

Will my good works outweigh my bad works?

People have had this question since the early days of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul, before his conversion, believed that his good works would outweigh his bad works. We can see the confidence he had in his own flesh for salvation in the book of Philippians chapter 3:4-6. Paul lists his reasons in which he might trust in the work of his flesh: *"Circumcised the eighth day"* (in covenant relationship), *"of the stock of Israel"* (his people wrote the Word of God), *"of the tribe of Benjamin"* (one of the best tribes), *"an Hebrew of the Hebrews"* (strictly kept to his Hebrew heritage culturally), *"a Pharisee"* (a separated one, the strictest of all the Jews), *"concerning zeal"* (persecuted anyone who opposed or disagreed), *"touching the righteousness which is in the law"* (a blameless law keeper). What a list Paul had of his good works, but he went on to say in Philippians 3:7-8 that now he considered them loss or valueless, and dung or refuse. What would change Paul's estimation of his good works so drastically? It all started on the road to Damascus as he was going to persecute Christians. According to Acts 9:5-6 he met the Lord Jesus. The brightness of the Lord struck him down to the earth and he

heard a voice saying, *"Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?"* When Paul (then Saul) responded *"Who art thou, Lord?"* he heard in response, *"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."* Paul then said, *"Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"* From this point on, Paul was never the same. He never viewed his good works as a way to gain heaven and favor with God.

How about you?

Do you think as the Apostle Paul did, that God will judge your works on a scale? If your good works are greater, then you will gain Heaven, or if your bad works are greater, then Hell. Nowhere in the Bible is God said to judge this way. In fact, good works do not come in the picture at all. Remember, this same Paul counted all his good works as loss and refuse *"that [he might] win Christ, and be found in him (Christ) not having [his] own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"* (Philippians 3:7-9).

First

Are you depending on your good works for your righteousness? Let us look at what Paul said in

Romans 3:20, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."* Paul is saying that doing good works will not make a man right in God's sight. Also in Ephesians 2:8-9 he wrote, *"For by **grace are ye saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **not of works**, lest any man should boast."* He makes it very clear that salvation comes to man by God's grace, which is God's undeserved favor to man, only by the means of faith. Faith is not a work but a **response** to God's loving offer, which is a gift. No one works for a gift but just accepts it. If one worked his way to Heaven, he could boast, and Christ would not have had to die on the cross for your sins. Do you see that God's salvation is not by merit, but by grace through faith **alone**? *"The just shall live by faith"* (Galatians 3:11).

Second

You must agree with God that all men are sinful. Isaiah 64:6a states, *"But we are all as an **unclean** thing (sinful), and **all** our righteousness (good works) are as filthy rags."* The reason we cannot do enough good works to please God is because we are not good. Romans 3:12b states, *"There is none that doeth*