Is it better to be "right" or "good"?

Have you ever wondered why we are more insulted to be called "stupid" than "bad". We have been brought up to believe that life is all about being "right". We compete with each other about who is really right, and many times this turns into a very destructive battle that no-one can possibly win. The fact is, we are wrong much more than we are right, and we are fooling ourselves when we think that by following a particular "prescription" we make ourselves into the chosen ones of God.

I was in a meeting not too long ago where a co-worker said, "You have to know what the rules are so that you can find out how to stretch them to the limit." So often we only want to see how far we are required to go and still be in the "right".

This made me realize that there is something of a difference between being "right" and "good". If you had a choice, which would you rather be? God certainly wants us to obey his will. But we end up twisting this into our own interpretation, and we judge others by the rules that we develop ourselves. In the same way, the Pharisees used rules to try to dominate people, not help them. But God loves mercy more than our own standard of duty. God wants us to obey from the spirit, not just out of a sense of duty. God wants us to obey commands, not for their own sake, but for the sake of Goodness.

As my friend David Elrod explained it, "Right" is about ourselves; "Good" is about others. If we don't care about Goodness, then we don't love God. It is somewhat like the difference between "Being Good" and "Doing Good". "Being Good" is like a child who sits quietly and doesn't break any of the rules, but "Doing Good" is like a child who cleans his room and sets the table to help his mother without having to be asked. Both are appreciated, but doing Good is better.

The story of the Good Samaritan may give us some insight into this. Were his actions about the law, or about dong what was Good? We might ask if duty is better or more important than compassion?

In the movie "Blast from the Past", the hero (played by Brendan Frasier) says that he had been brought up to understand that a gentleman worked to make a person feel more comfortable. In a similar way, a Christian should strive to make those around them feel good.

God's will (or word, or law) defines to us what is Good. We should be pursuing it with all of our heart, for the most important thing in the world is to do Good (and thus be like God). As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "We…are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." We must magnify the Goodness of God by increasing the Good in the world.