



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#195)

God empowers his people to do good works.

1

Good Works

- ⇒ They are an **OBLIGATION** for all people – not just Christians.
- ⇒ The works must be good in ways that honor God – which involves not only what is done, but why it is done.
- ⇒ Only those who are following Jesus* can successfully do this. It's because GOD EMPOWERS THEM TO DO SO.

* [The unsaved remain slaves to sin – John 8:34; Romans 6:6, 16-18].]

2

GOD EMPOWERS US so that we can do GOOD WORKS!

>> We can fulfil our obligations!! <<

... continue to **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling. For **it is God who is producing in you** both the **desire** and the **ability** to do what pleases him.
Philippians 2:12b-13 (ISV)

For we are **God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.
Ephesians 2:10 (BSB)

✓ *God is directly involved.*
 ✓ *He also uses people to accomplish his purposes.*

3

God empowers us to do good works.

- This does not cancel *our responsibility* to choose to do the good works. Rather, it explains *why* we are capable of doing them. Without God's gracious (undeserved) empowerment, we, *by nature*, don't do works that are good (taking into consideration both the actions and the motives).
- It's all part of what happens when we come under the **New Covenant** (Hebrews 10:16). It's the result of being changed into a **new creation** (2 Corinthians 5:20). It's what happens when we put on the **new self** (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10).
- Paul experienced a wide variety of life circumstances. Here is how he had the power to respond in a *good* way in all of them:

I can do all things **through Christ who gives me strength**.
Philippians 4:13 (BSB)

4

We have power because of our "connection" to God (i.e., being united with Christ).

- What we do is done "in God."
 ✓ *In his power; in his presence; with his approval.*

But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be plainly evident that his **deeds** have been **done in God**.
John 3:21 (NET)

- Jesus' accomplishment on the cross included preparing us to be *eager* to do good works. He *purified* us for this purpose.

[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 2:14 (NIV)

5

God provides other people to help prepare us for doing good works.

- God uses people (leaders) to build us up. The end result is:
 - ✓ *We are equipped to do good works.*
 - ✓ *We, as the body of Christ, are strengthened.*

He appointed some believers to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some to lead and others to teach the groups of believers.
 This was to prepare God's people to do **God's work** and **serve others**, so that all the people who belong to Christ might become spiritually strong.
Ephesians 4:11-12 (UDB)

This also implies human responsibility. People must be willing to use the gifts and abilities God has given them, in order for this to get accomplished.

6

God sometimes provides us with life circumstances that give us special opportunities to do good works.

EXAMPLE:
Rich people can use their resources for doing good.

Command them to do good, to **be rich in good deeds**, and to be **generous and willing to share**.
In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.
1 Timothy 6:18-19 (NIV)

- Riches tend to *hinder* a person from following Jesus (Luke 18:24). Few rich people will enter the kingdom of heaven because of this.
 - ✓ However, this passage shows us how a person can be both rich and a member of God's kingdom!

People may wish they were rich, and may daydream that they'd do many good things with those riches. But don't use that as an excuse! Such circumstances are NOT a prerequisite for doing good works! In fact, many poor people do more good than most rich people. They may have their own special opportunities that the rich don't have.

God requires us to encourage each other to do good works.

✓ By praying for each other.

- Prayer that God will fill them with the **knowledge** of his will. Then they will be able to fulfil their **desire** to please God by doing every kind of good work.

We ask {God} to fill you with **the knowledge of his will** through every kind of spiritual wisdom and insight.
We ask this so that you will live the kind of **lives that prove you belong to the Lord**. Then you will want to please him in every way as you grow in **producing every kind of good work** by this knowledge about God.
Colossians 1:9b-10 (GW)

God's people want to do good; but to do it, they need to know what it is!

- Prayer that God will provide them with the **power** to accomplish the good things they desire to do.

So we keep on **praying for you**, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the **power** to accomplish all the **good things** your faith prompts you to do.
Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.
2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NLT)

Since they are following Jesus, they *have* this desire. They also know that God's grace made it possible.

- Prayer that God will **encourage** and **strengthen** them in those works.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father ... **encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good word and deed**.
2 Thessalonians 2:16a, 17 (BSB)

✓ Through verbal reminders and encouragement.

