

There Is None Good but God

A response to the subway ads in New York City

Ladies and Gentlemen of the New York City Coalition of Reason:

As a member of this Coalition, you have been complicit in the launching an advertisement campaign with the slogan, "A million New Yorkers are good without God -- Are you?" I would like to take the opportunity to answer that question. To do so, let me first ask a question of my own. "What is good?"

Is it good for one to lie or to cheat? Is it admirable for one to murder or to steal? Do we applaud as heroes those who hate their neighbors? What is good?

Is a man good if he abandons his wife and children? Is he any better if he simply beats them? Is it good to take drugs? Is it OK to just sell them and not use them? Is it good to kill someone out of negligence, or even to do something which just causes another to be harmed? What is good?

Is it good to rape someone? Is it good to molest a child? Is it good to desire to do such things? Is it good to allow such things to happen? What is good?

Is it good to be jealous of the riches of others or to hoard ones riches for personal benefit alone? Is it good to use weakness in others in order to obtain wealth for oneself? Is it good to be gluttonous while millions starve? Does gluttony become more admirable if the one who lacks food is only a few blocks away? What is good?

Is it good to be a bully? Is it good to ignore bullying? Is it good to be angry with another driver on the road? Is it good to knock someone down in your hurry to get by? What is good?

Your poster claims that there are at least one million New Yorkers who are good without the aid of God. Are you saying that there are one million New Yorkers who have never lied or cheated; who have never once felt hatred for someone else; who have never stolen or become angry? My answer to your question is this – "there is none that doeth good."

No one is perfect; therefore no one can truly claim to be good. There may be one million New Yorkers who claim that they are somewhat good, and there might even be a few who say that they are almost good. But there is not a single person in all of New York, America or even the world that can claim to be the ultimate personification of goodness. There is no one that IS good.

You claim to be a coalition of reason, and as such I challenge you to reason with me on this. Can one be almost innocent of murder? Can a murderer ever become un-guilty of his crime? Can he remove his guilt by countless acts of atonement? If the slaying of a single innocent life makes one a murderer forever, does not the telling of a single lie mark one as a liar for all time? And if a single act of sin remains on one's record forever, how then can anyone truly claim to be good?

We, ladies and gentlemen, are not good. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. What is good? We are not good.

There is One, however, who is good. Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God Himself, lived a life without sin, then He who did no sin bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Jesus became our substitute and died in our place that we might be free from our sin, for there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

I implore you, to consider that there is none good but God. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins to Him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

What is good? I submit to you that God alone is good, and that we may only be made good through the acceptance His sacrifice and His forgiveness. There can only be one million New Yorkers that are good if they are good through God.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bill Fortenberry
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