



# **GOOD ENOUGH?**

**by Kristofer Keyes**

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# INTRODUCTION

Uncertainty can follow us into all realms of our lives – even our spirituality. It is easy to see where we are falling short, where we are missing the mark, or where we think we should be in life. Often, we aren't pleased with ourselves. "If I'm not pleased with myself," we think, "how could God ever be pleased with me?" So we grow afraid or ashamed and cut ourselves off from the God who loves us, the God who wants to give us rest in our souls, peace in our hearts, and security both in who He is and who we are as His children.

This devotional booklet is intended to confront the idea that God doesn't want you. It will show you that He not only wants you, but He wants you so badly that He came to the earth He created, served His own creation, died at their hands, and rose again just to pay the penalty for the things in your life that would keep you from Him. He wants you enough to sacrifice for you and chase you down. He is crazy about you.

This booklet is also intended to help you see that while God accepts you just as you are, He doesn't want you to remain just as you are. God actually wants to empower you to grow beyond the things that bring you shame or disappointment or make you feel like you're not good enough. He wants you to flourish in spite of those things and to live a beautiful, fulfilled, hope-filled life with Him. It has always been His design that humanity walk hand-in-hand with Him, and that doesn't change with you.

It is my prayer that as you walk through this devotional booklet, you begin to see God's love for you and God's grace on you to become the person He created you to be. I hope you come to realize that the question was never, "Am I good enough?" The question was always, "Is He good enough?" and the answer to that is a resounding, "YES!"

### **A Note About The Format:**

The layout of this devotional is intentionally simple. Each day starts with a selection of scripture that sets the stage for that day's thought, then has a few paragraphs breaking down the scripture in effort to strengthen your understanding of who God is, how He sees you, and how He desires to help you grow. Each day ends with a quick prayer that you can pray to help that day's thought take root in your heart.

I encourage you to highlight or underline thoughts that stand out to you or challenge the way you think. I also encourage you to go in your Bible and read the scripture excerpts in fuller context so that you can study what that verse really means to you. Finally, I encourage you to pray beyond just the prayers I have included at the end of each day. As these thoughts take root and these scriptures begin to reveal who God is, how He sees you, and how he desires to help you grow, think of what parts you're thankful for, where you need help, and where you can invite God into the process, then pray those things in your own words.

Thank you for reading **Good Enough?**.



# DAY 1 – IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

## EPHESIANS 2:1-9

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by Grace! Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For you are saved by grace, through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift – not from works, so that no one can boast.*

The reality of our situation is that many of us are unsure about how God may feel toward us because we know He has reason to be less than happy with us. We know we have done wrong. We know we have sinned. We know that oftentimes we aren't even pleased with ourselves, so we wonder how a perfect God could be pleased with us.

These verses of scripture start by reminding us of what is already clear – we haven't exactly lived up to snuff. We have cared more about our own desires, fulfilling the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and chasing our own selfish ambitions than we've cared about living how God has commanded us – loving those around us, caring for them, and making the world we live in look a little more like Heaven.

Essentially, the beginning of this passage looks at the fear we have that God may not be pleased with us because of all the places we fall short, and it tells us that it's a perfectly reasonable thought to have because we have actually fallen very short. The passage affirms that we have been living in sin, and that living that way deserves the wrath of God.

However, that's not where the passage ends. It doesn't leave us in shame, wallowing in our failures, doubtful that God wants anything to do with us. It continues by telling us that even though we were dead in our trespasses, God has brought us into life through Christ. In other words, even though we really have been living in a way that is displeasing to God, His love for us is so great, and His mercy so rich, that He sent Jesus to atone for our shortcomings and raise us out of the place of death in which we put ourselves.

The most important part of this passage is where it reveals that our salvation – our escape from the death created by the way we've lived, the atonement for our sins that appeases the wrath of God, and our entry into right standing with God that opens up the door to transformation in our lives – is not from ourselves. The passage tells us that this is God's gift. We don't do anything to earn it.

We cannot do it by ourselves.

This is a key component to Christianity. If you are a Christian, what you are saying is that you admit your life has been characterized by decisions and actions that make Earth look more like Hell, not more like Heaven, and that such decisions and actions are unacceptable and worthy of punishment by God. You are saying you believe that God actually came to the world He created, as Jesus, and died on the cross to take that punishment on Himself. His death on the cross fulfilled the payment for the sin – for the shortcomings and moral failures – of every individual that would ever walk the earth, including yourself. God did this out of His own love, not because you, or anyone, deserved it.

