

GOOD WORKS

By Buddy J. Duncan

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Introduction

Since God's creation of all matter and man, man has been required to work; even the first man Adam had to work: (Genesis 2:8-9) *"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (9) And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."* This garden that God created was a beautiful garden; furthermore, it was good for food and that food was necessary to sustain life and it was for this reason that God placed the created man, Adam in the Garden of Eden: (Genesis 2:15) *"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."* Adam was not placed in the garden of Eden to sit back and admire its beauty and to watch the trees and fruit grow; he also had work to do, he was instructed to "dress it and to keep it".

I don't know how large this garden was; I can only imagine that it was quite large so there was a lot of work to do. After all the Garden of Eden was to provide food for both Adam and Eve and it was God's plan that they reproduce so I believe that this garden was large enough to supply all their needs. I actually enjoy gardening; I love to plant seeds and to watch the plants grow and produce food. Like me many people plant gardens for fun and relaxation; but for Adam it was work! God placed Adam in this Garden of Eden and expected him to work; so from the beginning of mankind man was to work.

Before going any further there is one thing that I would like to set straight. We always hear that "prostitution is the oldest profession known to mankind"; friends, this simply is not true because according to the Bible gardening is the oldest profession known to mankind.

After both Adam and Eve sinned their work was increased: (Genesis 3:17-19) *"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; (18) Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; (19) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*

We should not think of it as a disgrace to work because actually it is a disgrace not to work: (2 Thessalonians 3:10) *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”* Perhaps some would think that these are very harsh words but we must remember that Paul wrote these words by inspiration; therefore, he is only relaying to us how God feels about our need to work and provide for ourselves and our families. To Timothy the young preacher Paul wrote these words: (1 Timothy 5:8) *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”* Again Paul is relaying how God views men who will not work.

We have all known those who labor tirelessly and never seem to get anything accomplished. Some experience this because they are performing in areas that they know nothing about. All will agree that experience is the best teacher and perhaps the next time they attempt the same task it will be easier and they will accomplish their intended goal. Have you ever known someone who was doing the same work as you were struggling to accomplish and they did it with little or no effort? Maybe they have had more experience at it than you or perhaps they possess a talent that you do not have. Regardless of whether we perform our labors with ease or with effort we must work.

Thus far I have only written about physical labors but in this booklet I will change gears and write about the works that God views as “good works”. Why should we seek to do “good works”? If you are a Christian you were “created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS”: (Ephesians 2:10) *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* As Christians we are obligated to perform “good works”.

The plain simple truth is that you and I have no choice in the matter; God expected Adam to work in the Garden of Eden and He expects you and I to work “good works” in His vineyard. I have heard that 20% of the members of the church do 80% of the work; but my experience is that we find 10% of the membership doing 90% of the work. As you can see that only leaves 10% of the Lord’s work being performed by 10% of the Lord’s church. Do you see anything wrong with this picture? If 100% of the membership would do 100% of the “good work” that they should be doing we would be busy building larger church buildings. It seems to me that a lesson on “good works” and who is to perform these “good works” is in order today.

In this book we will look at what the Bible calls “good works”, some things that “good works” cannot do, saints should perform “good works” and the duty of minister pertaining to “good works”.

Christ, An Example of Good Works

How very fortunate we are to have the perfect example of Jesus Christ. While Jesus lived and walked upon this earth he not only spoke about “good works” he showed the people “good works”: (John 10:32) *“Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?”* What were some of the “good works” that Jesus did? He healed the sick [including all manner of diseases], he cast out devils, he cleansed lepers [a disease that goes unhealed today], he caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk and he even raised the dead from the grave. Of course we recognize all the miracles Jesus performed were signs of power but and to prove his divinity; but they were also signs of mercy and it is for this reason they are called “good works”! Although John 10:32 testifies that Jesus did indeed perform “good works” there is also a great lesson in the latter part of the verse. The lesson I receive that “good works” may not be rewarded here on earth. Jesus had told them that he had showed them “many good works” and what did they do? They picked up stones to throw at him. Should they have not praised him and his heavenly Father for the “many good works” he had shown them? You and I do not perform “good works” to receive a reward or praise; we perform “good works” for the same reason Jesus did, it is the right thing to do and it pleases our Creator. I cannot help but wonder if these men who picked up stones to cast at Jesus were not some of the same men who shouted; “crucify, crucify him”.

