

Thanks for your interest in

Faith that Works

*I hope this information
will help you better understand
the subject of “good works” and
encourage you to fill your
life with them!*



About the Author

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*Dedicated to those who want to do
understand the importance of good works
in the Christian life*



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How does it make you feel when someone says or does something nice to or for you? It probably makes you feel great! Doing nice things is also a blessing to the person doing it. It feels good to help other people. After all, Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Ac 20:35).

In the Christian realm, words or acts of kindness directed at other people are called “good works” or “good deeds.” Works play a vital role in the life of every believer who truly wants to do God's will. Scripture is full of principles related to good works and it is the goal of this booklet to bring them to light. As Christians understand and apply these principles they can know that God is working through them to advance His kingdom.

In exploring the subject of “good works” the following areas will be investigated:

The **PURPOSE** of Good Works

The **PRINCIPLES** Surrounding Good Works

A **PLAN** for Doing Good Works

Let's begin by looking at the purpose of Good Works.

The Purpose of Good Works

If good works are so important in the Christian, it is important to understand their purpose. In a nutshell, the purpose of good works is to glorify God by showing and sharing His goodness and love with others.

The Bible teaches that Christians are God's ambassadors here on earth. As such, they are to do His will and reflect His character. One of God's attributes is goodness. When good



works are done, God's character is seen in the life of the one doing the works. Christianity is not just a matter of what we believe and who we are, it is also a matter of what we do. Our works demonstrate our beliefs.

Much as the moon reflects the glory of the sun, Christians are to reflect God's glory to a needy world. This honors Him and points people to His kingdom. Good works are a major witness to a watching world. When Christians help one another, and provide assistance and help to those outside the church, they send a powerful message of goodness and love.

One day I received a call at church that a family (that did not attend the church) needed food. The father had deserted his family and had taken the checkbook. I quickly made a phone call to the coordinator of the prayer chain, and within a few hours several large bags of groceries had been gathered. When these were delivered to the family, the wife said that she couldn't accept such generosity. I assured her that it was something I hoped people would do for me in a similar situation. She finally accepted. Before leaving, I prayed with her and said that the food had been given in Jesus' name. She cried and thanked me many times for the kindness of our people. A few days later her husband returned. I have not been in touch with the family since then, but I know the wife experienced God's love and knows that Christians care.

We don't always need to tell people that what we do is in Jesus' name. If they know we are Christians, they'll probably figure it out. The important thing is “doing good things” and pointing people to God.

Someone appropriately said, "Now that Jesus has risen from the dead, we are His hands and feet on earth." God could do a miracle every time someone needed something, but He often chooses to work through His people instead. God could whisper in the ears of those who need a kind word, but He has chosen believers to be His mouthpieces. He wants us to use our voices, our hands, our checkbooks and other resources. Why? Perhaps to see if we really appreciate His generosity to us! To whom much is given, much is required (Lk 12:48).

Again, what is the purpose of good works? It is to glorify God by showing and sharing His goodness and love with others. With this in mind, let's investigate the principles about good works taught in the Bible.

The Principles Surrounding Good Works

The Bible has much to say about GOOD WORKS. As these principles are learned and applied, the doer can know his good works are in line with God's will. Let's look at these principles one at a time.

1. Good works don't save us - Eph 2:8,9; Rm 3:20,28; Heb 6:1

Most Christians are familiar with the concept that good works don't save a person, but the point bears repeating. Some people still believe that God possesses a large scale that will be used to determine who may enter heaven. They think each person's bad deeds will be placed on one side of the scale and his good ones on the other. If the good outweighs the bad, he will be granted entrance into heaven. If the bad outweighs the good, he will be sent to hell.



Although this theory sounds logical, it is not true according to the Bible. Listen to the words of Ephesians 2:8,9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” If we could earn our way to heaven we could boast about it, and God won't let that happen.

Recently I received a call at church that a woman in a Care Center wanted to speak to a minister. I responded and went to the facility. When I arrived I was shown to her room. When the medical care person left the room, I turned to the woman and asked her why she wanted to talk to a minister. She said she had a recent brush with death. It scared her, and she wanted to be sure she was right with God. I told her I could help her, and began by asking her the following question, “If you were to die tonight and stand before God and He asked you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’, what would you say?” She responded that she had

served as a Judge in Marin County, California, and had helped many people. She humbly said she would tell God that He should let her into heaven based on her record of assisting others. I subsequently explained to her that although it was great that she had helped others, her good works would not get her into heaven. Needless to say, she was very surprised. I then showed her from the Bible that it was only God's grace that could save her. After explaining the plan of salvation, I asked the woman if she would like to receive Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. She said yes and subsequently placed her faith in Him through prayer.

