

**Introduction and Motivation for Studying Good Works**

As Protestant Christians, sometimes our never-ending struggle against those who teach salvation by works causes us to de-emphasize good works in our thinking or doctrine. But the revelation for our dispensation (the epistles particularly) has a lot to say to the Christian regarding good works. Let's look at a few aspects of Biblical good works.

**Definition of a Good Work**

Good works are "good" things (according to the Bible definition of good) which are done heartily in obedience and love to God, for his glory, in an attitude of faith and thanksgiving (Col 3:23, John 15:14 & Mat 28:20, John 14:15, 1 Cor 10:31, Rom 14:23 & 3 John 1:5, Col 3:17). It is not as simple as the golden rule (Mat 7:12)!

**What the Scriptures Teach About Good Works**

1. Good works are not precisely the same as "work" as in your job – 1 Thess 4:11  
See also 2 Thess 3:10. You must work, but you can work in a good way or a bad way.
2. Unbelievers are unfit for any good work – Titus 1:16  
This really boils down to the fact that any good works an unbeliever does are "unfit" or "disqualified" because they are done from a sinful disposition and standing before God (Isa 64:6). This flies in the face of conventional, worldly wisdom, which says that "if I do good, I will be alright with God." The problem is the unbeliever cannot do any qualified good works. Sure, he can do good things, but they are disapproved. It is like God is saying, "As far as any good works go, unbelievers are disqualified. Those works do not count for anything."
3. Good works do not provide salvation – Titus 3:5
4. Believers are to have the right mindset about good works
  - a. Eager to do them – Titus 2:14
  - b. Ready to do them – Titus 3:1
  - c. Intent on doing them – Titus 3:8
  - d. Always learning to do good works; cultivate them in yourself – Titus 3:14
5. Pastors especially are to be an example of good works – Titus 2:7
6. The work of a pastor is good work – 1 Tim 3:1
7. Believers are required to do good works, which are appointed for them – Eph 2:8-10
8. Believers are to persevere (keep on) in good works – Gal 6:9-10  
This is also motivated by the fact that such works are not useless – 1 Cor 15:58.
9. Believers are to abound in good works – 2 Cor 9:8. See also 1 Tim 6:18
10. Good works are sometimes seen by others, as a witness – 1 Peter 2:12, Mat 5:16
11. On the other hand, good works are sometimes unseen – 1 Tim 5:25
12. Believers are to encourage one another in good works – Heb 10:24
13. Good works require preparation by cleansing from dishonorable things – 2 Tim 2:21
14. God's word equips believers to do good works. – 2 Tim 3:17
15. Good works are noted for women too – 1 Tim 2:10, 5:9-10, Acts 9:36
16. Good works will be judged favorably – 1 Cor 3:13  
See also 2 Cor 5:10, Eph 6:8, Heb 6:10, 1 Peter 1:17, Rev 22:12
17. Good works are a subject of prayer – Heb 13:21, 2 Thess 2:17, Col 1:10

**Conclusions**

The burden of the Scriptures is obviously that Christians will do good works – the Bible never pictures a Christian who does not do good works! Don't be afraid of making that a Christian requirement for you in your own mind, and for others. As a Christian, the question of salvation has been settled for you. Move on in maturity to do good works!

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