Peter testifies that God anointed Jesus with power so that he could go about doing good: (Acts 10:38) *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”* This proves to me that it was God’s will that Jesus perform “good works”. God was with Jesus and “anointed” [set him aside to do good works]. God gave to Jesus the power to heal the sick, raise the dead and so forth. Jesus knew this and he went about from town to town doing what God wanted him to do. While it is true that we today do not possess the miraculous power that God gave Jesus that does not mean that there is nothing for us to do nor does it give us the excuse not to do “good works”.

Jesus went about doing “good works” and so should we. The apostle Paul followed Jesus’ example and he said that we should be followers of him: (1 Corinthians 11:1) *“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”* If Paul thought it was expedient to follow Jesus and exhorted his readers to do likewise cannot the readers of his writings today consider that his words apply to us as well? From any aspect you look at the subject of “good works” you must conclude that we too are required by God to do “good works”.

What Does The Bible Call Good Works?

The Bible gives several titles to “good works” for instance James refers to “good works” as “good fruits”: (James 3:17) *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”* As we saw from the example of Jesus acts of mercy can certainly be referred to as “good works”. James says that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure” then he goes on to further define that wisdom. One of the titles that he uses is “good fruits”. How can we display “good fruits” today? We cannot miraculously heal today and we certainly cannot raise the dead, all efforts to do so have failed, so what is left for us to do? We can be benevolent to the poor, we can visit the widows and orphans, we can feed the poor and we can clothe the naked. In the world today there are many who cannot afford to do these simple acts of doing “good works” but I would like to advise that the simple act of giving a glass of water is also a “good work”. There are very few in the world today who cannot afford a glass of water to share with someone who is thirsty.

While speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees Jesus once spoke these words: (Matthew 3:8) *“Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:”* “Fruits meet for repentance” is the same as “works meet for repentance”: (Acts 26:20) *“But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”* Trees are known by the fruits they bear, men are known by the fruits they bear and repentance is a fruit whereby we can recognize the sincerity of that repentance.

“Good works” may also be referred to as “fruits of righteousness”: (Philippians 1:11) *“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”* Gill agrees that this is referring to “good works”. Paul refers to the “good work” of benevolence as “fruits of righteousness”: (2 Corinthians

9:10) *“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)”* Barnes makes this comment about “fruits of righteousness”: “This evidently means, the results and effects of their benevolence. The word “righteousness” here refers to their liberality; and the wish of the apostle is, that the results of their beneficence might greatly abound, that they might have the means of doing extensive good, and that they might be the means of diffusing happiness from afar.” Benevolence is certainly a “good work”; in this age of greed we don’t see enough benevolence. We are more concerned with padding our own purses and bank accounts.

God will not forget your “good works” which the Hebrews calls “your work and labor of love”: (Hebrews 6:10) *“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”* For certain no one should ever accuse God of being unrighteous for God is righteous in all of His dealings with mankind. God is just and true in all of His ways and works. In this verse the “work and labor of love” was directed toward the saints. It may have been in an effort to seek their temporal or spiritual good. We know all men are to be loved but saints are especially to be loved and supported by our “good works”.

