



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#196)

God tells his people HOW to do good works.

# Good Works

- ⇒ **They are an OBLIGATION** for all people – not just Christians. *But only Christians can do them.*
- ⇒ **God has empowered his people to do good works.** *(The unsaved remain slaves to sin, and don't do their works in a way that honors God.)*
- ⇒ **God also tells us HOW to do them.** He gives answers to those "who, what, when, where and why" questions that people tend to ask. **We are going to look at these.**

## WE'VE ALREADY LOOKED AT SOME OF THE ANSWERS.

Today, we plan to fill in some of the gaps (and maybe reinforce some statements already made).

**WHO? – ALL OF US!**

- ✓ Each statement and command about good works reinforces this fact.
- ✓ But we cannot succeed unless we are willing to follow Jesus and receive God's empowerment.

**WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? – GOOD DEEDS!** This includes *everything we do* in life. (Some verses also include everything we *say*.) These verses imply **ALL THE TIME!** and **ANYWHERE WE ARE!**

**WHY? –** It's an expression of **LOVE FOR GOD AND NEIGHBOR.** (Everything we do must be an expression of love.)

**HOW? –** [We will be looking at some of these things.]

**WE ALREADY KNOW THE:** WHO? – ALL OF US!

**SO WE WILL START BY REINFORCING THE:** WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? – good deeds; all the time; anywhere we are!

## WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

- **Everything we do.** (Including everything we *say*.)

And **whatever you do**, whether in **word** or **deed**, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, ...

Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

- **Every good work.**

[... walking] worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in **every good work** ...

Colossians 1:10 (CSB)

(Verse 11: It's with *his* power.)

**AT NO TIME SHOULD WE BE DOING NON-GOOD WORKS!**
- **Being ready at all times.**

Remind the people ... to be **ready** to do **whatever is good**, ...

Titus 3:1 (NIV)
- **This includes daily work activities.** They are valuable in God's sight.\*
 

... make it your ambition ... to **work with your own hands**, ...

1 Thessalonians 4:11b (NHEB)

\* (If you do them as though you were doing them for *him* – Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23.)

**NOW FOR THE:** WHY? – Out of love for God and neighbor.

**AND** HOW? – [Let's find out some of the ways.]

## WHY? HOW?

- The "HOW" verses fit quite well into two categories:
  - ✓ *Love for God.*
  - ✓ *Love for neighbor.*
- This implies the answer to the "WHY" question: It's an expression of LOVE! (Also, many verses tell us to do *everything* as an expression of love for God/neighbor.)

**Good works, out of love for GOD.**

Doing them for God.

- In Jesus' name. [This includes doing them as his representative.]
 

And **whatever you do**, whether in word or deed, do it all **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, ...  
Colossians 3:17 (NIV)
- Doing them for the Lord.
 

**Whatever you do**, work at it with all your heart, as **working for the Lord**, ...  
Colossians 3:23a (NIV)
- Doing them to glorify and honor God.
 

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

**HOW to do them as an expression of LOVE for God.**

- Lives that are morally clean/pure.
  - OBLIGATION** "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord must **turn away from iniquity**."
  - ILLUSTRATION** A large house contains not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. Some indeed are for honorable use, but others are for common use.
  - APPLICATION** So if anyone **cleanses himself of what is unfit**, he will be a vessel for honor: sanctified, useful to the Master, and **prepared for every good work**.  
2 Timothy 2:19b-21 (BSB)

- With God-honoring motives.
  - Not for the purpose of impressing people.
 

"Be careful not to display **your righteousness merely to be seen by people**. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven."  
Matthew 6:1 (NET); three examples follow this verse.
  - Our ultimate motive: God's glory (not personal attention).
 

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may **see your good works** and **give glory to your Father in heaven**.  
Matthew 5:16 (CSB)

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may **see your good deeds** and **glorify God** on the day he visits us.  
1 Peter 2:12 (NIV)

- Having nothing to hide (when our works *do* become exposed).
  - THE UNSAVED** For **everyone who does evil deeds** hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed.
  - THE SAVED** 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 3:20-21 (NET)

["The light" refers to Jesus and his teachings.]

