

HC Q&A 91–How much of man’s good works is really good?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You need to “kill the old man” and “live as a new man” now that you have been regenerated. The new man **shows his new life by doing good works**. God expects nothing less.

So how can you know what good works are? This is an important question because there is a wide variety of beliefs in what good works are!

Some people believe that **helping the old and the sick to die** (euthanasia) is a good work. Others believe that the government’s **sharing of wealth equally** to all members of society is a good work.

Others think **abolishing capital punishment** is a good work for a civilized society.

Many believe that **public education is a good work as it comes “free”** of cost to poor people.

Other people believe that **killing “infidels”** is a good work that will take them to Paradise.

So please let God teach you how to know and do good works!

Our headings are:

Good works – Done from Faith in Jesus

Good works – Done according to the Law of Jesus

Good works – Done for the Glory of Jesus

Good works – Limitations

Our goals are: **That you will understand what truly good works are in order that you may do them to please the one who did the greatest good work for you -saving you through his Son.**

Q & A 91 - Q. What do we do that is good?

A. Only that which arises out of true faith, conforms to God's law, and is done for his glory; and not that which is based on what we think is right or on established human tradition.

Good Works –Done from Faith in Jesus

1. A good work is only a good work if it were done from true faith in Jesus Christ - the True Vine.

Hebrews 11:6 - But **without faith it is impossible to please Him...**

If you do not have a new heart from God, you can’t do good works. Your soul must be resting in and **drawing from Jesus Christ** as the source of your good works. So if you aren’t “in” Christ, you can’t do good works!

John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit**; for **without Me you can do nothing**.

2. Any action you do, if it were not done from faith, is a sinful action!

Whatever you do, even the smallest thing, must be done with the full persuasion and conviction that it is the right thing to do.

Romans 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for **whatever is not from faith is sin.**

You cannot please God if your motive is imperfect. God wants a pure heart for every good work.

So **even saving someone's from a burning building...baby-sitting someone's kids...making your home eco-friendly...it is not a good work if it were not done from faith.**

You must have no mental reservations about what you do as Roman Catholics allow.

3. What about those who say: "I let my conscience be my guide. If my conscience says it is okay, I do it?"

Are they wrong who say that? Yes, they are wrong. God's standards are much higher than your conscience. The conscience was damaged by the Fall and is no longer pure. So it must not be your standard.

The Russians say they have a clean conscience about what they are doing in Ukraine because they are "rescuing" their people! Are they justified?

4. While you must not let your "conscience be your guide," but let the Bible be your guide, yet you must never violate your Christian conscience.

Simply put, you must never do something that your conscience convicts you is sin.

Let me give you examples:

If you bought food on the Sabbath for someone who is starving (which is not wrong) but in your heart you think it is wrong, that is a sin.

Apostle Paul pointed out that if you believe it is wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols (which is good to eat) but you think it isn't good to eat and you still eat it, it is sin to you.

If you think taking a particular vaccine is wrong (though taking some vaccines is not wrong) and you still do, it is sin to you.

The sin resides not in buying of food on the Sabbath, or eating the meat, or in taking the vaccine, but in the *intent* to act against what one believes to be the command of God.

5. What about if others recognize your work to be good, isn't it then a good work?

Others can only judge your outward actions; God judges the motive as well.

Consider the rebuke God gave to those who were attempting good works without faith in him!

Isaiah 29:13 Therefore the Lord said: "**Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me...**

Since God judges the heart, make sure it is working well –working well to please him!

Matthew 15 teaches that **when the heart is clean, good works will come out of it.** When the heart is dirty, dirty works will come out. Outward acts might look exactly the same as others', but are not considered to be good. You might help the people in Ukraine, but if you did not do it through faith to Christ, it is not a good work. Maybe you do it because everyone else is doing it...or you do it to get FB recognition.

Good Works –Done according to the Law of Jesus

1. Good Works are only considered good if they are done according to God's Law.

Matthew 5:19-20 - "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that **unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven**

Those who mutilate their bodies to try and change their gender, aren't doing good deeds!

Those who marry an unbeliever because they made an effort to find a Christian spouse but couldn't, aren't doing a good deed.