When we look at our shortcomings and our failures and wonder if God loves us, we are essentially asking, “Am I good enough to deserve God’s love?” But when we look at this verse, what we see is that God sent Christ – God paid for our shortcomings and failures and provided a means of relationship with Him and transformation in our lives – as a result of His love and mercy, not as a result of our goodness or merit.

Let me point this directly at you, the reader.

Your goodness does not earn your salvation. God initiated everything by sending Jesus to pay the penalty for your sin so that you could walk with Him despite your shortcomings. The question in your mind should not be, “Am I good enough?” It should be, “Is Christ good enough?”

Until you realize that God’s judgment on you is not based on you at all, but is based on the finished work of Jesus, you will be nervous, afraid, anxious, and unsure of how God feels about you. Those feelings exist because you are trying to earn God’s love by your own merit, and you know better than anybody else how short you fall. But when you see that He loved you so much that He sent

Jesus before you ever did anything to deserve it, you will begin to recognize His love for you is not founded on whether or not you are good enough, but it is founded on how good He is. His love existed for you when you had done nothing to deserve it. If His love existed then, it exists now and will remain, unfailing, forever.

**Prayer:**

*Father, thank you for putting the punishment of my sin on Jesus. Thank you for loving me so much that you were willing to sacrifice so that I could live the life you created me for. Help me to remember that nothing I do can make you love me any more, and nothing I do can make you love me any less. Help me remember that your love for me is perfect because it is founded in your goodness, not in mine. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



# DAY 2 – GOD’S LOVE

## **ROMANS 5:8**

*But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!*

## **1 JOHN 4:10**

*Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

We have established that the question is not, “Am I good enough?” but it is, “Is Christ good enough?” It is not by our goodness, our holiness, our obedience, or our own merit that we enter into life with God. It is only by Christ that we have been taken from death to life, from darkness to light. It is only by Christ that we can leave the pursuit of self-gratification, which makes earth look more like Hell, and move into the fulness of life that is found in following God, which makes earth look more like Heaven.

The answer to, “Am I good enough?” is, “No. But, with Christ, I am more than enough, because He is more than enough!”

Before we go any further, I think it’s important to acknowledge why God sent Christ for us in the first place.

He sent Christ for us because He loves us! And His love is not conditional on our merit. Romans 5:8 makes it a point to say that God did this while we were still sinners. What is the significance there? It means that before you had any love for God, before you ever attempted to live for Him or pray to Him or go to church, before you ever tried to earn His love, He already loved you!

No action that you do makes God love you. Accepting Christ doesn’t make God love you more. If you lived perfectly in every way, it wouldn’t make God love you more. His love is a perfect love. He can’t love you any more because His love for you is love in complete fullness.

And no action that you do makes God love you any less. While you were still a sinner, God sent Christ. He didn’t wait until you had done enough good, His love was already there. And His love remains even when you fall short, sin, ignore His leading, neglect the things you know He would have you do. His love for you is a perfect love. He can’t love you any less because His love for you is love in complete fullness.

1 John 4:10 repeats to us the idea that God's love for us is not based on anything we did – “not that we loved God” – but that He is the initiator – “but that He loved us...”

I want to take a moment to explain the word “propitiation.” It isn't a word we use often, but I think it is important.

The Greek word translated “propitiation” here is *hilasmos*. It means, “an offering to appease an angry, offended party.” It is used in this verse to describe what Jesus was sent for.

God loves us unconditionally. He does not love everything that we do. Sin is a real problem and it deserves a real penalty. God's love for you is so great that rather than making you pay that penalty, God came to earth in flesh to take the penalty you deserved so that you could live separate from sin, close to Him.

This is an important point to make because even though God loved you while you were still a sinner, and even though God still loves you when you make mistakes and fail, He also paid a great price to satisfy the just penalty for your sins, and He doesn't want you to remain in that sin. His love for you is not a passive love, it is an active and passionate love that wants to see you grow better and walk in fulness of life. He is not content to see you acknowledge His love but remain in sin. Sin is death, and He is the God of life. His love for you is immense and undying, and it drives Him to want you walking in life, not trapped in death.

So, why did God send Christ? He sent Christ because He loves you, and He sent Christ because He wants your life to transform from a life of sin and brokenness and selfishness – a life that makes earth look more like Hell – to a life of love and hope and generosity, a life that resembles the love of Christ – a life that makes earth look more like Heaven.