People are saved by God's grace rather than good works. This grace is triggered by faith. Grace is God's unmerited favor. It is undeserved by us, but given when we place our faith in Christ. It is a free gift, not a result of works, otherwise we could boast about it. A person does not get to heaven because he has given money to the poor or done certain good deeds. He only gets to heaven because he puts his trust in God.

Picture a person travelling through a desert. His canteens are empty, and if He doesn't get water soon he will die. Above him high in the mountains is a crystal clear lake of cool, refreshing water, but the man is too weak to get to it. Fortunately there is a pipe that runs from the lake to the desert below. The man finds the faucet at the end of the pipe and turns it on allowing the cool, refreshing water to flow to the thirsty man. The water saves his life.

In this illustration, we are like the person dying in the desert. It is our sin that separates us from God. It is just a matter of time until we expire. We need God's grace (His living water) to save us. The only way we can get that living water is through some sort of channel, pipe or conduit. That conduit is our faith. Our faith is the channel through which God's grace flows. It is not our faith that saves us, it is God's grace, but it is our faith that brings God's grace to us.

Romans 3:20 and 3:28 also make it clear that no one will be saved by works. Romans 3:20 states, "because by the works of the Law no flesh

will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:28 adds, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”

Even though good works don't save people, we still should do them. The next principle makes this clear.

2. We were created to do good works - Ephesians 2:10

Although Ephesians 2:8,9 makes it clear that good works don't save us, verse ten reveals that believers were created to do good works and these good works were prepared by God beforehand. Listen to verse ten, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Christians are God's workmanship. He created them for the specific purpose of doing good works. Just as hammers are designed to pull and drive nails, just as cars are created to drive, believers are designed to do good works. Ephesians 2:10 also teaches that God prepared these works beforehand. In other words, before we were saved, God already had a list of good works prepared for us to do. If we fail to do the things on our list, they may not get done. It is therefore crucial that each of us be conscious of the needs around us. Meeting those needs may be on our list!



I've even wondered, when we get to heaven if we'll have access to the list of good works God had for us to do. It would be great if we actually accomplished most of the “works”. It would be embarrassing if the list was a hundred pages long and we'd only done a few pages. On the other hand, if we've worked hard to do all God has for us to do, we will hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

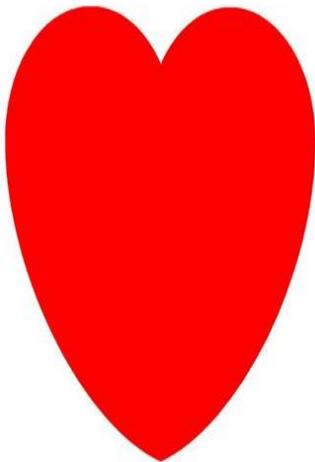
3. Good works prove our faith - James 2:17,18

Good works prove a person's faith. Listen to James 2:17,18, “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. But someone may *well* say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’”

James makes a logical observation; faith without works is dead! Think about it. If Christians are designed to do good works, but aren't doing any, perhaps it is because they are not really saved. Good works done in Jesus name don't save us, but they are solid evidence that we are saved! James is saying that true faith naturally issues in good works. If a person says he has faith, good works should logically follow.

4. Good works prove our love - 1 John 3:17

Not only are good works proof of faith, they also are proof of one's love for God. Listen to 1 John 3:17, “But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?” The answer is, “It doesn't!”



If we have resources to help our fellow man, but choose not to help, John questions our love. If we say we love God, we should be ready and willing to share with those who have legitimate needs.

This verse is strong support for living on a margin. This means living below our means and holding resources in reserve. If we are up to our ears in debt, it becomes difficult to give money or other things to help those in need.

Many people want to buy the biggest house they can afford, or drive most expensive car. Christians should limit their lifestyles so they have resources left over to funnel into ministry. If a family is not able to give at least 10% of their income to God's work, it is time to scale back.

