

The West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

As Christians we are called to do good works. In fact, according to scripture that is why we exist – “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10, NKJV). We see examples of this in the way Jesus performed miracles. He still left the recipients of the miracle work to do. In John 2 it was Jesus who performed the miracle of changing the water to wine, but it was the servants who had to fill the water pots and draw the wine from them. In cleansing the leper Jesus required that the leper fulfill the obligations of the law (Luke 5:14). When Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, He told the man to take up his bed and walk (John 5:8). One interesting example is of Christ healing Peter's mother-in-law. When Jesus healed her, she immediately got up and started serving – with no apparent convalescence she went from bed ridden to working that very evening.

In these examples we see Christ doing what only He can do, miracles, leaving those He touched with what they should do. The same principle applies to the work He does in and through us. Jesus provides those things we can not – salvation and the Holy Spirit. The works we can do He leaves for us. We were called and created to do good works.

Christ does not intervene in our lives if it would cause us harm, such as making us lazy or irresponsible. In other words, Jesus will not miraculously pay our rent every month or put food on our table every day if we can do it ourselves. God's plan and design for His people is to be industrious workers providing for our own needs and the needs of those who can't work. Notice Paul's letter to the Thessalonians: “If anyone will not work neither shall he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10, NKJV). Another example is found in the welfare system God gave Israel. It included leaving the corners of a field ungleaned so that the needy could come and glean them. The requirement for those in need was to go out and glean the fields, to work for what they needed. God provided for their salvation in requiring the land owner to leave gleanings, but the rest was up to them – glean or starve.

Likewise it is for Christians. It is God who does the calling through Jesus Christ (John 6:44). We can have faith in that calling and salvation, but as James tells us “faith without works is dead” (James 2:14-20). Dead faith produces nothing. We were called and created in Christ Jesus to do good works. “Without faith it is impossible to please [God]” (Hebrews 11:6, NKJV). Without works. Faith is dead.

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