

By Whose Definition Is God Good?

"And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.'" Mark 10:18

As you know, Adam and Eve decided in the Garden of Eden that they wanted to define good and evil. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."¹ Since that time nothing has changed. **All people wish to define good and evil.** Therefore, if you call God "good," who gets to define good and evil?

God defines for His people what He calls good and evil in Scripture. We find this in His commandments: when you love others, it is good. When you break His commandments, contained in passages such as the Sermon on the Mount,² it is evil. In other words, it is good when you do what He says; it is evil when you disobey Him. This is fairly simple and straightforward.

Where most people struggle is in the area of Providence. Life is filled with so many hurtful experiences that **they would rather argue that God is not in control,** and therefore the hurt did not originate with God, than think it came from Him and He is good in doing it. When this happens they, like Adam and Eve, insist on defining good and evil rather than affirming that all that happens comes from the hand of a good God. **This in turn makes it difficult for them to obey His command,** "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."³ To do this is good!

¹ Genesis 2:17 ² Cf. Matthew 5-7 ³ I Thessalonians 5:18