Good Works Are To Glorify God

As I stated earlier “fruits of righteousness” refers to “good works” and Paul wrote that Jesus was “filled with the fruits of righteousness” which Jesus performed to the “glory and praise of God”. (Philippians 1:11) *“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”* All the miracles, healing, benevolence and etc. that Jesus worked were done in such a fashion so as to glorify and praise God. Personally if I desire to do works of benevolence I will give whatever is necessary to the church and ask that such benevolence be done in the name of the church so that God can receive any glory and praise that may be forth-coming. I have known a few who preferred to do works of benevolence themselves and I had to wonder were they doing it to receive glory and praise or were they truly giving in a true spirit of love and benevolence? Let us say that the church helps someone who is in need; who do you think they will praise. Many churches that I have labored with have had a food pantry; when you give food for this pantry do you insist that whoever passes out the food that you donate inform the recipients that you gave that can of corn or spam? It is upon such principles that I feel that all of our works of benevolence ought to be done through the church.

We do not work “fruits of righteousness” in order to receive salvation as we know that salvation can only be obtained by the grace of God. Nor do we perform these works to gain praise and applause from men. May we always perform “fruits of righteousness” [I.e. good works] because it is according to the righteous law and will of God. Friends, when we have done everything we can we are still unprofitable servants: (Luke 17:10) *“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”*

Scriptures Lead Us To Do Good Works

Some people cannot do anything unless they are led. Is there anyone or anything that leads us to do good works? Of course there is; God leads us into good works through His inspired word: (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* As you read every word of your Bible you should be led to do “good works” as the Bible “thoroughly furnishes you unto **ALL** good works”. Even as you read from the Old Testament you will learn a lot about doing good deeds unto others. Look to Abraham: (Genesis 13:5-12) *“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. (6) And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. (7) And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. (8) And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. (9) Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. (10) Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. (11) Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. (12) Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.”* Even though Lot chose the land that was “well watered” Abraham did the kind thing and allowed Lot to settle in the land that he chose. There are many other cases of “good works that you can read of in the Old

Testament. The ministry is a “good work” and everything you need to know about performing the works of the ministry can be found in the scriptures. No one can make the excuse of not knowing what to do because God has given us everything that pertains to “good works” in His written word.

James says if you “look into the perfect law of liberty” and if you don’t forget what you have read you will “be blessed in your deeds”: (James 1:25) *“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”* James does not mean the Mosaic Law or the moral law; he without a doubt is referring to the gospel! James is making reference to the engrafted word that is able to save your soul: (James 1:25) *“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”* It is the gospel that relays to us the message wherein we may have liberty from the slavery of sin. Once you have looked into this perfect law of liberty and are not moved away from the hope that the gospel gives you must continue to do the deeds prescribed therein [I.e. you are a doer] you shall be blessed. This would include keeping every ordinance of the doctrine contained in the gospels. What a wonderful message we find contained in the gospel; it tells us what we must do to be saved, what we must do once we have been saved and the gospel informs us of blessings we will receive if we are not “forgetful hearers”. Brethren, read that Bible because it will lead you to the “good works” that we must do in order to be blessed.

As you perform your “good works” remember to do them “in the name of the Lord”: (Colossians 3:17) *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”* To do anything “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do so by his authority! When we thusly do our “good works” we can be assured of being given the strength of Jesus to help us: (Philippians 4:13) *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*

What Good Works Cannot Do

It is important for us to realize that there are indeed some things that “good works” cannot do. There are some who think that “good works” alone will save them without obeying the gospel and this just is not so.

Paul says that justification cannot be had by “good works”: (Romans 3:20) *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for*

by the law is the knowledge of sin.” When Paul wrote “by the deeds of the law” he meant by working obedience to the deeds of the law. The Jews thought they would be justified if they kept the Law of Moses; Paul plainly tells them that they will not be justified by keeping the deeds of law. Regardless of whether you are a Jew or a Gentile you cannot be justified regardless of how many “good works” you do; it is only through obedience to the gospel that justification may be found.

