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 Faith Bible Church  
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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (25)  
 ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #16  
 (DDR #644)

**Objection #16: “I’m not a very religious person, but I’m certainly not a bad person. I’m basically a normal, middle-of-the-road, good person.”**

Michael Brown’s shorter response:

By whose standards? Did you know the Hebrew Bible does not even recognize a “not too good and not too bad” class of people? You are either a sinner or you are righteous, a servant of the Lord or a transgressor.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is a bit of imprecision in the language of Brown’s response, it is true that either a person is a believer clothed with the very righteousness of God by faith alone in Christ alone, or he is an unbeliever who has rejected God’s grace and therefore, stands in his own evil of self-righteousness. There are only two choices: standing in self-righteousness or in the imputed righteousness of Christ at the point of salvation—apart from works (i.e. justification; cf. Rom. 3:28; 4:1-5). Failure to make a distinction between positional truth (righteous or unrighteous), and experiential truth (of righteousness and unrighteous) always leads to fatal flaws in properly understanding the Word of God. It is true, nevertheless, that there is no middle-of-the-road in regard to salvation or fellowship with God (spirituality). A person is either saved or unsaved. A believer is either in fellowship with God or out of fellowship with God at any given time (1 John 1:5-9). There is light and darkness—and no grays, at least in the Bible in regard to salvation or spirituality.

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<sup>1</sup>Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1ST ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 55-56. In this work, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response, which is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response, after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer response (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

Probably, the greatest myth in the human race is the myth that any person is inherently good (this myth is also found in all the religions of the world, most notably Judaism and Islam). Only Christianity teaches that man is really wicked at heart and must be redeemed and transformed from the inside out.

This objection is not only found in Judaism, it is also common among most people because they do not know Christ and the Word of God. Even the Bible teaches us that every man's ways is right in his own eyes (Deut. 12:8; Prov. 12:15). You could try to shake them out of their mythology of human good by showing them commands in the Word and then ask them how they are living up to them. For the Jews, you could point to their own Jewish Bible, the Tanakh, and show them that man is born in iniquity and does not have it in him alone to understand or seek God:

**Psalm 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

**Psalm 58:3** The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

**Psalm 14:1** *For the choir director. A Psalm of David.* The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. <sup>2</sup> The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who [always/continuously] seek after God.

If they reject the Bible, you could always ask them about certain standards and see where their standards are. Even many gay and lesbians think that polyamory is absolutely wrong. Everyone has some standard. Then you could ask them what makes their standard better than God's or anyone else's. Given the fact that man's standards continue to change, on what basis could they say that theirs is right or absolute. If they don't believe in absolutes, you could ask them if they are absolutely sure about that.

Blessed to be the object of God's immeasurable thoughts and grace,

**Psalm 139:17** How precious also are Thy thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup> If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with Thee.

Pastor Don