5. Good works should point people to God, not us – Mt 5:14-16

Some people do good works to be noticed. They want to be in the limelight and convince others what great people they are. It is like corporations giving money to telethons. The representatives present the checks on T.V. in front of millions of viewers, but their motives are always in question. Did they give because they really wanted to help, or did they give to improve their image and get some inexpensive advertisement? Christian's motives need to be pure, and their actions always need to point others to the Lord.

Listen to Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Christians are the light of the world and need to let their light shine. But it must be done in such a way that God gets the glory. Someone might ask, “If people see my good works, won't they give me the glory?” Not necessarily. It depends on how the works are done. If done humbly, God likely will get the glory.

Even when works are done in humility, there are those people who will accuse Christians of stealing the glory for themselves. It is impossible to please all the people all the time. The key is to have pure motives, to please God, and leave the results up to Him.

One way to insure that God gets the glory is to do good works in secret. This is appropriate when giving money. Matthew 6:3,4 says, “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.”

When you give money, it is not to be flashed around. Instead, let people read about an anonymous gift in the financial report or hear about the good deed from others. The glory will then go to God.

Many times, even in our own church, people give money to others in secret. One family even asked me to let them know of anyone with a legitimate financial need. I have informed them and they have met several needs.

Not all good works can or even should be done in secret, but all can be done humbly. One good work that could be done for all to see involves kids sticking up for the underdog at school. Most kids are afraid of doing this because of peer pressure, but the Christian should put that aside. What a great opportunity to show God's love to someone who probably doesn't feel much love from anyone. It might even bring that person to Christ. This definitely glorifies God! Indeed, good works should be done to bring glory to God.

6. Good works start with believing - John 6:28-29



When one particular crowd followed Jesus, He told them not to work for the food which perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life. They then asked Him how they could do this work. John 6:28-29 records the incident, “Therefore they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’”

After reading this passage, someone might ask, “Doesn’t this passage teach that believing is a work?” Certainly not! Jesus is simply saying that anyone who wishes to do the works of God must start by believing in Him. When we believe in (place our faith in) Christ, and receive Him as Lord and Savior (Jn 1:12, Rm 10:9,10), the Holy Spirit indwells us and guides us into the works God has for us.

Although many non-Christians do philanthropic works, these good deeds do not measure up to God's standard for good works. Without the indwelling Spirit, non-believers may do works in the name of charity or a social organization, but not in Jesus' name. They are simply doing works in the flesh. Although it is good to do good deeds, no matter what the motive, Christians are to do their good works out of a heart of thanksgiving for all God has done for them.

7. We are to commit our works to the Lord – Proverbs 16:3

The next principle regarding good works is that they should be committed to the Lord. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established." Committing our works to God means to dedicate them to Him. It is like saying to God, "I am doing this good work for You, and I am asking You to bless it. Help it fulfill your purposes."

Whatever we do, we need to commit our works to the Lord. This implies choosing our works carefully. We must be sure that it is God leading us to do something, and not just pressure from others. God may use others to encourage us to do certain things, but we must pray and ask God for His leading. It is easy to volunteer without consulting God, and then subsequently find ourselves swimming in activities He never intended for us. When we do the works He has for us, He will establish them, in other words, He will make them succeed.

8. Good works should be directed toward needs – Titus 3:14

It is important to direct our works to people's needs. In Titus 3:14 Paul states, "And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful." Notice that Paul links good deeds (works) with pressing needs. Without this connection, ministry is unfruitful. Here's an example. A single mother may be sick and unable to cook for her children. Another person might hear about the need, and volunteer to bring a few meals to the family. This good work is certainly directed at a pressing need, and God would bless it.

I remember an instance when someone's close relative in a distant city was dying. The family wanted to visit but lacked the finances to make the trip. Someone heard about the need and funded the trip. The family was overjoyed by the person meeting their pressing need.

Often, another person's need provides the perfect opportunity to demonstrate God's love. This love strengthens Christians, and draws non-believers to God. That is why it is important for Christians to have their eyes open and their ears to the ground in order to find out about and respond to the needs around them. When they hear of a need, God may prompt them to spring into action.