Writing on the same subject to the Galatians Paul wrote this: (Galatians 2:16) *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* Paul declares that he, Peter, Barnabas and other believing Jews knew that they could not be justified “by the works of the law” and he wanted everyone made aware of this fact. We are justified when Jesus is the object of our faith because he is the “author and finisher of our faith: (Hebrews 12:2) *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* Work as hard as you might you will never be “justified” by “good work”; you must turn to Jesus.

Salvation is unattainable through “good works”: (Ephesians 2:8-9) *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Works of any kind, moral or ceremonial, before or after conversion, done without faith or in faith will never bring salvation to anyone. It is only through the grace of God that anybody will receive salvation. The Bible tells us of a good man by the name of Cornelius who did many “good works” yet he was not saved until he obeyed the gospel: (Acts 10:1-2) *“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, (2) A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”* Now you might think that a good moral man; one who did many “good works” like Cornelius would be saved; but he wasn’t, he had to be told what to do: (Acts 10:5-6) *“And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: (6) He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”*

No one can earn salvation by “good works”: (2 Timothy 1:9) *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”* “Good works” are not the cause of our sal-

vation; salvation is according to God's grace and purpose. Regardless of how much works you do before or after conversion you will not be saved because of those works; salvation is dependant upon the grace of God.

We are called by the gospel of God; this is how God saved those to whom Paul preached: (2 Corinthians 11:7) *"Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?"* God does not call us because of any "good works" we have done, it is because of his mercy and grace that He calls us. Do not think for one moment that you are saved by the "good works" you may have done; you are saved by the grace of God and the purpose of God [2 Timothy 1:9]. Our salvation is not earned; our salvation comes from the love and favor of God. Simply stated "good works" cannot be the cause, rule or root of our salvation.

Paul made sure that Titus understood that salvation did not result from "works": (Titus 3:4-8) *"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (8) This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."* In this chapter Paul exhorts Titus to impress upon those he preached to certain facts and a very important fact or doctrine is found in verse five. Paul made sure that Titus taught that we are not saved by "works of righteousness". As Paul here states the kindness and love of God toward man has appeared. Paul wanted Titus to **CONSTANTLY** tell and affirm that salvation has come to man because of God's mercy and not because of any works on the part of man. Can we do anything less than what Paul instructed Titus to do?

Saints Must Do Good Works

Saints are exhorted to put on "charity": (Colossians 3:12-14) *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (14) And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of per-*

fectness.” Why do you want saints to put on charity Paul? Because when you put on charity you are putting on brotherly love and brother love is the bond of union between brothers. Of course if you truly love the brethren you will do everything within your power to do good deeds or “good works” toward them. I have been in congregations where brotherly love existed; it was very pleasant and we grew in numbers and in the truth. I have also been in congregations where it was hard to find any brotherly love; this situation is not conducive to any growth, in fact such conduct results in a church slowly dying. I am afraid that we spend too much time telling what is wrong with denominations and not enough time encouraging love. I believe Paul when he wrote that charity [I.e. brotherly love] is the BOND of PERFECTNESS. If you believe Paul won’t you strive to put on charity and let that charity be witnessed by all through good works?

Saints are to be “full of good works”: (Acts 9:36) *“Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.”* Here is a woman that was known by those in her community for her “good works”. Tabitha who was also known as Dorcas was “full of good works”; by this we understand that her works were not only good but they were also many. She was very kind and beneficent to the poor and the inspired writer credits her as doing “good works”. The fact that she made these garments with her own hands made them all the more precious to those who received her gifts. Not unlike you and I Tabitha faced death: (Hebrews 9:27) *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”* When she died many wept: (Acts 9:39) *“Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.”* And when she died people wept over her; I doubt that they were weeping because they would not receive anymore of her coats and garments; they were weeping for her because they loved her and they loved her because she had first demonstrated her love to them through her “good works”.

