

# In God's Eyes: A Pretty Good Egg

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**By Tony Stith**

ZIMMERMAN, Minn.—My wife would tell you I have egg issues. In a nutshell—or, um, should I say an eggshell?—when it comes to the preparation of scrambled eggs I demand perfection. They have to be prepared just so: consistently yellow through and through, not undercooked, sliding around the plate, and not overdone, having the consistency of Silly Putty.

Any of these are simply unacceptable. But perhaps the infraction that catapults an egg from my plate into the garbage faster than anything else is the discovery of one or, gag, dare I say more than one, eggshell pieces hidden among the folds of an otherwise perfectly prepared scrambled egg.

Okay, so it's true. I have egg issues. That's probably why my wife declared long ago, "If you want eggs for breakfast, you're on your own." I can't say I blame her.

I had a strange thought the other morning as I was pushing the spatula around the frying pan, striving for that perfect egg: Wow, I'm glad God isn't as hard on me as I am on my eggs.

How thankful I am that when He discovers an eggshell in my character, and there are many, He doesn't scrape me off the pan into the garbage.

The fact is, if we are to believe Scripture, He does just the opposite.

Did you know that Scripture refers to you and me as saints not 20, not 30, but 2,240 times?

In contrast, of the 28 uses of the word *sinner*s and 13 uses of the word *sinner* in the New Testament, only a few of them refer to people who have come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

God doesn't see us the way we too often see ourselves. We are often so focused on our faults, on the pieces of eggshell that taint our character, that we forget to appreciate the new identity that He has given us despite our imperfections.

We perhaps have the Catholic Church to thank for our skewed understanding of what it takes to be called a saint. Catholics, unfortunately, turned sainthood into a right of passage, bequeathing that lofty title only to those they deem worthy by having lived a magnificent life or having achieved a certain level of spiritual maturity.

But that's not how God sees it. No, we're not perfect. Of course, we sin and continue to sin. We continue to fall short throughout our Christian walk. But in God's eyes being a saint is not about our character. It's about embracing our identity.

Our God wants you to see yourself as one of His saints.

In Ephesians 1 Paul writes: "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you . . ."

What does He want to give you? How does He want you to see yourself?

Continuing the passage: That God "may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe . . ."

Our God wants our eyes to be enlightened so that we can know the power of His love toward us and the inheritance He has given to us as His saints. You are a saint. That's who you are. He wants you to believe that.

That isn't to say should adopt an "I have arrived" mentality. Scripture is clear that we are to continue striving against sin. We are to grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This Christian walk is to be one of growing, of overcoming.

In Romans 7 Paul makes it clear that you and I have pieces of eggshell floating around in our lives.

Paul says of himself and all of us by extension, "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin."

All of us are fit to be scraped off the plate into the trash. Against the measure of God's law each of us is judged weak, sinful and worthy to be condemned.

In verse 24 he laments, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

Paul could have stopped there. He could have become focused on the pieces of eggshell. He could have become bogged down mentally and spiritually on his unworthiness.

But that's not where He stayed. He quickly moved from there to where God wanted His focus, where He wants all of our focus to be, on his new identity in Christ.

He continues in verse 25: "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

And in Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

Satan would like nothing better than for us to feel that we are defined by our sin. He wants us to become discouraged by our imperfections, to become fixated on our unworthiness, to live as those who are in bondage to sin and worthy only of condemnation.

But what Paul understood and what we too must understand is that, though we are sinners, it is not sin that defines us. It is not what you do that determines who you are; it is who you are that determines what you do.

If you think you are a no-good bum, you will probably live like a no-good bum. If you see yourself as a child of God who is spiritually alive in Christ, you will begin to live accordingly.

When we sin, and we all sin, rather than becoming discouraged and unlovable we instead draw strength from our identity in Christ to keep on fighting. It's a mind-set that exclaims: How amazing it is that I who am helpless and so sinful am saved by His grace! How wondrous it is that He has made me, such a sinner, to be named among His saints.

At risk of beating metaphor to death, when God looks at you He doesn't see the broken pieces of eggshell floating around in your life. Through the lens of His grace, He sees a pretty good egg.