3 EXAMPLES:

REMINDE THEM Remind them ... to be ready for **every good work**.
Titus 3:1 (NET)

EMPHASIZE IT, SO PEOPLE WILL LEARN And I want you to **stress these things** [see context], so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to **doing what is good**. ...
Our **people must learn** to devote themselves to **doing what is good** ...
Titus 3:8b; 14a (NIV)

"SPUR" THEM ON! And let us consider how to **spur one another on to love and good deeds**.
Hebrews 10:24 (BSB)

✓ Using one's gifts and abilities to prepare others to use theirs.

- Then we will *all* benefit!

[God appointed various leaders] to prepare God's people to do **God's work** and **serve others**, so that all the people who belong to Christ might become spiritually strong.
Ephesians 4:12 (UDB)

✓ Being an example for others to learn from.

Tit 2:7 In everything, show yourself to **be an example by doing good works**.
Titus 2:7a (BSB)

In this context are some examples that applied to Titus, based on the specific gifts and abilities God had given him.

These examples have a greater focus on *leaders* encouraging others; but we can *all* encourage each other in some way.

✓ Examples of people in the Bible.

The Bible has *many* examples of God's people doing good works! Most of them don't have the word "works" (or "deeds") in the context; but here are a few that *do*:

- The work of sharing the Good News**; evangelism, missionary work, etc.
 - ✓ Barnabas and Saul (Paul) – Acts 13:2; 14:26.
 - ✓ Timothy (following Paul's example) – 1 Corinthians 16:10.
- The work of helping God's people**; providing for their needs, etc.
 - ✓ In general, providing help as needed – Hebrews 6:10; Titus 3:14.
 - ✓ Contributing financially to the needs of God's people – a work of grace – 2 Corinthians 8:6-7, 19.
 - ✓ A woman who made clothes for the poor – Acts 9:36, 39.

[For more examples – good and bad ones – read the Bible!]

Some attitude issues.

ABOUT US

- Scripture tells us that doing good works is the *desire* of those who have been changed by God (i.e., are now saved). As we *grow* in the faith, we will also want to *grow* in doing good works.

We live in a day in which church-goers don't seem to emphasize this, *though Scripture does.*
(The early church also emphasized this.)

ABOUT OTHERS

- There are some passages that illustrate the attitude we should have toward those who's lives are characterized by good works.
 - ✓ Examples are randomly distributed across the many activities of life, focusing on different types of good works. **(After all, all areas of life are to be done in a way that honors God.)**
 - ✓ These examples give us a basic perspective for learning how we should respond. Our job is to think about ways to express similar attitudes in *other* areas of life. →

Some random examples of responding to others who do good.

- ✓ **Honoring leaders in the church**, especially if they do their work well – 1 Timothy 5:17.
- ✓ **Providing for destitute widows**, if they have been dedicated to serving God and have a reputation for good deeds, etc. – 1 Timothy 5:10 (important context begins in verse 3).
 - ❖ [Note the priorities mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:9-10: We should be more impressed by their good deeds, than by any fancy apparel they may wear.]
- ✓ **Appreciation** for the people and their works – seen in this example, when Tabitha (Dorcas) died (temporarily) – Acts 9:36-39+.
- ✓ **Recognizing** good deeds for what they are – here, learning to respond the *right* way to the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume – Matthew 26:6-13.

- ✓ **Gratitude, thankfulness to God for what others do** – 2 Corinthians 9:12 (because they were helping the poor Christians in Jerusalem); 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (because their lives were characterized by works, the result of their faith and love).
- ✓ **Submitting to leaders who serve you** – 1 Corinthians 16:16. (Don't make doing God's work difficult for them!)

What about those who *claim* to be saved, but *don't* do good works?

Don't do anything that encourages them to stay that way! Don't even feed them, if doing so will reinforce their sin!

- ✓ Applied to lazy busybodies, who would rather sponge off the good works of *others*, than work to take care of *themselves* – 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; also 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.
- ✓ Applied to pleasure-seeking widows, who want to be fed by the church – 1 Timothy 5:3-10.

What should we conclude?

⇒ Can we do good works – ones that GOD considers good?

↳ If we are following Jesus, then the answer is a resounding

★ **YES!** ★

But when you're tempted to sin, it all comes down to this:
WHO ARE YOU GOING TO TRUST?

YOU'RE DESTINED TO FAIL!



I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME!



Your mission:

Do what you have the power to do!

Do you **TRUST** God, who *promised* you the power to do good works ... and even prepared the opportunities for you to do them?

THIS TRUST – for doing good works – IS THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF GENUINE FAITH!

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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