

Good Girl, Bad Girl

From: Overcoming the Overwhelming:
A 40-Day Journey toward Rediscovering Faith in God

Taken from Day 12: Good Girl, Bad Girl
by C. D. Hildebrand

When we began this journey of learning to live by grace through faith and not by law, it was like entering a new and living road—one which Jesus already prepared for us. How beautiful it was to behold! It seemed that daily our eyes were opening to Scriptures we'd read so many times before without knowing what they meant. The truths were in our hands all those years, but we were blinded by our bent perspectives of what it meant to please Him.

Diligently seeking to be close to Him and seeking to love Him with all of my heart, my soul, and my strength, yet not being totally convinced of how deeply He loved me brought emptiness and misery.

As I was heading down a prescribed road to righteousness, I was convinced I was correct in my pursuits. "I" would please God. "I" would live a holy life. "I" would practice my spiritual disciplines. "I" would love God with all of my being.

"I" would be a good wife and mother. "I" would make sure that every thought and word and deed of mine was honest and pure. "I" would give. "I" would love others as Christ loved me. "I" would overcome the overwhelming areas of my life. Please understand this: I didn't see this as self-righteousness, but as my desire to please God and be holy—to be diligent and faithful.

In my zealous pursuit of holiness, I lost sight of the fact that by "His" blood, once and for all, "He" made me holy. "He" brought me close. "He" forgave all of my sins. By "His" grace through faith, "He" made me "His" righteousness. By "His" wounds I was healed. "He" was my wisdom. By "His" doing I was in Christ. "He" gave me an anointing. "He" brought about revival. "He" loved me, yes, me personally, and "He" loved me without condition. All these things that "He" did, I was trying to better.

No wonder God seemed far away! Of course my perception of His love for me, the love I knew the first day I believed in Him, was diminished. Religious laws and goals mixed in with societal expectations had snuffed out nearly every trace of the life that was in me. Seeking my own righteousness through my own efforts caused me to be “estranged from Christ” even though I was not involved in sin and desired so greatly to please Him and glorify His name.

**Anyone who seeks to be justified by law
will fall from His grace.**

It is automatic.

**God loves us too much to allow us
to feel comfortable continuing down
the dead road of self-effort.**

How wonderful it was to see Jesus once again. How marvelous it felt to have Him peel the burden of law off of our backs and replace the loss with His grace. Even so, the law is very pushy. We may think we have banished it completely from our lives, but then discover it is still lurking somewhere we didn’t detect.

This became apparent to me again recently when the evening was winding down, and I was getting things ready for the next day. A thought was running around in my mind without me really “hearing” it. Not unlike me, I began to speak my thoughts aloud. “Today,” I began, “I was a good girl because I took my vitamins, had my fiber three times a day, and didn’t snack.” I was nearly patting myself on the back for these great accomplishments. Then I said, “But I was a bad girl because I didn’t stretch as I planned, and had a dessert.”

When I heard myself, it hit me—this Good Girl, Bad Girl routine was not only an integral part of my existence, but it was LAW in operation. I sat motionless, stunned yet delighted by this revelation from God. I wasn’t just feeling justified or guilty before God based on what I did or didn’t do—something I’d observed and eliminated many years before, but I was evaluating my *goodness* and *worth* as a person on how well I met the goals I’d set. Instantly, I rejoiced that God was going to set me free from *this* operation of law, too.

I share this so that you will not be alarmed or discouraged to discover that some aspects of law are still in operation in your life. **This is because we can be walking by grace through faith in many areas, but when it comes to overcoming the overwhelming**

situation that we currently face, we might still be layered in law and self-effort, which is restricting us in ways we have not yet identified. Even after many years of recovery from “living” by law, you will likely realize as you walk down this new life of grace through faith that there is yet another layer of it at work in your heart attempting to rob you of the liberty that is yours in Christ.

Since that night, when it became apparent that I was evaluating myself as either good or bad based on keeping a list of self-imposed rules, God has helped me stop this bad habit dead in its tracks. Increasingly, I’m learning that my goodness is based on the truth that He made me good, and even if I don’t do everything perfectly, I’m still good because who I am now is based on *His* work, not mine.

God delights in setting us free, truly free. When we see the lies that are holding us back and come to know the truth, we will be free indeed. As we begin to apply these truths to the different areas of our lives, we begin to see the victory in life that He has provided for us.

