

At one time or another, each of us has uttered those famous words: “No Good Deed Goes Unpunished.” You remember: that time you were just trying to do the right thing to help somebody. And instead of thanking you, they disregard your effort or maybe even turned things against you! Yikes.

In that moment “When Good Deeds Get Punished,” you immediately see the fault in the other person and lose just a tiny bit more faith in humanity. And you may be less inclined to help next time.

Well, let me ask you this: What if it was God? What if you did a “good deed” for God and instead appreciating you, He disregarded you, or maybe even inflicted punishment on you.

Some would say – if it is good and in Jesus name and offered rightly, God will never punish us. And... if God would punish us, that is not a God I choose to serve (that’s a dangerous idea).

But has this ever happened in God’s dealings with man? YES. God has punished “good deeds.” And He is the ruler of the Universe. And we need to understand why these things happened.

1. **Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10)**

- a. (v1) Here were two priests making offerings to God. They would have certainly considered their offering a “Good Deed.” I mean, it was offered to the Lord and in the firepans God had given them for that very purpose.
- b. (v2) Was God thankful for the effort? No. God sent fire down to kill them instantly! They would call it a good deed, but for that act, God punished them.

2. **The Young Prophet (I Kings 13)**

- a. (v11-19) – This young prophet had done great work for God crying against Jeroboam earlier in the chapter. Here he is doing the “good thing” of listening to and showing respect for an older man of God.
- b. (v20-22,24) – And the older prophet spoke of the young man’s death. And God sent a lion to kill the man. He would have said he was doing good. But God punished him.

3. **Uzzah and King David (II Samuel 6)**

- a. (v.1-4,6) – David was doing good by retrieving the ark of the covenant. He had figured the fastest way: on a cart. Uzzah did a very good thing by keeping the sacred ark from falling. These were two men with nothing but the best intentions.
- b. (v.7-10) - Did God praise Uzzah for his effort? No. He struck him dead and also caused David’s work of moving the ark on the cart to come to a screeching halt.

4. **Saul and Israel (I Samuel 15)**

- a. (v.3,7,9,15) – God sent them to destroy the enemy. They did destroy them, but kept one man alive and brought back some spoils, so that they could offer them to God.
- b. (v11,19, 22-23) – Saul and his lineage are removed from the kingly line. Saul was doing what he perceived to be good to God, and He called it “evil.” And punished him.

In order to explain why these things happened, we may need to take a look at the phrase “Good Deed.” The truth, as revealed in these stories, is that a deed is only good if it is **GOOD TO GOD**.

1. **They Lack God’s Given Authority**

- a. **Leviticus 10:1-3** – “strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them”
- b. **Matthew 28:18-20** – “All authority has been given unto Me”
- c. **II Timothy 1:13** – “Retain the standard of sound words”
- d. Our works are Good to God when they follow only the pattern He has laid out for us.

2. **They Are Based Upon Men’s Will**

- a. **I Kings 13:15-18** – “He lied to him.” But God’s Truth was still in place.

- b. **II Timothy 3:13** – Some will lie to us and seek to deceive us religiously.
- c. **Acts 18:24-26** – Some don't teach whole truth because they don't know what is right.
- d. But actions are only Good to God when they are based on the Truth He has revealed.

3. They Come From Another's Mistake

- a. **Exodus 25:12-14; Numbers 4:15** – David set things up sinfully and set up Uzzah to fail.
- b. **Acts 22:3-4; 23:1** – He felt right, but it was wrong, because it was based on wrong ideas and principles upon which he built. *Even though he sat at the feet of "good" teachers.*
- c. Sometimes, because of a faulty setup, you don't have any good choices. Until we get back to the basics of what we are doing, no choice can be good to God.

4. They Fail to Finish the Task

- a. **I Samuel 15:3,7,11,20-22** – They did most of what God said but failed to finish it all.
- b. **Luke 14:27-35** – ½ done houses don't do much good. A half fought war ends in defeat.
- c. Salt is good, but only as long as it stays potent. But it must hold integrity to the end.
- d. Actions are good to God when they don't come up short, but to do all His will to the end.

In each of these cases there are some contributing factors:

- 1) **There was some support from another person. This can make things FEEL GOOD.**
- 2) **God had already addressed all these issues before. Modifications were NOT GOOD.**

Is It Good To God?

1. *Does it follow the pattern He has revealed?*
2. *Is it supported by men or by the Word?*
3. *Are the people who taught me Sincere?*
4. *Does it carry out God's will fully? (or not far enough, or too far)*

Three examples to consider. We are not going to detail the Scriptural arguments for each this morning. Each one would demand its own 37 minutes. Instead I just want to invite you to THINK properly about these things and ASK the right QUESTIONS to determine if this is GOOD TO GOD or just to me and the people in my social and religious circle.

Women Leadership in Churches

Instrumental Music in Worship

Divorce and Remarriage Acceptance

Sadly, the Text is not the issue in most of these cases. Very much like all of our Old Testament examples, God has addressed His will and authority on these issues: clearly.

"Is it Good to God" is found in what the Bible says. The problem: people still want to do it. They want it to be good. They feel that it is good. They desire God to accept it, so they offer it.

Matthew 7:21-23 - We live to do His Will. We live to follow His Law. We will not make it to heaven based on what we have chosen to do. But by how purely we loved Him and honored His law.

In worship, in work, in life – let God tell you what is Good. And always ask: Is this good to God?

Hey, I know something good to God – **Acts 2:38,42,47** – People repenting and begin baptized and living to serve Him and His people. God welcomed those people to Him. He blessed them. Would you obey the Gospel this morning for one reason, one only: That is Good to God.