



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#188)

Learning about *good* works from *God's* works.

## GOOD WORKS... WHY DO THEM?

IS IT ...

- To make God happy?
  - To increase your chance of getting into heaven?
    - To get bigger rewards?

OR IS IT ...

- Because your *love* for God and neighbor *compels* you to do them?

### THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO REASONS.

## WHAT PEOPLE TEND TO NOT UNDERSTAND (1):

↳ **"DOING GOOD WORKS"** is NOT the same as "doing religious activities."

**UNLESS** you use the word "religion" the way James does: as an expression of *love for God and neighbor*.

THE TONGUE SHOWS WHAT'S IN THE HEART. A GOOD HEART IS NECESSARY!

If anyone considers himself **religious** and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his heart and his **religion** is worthless.

EXAMPLES OF LOVE FOR:

- ✓ NEIGHBOR → Pure and undefiled **religion** before our God and Father is this: to **care** for orphans and widows in their distress, and to **keep** oneself from being polluted by the world.
- ✓ GOD → James 1:26-27 (BSB)

## WHAT PEOPLE TEND TO NOT UNDERSTAND (2):

↳ **EVERYTHING** a person does is to be done in a way that honors God – even eating and drinking.

So whether you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do it all for the glory of God.  
1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

**In other words...**

- Everything* a person does is to be a *good work!*
  - To qualify, it must honor God!

## WHAT PEOPLE TEND TO NOT UNDERSTAND (3):


↳ **ALL PEOPLE** have an obligation to do these good works – NOT just people who are *saved*.

**ALL will be judged** for their works, whether good or evil.

For the Son of Man ... will reward each **according to what he has done**.  
Matthew 16:27 (CSB)

... the dead were judged **according to their works** ...  
Revelation 20:12b (CSB)

- We will also be judged by the things we say – our *careless* talk (i.e., spontaneous, not preplanned) – Matthew 12:36-37.




## PROBLEM:

**SIN IS EMBEDDED WITHIN THE HUMAN HEART.**

The **heart** is **deceitful** above all things and **beyond cure**.  
Who can understand it?  
Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)

Indeed, there is **no one** on earth who is righteous, **no one** who does what is right and never sins.  
Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NIV)

- On the surface, people may do things that others call "good." But when taking into consideration all the issues – including motives and whether or not it is done to honor God, the final verdict is:
  - There is **no one who does what is good**, not even one.  
Romans 3:12 (CSB)



**SOLUTION:**  
**THOSE WHO FOLLOW JESUS ARE CAPABLE OF DOING GENUINE GOOD WORKS.**

... the Lord says,  
 I will put **my laws on their hearts** and write them **on their minds**, ...  
 Hebrews 10:16b (CSB)

Yes, **it is God who is working in you**. He helps you **want to do** what pleases him, and he gives you the **power to do** it.  
 Philippians 2:13 (ERV)

**GENUINE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS:**

- They are not sinless; but because of God's power, they can begin to do what is truly good and righteous.
- At best, an unsaved person can *imitate* some of the actions; but *they won't do them for the glory of God*.

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**WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF GOOD DEEDS/WORKS?**

It can include activities that people tend to call "religious" ...  
*but it includes far more than that!*

It can include time we spend in a "church building" ...  
*but it includes far more than that!*

★ **It includes every aspect of life. It is ALL-ENCOMPASSING!** ★

*Two ways to say it:*

And **whatever you do, in word or in deed**, do everything **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him.  
 Colossians 3:17 (CSB)

**Everything you say and everything you do** should be **done for Jesus your Lord**. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.  
 Colossians 3:17 (ERV)

(It also involves our *attitude and motives*.)

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(We will take a more in-depth look at these issues in the future.)

**The WORKS of the UNSAVED.**

- By nature, they do works that do NOT honor God. They are often *deliberately* evil; but even when their works are "good," they are done with corrupt motives, and *with no desire to honor God*.

