

GOOD WORKS – “LOVE IN ACTION”

I John 3:17-18

“I know this now. Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing and they give their lives to little or nothing. One life is all we have and we live it as we believe in living it. And then it is gone. But to sacrifice what you are and live without belief, that’s more terrible than dying”. Joan of Arc

WHAT

What are good works?

Good works represent “love in action” (I John 3:17-18)

“Christianity is not just about helping you become a better person; Christ came into your life so you could help make the world a better place” (from “The Externally Focused Church” by Rusaw and Swanson)

Some biblical examples include:

- Meet needs of others (Titus 3:14), including feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, giving drink to the thirsty (Mt 25:31-46; Jam 2:15-16). Meet the needs of the saints and practice hospitality (Rom 12:13).
- Visiting orphans and widows (Jam 1:27).
- Giving cheerfully (II Cor 9:7-8).

Here are some biblical examples of people who did good works:

- Good Samaritan - made an effort to help someone who was in need (Luke 10:25-37).
- The woman who poured perfume on Jesus (Mt 26:6-13).
- Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) (Acts 9:36).

- Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2).
- Epaphras (Col 4:12)

WHY

Why should we NOT do good works (i.e. what are some wrong motivations)?

- To earn our salvation. We are saved by FAITH (Eph 2:8-9).
- To keep our salvation. We are justified by FAITH (Rom 3:28,5:1; Gal 2:16, 3:24).
- To bring glory to ourselves (Phil 2:3-4; I Cor 10:24).

What are some proper motivations to do good works?

- God created us to do good works; true faith should result in good works (Eph 2:10; James 2:14-26)
- We are commanded to:
 - * Bear fruit in every good work (Col 1:10)
 - * Be zealous for good works (Titus 2:14)
 - * Be careful to engage in good deeds (Titus 3:8)
 - * Be DOERS of the Word, not just HEARERS (James 2)
 - * Be ready for every good deed (Titus 3:1)
 - * Meet pressing needs (Titus 3:14)
- We are to love God and our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 22:34- 40). A practical way to demonstrate our love is through good works (I John 3:18). Good works benefit others.
- Good works pave the way for the good news (Acts 9:32-35; Luke 5:17-26).

“In serving others, salvation is our ultimate motive but not our ulterior motive”.

- Good works bring glory to GOD (Mt 5:16; I Pet 2:12; I Cor 10:31). We should do our good works in the

name of Jesus (Col 3:17).

- When we help the poor and needy, we are helping Jesus; or help or lack of help for the poor and needy is a test of our relationship with Jesus (Mat 25:31-46; Jer 22:15-16; James 1:27).
- To earn favor with civil authorities so that we can live in peace and share the gospel openly (Rom 13:3; I Tim 2:1-4).
- We are God's fellow workers (I Cor 3:9). God is our example by the great works that He does (Rev 15:3). Jesus was a great example to us (Acts 10:38).

* God created us to do good works (Eph 2:10).

- We are called to external good works, not internal piety (i.e. external focus, not internal focus) (Is 58:1-12).
- We "reap what we sow" (I Cor 3:8; II Cor 9:6; Prov 12:14).
- We will be judged for our deeds (Rev 20:12-13; 2 Cor 5:10).

WHO

Who should do good works?

- All believers (Eph 2:10; Titus 3:8)
- Women (I Tim 2:10)
- Widows (I Tim 5:10)
- Rich (I Tim 2:21, 6:18)

- Young (Titus 2:7)

Who should be on the receiving end of good works?

- All people, especially believers (Gal 6:9-10).
- Poor and needy (Mat 25:31-46)
- Our local community/city (Jer 29:4-7; I Tim 2:1-6).

HOW

We need to do Good Works AND verbally share the Good News (Acts 10:36-38; Rom 10:8-17; I Pet 3:13-16).

What resources are available to us to help us practice good works?

- Jesus strengthens us to do good works (II Thes 2:17).
- God's Word equips us for good works (II Tim 3:17).
- We should stimulate each other to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24).
- The Holy Spirit can give us great power (Acts 1:8).

Mother Teresa “We can do no great things, only small things with great love”.