The examples of meeting pressing needs are endless. Here is a short list of ways to respond to needs. Some needs are more pressing than others:

- Send someone an encouraging card when they are down
- Take ice cream to a friend who needs cheering up
- Mow a neighbor's yard when they go on vacation
- Visit someone in prison and encourage and pray for them
- Visit someone in the hospital and pray with them
- Go to a convalescent home and talk with folks
- Phone someone to check on them following surgery
- Phone the elderly and volunteer to pick up groceries
- Drop off a music CD to a friend to encourage them
- Volunteer for a ministry that needs workers
- Mentor the teenage son of a single mom
- Volunteer to wash dirty windows around the church
- Take a friend to a doctor's appointment
- Give money to a family when someone has lost a job
- Pay to fix someone's car if the person is financially strapped
- Send a college student or military member a care package

Meeting needs is a great way to do good works.

9. Our works will be tested by fire - 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

The next principle regarding good works is that they will be tested by fire. Listen to what 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 reveals about building on the foundation of Christ, “Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”



Every Christian builds in some way on the foundation of Christ. The question is what will he build? Will he build with things that have eternal value that will last, or will he build with temporal things that will be burned up. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 teaches that a Christian's works will be tested by fire when he stands before God. This testing will not determine whether or not the person goes to heaven. That was already decided when the person placed his faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. The testing of his works will be to see which ones have eternal value and which ones do not. The works which have eternal value (those represented by gold, silver, and precious stones) will last. Those with no eternal value (represented by wood, hay, and straw) will be burned up.

Even though some Christian's works will be burned up because they have no eternal value, the Christian himself will be saved, yet as through fire. In other words, his soul will be saved even though many of his works get torched. How much better it is to spend one's life doing things that really matter, rather than chasing after things with no eternal value. Each of us should want his or her works to count for eternity.

What types of works have eternal value? Works that are done in Jesus name and for His glory! What works will be consumed? Those done for

personal pleasure and glory. Here are a few examples. Notice which ones will last and which will be burned up:

The work	Will it last or be burned up?
Sending food to starving children.....	It will last
Becoming a great tennis player.....	It will be burned up
Working as a church volunteer.....	It will last
Building a vacation home.....	It will be burned up
Giving a cup of water in Jesus name.....	It will last
Volunteer work for the red cross.....	It will last
Raking a next door neighbor's leaves.....	It will last
Becoming great at computer games.....	It will be burned up
Working at bench pressing 300 lbs.....	It will be burned up
Building a valuable coin collection.....	It will be burned up
Becoming the good water skier.....	It will be burned up
Building a multimillion \$ corporation.....	It will be burned up
Sharing Christ with a neighbor.....	It will last
Becoming a missionary.....	It will last
Writing a note of encouragement.....	It will last
Encouraging an aging parent.....	It will be burned up
Training a child in God's principles.....	It will last
Volunteering time at a Rescue Mission....	It will last

Since many recreational things will be burned up, should they be eliminated from our activities? Not necessarily! Recreation is important. We all need to relax, have fun and stay in shape. The problem comes when recreation gets out of balance and becomes the focus of our lives rather than being kept in its proper place. If the weekend comes and there is no focus on good works, but only on self-indulgence and self-gratification, there is a problem!

Let me ask a question (I address it to myself as well). "When is the last time you asked God to show you a good work, waited for His answer, and then went out and did it?" Perhaps for some it was today! If so,

praise God! Unfortunately, many people only think about themselves and miss the incredible privilege of serving and helping others.

10. Good works will be rewarded - 1 Corinthians 3:13-15

Not only will our good works be tested, they will also be rewarded. This should not be our primary motivation for doing good works, but reward is a fact in God's economy. Listen again to 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, "Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

Some people have asked, "What kind of rewards does God give for doing good works?" Personally, I don't know. Since James 1:12 says that every believer will receive a crown of life, perhaps our reward will be jewels placed in our crowns. Revelation 4:10,11 describes a scene in heaven where the twenty-four elders cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus because He is the only one worthy of worship, glory and honor. Perhaps this is what we will do, too. Whatever our reward, our prime motivation for doing good works must be gratitude to God for all He has done for us.



1 Corinthians 3:13-15 states that those whose works are burned up will suffer loss – the loss of reward, the loss of what could have been if they had only focused on things of eternal value.

11. God desires for us to be rich in good works - 1 Timothy 6:18

Did you know that God wants you rich? He does! He wants you and me to be rich in good works! In other words, to do lots and lots of good things for others and for the Kingdom of God! Listen to 1 Timothy 6:17-

19, “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

Those people who are rich in good works are to be generous and ready to share their resources. Compared to the rest of the world, every person in America is rich. Thus, Paul’s instructions to Timothy apply to us. We must learn to be rich in good works as we share ourselves and our resources generously. Doing good works should be a major focus in our lives. We need to fulfill the wise saying, “Find a need and fill it!”

