



GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#189)
God works to enable our works.

1

GOD SAVED US FOR A PURPOSE – AND THAT PURPOSE IS CALLED "GOOD WORKS."

... we were **by nature children under wrath** ...

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, **made us alive with Christ** even though we were dead in trespasses.

You are **saved by grace!**

For you are **saved by grace through faith**, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

Ephesians 2:3b, 4-5, 8-10 (CSB)

2

God has not left us on our own, to figure out what those "GOOD WORKS" are.

- ✓ **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.

(We looked at these last time.)

God has not left us on our own, to do them in our own power.

- ✓ **God's empowerment** – *enables* his followers to do good works.

(We will look at this today.)

... **good works**, which **God prepared** ahead of time for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10b (CSB)

3

GOD IS WORKING IN US!

AS INDIVIDUALS and AS A GROUP.

① **He works in those who proclaim the Good News about Christ.**

He is the one we **proclaim**, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

To this end I strenuously contend with all **the energy Christ so powerfully works** in me.

Colossians 1:28-29 (NIV)

4

God working IN us...

② **He works to enable us to trust Christ [= faith] and to recognize the greatness of his love for us.**

I pray that ... [the Father] may strengthen you with **power** ... so **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have **power** ... to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is **the love of Christ**, and to know **this love that surpasses knowledge** ...

[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his **power that is at work within us** ...

Ephesians 3:16-20 (NIV)

5

God working IN us...

③ **He works to give us the desire and ability to do his will.**

HIS work enables OUR work!

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—**continue to work** out your salvation with fear and trembling,

for it is **God who works in you to will and to act** in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Philippians 2:12-13 (NIV)

- *Willingness to obey God* is a characteristic of people who belong to God – *because God is at work in them*.
- Our **work** is an expression of human responsibility. It's a response of **trust** in God, who works his power in us.

6

God working **IN** us...

**④ We can rejoice because
God will finish the work he has begun in us!**

He began it... he won't give up!

And I am certain that God, who **began the good work** within you, will **continue his work** until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.
Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

- HOW can Paul be *certain* that God will do it? The answer is found in a similar passage that he wrote to the Christians at Thessalonica:

Now may the God of peace **make you holy** in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be **kept blameless** until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.
→ **God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.**
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (NLT)

7

HERE are some of the things he has done in our lives:

- ✓ The Father chose us. Jesus' sacrifice cleansed us. The Holy Spirit made us holy.

God the Father knew you and **chose** you long ago, and **his Spirit** has made you **holy**. As a result, **you have obeyed him** and have been **cleansed** by the blood of **Jesus Christ**.
1 Peter 1:2 (NLT)

(Often translated as: "through the **sanctifying work** of the Spirit.")

- ✓ Jesus **changes** our values and desires, so that we become people who **want** to obey him.

... **Jesus Christ**, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, **eager to do what is good**.
Titus 2:13b-14 (NIV)

8

GOD IS WORKING WITH US!

↪ AS a GROUP.

① God works with our prayers.

- We can pray that God will enable us to do his will. *In doing this, his will and our will are aligned!*

Now may the God of peace ... **equip** you with every good thing to do his will, **working** in us what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever.
Amen.
Hebrews 13:20a, 21 (NET)

- This verse expresses a desire for God to work in our lives. Other verses (such as Philippians 2:13) show us that God is doing it!

9

God working **WITH** us...

② God provides us with gifts and abilities.

- ✓ *Each* of us has some type of ability. *All* of them are from God.

There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. There are different ways of **working**, but the same God **works** all things in all people.
Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.
1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (BSB)

Paul then lists various examples here. Other passages list *different* examples. But regardless of what the gift is ...

All these are the **work** of one and the same Spirit, who apportions them to each one as He determines.
1 Corinthians 12:11 (BSB)

- ✓ By means of these, God uses us (his people) to build each other up.

10

GOD IS WORKING AROUND US!

↪ IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE.

① We have a part in his plan – and it results in praise and glory to God.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of **him who works out everything** in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be **for the praise of his glory**.
Ephesians 1:11–12 (NIV)

11

God working **AROUND** us...

② God is using all things to accomplish good for those who love him.

And we know that in all things **God works for the good** of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28 (NIV)

- Because this is true, we can know *with certainty* that **nothing** can separate us from his love for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ...
No, **in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him** who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:35, 37-39 (BSB)

12

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

[Already mentioned: ① prayer and ② using our gifts.]

① Living a life based on *genuine* love.

✓ **FIRST**, God embeds within us this *genuine* love, to replace the counterfeit and self-focused "love" that characterizes the world.

... lovers of self, lovers of money, ... unloving ... without love for what is good ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ...
From 2 Timothy 3:2-4 (CSB)

WE GO FROM THIS... TO THIS!

We **love** because God first **loved** us.
1 John 4:19 (ERV)

THE GENUINE KIND OF LOVE!

13

✓ **SECOND**, Christ's love *compels* us to love others. We gain a *desire* to have *genuine* love for God and neighbor!

For **Christ's love compels us** ... that those who live should **no longer live for themselves**, but for Him [= Christ] who died for them and was raised again.
From 2 Corinthians 5:14a, 15b (BSB)

LOVE FOR GOD

⇒ We become **EAGER** to do what is good!

... **eager to do what is good.**
Titus 2:14b (NIV)

LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR

⇒ At the same time, it is a **RESPONSIBILITY**. We must carefully devote ourselves to doing these expressions of love.

And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be **careful to devote themselves to doing what is good**. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.
Titus 3:8b (NIV)

LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR

14

② Doing God's work the *right* way.

✓ We can say that *our* works are *God's* works, since God has prepared them for us to do (Ephesians 2:10) and he has equipped us to do them (Hebrews 13:20-21).

✓ This gives us a great (and holy) responsibility to do these works the *right* way! Here are two *principles* to help us:

⇒ **The urgency of doing God's works while we can.** This was Jesus' attitude... and should also be ours.

We **must do the works of [God]** who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work.
John 9:4 (CSB)

THIS PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO US BY PAUL

Make the most of **your opportunities** because these are evil days.
Ephesians 5:16 (GW)

15

⇒ **The need to *NOT* destroy the work of God.**

Do not destroy the work of God ...
Romans 14:20a (NIV)

- This specific verse has to do with food issues. (It continues by saying, "**... for the sake of food.**") But the devil tries to destroy God's work in *many* ways... *and he uses people to do it.*
- Our focus is on the *visible* church; and here are some of the ways people may attempt to destroy the work of God:
 - ✓ Attacking its foundation with false teaching – 2 Timothy 2:18.
 - ✓ Attacking it from without, through persecution – Acts 8:3; Galatians 1:13, 23.
 - ✓ Creating contention and strife within the church; pushing for one's "rights" (rather than acting in love); arguing over minor issues; promoting personal preferences; etc. – Romans 14:15, 20. [The "food" issue is one example of many in this category.]
- We are to build others up, not tear them down. We must encourage each other to live by what Scripture defines as right and true.

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WHAT can we conclude?

GOD IS ACCOMPLISHING **HIS** MISSION, TO ENABLE US TO DO **OUR** MISSION!

He not only *enables* our works, but makes them eternally *significant*!

Our MISSION

- ✓ **RECOGNIZE** that we are "under construction" by God; and **LOOK FORWARD** to the final result!
- ✓ **DELIGHT** in what God is doing, and **PURSUE** a life that is based on God's work in us.

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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