



## LESSON 3 DEVOTION 1

**FOR IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED, THROUGH FAITH—AND THIS NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD—NOT BY WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE CAN BOAST. FOR WE ARE GOD’S WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS TO DO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED IN ADVANCE FOR US TO DO. EPHESIANS 2:8-10**

This week in your study on Jesus and Loving Others you learned about showing love to a group of people known as the “least of these.” It would be easy for early Christians to get caught up in the idea that what a person does is what makes them good in God’s eyes. That kind of logic was the foundation for obeying God’s Law in the Old Testament. For thousands of years God’s people seemed to view how well they kept God’s commandments as a way of measuring a person’s relationship with God.

Do you know what changed all that?

When Jesus died on the cross He replaced the DOING as a means of righteousness with BELIEVING. We are saved from our sins not by our good actions (which could never be good enough) but by faith in Jesus’ life-saving work on the cross. Now the good things we do like loving the least is not a requirement for salvation, but a result of salvation.

Paul said that God created us to do good things in this world. We have the freedom as believers to do those good things out of our love for God. What we do for Christ flows from our salvation, not the other way around.

Take some time today to thank God for His great gift of salvation and ask Him to guide you to those who need to see the love of Jesus in action.

## LESSON 3 DEVOTION 2

*In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. Acts 9:36*

Here’s a quick quiz. This may be easier if you have been a Christian for a while, but give it your best shot. Think of what comes to your mind when you hear the names of the following Bible characters:

- Noah, Joseph, David, Jonah.

Noah built a big ark. Joseph received a coat of many colors from his father. David killed a giant. A big fish swallowed Jonah. Don’t you find it interesting how and why some people become known because of what they do?

Sometimes just one big event can define a person for a lifetime. In the book of Acts, we find this small passage about a woman named Dorcas who was known because she did good things and helped the poor. How cool would it be to be the guy or girl who was well known because they loved people and showed compassion to others, especially those who are most needy? (By the way, when Dorcas died in Acts 9, the apostle Peter prayed and she came back to life. Pretty miraculous!)

What would it take for you to be known because of your love for others, especially the poor and needy?

## LESSON 3 DEVOTION 3

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 1 Corinthians 13:1*

Scripture can really come alive when we take time to examine a passage. Read the verse above again and take a moment to think about what it means to you. Here are some thoughts to help you dig a little deeper into the passage:

- The **“tongues of men”** refers to the emphasis Greek culture put on public speaking. An eloquent speaker was a superstar back then.
- The **“tongues of angels”** is literally a reference to the language angels would use to talk to God. Which is kind of cool!
- The gong and cymbal were really loud instruments used to attract a crowd. Compared to eloquent speech and angel chit-chat, it was a rough sound.

Now take what you have learned and read 1 Corinthians 13:1 again and see if the passage takes on a different meaning. What does this verse mean? Here's one thought: Even if we have the most eloquent speech on Earth or in the heavens, without love for others the noise from that kind of speech is loud and disruptive.

Take a few minutes to consider the richness of that verse and how the words apply to your life. Pray that God would give you a genuine love for others so that both your words and deeds would be pleasing to God.