I’m a Pretty Good Guy

“I’m a pretty good guy; I’ve never killed anyone!” That was the reply I received from my father when I asked him if he thought he was going to heaven when he died...

Please allow me to share the (true) story:

Several years ago my father was in the hospital with congestive heart failure. We didn’t think he would live through it. As a believer, I felt compelled to find out about his salvation. Bear in mind that what he told me was the absolute truth. All who knew him would most assuredly say he was a good guy. He was kind, generous, gentle, never complaining about anything! If that was the criteria for entry into heaven, I believe with all my heart that he would be there today. Unfortunately, that is not the criteria for entrance as I attempted to explain to him.

“Dad,” I said, “do you believe in heaven and hell?” – You see in our family we never talked about church or Jesus or heaven or hell – nothing like that was ever discussed.

“Yes” was all he said.

“When the time comes for you to die, do you think you are going to heaven?” I asked.

Again, “yes” was all he said – he was a man of few words.

“Why do you think that?”

“I’m a pretty good guy; I’ve never killed anyone! Yeah, I’ve been in jail a time or two but not for anything big. And I’ve done a bunch of good stuff too. So, yeah, I think I’m going to heaven.”

“What if being a good guy isn’t the basis for getting into heaven?”

He said nothing, just looked at me. So I continued.

“Here’s the deal, dad. God owns heaven, and He gets to decide who comes in, not us.”

He furrowed his brow but remained silent. “Can I make up a story to help you see what I am talking about?” I asked. He shrugged, slightly indifferent to the conversation.

“Who owns 713 State Street (not his actual address)?”

He rolled his eyes, “I do! You know that!”

I continued, “Let’s say you are standing on your front porch, and you see a beggar walking up State Street toward your house. He continues up the driveway, then the porch and reaches for the front door handle, fully intent on going inside. He totally ignores you standing there.”

“Hey!” you yell as you grab his arm, “What do you think you are doing?”

“I’m going in.” he replies. “What makes you think you can do that?” you demand!

He replies, “I’m a pretty good guy; I’ve never killed anyone! Yeah, I’ve been in jail a time or two but not for anything big. And I’ve done a bunch of good stuff too.” He attempts to push his way in, but you resist.

Dad’s eyes widened a bit as he recognized that I had repeated his own reply as to why he believed he should get into heaven, but he said nothing.

“So,” I continued. “who gets to decide, you or the beggar?”

“I do!” his voice elevated a bit. “I own 713 State Street – I say who comes in!”

“I totally agree.” He calmed down.

“And God owns heaven, it is His home. He decides who is invited into His home – not us. He sets the criteria – and ‘being a pretty good guy’ isn’t it – not at all. In fact, we can’t be good enough to qualify for entry. But God made a way for us, the way is through His Son, Jesus...”

I waited to see what dad would do or say next. I am sad to say that he turned over saying, “I’m tired, I don’t want to talk about this anymore.” My heart broke.

I’ll tell you a bit more of this true story later in this book/study guide. For now, may I ask you, my friend, “Are you going to heaven when you die? On what basis are you counting on?”

The purpose of this book/study guide is to plainly outline God’s plan of salvation. It is possible that it is not what we think it is. Everything we need to know and do is provided in the Scriptures. But most of the 8.3 billion people alive today are indifferent at worst or misinformed at the least - just like my Dad was. Many will be “left behind” on that fateful day. Make sure you aren’t one of them. Then help others as well.