

JANUARY  
9 & 10

# IOWA'S GOSPEL: I'M A GOOD PERSON.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the state of Iowa, we pride ourselves on being good people who are willing to work hard. But what if this humble notion stood in the way of us reaching Iowa for God? A new year is a great opportunity to examine religious lies we as Iowans tend to believe and start fresh with new perspectives to guide our lives. Some believe entrance to Heaven is a matter of being methodical in our behavior, and our meticulous Father keeps tally of every right or wrong move. This week, we will contrast what it means to be a Christian rather than simply do Christian acts.

## DISCUSSION

1. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. Paraphrase these verses [put them in your own words] on a sheet of paper.
2. Since we are God's "workmanship" and are "saved by grace," what does He expect from us? How does this passage relate to "be"-ing instead of "do"-ing?
3. Read Isaiah 29:13. Share an experience where you or someone you know "honored" God with their lips but their "hearts were far from Him." What did you learn from the experience that has helped you to take next steps in your faith?

## THINK ABOUT IT

Habits can be very good. As we are daily bombarded with new information, habits are one tool our brains use to conserve mental effort. Being methodical prevents error and likely helps us get many things done in our day in a fraction of the time. However, methodical and punctilious habits happen without feeling. We perform these routines simply to get them done. If we looked in a thesaurus, we'd find that methodical, punctilious and religious are all synonyms; this is clearly the "do" meaning. In Ephesians 5:17, Paul instructs us not to be foolish and act out of habit but to understand God's will. Following his instructions puts emotion and purpose into our actions and helps us be greater ambassadors for the Kingdom.

## DO SOMETHING

1. Make a list of your religious routines. Take time this week to evaluate each. Change or eliminate any that put "do" before "be."
2. Read Galatians 6:9-10. In prayer this week, ask God to place you where you can be a blessing to others and for the patience to be interruptible to His promptings.
3. Use this New Year as a time to reevaluate your small group's activities. Is your group spending time "be"ing [in the Word, community, prayer] or more time "do"ing? Pray about what challenges you face as a group and what you could do to overcome them.