



Welcome! As we begin, I want you to think about a question that most of you have asked at some point. The context may have been sports, school, or even your looks, but somewhere along the way, everyone has asked this question. **HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?**

Most of us recognize that this question is a big part of our world today. We live in world with measurements and standards, winners and losers, and we all want to know how good is good enough. Whether it's making the team, passing a class, or getting to first chair in band, we all want to know what it's going to take, and we hope to make the cut. Whether we like it or not, whether we agree with it or not, there will always be a standard to meet. However, for some of us, it seems like the bar is set so high that it's nearly impossible.

How many of you like to play sports? Are there any athletes in the room? Many of us enjoy playing or at least watching some sport, but have you ever thought about what it takes to play at the elite level? For those of you who play basketball and have hopes of making it to the NBA one day, good luck! The reality is that even if you're the star player on your high school team, the percentage of high school players who eventually get drafted into the NBA is only .03%. This means only 3 out of every 10,000 players in high school will make it to the NBA. So, as good as you are now, and I know some of you are really good at basketball, you may not be good enough for the NBA. If that's your dream, your calling, and your passion, go for it! Some of you in this room may just be that good and make it all the way, and I'll be the first one to get courtside seats to watch you play. I just want you to recognize that the standards are pretty high to play in the NBA.

For some of you, maybe sports are not your thing, but what you're really good at is school. While you may never brag about it, your report card has a lot of A's on it, with maybe an occasional B. Maybe you're so intelligent that you have dreams about eventually an elite university. However, for those of you who want to attend Duke University, not only do you have to have a 4.08 GPA, but you're also going to need a 34 out of 36 on the ACT and 1580 out of 1600 on the SAT. For Harvard, it's pretty much the same on GPA and standardized tests, but they also have only a 5% acceptance rate. This means that last year, out of 39,000 people that applied, less than

2,000 actually made it into Harvard. As smart as you are, you may have trouble meeting some of the standards at Duke or Harvard, because they're just so picky. However, if this is your dream, go for it! I wish you all the success in the world!

Whether it's sports, school, or some other area of life, you need to recognize that our world is built around this idea: you've got to be good enough. The best athletes make the best teams, the smartest kids get into the best schools, and even the best-looking people often get some of the best opportunities in life. You may complain and say this just isn't fair, but the reality is that this is how the world works today. Everyone wants to know the answer to the big question, **HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?**

Since this is true in our world today, and you have to be good enough and meet certain standards, have you ever wondered if it works this way with God? **HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH** for God? If He has a standard, what would it take for us to meet it? I'm sure some people would say things like go to church, read your Bible, or just be a good person. But where do you draw the line in terms of how good is enough for God? If it's about going to church, how often are we talking about: once a month, once a week, more? If it's reading the Bible, is it weekly or daily and for how long? Or maybe it's more about avoiding all the bad stuff that's out there. So, we come up with these lists of the really bad things and the more minor stuff. Most of us would put murder on the really bad list but lying and cheating on the minor offense list. When we do this, we end up playing this game of comparison where we measure ourselves compared to other people. We make these distinctions, not God.

[LEADER NOTE: Consider using an illustration that shows how we compare ourselves to other people. You could show some pictures and talk about someone that most people would agree is pretty bad (e.g. Osama bin Laden). Then show a picture of someone that most people would agree is pretty good (e.g. Mother Theresa) followed by a pic of someone in the middle (e.g. yourself or one of your favorite youth volunteers). Make the point that when we compare ourselves to some people, we seem really good, but compared to others, we're nowhere near their level of goodness. Most of us see ourselves somewhere in the middle.]

The reality is that we can talk all day long about how good or bad we think people are and make lots of comparisons. However, when it comes to

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