**The WORKS of the SAVED.**

- As they submit their thinking to Scripture, they begin to learn what *genuine* good works are.
- Their "old selves" still desire to do evil; but God has: ① embedded within them a desire to do good, and ② given them the power to overcome their "old selves." This may result in a struggle... but it is one that, with God's power, will ultimately result in victory over sin.
- Complete perfection won't come until Jesus returns ... but in the meantime, it is our duty to pursue it.

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**HOW CAN WE KNOW WHICH WORKS ARE "GOOD"?**

- **NO** ⇔ Personal preferences, or the views of the world.
- **YES** ⇔ The *Word* of God: Direct statements, commands, general principles (which help us to evaluate things not directly mentioned in Scripture).
- **YES** ⇔ The *example* of God: What God does is the perfect expression of what is good.

**Even the Creation account (Genesis 1-2) teaches us what is "good."**

- ✓ God provided some basic instructions for working with creation in a way that honors God and is good for society (our "neighbor").
- ✓ God gave us a pattern that shows us the optimal way to express love for God: setting aside part of each week, redirecting our focus away from daily work activities and toward God.

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**GOD HIMSELF HAS SHOWN US WHAT IS "GOOD."**

He has also made *doing it* possible.

The Lord has told you what is **good**, what he demands of you ...  
 Micah 6:8A (OEB)

- ✓ **God's Word** – *teaches* us about good works.
- ✓ **God's creation** – is the *context* in which we can do good works.
- ✓ **God's actions** – give us *examples* of good works.
- ✓ **God's empowerment** – *enables* his followers to do good works.

(We will look at the first three today.)

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**GOD'S WORD – TEACHES US ABOUT GOOD WORKS.**

- God has called (saved) us to do good works.  
 For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.  
 Ephesians 2:10 (CSB)
- God has *not* left us to *guess* what those good works are. He has given us his Word, which *works* in us – ① to save us, as well as ② to teach and prepare us to do good works!  
 ... the word of God, which is indeed **at work in you** who believe.  
 1 Thessalonians 2:13b (NIV)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, **fully equipped for every good work**.  
 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (BSB)

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## GOD'S CREATION – IS THE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE CAN DO GOOD WORKS.

- God's works reveal something about him. All creation shows his greatness, his power, his faithfulness, his love. It shows us that we can rely on him: *we can trust him*.

Your eternal word, O LORD,  
stands firm in **heaven**.  
Your faithfulness extends to every generation,  
as enduring as the **earth** you created.  
Psalm 119:89-90 (NET)

The **earth** is filled with your love, Lord;  
teach me your decrees.  
Psalm 119:64 (NIV)

- Human sin may mask this revelation; but it cannot erase it. (Creation itself has also been *harmed* by our sin.)

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## God's works in creation are good works.

- God's work includes the creation of the heavens and the earth – Hebrews 1:10; Genesis 1:1+. These works of creating were good works – Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

Everything God created is good.

1 Tim. 4:4a (GW)

- God *continues* to work in creation and among his people – John 5:17. But he has *rested* from his work of creating heaven and earth – Genesis 2:2-3; Hebrews 4:3-4, 10.

( In doing this, he has set the pattern for *our* rest from work.  
(Other Scripture passages show us that this "rest" includes  
a redirecting of our focus toward God.)

- God does mighty deeds. All that he does is great and marvelous, and worthy of praise – Luke 1:51; Revelation 15:3.
- We don't always see it *now*, but ultimately, God can even use sickness and death to display his *good* works – John 9:3+.

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## Our responsibility over creation – to use creation to do good works!

- We are to rule over creation, working with it, caring for it, and using it in a way that honors God and benefits people – Genesis 1:26-28 (plus many examples throughout Scripture).
- Sin has effected both us and all of creation; it negatively impacts our interaction with creation – Romans 8:19-22; Genesis 3:17-19.
- Jesus is in the process of restoring all things, undoing the damage we have caused. In the end, he will enable us to fulfil our original mission in creation – Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2:6-9.



It's GOD's  
creation; so  
*learn to treat  
it as such!*  
In the end...