**Prayer:**

*Father, thank you for your perfect love. Help me remember that I don't earn your love through my goodness, and I don't un-earn your love through my badness. Help me to recognize the areas in my life that you would change so that I may walk in the fullness of life that Jesus died to provide for me. I don't want to be good so that you'll love me, I want to be good **because** you love me. I want to live in a way that I reflect Heaven to the world around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



# DAY 3 – LOVING GOD

## **1 JOHN 5:3**

*For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. Now His commands are not a burden,*

## **MATTHEW 22:36-40**

*“Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as your self. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”*

On Day 2, we looked at how God loves us so much that He took the punishment on Himself for our sins, and He has brought us from death to life. He wants us to live a life where we are not trapped by sin, where we are not in darkness, experiencing Hell on earth and bringing Hell on earth to those around us. He wants us experiencing Heaven on earth, and He wants us to partner with Him in creating Heaven on Earth for others. How do we do this?

We start by responding to love with love.

God first loved us. Now, we get the opportunity to love Him back. 1 John 5:3 tells us how we can do this: Keep His commands.

This helps us put some practical handles on what it means to love God. Loving God means acknowledging that the things He has commanded us to do are actually meant to bring life. Just like He has brought us into life from death, as we've talked about the past few days, He wants to restore all of fallen creation to life! The way He does this is by teaching us a better way to live – He lays out commands and urges us in His word to live a certain way in relation to the people around us. When we keep His commands, we show love to God by showing gratitude for bringing us into life, and we show love to God by doing all we can to bring others into life as well.

In Matthew 22:36-40, Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is love your neighbor as yourself. He says all the Law and Prophets are summed up in these two commands.

So, what does loving God look like? It looks like keeping His commands. What does keeping His commands look like? It looks like loving your neighbor as yourself. With all the same energy and zeal and resources that we promote self-interest, we are to promote those around us. The same way we have experienced forgiveness and the love of God in our own lives, we are meant to forgive and love others.

Our interaction with the people around us is supposed to reflect God's interaction with us.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 through 7), Jesus gives some great insight on what it means to love your neighbor. He says things like, "You thought murder was bad, but I'm telling you that unchecked anger toward another is bad." He says things like, "You thought sleeping with a person you weren't married to was bad, but I'm telling you that just the internal attitude of lust is bad." He challenges us to tell the truth, to love our enemies, to give generously but not just to get accolades, to pray earnestly but not just to look holy, and not to judge the little things in your brother's life while ignoring the massive problems in your own. The commands God gives us are about respecting and caring for the people around us even when it brings no benefit for us. God's commands make us less selfish.

Sometimes it can seem like keeping God's commands is about keeping us from doing the things we want. It's really about helping change the things we want from selfish desires into things that will help the world around us look more like God intended – Heaven on Earth. He wants all people to experience a full life, and that doesn't happen when we only care for ourselves. So, as we journey further in our faith and seek the life God has for us, we need to ask ourselves how we are showing our love for God, and how we are loving those around us.

**Prayer:**

*Father, I am so grateful for your love. Please help me to love you in return by obeying your commands. Help me to see that the things you ask me to do in the scriptures are not meant to keep good things from me, but they're meant to make me a means by which you bring good things into the world. Help the motivation behind my actions to turn from love of myself to love of you and love of those around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



# DAY 4 – NEW YOU

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-19**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, as He has committed the message of reconciliation to us.*

## **ROMANS 6:5-7**

*For if we have been joined with Him in the likeness of His death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that sin's domination over the body may be abolished, so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, since a person who has died is freed from sin's claims.*

Day 3 looked at how we show love to God. Loving God means keeping His commands. We know that His love for us isn't predicated on how well we do this or on how much or how little we do. God loves us completely separately from any kind of merit we may or may not have. Yet he wants us to act a certain way in the world. He wants us to help Him make Earth look more like Heaven, not more like Hell.

This is where we run the risk of circling back to the beginning. This is where we run the risk of getting caught up in whether or not we are doing well enough, or whether or not we can do well enough, or how God feels when we aren't doing well enough.

Psalm 103:4 says that God knows what we are made of; He remembers that we are dust. He knows our natural tendency to fail. And He knows our inclination to beat ourselves up, sometimes unceasingly, for our continued failures. Even as we begin to learn and grow and take steps forward into the life He has designed for us, we have a tendency to look back at who we've been, and we let that define us. We let that limit what our future holds and who we can become.

God's insight into our tendency to chain ourselves to our past is why He has so clearly put in His word that the past is no longer what defines us.

Once we begin life with Christ, we are a new creation. The old has passed away. The person you used to be is not who you are now. Now you are something new.

I like the language of Romans 6. It says that our old self was crucified with Christ. What does that mean? It means that when Christ was crucified and died, the old you was crucified and died with Him. The person that always fails, the person you are ashamed of, that you feel chained to, that person has died! That person no longer exists. You are no longer that person! Now, you are something new!