12. Doing good works is the way to lay hold of real life – 1 Tim 6:19

Did you catch what Paul said to Timothy about good works in 1 Timothy 6:18,19? Listen again, “*Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

Notice that doing good works helps believers lay a good foundation for the future so that they can take hold of that which is life indeed. The future of every Christian is heaven. The good works they perform on earth lay the foundation for heaven. In other words, the works are the obvious proof that they are saved and have faith in Christ. Heaven will be the believer’s eternal home, but eternal life is more than “quantity of life” (eternity in heaven) – it is also a “quality of life” (living with an eternal perspective on earth). When a person does good works in this life, he brings a little of heaven’s goodness to earth. When people live with this eternal quality in their lives, they lay hold of God’s purpose for their lives. And by doing so, they feel fulfilled.

I tell people, “If you are down about life, or depressed about your situation, begin doing things for others and it will lift you up and breathe

new life into your soul.” When we do good works it is like a throwing a duck into water; it feels right, and brings joy and fulfillment.

I recently read a story about a woman who lost her son in the second plane to hit the World Trade Center. It caused her to go into a deep depression and she was eventually diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She remained in her depressed state until she received an e-mail from Marine Maj. Rush Filson, one of her son’s childhood friends. He told her of a desperate need for school supplies in Afghanistan. She responded and began to raise money for the supplies. This eventually became a Memorial Foundation which helped build a whole new school. Her involvement helped lift her out of depression and put meaning back into her life.

Giving our lives away in good works to others is the way in this life to lay hold of that which is life indeed. Do you want to lay hold of real life? Do you want to feel fulfilled and useful? Then make it your goal to do good works, lots of them!

13. Having a reputation for good works is good - Romans 16:12

Even if a person does good works in a way not to be noticed, he or she may still get a reputation for them. That's OK. At the end of the book of Romans, Paul sends greetings to various people. Some were known for their work in the Lord. Listen to Romans 16:12, “Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.”

Is anyone familiar with the lives of Tryphaena, Tryphosa or Persis? I'm not. The only thing I know about them is what Paul shares in Romans 16. And yet, perhaps that's all I need to know. They were workers for the Kingdom; hard workers!

Nearly everyone wants to leave a legacy or be known for something. Some people want to be remembered for their business success or accomplishments. Teens may want to be known for their sports prowess or for having the coolest friends, or best clothes. I believe the greatest

thing, and really the most important thing to be remembered for is the work we have done quietly and humbly for God. All of us should want to be like Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis. If we are known or remembered for nothing more than our hard work for God, that should be enough.

14. Time is running out in which to do good works - John 9:4



Have you ever considered that the time for good works is running out? Listen to Jesus' words John 9:4, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work."

Here Christ informs His disciples that a time is coming when no one will be able to do good works. For Jesus, it was when He left this earth. For us it will be when we die or when the Lord comes back. When will that be? It could be at any time!

I'll never forget my best friend's grandmother. When I was about thirteen she heard me play the guitar and asked if I would come over to her house and play for her. Being quite elderly, she didn't go out much. I told her I would come by but never did. One day news came that she had died. My opportunity had passed. My good intentions had been useless because I never followed through. Today I still live with this regret.

Based on the uncertainty of the future, all of us should have a sense of urgency about doing good works. At any moment the opportunity to do them may disappear. Perhaps you have been meaning to say or do something special for someone – a child, an aging parent, a friend... Don't put it off, you may lose your chance.

15. Good works please God and bear fruit - Colossians 1:9,10

How would you like to know for sure that you are pleasing God? You can! You can do it by doing good works. In Colossians 1:9,10, the Apostle Paul prays a special prayer for the Christians at the town of

Colossae, “For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Notice that good works please God because they bear fruit for His kingdom. Just as children should want to please their parents, we should want to please our heavenly Father by bearing much fruit!

16. Good works should flow out of our study - Colossians 1:9,10

Another principle clearly taught in Colossians 1:9,10 is that good works should be the natural outflow of getting to know God better. Listen again to the Colossians 1:9,10, “For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Notice that Paul first prays that the Colossians will be filled with the knowledge of God in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so they will walk in a worthy manner. This worthy manner is then explained as one that "bears fruit in every good work." Works are thus to flow out of being filled with spiritual knowledge. We are filled with spiritual knowledge first and foremost when we study the Bible in order to get to know God better.

