

## Key Concept #4 - WORKS

# WORKS

We've seen how our salvation is entirely dependent on God. Jesus Christ is the one who made the complete payment for our sins. The Holy Spirit is the one who creates saving faith in our hearts. But where do our good works play into all this? That is the focus of our final key concept – works. Here are the questions we need to answer in this lesson:

- What part do good works play in our salvation?
- Why do we do good works?
- How do we do good works?
- What guidance does God give to help us learn what he considers “good”?

### WHAT PART DO GOOD WORKS PLAY IN OUR SALVATION?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

**Romans 3:28** - We maintain that a man is justified (declared “not guilty”) by faith *apart from observing the law*.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - 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.

**Romans 11:5-6** - So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen *by grace*. And if by grace, then it is *no longer by works*; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

**Romans 9:30** - The Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.

**Galatians 5:4** - You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

1. On the basis of these passages, if you were to fill in percentages for how much our salvation is dependant on God's grace and how much is dependent on our good works, what would those percentages be?

*Our salvation is \_\_\_\_\_% God's grace and \_\_\_\_\_% our good works.*

2. What do those passages say happens if someone tries to earn salvation on their own, by relying on their own good works? (Look at the underlined portions of those passages.)

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On the basis of those passages, how would you answer that question, “WHAT PART DO GOOD WORKS PLAY IN OUR SALVATION?”

We have used the word “justification” (or “justify”) a number of times. It came up again on the previous page in Romans 3:28 and Galatians 5:4. We defined this as “a legal term which means to declare someone ‘not guilty’ of sin.” It’s important to remember that our salvation is just that - a simple declaration of God that he makes in light of Christ’s death and resurrection.

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### WHY DO WE DO GOOD WORKS?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

**Psalm 56:4** - In God I trust; *I will not be afraid.*

**1 John 4:19** - We love because *he first loved us.*

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15** - For *Christ's love compels us*, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but *for him who died for them and was raised again.*

**Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, *who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Romans 12:1** – Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, *to offer your bodies as living sacrifices*, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship.

3. **Psalm 56:4** gives one reason for trying to do good works that has been removed from our life. What motivator to do good works has been removed from the life of the Christian?

Christians have a different motivation. On the basis of those passages, how would you answer that question, “WHY DO WE DO GOOD WORKS?” (Look at the italicized portions of those passages.)

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### HOW DO WE DO GOOD WORKS?

**Romans 8:7** - The sinful mind is hostile to God. *It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

**Galatians 5:17** - The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so *that you do not do what you want.*

**Romans 7:18,19** - I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but *I cannot carry it out.* For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do -- this I keep on doing.

4. Do we have the power, on our own, to do good works? (Look at the italicized portions of those verses.)
5. Why? (Look at the underlined portions of those verses.)

**Ephesians 2:10** - For *we are God's workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Philippians 2:13** - ...for *it is God who works in you* to will and to act according to his good purpose.

**2 Corinthians 9:8** - And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, *you will abound in every good work.*

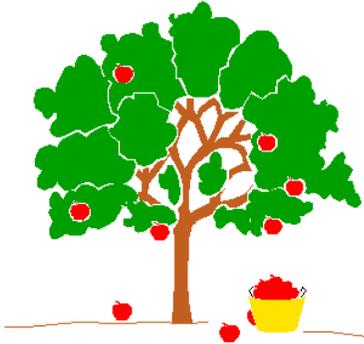
**Titus 2:11-14** - For *the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.* It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...

6. Why are we able to do good works? (Look at the italicized portions of those verses.)
7. We said that God gets the credit for the forgiveness of sins. We said that he gets the credit for our faith. Would you have to say the same thing about our good works?

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These passages demonstrate the way that we speak about good works. We don't speak of good works as something that we *should do*. Good works are something that we *want to do*. They are something that by the grace of God we *can do*. And they are something that a Christian just naturally *will do*. (2 Cor. 9:8 - "...you *will abound* in every good work.")

You can illustrate it this way.



Think about apple trees. Why is it that they produce apples? Is it because they'll feel guilty if they don't? Is it because they will be in some sort of trouble if they don't produce enough fruit? That's foolish! Apple trees produce apples because that's just what apple trees do. It's natural.

Christians produce good works, not because they'll feel guilty if they don't, and not because they're afraid that otherwise they'll get in trouble with God. Christians produce God works because Christ gave them the power to do so. It's what they naturally do! Look at the following passages.