Are you zealous for “good works”? Do you know that Jesus gave himself so that we might be “zealous of “good works”? (Titus 2:14) *“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”* Jesus gave himself as the price of redemption and he expects from us in that we in like fashion be “zealous of good works”. As members of Christ’s body we are to be “zealous of good works” not to retain our salvation; we are thusly minded because we know it is the will of God and it is for this very reason that Jesus expects to be “zealous of good works”. Jesus’ biggest concern while upon

this earth was to do the will of his Father and he wants all saints to be like minded. We perform them from principles of truth and love, and with a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his Gospel. I would encourage you to look at it this way; we have been redeemed so that we might be “zealous of good works”.

Furthermore, we are to be “rich in good works”: (1 Timothy 6:18) *“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;”* If there is one richness that you should desire it is to be “rich in good works”. The thought here is that we are to abound in the performance of “good works”. We must be aware of where our true riches lie; true riches are found in the grace we receive from God and the mercy and grace we feel for one another. Paul exhorts that we be “ready to distribute”; sometimes we wait until we are asked for help. Brethren if you see anyone in need why would you stand around and wait to be asked? If we are truly “rich in good works” you won’t hesitate to help the needy in any way that you are capable of helping. Certainly if you are asked for help never turn anyone away if you have the means to relieve their needs. The Christians of the first century were “rich in good works” being ready and willing to “distribute”: (Acts 4:34) *“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,”* It would be improper to believe that every individual who became a Christian sold their possessions and shared with those who had need; this was not the general practice of all Christians but there were some who felt the need to bring the money received from selling lands and house and share the proceeds. Let it be fully understood that this was never a commandment; what it was simply was an act of love. Are you wondering why there was a need to share? Generally speaking all those who became Christians on the Day of Pentecost were Jews who had traveled a great distance to worship during the Passover as all male Jews were required to do. Since they had traveled from afar they stayed in Jerusalem for fifty days waiting for the Day of Pentecost. In those days they didn’t have plastic cards with which to purchase anything, nor could they write checks as you and I can. Probably many of those who found themselves in need because their money had ran out because they stayed after the Day of Pentecost because they want to hear and learn more about this new found religion. Wouldn’t you be willing to help anyone who wanted to learn more about Jesus?

As Christians we should be careful to “maintain good works: (Titus 3:8) *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”* We understand when Paul wrote about ‘good

works” he did not mean honest trades or lawful occupations [although these must certainly be sought]. When you give a good day’s work you will usually receive a good day’s salary; that is your reward, but we seek a greater reward. Our reward shall be eternal life in heaven. The thought that Paul wants us to understand is that we are to excel in “good works”. Another fact I want to stress is that when we “maintain good works” we are setting a good example for others to follow; would that not be Christ like? Is this not what being a Christian is about? May I suggest that we are to perform our “good works” with a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his gospel? Does Paul say that “good works” is something that must be learned? Before you say “no” read this: (Titus 3:14) *“And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”* Again I will state that Paul does not mean an honest trade even though a trade is certainly a work and an honest employment in life is good and must be learned either by a school or experience. The first rule to Bible study or interpretation is to keep the verse studied in context with the verse or verses before and after the verse that is being studied. When we do this we know that Paul is writing about spiritual matters of doing “good works” of benevolence and helping others which is pleasing to God. One mistake that is made by some is that we do good only to brethren; they say “We are not obligated to help anyone who is not a member of the church”. I wonder how they explain Galatians 6:10 *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto **all** men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”* To follow their teachings we would have to change the word “all” to some. I believe there is a rule condemning this; (Revelation 22:19) *“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*

Paul, who wrote a lot about “good works” wrote we should be “established in good works”: (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17) *“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, (17) Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”* We should be established in every “good word and work” so as not to stagger or waver in the word of truth or from our “good works”. May I suggest that “good words and good works” must always go together in good practices and principles and as Christians we are to be established and abound in both; this is our duty.