Sometimes Christians wrongly think that Bible study is an end in itself. They simply learn more for the sake of knowing more. But Bible study was never meant to end with study. It is meant to spur us on to better living which includes doing good works. If this bridge between knowledge and action is not gapped, learning is useless. Christianity becomes little more than an academic exercise. An important part of

spending time with God in study and prayer is asking Him what good works He has for us to do, and then making plans to do them.

17. We must be wise in doing good works - Matthew 7:6

Good works must be done with wisdom and discretion. Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 7:6, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."



When we do our good works we need to be careful that we do not waste God's resources. Drunks are not normally helped by giving them money. It shortly becomes their next drink. When a person gets into trouble it may not be right to bale him out. Parents sometimes think they are helping their children by paying their traffic tickets, doling out money or doing their chores for them.

Sometimes people need to suffer the consequences of their actions, otherwise we are merely supporting their poor choices or bad habits.

18. Jesus is really the recipient of every good work - Mt 25:40

When we do a good work, we are really doing it to and for Jesus. Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 25:34-40, "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the

extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.”

When we do a good work, no matter how small, even to people who others consider as nobodies, we are doing it to Christ. This is an awesome principle.

When we call someone to encourage them, we are actually encouraging Jesus. When we give money to help someone in need, we are giving it to Jesus. When we open the door to let someone go ahead of us, we are opening it for Jesus. When we take a meal to a sick friend, we are taking it to Jesus. Amazing! This should cause us to look at those in need in a whole different light. It should encourage us to pursue good works with zealousness.

19. Good works should be done for all people, but especially for fellow Christians - Gal 6:10

Listen to Galatians 6:10, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Is Paul preaching Christian favoritism here? Yes, in a sense he is. Christians must take care of each other, or the church will have a poor witness to the watching world. When we are strong we can better help others. We must do good to all people, but especially to fellow believers.

20. Good works don't come naturally

There seems to be a clear pattern in Scripture. God doesn't waste time or words telling us to do things that come naturally. Instead, He informs us of areas that require effort. This is one reason there is such an emphasis on good works. Our natural inclination is to live for ourselves. That is why we need to devise a plan to help us do good works. □

A Plan for doing good works

In the first two sections of this booklet we looked at the **purpose** of good works and the **principles** surrounding them. We know that the purpose of good works is to glorify God by sharing and showing His love to the world. The principles surrounding good works are many:



1. Good works don't save us
2. We were created to do good works
3. Good works prove our faith
4. Good works prove our love
5. Good works should point people to God, not us
6. Good works start with believing
7. We are to commit our good works to the Lord
8. Good works should be directed at needs
9. Our works will be tested by fire
10. Our good works will be rewarded
11. God desires that we be rich in good works
12. Good works is the way to lay hold of real life
13. Having a reputation for good works is good
14. Time is running out in which to do good works
15. Good works please God and bear fruit
16. Good works should flow out of our study
17. We must be wise in doing good works
18. Jesus is really the recipient of every good work
19. Good works should be done for all people but especially for Fellow Christians
20. Good works don't come naturally

To help us do good works on a regular basis, it is helpful to devise a plan. Here are some helpful steps to follow.

1. Develop a mindset for good works

The first step in doing good works on a regular basis is to develop a mindset for them. To do this we need to be able to name some common good works. Here is a sample list. Some are repeats from the prior list.

- Give the gift of friendliness – smile and greet people warmly
- Give someone a ride to get their car worked on
- Give someone a ride to a doctor's appointment
- Give money to someone in need
- Watch someone's children so they can go out
- Say encouraging things to people
- Get involved in a church ministry
- Send "thank you" notes
- Send a special note of encouragement to someone
- Call someone who could use some encouragement
- Compliment people when it is appropriate
- Call grandparents or parents to encourage them
- Do the dishes without being asked
- Give time to worthwhile causes
- Clean the house
- Clean your room
- Take the dog for a walk
- Do laundry and the ironing
- Share your faith
- Help someone change a tire
- Visit the sick
- Send a get-well card
- Send a notes to congratulate people on their achievements
- Give clothes to the clothing drive
- Listen to those who are hurting or need to share
- Visit people in prison
- Take meals to those who need it
- Help someone carry something

- Be polite and open the door for others
- Comfort the hurting
- Visit a retirement home or convalescent facility
- Listen to people when they need a listening ear
- Give someone a hug who needs one
- Help a brother or sister with homework
- Rake a neighbor's leaves if they need help
- Cut a neighbor's lawn if they need help
- Wash someone's car
- Invite someone for dinner to encourage them
- Visit those who visit the church
- Work hard at getting good grades
- Obey your parents
- Write to a missionary to encourage them
- Support an agency that feeds the hungry

Part of building a mindset for good works is taking time each day to ask God which good works He would like done. We need to discipline ourselves to think about good works!