**John 15:4,5** – [Jesus said], "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

**Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, *I live by faith in the Son of God...*

- 8. Those passages tell us something about who can do good works. In order to do what God considers to be "good works," you need to be connected to Christ. How is that connection made? (Look at Galatians 2:20.)
  
- 9. Therefore if you didn't have faith, would you be able to do good works in God's eyes?

On the basis of the passages that we have looked at, how would you answer that question, "HOW DO WE DO GOOD WORKS?"

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### WHAT GUIDANCE DOES GOD GIVE TO HELP US LEARN WHAT HE CONSIDERS “GOOD”?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

**Psalms 119:105** - *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** - All *Scripture* is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Romans 7:22** - In my inner being I delight in God's law.

**Psalms 119:35** - Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.

**1 John 5:3** - *This is love for God:* to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

10. According to those first two passages (on the bottom of the previous page), where does God give us directions about how to live our lives?

11. For the unbeliever, God's laws and commands are terrifying, because they show how far short of the goal of perfection humans fall. But according to the last two passages printed above, are God's commands terrifying for the Christian? Why is this the case?

**Matthew 22:37-39** - Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

**Psalms 119:104** - I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

12. These two passages give us a brief summary of God's commands, and therefore a summary of how we can live a life of good works. What are the two parts of this summary?

1. **LOVE** \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

2. **HATE** \_\_\_\_\_

On the basis of the passages, we have looked at in this portion of our Bible study, how would you answer that question, "WHAT GUIDANCE DOES GOD GIVE TO HELP US LEARN WHAT HE CONSIDERS 'GOOD'?"

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The technical term we use for the way God enables us to perform good works is “sanctify.” He “sanctifies us.” The word’s basic meaning is “to set apart.”

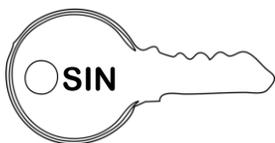
**SANCTIFY – To lead a believer to hate sin and be eager to live a life filled with good works.**

Therefore God is the one who justifies us. He declares us “not guilty of sin.” God is also the one who sanctifies us. He “sets apart” believers as his special people who love to do his will. Our “justification” is a completed action. Jesus completed it on the cross. Our “sanctification” is an ongoing action that the Holy Spirit is working inside of us. It won’t be perfectly complete until we reach heaven. Christians will slip in their sanctified lives. Because we are still tainted with sin, we will not always see the opportunities to do good works that God places before us. We will not always want to do them. Look again at what the Apostle Paul himself wrote to the Romans.

**Romans 7:18,19,24,25** I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do -- this I keep on doing. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? *Thanks be to God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

**13. Even though I don’t always do good works, I know I will live forever. Why can I be certain that I am saved?**

This concludes our study of the four key concepts – SIN, GRACE, FAITH, & WORKS. A firm grasp on these four concepts will give you a solid foundation upon which to build with further Bible study. May God bless your study and grant you the full assurance that you are Christ’s and that Christ is yours.



<sup>1</sup> As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and SINS, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our SINFUL nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.



<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions -- it is by GRACE you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his GRACE, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by GRACE you have been saved,...



...through FAITH -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God –



<sup>9</sup> not by WORKS, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's WORKMANSHIP, created in Christ Jesus to do good WORKS, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

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### TAKING IT DEEPER...

- A. Agree or Disagree – You can't live a perfectly holy life until you become a Christian.
- B. Agree or Disagree – The work of Jesus Christ gives us the chance to win eternal life by following his example.
- C. Agree or Disagree – A Christian does not go to heaven because of their good works.
- D. Agree or Disagree – I deserve some credit for the good works I do.
- E. Agree or Disagree – Christians, who are justified, still continue to commit sins.
- F. Agree or Disagree – When I sin, I lose my salvation.
- G. Agree or Disagree – Saving faith will always produces good works. It won't produce them perfectly.
- H. Agree or Disagree – Because we are justified by grace, through faith, God doesn't care whether a Christian does good works or not. He cares whether or not we have faith.
- I. What do you think? Would you agree with the following statement? "The most important thing about our lives is that we do good works. It's not so important why we do them."
- J. What do you think? If I am saved entirely by God's grace and my good works have nothing to do with it, why can't I go out and commit whatever sins I want and then ask God for forgiveness later?