The Hebrews writer informs us that we should be “perfect” in “good works”: (Hebrews 13:21) *“Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory*

for ever and ever. Amen.” The word that has been translated “perfect” here means to be fully prepared and ready. According to verse twenty God will make us “perfect” in “every good works”, this of course is impossible if we do not know the will of God; therefore, if you want to be perfect [complete] you must know the will of God and this can only be accomplished by studying your Bible.

Our Good Works Will Follow Us Into The Judgment

Our “good works” do not go unnoticed; not only will man be aware of the “good works” you do but so will God also notice your “good works” and they will follow us to the Judgment Day. This is a truth that has long been known as the very last verse of Ecclesiastes states: (Ecclesiastes 12:14) *“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”* Whatever has been done by man from the beginning of the world to whatever shall be done unto the very last day that God permits this earth to exist will be brought “into judgment”. All things are observed and taken notice of by our omniscient God. He will register all deeds committed by man in His remembrance and He will bring our deeds into account on that Day which will be great for some and terrible for others. For mortal man this may seem to be impossible to remember every deed that has ever been committed by every man; but with God all things are possible: (Mark 10:27) *“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”* I may be able to hide my sins from you but every sin I commit is know to God. We cannot hide from God: (Jeremiah 23:24) *“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.”* Even though we sometimes act in secret every secret thing will follow us into the Judgment. When Solomon wrote this he was well aware of a future state and a future Judgment; he also knew that evil works as well as good works would be remembered and would follow him into the Judgment. Should this not motivate us to do “good works”? I have serious doubts that anyone in their right mind would only want to be remembered for their evil deeds. The apostle Paul makes a similar statement: (2 Corinthians 5:10) *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* One of the great and just things about our God and His inspired word that can be said is that we are fully forewarned.

Jesus Christ taught this same truth: (Matthew 25:31-46) *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit*

upon the throne of his glory: (32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. (34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: (36) Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (37) Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? (38) When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (42) For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: (43) I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. (44) Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? (45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” These words were spoken by the judge himself: (2 Timothy 4:1) *“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;”*

James, an inspired writer says that faith alone will not save you, your faith must be accompanied with “works” and I think it would be right to think that James is referring to the “good works” that we have been writing about in this booklet. Here is what James wrote: (James 2:14-20) *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, (16) And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. (19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that*

faith without works is dead?” It is not enough to say “I believe” you must demonstrate your faith with “good works”. James gives an illustration in verses sixteen and seventeen that proves his point. No one is ever filled or warmed unless we do something for their relief. Faith only will not save as James indicates with a question in verse fourteen.

Conclusion

Anyone who has ever seriously study a Bible has no doubts that they should be performing “good works”. They are also aware that “good works” will not and does not entitle them to salvation. Salvation is only obtained by the grace of God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ: (Ephesians 1:7) *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”* (Ephesians 2:5) *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”* God’s grace did not end with the early church; it continues on, even today: (Ephesians 2:7) *“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* Paul said if you “love the Lord Jesus” you can be assured that grace will be with you: (Ephesians 6:24) *“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”* Paul added the word “sincerity” to his message because he knew that only those who sincerely “love Jesus Christ” would obey him. God’s grace is available to all men: (Titus 2:11) *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”* WARNING; just because God’s grace is available does not mean that you will automatically receive it, obedience is required. I find it impossible to emphasize the “grace of God” enough as mankind is in such desperate need of grace. I think we can say that Paul felt the same way as we find that he opened many of his epistles with the word “grace”: (1 Corinthians 1:3) *“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 1:2) *“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Galatians 1:3) *“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,”* (Ephesians 1:2) *“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Not only did Paul greet the ones who received his epistles with the word “grace” he often informed them of their great need for God’s grace throughout his writings. Let us always be mindful of our need for grace and continue in “good works” because it is the will of God and it is also pleasing to God!

Remember Christians are required to do “good works” and our “good works” will follow us to the Judgment.

Written and Published by

Buddy J. Duncan

Sedalia, Mo. USA

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Email: buddyduncan@att.net