

BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED – SAVED TO DO GOOD WORKS (I)!

Mention **Good Works** and your thoughts may turn to Mother Theresa, the Roman Catholic nun who spent her life ministering to the poor in India. Or maybe you will think of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides selling flags on Saturday morning for charity, or that donation draw ticket. Or maybe you are so busy ensuring that your office work is good that you have no time thinking of **Good Works** at all.

So what are **Good Works**? Is there any standard to define and measure **Good Works**? Are **Good Works** important? Must we do **Good Works**, and how can we do them? What can **Good Works** achieve, and on what basis will **Good Works** be accepted?



GOOD WORKS ARE DEFINED BY GOD.

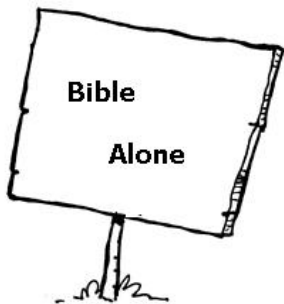
The term 'good' implies the idea of making a judgment. Some works are good while others are not good. So someone must define what is good and what is bad. That someone is God Himself.

As the Creator, He alone has the right to define what is good and what is bad, what is acceptable to Him and what is not. Moreover, He is good. He *alone* is good. The psalmist exhorts us to give thanks to the Lord, *for He is good*. And our Lord Jesus Christ says the same in **Matthew 19:17** ~ *No one is good but one, that is, God*. So the good God, the Creator, He and He alone defines what **Good Works** is. In other words, a work is good only when God has defined it as such.

This is very important, because it tells us that what man considers as **Good Works** may not be **Good Works** at all. There was a king in the Old Testament, whose name was Saul. In **1 Samuel 15**, King Saul had just offered up some animal sacrifices to God. He was very pleased with what he has done, and he told the prophet Samuel that he had done the commandment of the Lord. But God did not consider what Saul had done -- offered up animal sacrifices -- as something good. In fact, God actually condemned what Saul had done. Why? Because God has clearly commanded Saul to destroy *all* the animals of the

Amalekites, but Saul, relying on his own wisdom, has actually kept some of them alive, and then offered them as a sacrifice to God.

He thought that he was doing something which was good, and he thought God would be very pleased with him. But he was miserably and terribly wrong! What Saul has done is actually a very popular past-time for fallen man. We try to redefine **Good Works**, we try to invent our own **Good Works**, and believe that somehow God would accept them. Fallen man will always try to be wiser than God, and fallen man loves to try and replace God's standard with our own standard. But the truth remains that a work is good only when God says it is. **GOOD WORKS ARE DEFINED BY GOD, AND GOD ALONE.**



GOD'S DEFINITION OF GOOD WORKS CAN BE FOUND IN THE BIBLE ALONE.

God is the One who *can* define what **Good Works** are and He *has*! God has shown us what is good, He has not kept silent. God's definition has been written down the Bible.

Micah 6:8 ~ *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*

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, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Let's turn to the Bible and survey a few examples:

- (a) **Acts 9:36, 39** *At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. Helping the poor with material goods is **Good Works**.*
- (b) **2 Corinthians 9:8-9** *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for*

every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Helping the saints and churches in need is Good Works.

- (c) **1 Timothy 5:10** well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. Being a good mother, showing hospitality to people, visiting and comforting the sick -- these are some examples of Good Works.
- (d) **1 Timothy 6:17, 18** Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share. To give and to share our material goods with those in need, is Good Works.

Within the broad scope of *doing justly, of loving mercy, of walking humbly with God*, there is a wide spectrum of things that can be done -- either with our money and material goods, or with our time and effort and concern.

The Bible is filled with examples of what God deems as **Good Works**. These examples are listed, not just merely for our information but also for our imitation. Remember **Micah 6:8** ~ *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?* The emphasis here is not just on God has shown you, but also what God requires from you. God requires the one who believes in Him to be engaged in **Good Works**. So Christians, we must ask ourselves: *Are we actively engaged in Good Works?*

James 1:27 says, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this : to visit the orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" Is your religion pure and undefiled?

Jesus says (**Matthew 5:16**), "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Are you?