You are reconciled to God who does not hold that past against you. You are a completely new creation, a new person. God is telling you, “Now, with me, you can do this!”

There is still a growth process. And growth means trial and error, forward momentum and abrupt halts. To grow, you will have to invite God into the process, you’ll have to ask him to change some things, to help you see the new you that He sees, and to help you act in line with who you are becoming. The truth is that you will still experience failure. We will all still miss the mark at times. But we no longer have to be enslaved by the shame and fear that come with failure. We can no longer say, “That’s just who I am. I will never change.” You have changed! You are no longer that person. You are somebody new. Scripture says that sin no longer has a claim on you, you are no longer a slave to those sins that snared you in the past. So, when you do make a mistake, don’t let that mistake cripple you into inaction, beat you into depression, or trick you into thinking God is done with you.

You are the child of a loving, gracious God who will never leave you. He knows your weaknesses and He sent Jesus anyways. He knows your failures and yet promises you new life. He knows who you think you are and He reassures you that He sees you as so much more.

When you get discouraged and you feel like you’re making the same old mistakes, remind yourself that He says you are new! That person is dead, and with God you are no longer enslaved to the past.

**Prayer:**

*Father, thank you for making me a new creation. As I continue to try to live the way scripture teaches me to live, help me remember that you are with me in the process – both in my successes and in my failures. Help me remember that failure doesn't mean I haven't changed. I have changed! The old me is gone, and as I give you space in my life, I am becoming the person you want me to be. Help me see the places I still haven't let you in, and give me the courage to open them up to you. Thank you for not expecting perfection, and thank you for drawing me into new life. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



# DAY 5 – SELF CONTROL

## **GALATIANS 5:22-23**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

## **1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27**

*Don't you know that runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away. Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

The fruit of the Spirit is a list of characteristics that begin to manifest in our lives in greater and greater degrees as we allow God to mold us into who He wants us to be. One characteristic on the list that I hear remarkably little about is self-control. It is actually a mark of the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives that we can control ourselves – our emotions, our desires, and the expression of those emotions and desires in our behavior and actions.

We have looked at the idea that God wants us to make the world look more like Heaven and less like Hell, and we know that God is molding us to be the new person He sees, but that still leaves the question of how we do it. How do we embody the new person we have become in Christ and not slip back into the habits of the person we used to be? How do we make the world around us look more like Heaven?

The first step may seem like a cookie-cutter response, but I think it is an essential part: We have to invite God in on the process. Scripture teaches that God generously gives wisdom when we ask for it (James 1:5). Scripture also teaches us that the Holy Spirit reveals truth (John 16:13). We should be asking for revelation about the areas of our lives that need to change and the wisdom for how to change them. There are some areas of our lives that we know need changing without divine revelation. Some of our habits of thought and action don't take a supernatural intervention for us to know they aren't God's best for us or the people around us. But the supernatural wisdom of God may help us get out of those places where we've been stuck for years.

One quick note about both revelation and wisdom from God: Don't be surprised if they show up in the form of people. Sometimes when we ask God for these things, we half expect a voice from the heavens or a divine vision or dream. Those aren't necessarily impossible things, but what's much more likely is a friend or a mentor, maybe somebody who has been telling you the same things

for years, will have a word of advice for you or will say something in passing that pops out in a new way. Don't minimize those moments. God has always worked in the world through people, and chances are He's going to work in your life through people, too. When you ask for His help, expect a response, but be open for that response to come from an unexpected place.

The second step is tied to the first one: We have to do what God has revealed to us. When we ask God to reveal the areas that need changed, we will begin to notice thought patterns that need to change or need to be abandoned altogether, and we'll begin to notice behavioral habits that need to be remedied because they are destructive either to ourselves or to others. We will even begin to notice our motives and desires coming into question in ways they never have before. When this happens, we have to take action on what has been revealed. Intentional action in step with God's revelation is self-control.

It is telling that Paul parallels self-control to an athlete's discipline. Athletes have to train continuously. They can't just reach an end goal and then stop, they have to continue training to stay in peak condition. They also have to repeat the same actions over and over again to master them. Top tier athletes perform under pressure because their bodies know what to do without thinking about it. They have performed the action so many times that they can actually do it subconsciously.

In order for us to live the way God wants us to live, it's going to take continuous effort. When the situations arise in our lives where we have the option to respond in a Christ-like manner or in a manner more like the person we used to be, we will have to intentionally choose to respond like Christ just like the athlete intentionally chooses to repeatedly perform the same exercise or drill to master a skill. And for us to build self-control, for us to really be disciplined and have an almost subconscious reaction to respond like Christ, it

will take intentional choice after intentional choice after intentional choice.