- Eventually, our good deeds will be recognized for what they are.
 

Similarly **good works** are also **obvious**, and the ones that are not **cannot remain hidden**.  
1 Timothy 5:25 (NET)

(This also applies to sinful deeds – v. 24.)

**Good works, out of love for NEIGHBOR.**

**NEIGHBOR**

Time for a "reality check." → **Who is my "NEIGHBOR"?**

- It includes the people we know – friends, acquaintances, etc. – people who tend to love us back. **BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT!** (Even the wicked can have some form of *this* "love"!)

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? **Even sinners love those who love them**.  
Luke 6:32 (BSB)

**NEIGHBOR**

- It includes the people we **don't know** – strangers, aliens, *even enemies* – people who will most likely give us nothing good in return, and who would not do it to honor God.

But I tell you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.  
Matthew 5:44-45 (BSB)

(See also the Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:29-37.)

★ **THIS IS THE MARK OF A JESUS-FOLLOWER!** ★

Loving our friends, acquaintances, etc. – but also strangers, aliens, and enemies.

# NEIGHBOR

*Jesus did not invent something new. The Old Testament Law had a similar focus!*

- In the Law, it is written:
 

**Love your neighbor as yourself.** I am the LORD.  
Leviticus 19:18b (ERV)
- But it is also written:
 

You must treat **the foreigner** living among you as native-born and **love him as yourself**, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.  
Leviticus 19:34 (BSB)

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**[Time to learn about these good works!]**

**Doing them for neighbor.**  
(Many of these verses focus specifically on God's people – our *family* – but we are also to do good to the "outsiders.")

- Doing good to ALL people, but with a **greater** emphasis on GOD'S people.
 

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us **do good** to all people, **especially** to those who belong to **the family of believers**.  
Galatians 6:10 (NIV)
- Even when we get discouraged in doing good, be aware that, as we do it for **people**, we are also doing it for **God!**

God is not unjust; he will not forget **your work** and the love you have shown **him** as **you have helped** his people and **continue to help them**.  
Hebrews 6:10 (NIV)

GOD NEIGHBOR

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**HOW to do them as an expression of LOVE for neighbor AND to honor God.**

Some of these passages describe *basic principles*; others are *applications of principles*, applied to specific situations. We can learn from both.

- As an expression of love.
 

We must show our **love** by the **things we do**.  
1 John 3:18b (ERV)
- With an attitude of wisdom and humility.
 

If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, **doing good works** with the **humility** that comes from **wisdom**. ...  
But the **wisdom from above** is ... [many characteristics, including...] full of mercy and **the fruit of good deeds**.  
James 3:13, 17a (NLT)

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- Not hypocritical, but consistent in what we say and what we do.
  - It's the way *genuine* love acts!
 

My children, our love should **not be only words and talk**. No, our **love must be real**. We must show our love by the **things we do**.  
1 John 3:18 (ESV)
  - It may have *eternal* consequences – for both us and them!
 

Pay close attention to **your life and your teaching**; persevere in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.  
1 Timothy 4:16 (CSB)
  - Don't be like the religious leaders in Jesus' day (Matthew 23:3)!

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- Looking forward to the opportunity!
  - Fully committed to doing what is good!
 

[Jesus Christ] gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, **totally committed** to **doing good deeds**.  
Titus 2:14 (NLT)
  - Thankful for the opportunity!
 

And **whatever you do**, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God the Father through Him.  
Colossians 3:17 (BSB)
  - Even when it involves employment – where you are simply doing what someone else tells you to do!
 

**Whatever you do**, work at it **with all your heart**, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ...  
Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

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- Giving good works the priority over trying to impress people.
 