"The time has come for judging the dead,  
and for rewarding your servants the prophets  
and your people who revere your name,  
both great and small—  
and for destroying those who destroy the **earth**."  
Revelation 11:18b (NIV)

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## GOD'S ACTIONS – GIVE US EXAMPLES OF GOOD WORKS.

### God's interaction with people.

#### God's mercy, grace and justice.

- Scripture is filled with examples of God's love for people – and even his tolerance and kindness for those who hate him – Romans 2:4-5.
- Even so, judgment must eventually come. *God will not compromise his holiness*.

#### Following his example.

- We can learn from God's example. We need to be like our "Father in heaven," and show kindness to our enemies (as well as to our friends) – Matthew 5:43-48.
- We must also refuse to compromise holiness, righteousness and truth – or we will be denying Christ by our actions – Titus 1:16.

#### God's providential care.

- God is working all things for the good of those who love him – Romans 8:28.

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### Jesus' works.

#### Jesus' works are directly linked to God's works. What the Father did, the Son also did.

- The Father revealed his own works to the Son – John 5:20.
- The Father gave Jesus works to do, *and* Jesus did those works – John 4:43; 5:30, 36; 10:32-33; 17:4. Also Hebrews 10:7,9.
- His union with the Father made his works possible – John 14:10+.
- Jesus' works testify about him. If we accept the significance of his works (including the miracles he did), we will be willing to accept his *message* – John 10:25, 37-38; 14:11.

*Jesus was so focused on going God's works, that even his worst  
enemies could not find any sin in him. His works were 100% GOOD!*

Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I  
am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me?

John 8:46 (NLT)

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#### Two ways to respond to Jesus' good works...

[Jesus] ... powerful in word and **deed** ...

[Jesus] ... powerful in speech and **action** ...

Luke 24:19b (NIV & BSB)

Jesus' works included all that he did. People often focus on  
the signs and miracles; but their purpose was to *confirm* what  
he said and did. (They were not his primary focus.)

- **When people reject Jesus' works**, it's an expression of *hatred* for both Jesus and the Father – John 15:24.
- **We who trust ("believe") Jesus** will be able to do even greater works than he – John 14:12. This is because:
  - ↳ He came to do the Father's will: He established the New Covenant, which embeds God's laws in our hearts and minds – Hebrews 10:7,9,16. This gives us a *desire* to do good works.
  - ↳ He was going to ① return to the Father (so he could intercede for us) and ② send the Spirit (to empower us) – John 14:13-17. This gives us the *ability* to do good works.

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**Following Jesus' example.**

- There are many things we can learn from Jesus' life. After all, he has told us to follow him. Those who belong to him do follow him.

**COMMAND** → Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and **follow Me.**"

**FACT** → "My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they **follow Me.**"  
Matthew 16:24; John 10:27 (BSB)

- There are some specific situations in which Scripture tells us to follow Jesus' example, such as...
  - ✓ Jesus' example of love and humility – John 13:16.
  - ✓ Jesus' example of how to respond when suffering for doing good – 1 Peter 2:21-23.
- We can also learn from *people* who are following Jesus' example. Paul was such a person – 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1.
 

Follow my example, just as I follow the example of Christ.  
1 Corinthians 11:1 (ERV)

# Our MISSION

⇒ **TO DO ALL THINGS IN A GOOD WAY –**  
**the way that honors God**  
**and expresses love for God and neighbor!**

**God has given us what we need so that we can accomplish this!**

- ✓ God has given us a good creation to work with.
- ✓ He has given us good instructions and good examples to *show us how* to do it; and has sent the Spirit to *enable us* to do it.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is **the duty of all mankind.** For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is **good** or **evil.**  
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (NIV)

The **Lord has told you** what is **good,** what he demands of you: Only to do justice and love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.  
Micah 6:8 (OEB)

**NEXT TIME:**  
**God's empowerment**  
 – enables his followers to do good works.

... **a time is coming** when all who are in their graves will hear [Jesus'] voice and come out—those who have done what is **good** will rise to live, and those who have done what is **evil** will rise to be condemned.  
John 5:28b-29 (NIV)

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