Those who think they are wise by not spanking their children for disobedience, aren't doing good deeds.

Those who believe we should call men women and women men, aren't doing good deeds.

Those who believe the government should be Robin Hood and steal from the rich and give to the needy, aren't doing good deeds.

Those who choose to do homework on Sundays so they would get better grades are doing good deeds.

If it is not a good deed, it is a bad deed!

2. Good works must be done according to the spirit (not the letter) of the law of Christ.

The Pharisees pretended to obey the law but they did not conform to the spirit (intention) of the law...often they only conformed to the letter of the law. But no work is considered good if it were not done according to the true spirit of the 10 Laws.

The letter kills; the spirit gives life. (Matthew 5-7)

3. God's laws come as a package, so if you break even one law – a small one – you have broken them all.

On the other hand, God will greatly bless those who obey his 10 laws and those who teach others to do so also.

This is an individual, ecclesiastical, and national promise.

Good Works – Done for the glory of Jesus

1. Good Works are only considered good if they are done for the glory of the Lord.

The Scriptures speaks frequently on this.

Matthew 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

1Corinthians 10:31 - Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

1Peter 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, **by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

2. By consistently doing good works you will lead men to honor and please God.

You are a city on a hill and YOUR people are watching you! **So show good works in a domestic, civil, or religious setting:** in preaching, hearing, praying, fasting, helping the poor, serving the family, sharing in the church, or in the world, in private, or in public.

Doesn't this mean you must know the Scriptures well in order to do well?

Doesn't this mean you have to ask God to show you where and how you can do

well?

3. So don't do good works in order for people to like you.

Do good works because you love God and want to glorify him. To do good works for people to like you corrupts those works!

Yes, people may like you when you do good works, but that is a **result** of your good works, that is not the **purpose** of your good works.

Good Works – Limitations

1. Many people do good works because they think good works will earn merit with God, but good works cannot save you from the fires of hell; good works cannot even help save you from the fires of hell.

2. Where do the Scriptures make this abundantly clear?

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Since you can only get life through Christ's life and death, you must take no credit for your eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that **not of yourselves**; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, **lest anyone should boast.**

Everything you have you have received! If there were saving merits in your good works you would be prone to forget that salvation is from the merit of Jesus Christ alone. The truth is, man likes to take credit for what Christ does. But man shouldn't. Jesus Christ is jealous for his worship and praise.

3. Your good works don't earn your salvation, but you respond to your salvation by doing good works.

And only God can help you, even after you are regenerated, to do good works.

Philippians 2:13 **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works...**

4. Good works are done both in physical things, and spiritual things –and in things which may be seen or unseen by people around you!

Titus 2:7 in all things **showing yourself to be a pattern of good works**; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

So children, maybe your parents won't know when you help your sister...or when you prayed for her, but God knows! God will bless you for your unseen good works! You must not publicize them.

5. Good works don't come naturally, they need to be taught; good works need to be learned.

Titus 3:14 And let our people also **learn to maintain good works**, to **meet urgent needs**, that they may not be unfruitful.

This goes against all human pride, but you need to start training your children early so they learn to do real good works. From the time you start teaching a child to say: "Please" and "thank you," you are beginning to teach them good works.

Conclusion:

Good works show you are converted. Good works **proceed from faith**, are **done according to God's law**, and are done for the **glory of God**.

This is the test you are to use before you do anything.

If you find that you are doing something because you want people to like you or think highly of YOU, then it is not a good work.

If you do a good work simply because YOU think it is a good work, it isn't good work.

You do good works because God saved you and you want to please him.

And there are rewards for doing good works – rewards now and later!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. May you, having understood your position in Christ, fulfill your responsibility and do truly good works with diligence, and bring honor and glory to your Savior and show the world you are saved.

2. May you receive his help by Christ's Word, Spirit, and receive the mutual encouragements of each other to do these good works. Remember, good works don't come naturally.

Finally, have you done anything to please God? If you are not a Christian, the answer is "no." You are under the condemnation of God and bound for hell. **But don't despair!** There is hope! Christ can fix that problem for you if you ask him to take away your sins, fill you with his Holy Spirit, make you his child, and then enable you to do the good works he has commanded. Ask him today!