The fact that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit does not mean that the Spirit somehow miraculously deposits self-control in us and we go from an absolute mess one day to the epitome of Christ-likeness the next. It does mean that through our sensitivity to the leading of the Spirit, through our intentional use of the wisdom He bestows, and through our repeated decisions to respond how Christ would respond to a given situation, we will begin to see self-control manifest in our lives. And the byproduct of that self-control will be that in each of those instances where we respond like Christ, we will have brought a glimpse of Heaven in where it didn't exist before.

**Prayer:**

*Father, thank you for continuing to mold me into the person you want me to be. Please reveal to me by your Spirit, even by speaking through pastors, mentors, and friends, those parts of me that need to change, and give me the wisdom your word promises so that I know what to do about it. Help me develop the self-control to deliberately act in accordance with your word and what you have revealed to me so that my life may be characterized by the fruit of your Spirit, and so that the world around me would begin to look more like Heaven as a result. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# CONCLUSION

It is my hope and my prayer that this devotional has brought gratitude, peace, hope, and courage to your heart.

First and foremost, I hope that you have a renewed gratitude for what God has done for you in Christ. Through the pages of this devotional, I have tried to bring to mind the reality that the reason we often feel insecure about our standing with God is because we have actually done things that give God every right to be at odds with us. Instead, we find a God who came to the earth He created and died at the hands of men He created. And He did all this to bring healing and wholeness to people who brought little other than destruction to those around them. When we deserved anything but love, He still loved us. That is something we should always be grateful for.

In light of His unending and extraordinary love, I hope you have found peace in who He is rather than trying to find security in who you are or in anything you've done. Uncertainty about our standing with God comes in when we focus more on our failures than on His victory on the cross. As you've read, I hope you've seen that your standing with God is secured in the finished work of Jesus. You never earned it in the first place, so it isn't up to you to earn it now. God isn't giving up on you. Rest in who He is, and have peace in your soul.

We can often think that we are unique in our failures, and we can tend to lose hope that we will ever change. I hope that as you



have read, you realized that you are not the only one who fails. You are not the only one who wishes you were further ahead, who wishes you were stronger, who wishes you could pull it all together. All of us struggle at times, and many of us struggle much more than we let on. It is part of the human condition that we all fall short of God's standard. Furthermore, God knows that it's part of the human condition. He knows that we all fall short, and yet He has promised that He will be faithful to complete what He has started in us (Philippians 1:6). You don't have to stay who you have been. You are not enslaved to your past. God has made you new, and He will continue molding you to be more and more like Him as long as you live. Your future is not hopeless. You are not destined to repeat the failures of yesterday. God has more for you!

My prayer is that the culmination of these things – the gratitude for what God is done for you, the peace that He is not giving up on you, and the hope that He is making you somebody new – birth in you a courage to act in faith. As the reality of Christ's atoning sacrifice, His love for you, and His power at work in you take root in your life, I pray that you would have the courage to live in accordance with who you are becoming, not in bondage to who you have been. Walking a new path bound towards wholeness sounds incredible, but it's often hard. It can mean losing old friends, turning away from old habits, and stepping into a life that doesn't look familiar at all. That is no small task. Even though the things you're walking away from may be toxic, it can be frightening walking into the unknown. But the promise of God is that what comes on the other side is better. It's better because He is in it, and He brings the wholeness we've been seeking our whole lives. Have courage to take the steps you need to take in order to be the person God has called you to be.

Finally, my prayer is that as these truths begin to take hold in your life, you begin to see that God wants these same truths to take hold in the lives of every single person around you. Your loved ones, your neighbors, your co-workers, and even your enemies all deal with insecurities, with brokenness, with Hell on Earth. If they are Christians, they may deal with some of the same insecurities and uncertainties that we've talked about in this devotional. If they aren't Christians, they deal with all kinds of life situations, but without the hope and the wholeness that Christ promises. Either way, you have the opportunity to show them the same picture of God's love through Christ that I have tried to show you here. You have the opportunity to bring a glimpse of Heaven into the Hell people are living in all around you, and my prayer is that you would have the compassion and the boldness to do it.

Thank you for taking the time to read this short devotional. I pray that it was beneficial. For more encouraging and challenging thoughts, please follow my blog:

**KRISTOFERKEYES.COM**

**DESIGNED BY:**  
 **@NELSONSWARTZ**

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