2. Look for needs and listen for God's prompting

In addition to building a mindset for good works, it is also important to look for needs. They won't always be obvious, so we need to keep our ears and eyes open. We need to develop the habit of scanning the church bulletin, and asking people how they are doing. Sometimes when we discover a need, we won't be able to meet it ourselves. We may need to let others or the church know about the need and solicit their help. Also, spending time in prayer makes us more susceptible to God's leading. We should ask God to prompt us when He wants us to do something. He has a wonderful way of prompting us when we pray.



3. Take action

The third step in doing good works is to take action. When God prompts us to meet a need, we must set aside time to do it. If we wait to take action, we may miss the opportunity. Remember, the road to nowhere is paved with good intentions. It is better to spend part of an evening doing a good work than watching extra T.V. By the same token, we must be careful not to burn ourselves out doing good works. If God is calling us to do a good work, He will give us the energy. For example, if you hear that someone is in the hospital, you may not feel like stopping to see them after a busy day at the office, but even a short visit could be just the encouragement they need.

Could you imagine what could happen if every Christian committed him or herself to doing good works every day, and asked God to show them what those works were? More good works would get done, the world would feel Christ's love in a greater way, doors would open for sharing, barriers would be broken down, and people who think that Christians are strange religious fanatics, would realize that they are nice people who really care about others.

Together we have seen the PURPOSE, PRINCIPLES and PLAN for doing good works. Understanding and applying these concepts is critical if we want to let God work through us. Christianity is more than KNOWING RIGHT, it is DOING RIGHT. Although we are all busy with many things, God expects us to look beyond ourselves and to make good works the habit of our lives.

Doing good to others is hard work, and it is easy to grow weary. Galatians 6:9 gives encouragement, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” 2 Thessalonians affirms, “But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.”

In closing, here is a quote by John Wesley. It is obvious from his words that he understood the importance of doing good works. Here's what he said, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways

you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.” Now there’s a challenge!

GOOD WORKS DISCUSSION SHEET

1. What is the PURPOSE of GOOD WORKS?
2. How can GOOD WORKS be done so they point people to God instead of us? What does Matthew 6:3,4 teach about this?
3. What did Jesus tell the multitude in John 6:28,29? Why must GOOD WORKS start with believing?
4. How does a person commit his works to the Lord? (Prov 16:3)
5. Why should GOOD WORKS be directed to needs? (Titus 3:14)

6. Explain why GOOD WORKS don't save us. (Eph 2:8,9)

7. Why do you think God prepared GOOD WORKS beforehand for us to do? (Eph 2:10)

8. List three WORKS that will burn up on Judgment Day. List three works that will last. (1 Cor 3:13-15)

9. Why do you think God will reward our GOOD WORKS? (1 Cor 3:13-15)

10. What does 1 Timothy 6:18 teach about GOOD WORKS?

11. Why is having a reputation for GOOD WORKS commendable? (Rm 16:12). Who do you know who has this reputation?

12. According to John 9:4, why should we not keep putting off GOOD WORKS that God wants us to do?

13. Why do good works please God? (Col 1:10)

14. Why should GOOD WORKS be the natural outflow of our study? (Col 1:9,10)

15. What does Matthew 7:6 teach about GOOD WORKS? Why must we be careful in how we do our GOOD WORKS?

16. Why is Jesus really the recipient of every GOOD WORK? (Mt 25:34-40?)

17. Why should we especially want to do GOOD WORKS for fellow Christians? (Gal 6:10)

18. Explain why GOOD WORKS don't come naturally? What does come naturally?

19. What are three important considerations in devising a plan to do GOOD WORKS? Briefly explain each one.

20. List as many GOOD WORKS as you can in 3 minutes.

21. From this list, choose one GOOD WORK you can do each day this week for someone else.

NOTES: