

Grading on a Curve

Remember back in school, a teacher would sometimes give a test that proved much too difficult? Rather than throwing it out altogether or failing 75% of the class according to the actual scores, s/he might decide to grade the exam on a curve. That was a relief for most students, knowing they'd only be compared to their classmates instead of judged against the impossible standard of the test.

Are you hoping God grades on a curve too? After all, life is hard and not a single one of us can live up to God's holy standard. If he judges us against other people instead, we'll probably feel better about our chance of receiving a passing grade. However, if you go with that strategy when you're called to account before God, you're in for a horrible shock, because you've been duped by one of Satan's most successful lies.

To win, Satan doesn't need to make you evil. He's perfectly okay with people living moral lives, following all the rules, and even doing good deeds, because then it's easier to convince us that we're safe – that since we're nice and avoid the “big” sins, surely we'll be acceptable to God when the time comes. Satan's dangerous deception is making people believe that they're good, at least compared to others. Good enough not to need a savior. Don't fall for that lie.

In case you're still in doubt, God does NOT grade on a curve, and there's only one question on the final exam. It's strictly pass or fail based on your response to Jesus Christ. Was he just a great prophet? Wrong answer. Is he one element of the salvation package that, when added to right morals and good works, will get you to heaven? Sorry. Still a failing grade. Stumped? Luckily, it's an open-book test. Start by looking up Romans 3:22-28.

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus... For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

The answer isn't complicated; the answer is confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Period. God's own Son paid the *full* price for our sins on the cross. We can't take any credit (and if we try, it means we really *aren't* trusting in Jesus). As the old hymn goes, *My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. No merit of my own I claim, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.*

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