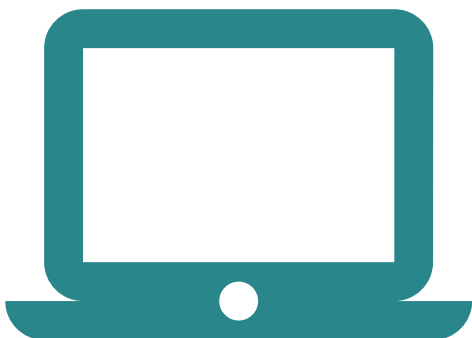
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