

WHO YOU ARE

People say and believe that man's misdeeds, large and small, prove that man has an evil nature. Look: though we may sometimes do bad things, we feel bad when we do. That proves our goodness. Who but a good person feels bad about bad? So, choices you've made don't change who you are. And they don't limit what you can do now. No matter what you've done, you're inherently good—with full potential to live a good, beautiful life.

This you know: You are NOT your past, and you're not the things you've done. You're NOT the person you're trying to make yourself be. (Not the one, for example, who can become hard, unfeeling, unloving, ungenerous—in fact, your heart hates that.) You're NOT whatever culture thinks you should be. And you're NOT a rigid, unchangeable character; you're free, responsive, multi-faceted.

Fortunately, you can't get rid of your heart, or prevent it from feeling what it feels. All the goodness God created in you, the knowingness, the sensitivity, is permanent *regardless* of your acceptance or denial of it. Hallelujah!

Now you know why these are so strong in you: the desire to serve, heal, uplift. A heart of compassion, understanding, admiration, love, and forgiveness. A distaste for selfishness, greed, cruelty, indifference. Guilt when you've hurt someone. A drive to right wrongs, and stop injustice. A desire to avoid/correct wrongness in your own life.

You see, God has given each of us a beautiful heart, with beautiful ways of responding, understanding, feeling. And that heart is at work constantly, as a feeling sentinel, evaluating the results of our choices. Feeling those results. *Feeling*. So, when a good person does a bad or hurtful thing, it's hard for them to *believe* in their goodness. *Why*? Because they can't help but feel that a good person should have the integrity to do good things, and not bad things.

And needless to say, when you hurt people, it's hard for them to trust you. You've given them reason to believe you're careless and irresponsible. So it's not sufficient to say, "I'm an essentially good person, I have a good heart." That won't eliminate your guilt when you mistreat people, much less take away the hurt you caused. You *are* good, you have the potential to *do* and *be* good; but to step into your own good shoes, you have good choices to make, risks to take, love to give. Our goodness is an unfinished creation until we participate as it. God made us good and gave us everything we need to be good, but it's still up to us what we choose to be.

So beloved reader, when you think, "I need to be different," you're really feeling, "This way of life doesn't agree with me. I want to act in a manner more consistent with *who I am*." Our true nature is inclined to live beautifully, as God intended. And we won't be satisfied until we do.

[also see the *What God Gave Us to Work With* card]

Your Part in Your Goodness