And I want the women to make themselves attractive in the right way. Their clothes should be sensible and appropriate. They should not draw attention to themselves with fancy hairstyles or gold jewelry or pearls or expensive clothes.  
But they should make themselves **attractive by the good things they do**. That is more **appropriate** for women who say they are devoted to God.  
1 Timothy 2:9-10 (ERV)

(Men also have ways of trying to impress people.)
- Devoted to meeting urgent needs – and not having a wasted life.
 

Our people must learn to devote themselves to **doing what is good**, in order to **provide for urgent needs** and **not live unproductive lives**.  
Titus 3:14 (NIV)

(The context has to do with travelling Christians who would be ministering at their church... but this principle is not limited to this!)

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### WHAT shall we conclude?

First of all, note that one thing is "missing" from the "HOW" instructions: "TECHNIQUES" for doing it.

- That's because doing good works involves day-to-day living... and *that is not* a "technique." It's a matter of doing what you believe Jesus would have done *in all of life*.
- Following Jesus is a matter of relying on God, learning his word (so you know how to live and respond to situations), and then living with a new set of values that control how you live and talk.
- Even if you *do* memorize a "technique" or plan (for certain situations), you still need to rely on God. Things rarely work out the way our "technique" wants them to!
- If your "technique" involves manipulating people into responding the way you want, you may get "results" at that moment; but *in the long run*, it will usually turn out bad.

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### Avoiding a major misconception.

We've mentioned this issue briefly several times; but ...

- Most people view "good works" as something "extra" that we do, in addition to our daily activities.
- The "good works" described in the Bible are activities based on a *new* nature and a *new* set of values, that replace our previous daily activities. They aren't an "addition" to life; but are to be "the way we live" every second of the day.
- Many of our daily activities will look the same; but our *motivation* for doing them has changed – and sometimes that could change the *way* we do them. (We may also have to *replace* some activities with others.)
- **This much of life is affected:**

So, whether you **eat** or **drink**, or **whatever** you do, ... /  
**Everything** you **say** or **do** ... / **Whatever** you do, ...  
 1 Corinthians 10:31a; Colossians 3:17a, 23a (GW)

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At this point, we've learned enough about the "how" that we can start doing (or living a life of) good works, *if we aren't already doing them.*

⇒ If we've been hesitant in the past, we can stop being so!

DON'T TRY!  
 YOU'LL MAKE MISTAKES!  
 YOU'LL BE EMBARRASSED!

YOU NEED TO LEARN (WHICH REQUIRES THE BIBLE) AND GAIN EXPERIENCE (WHICH REQUIRES YOU TO PRACTICE DOING IT).

IT'S A MATTER OF GROWING. IF YOU MAKE MISTAKES, KEEP TRUSTING GOD, AND LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES.

But it all depends on this:  
**WHO ARE YOU GOING TO LISTEN TO?**



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## Your (our) mission:

### God has given us what we need!

- ✓ A changed heart and mind.
- ✓ His power.
- ✓ His instructions.

We just need to take what he's given us, and put it to use!

So do whichever

applies to you: ✓ Trust God, learn and do!  
 (or) ✓ Keep up the good work!

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### WE CAN HAVE PAUL'S PRAYER AS OUR PRAYER!

This is my prayer for you: ✓ that your love will grow more and more;  
 ✓ that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love;  
 ✓ that you will see the difference between what is important and what is not and choose what is important;  
 ✓ that you will be pure and blameless for the coming of Christ;  
 ✓ that your life will be full of the **many good works** that are produced by Jesus Christ to bring glory and praise to God.

Philippians 1:9-11 (ERV)

### FOLLOWING JESUS IS A LIFE OF GROWING!

Even when we are doing *well* in something, our goal is to do *even better*. We will want to...

- ✓ Please God more and more, by the way we live – 1 Thessalonians 4:1.
- ✓ Love each other more and more – 1 Thessalonians 4:10.
- ✓ Be constantly growing in faith and love – 2 Thessalonians 1:3.
- ✓ Increase in the expression of godly character – 2 Peter 1:5-8.

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