

“Of Good Works” part 8 WCF 16.2.5, Good Works Adorn the Profession of the Gospel

2021.11.07 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 16.2 (TPH p928)

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith;^a and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,^b strengthen their assurance,^c edify their brethren,^d **adorn the profession of the gospel,^e stop the mouths of the adversaries,^f and glorify God,^g whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,^h that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.ⁱ**

^a James 2:18, 22

^b Psa 116:12-13; 1 Pet 2:9

^c 2 Pet 1:5-10; 1 John 2:3, 5

^d Mat 5:16; 2 Cor 9:2

^e 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5, 9-12

^f 1 Pet 2:15

^g John 15:8; Phil 1:11; 1 Pet 2:12

^h Eph 2:10

ⁱ Rom 6:22

¹Timothy 5:24 Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. ²⁵ Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden. ^{6:1} Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. ² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

⁶ Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

⁹ Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Our gracious. God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We bless your name for the good news of your salvation that it is your power for salvation. We thank you that you not only make us right with you in Christ, through faith in Him. But that's you by your spirit can form us to His image and exalt yourself in the new creatures that you create new in Christ and you make to walk in.

Good works that you have prepared for them. We pray that you would help us. Now, as we study your word, that you would grant to us the ministry of your spirit that he would be conforming us to the Lord Jesus. And as we heard last week, our lights would shine and bring glory unto you cause us.

We pray to adorn. Well, our profession of the gospel For. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

So of good works Westminster Confession 16 and we've been these many weeks now on the second paragraph. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith. And by them believers manifest, their thankfulness Strengthen. Their assurance edify their brethren adorn.

The profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries and glorify God, whose workmanship. They are created in Christ Jesus there unto that, having their fruit unto holiness, They may have the end eternal life. So the first couple of phrases in this paragraph defined very briefly and there's more that's coming in the chapter that will do this divine very briefly, what good works are.

These good works done in obedience to God's commandments. So, their actions of obedience, Not only that they are recording to the commandments, but there are response to God and his commitments are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith. So the good works that believers do are the fruit of their faith.

And since that's the kind of fruit that grows on the faith tree, when you produce that fruit, it shows it. You are a faith Street. You could tell a tree by its fruit or perhaps, you could tell that you were wrong about the tree. Once it bears fruit, I'm sure all of you.

Super homesteaders are much better at this than I am, but every once in a while, something comes up in the garden that I think is one kind of plant, and then it bears a different kind of fruit and I say, oh that's what kind of planted this So good.

Works are the fruits. And evidences of living faith, a lively faith is the way they put it here And by them believers. Now we're in the one, two, three, fourth part of what good works do. And you'll notice that they have this kind of expanding circle of target manifest, they're thankfulness.

So that is what's done unto God. Strengthen their assurance, That is something that good works do unto ourselves, edify their brethren. That's something good. Works. Do unto the church. Adorned the profession of the gospel, That's the one, we're on today. And it's what good works do. Especially for those who are not yet part of the church, but whom you are telling the good news about Jesus.

Notice what's assumed here in the second paragraph of Westminster? Confessions 16 It's assumed that Christians are telling people, good news about Jesus that they profess the gospel. Because we use the language profession of faith to talk about when you come to have your faith tested and be admitted to the table.

We might end up, misreading this adorn, the profession of the gospel. Now, it's true that when you come and you want to be admitted to the, to the table, one of the main things you're doing is telling your elders, the gospel telling them, whom, you know, Jesus to be what, you know, Jesus to have done and that, you know, Him to be those things for you and to have done those things for you and that that is your hope and that is your purpose.

And that is your pleasure. So, it's not like there's a big distinction between those two things. But there is this, There's this assumption behind the part of the paragraph that we're studying today And that is that we are professing telling forth the gospel. So, the way that we act ought to commend well that which we are professing, This is actually kind of a big deal in the Reformation papists.

Roman Catholics were were notoriously ungodly and the further up you went in Roman Catholicism. The more ungodly people seemed to be priests and even monks who were kind of high up in the church, they had all of this forgiveness credit that they'd built up by all the stuff you could buy or do as a Roman Catholic.

And so, with all that forgiveness, credit in the bank boy, they could really just spend it on sin, doesn't Roman Catholicism sound, great. Well, yes to the flesh and to demons and the devil and any extent in which that sounds great to us that just exposes remaining fleshliness, that part of who we were in our first father.

Adam that wants to be free to sin, which we know the Bible calls bondage, and being delivered from that saved, out of that, and wanting to be free to obey, and free to love and free to be ruled by Jesus. That's what the new nature, calls freedom. Well, It was such a problem in Roman Catholicism that poor Martin Luther who not sure why we celebrate the 95 Theses themselves.

There were other things that he did that before and after October 31st 1517 that were more significant, I think, and triggering the Reformation about Paul Martin Luther. One of the big

things that happened in his conversion to biblical Christianity. Was he thought he was gonna take a trip to Rome and he was going to see what godliness really looks like.

I mean, that's the place where they have the highest up most, Roman Catholic. People, I mean, before Francis came along, and people are really wondering if the boat is actually Catholic anymore. You know, you would say is the Pope Catholic and that would mean of course. And so he was gonna go, see the godliest place, and the godliest people on earth, and when he got to Rome, He found the most filthy, wicked city in sins against marriage and violence, and sins of theft, and abuse, and oppression, and, and vulgarity, and not carrying it all about God, or his worship and doing the most horrible things in.

What the, what the Roman church called acts of worship and even in those things are most blasphemous. And Needless to say, that their conduct did not adorn. Well, what they were professing, what they were telling forth And so it is one of the joys of a biblical Christian. And in this case reform Christians about a hundred and thirty years.

After that to say that the good works that God produces and those whom he saves through faith in Jesus they do adorn well that good news about Jesus that they tell So that's what we hope to see in the late and first Timothy and kind of right in the middle of Titus.

First Timothy 6:1 as the first proof text. They give us Let as many bond servants as our under the yoke count, their own masters worthy of all honor. So that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. So it's assumed that your master even if you're a slave.

So it a bond servant is you're a servant who's been bound who it's not optional for you Bond servant or bond slave is assumed that they would if they're Christians their masters would know it and that they would be honoring Christ not just with their life but with their words, Isn't it amazing?

It's assuming that a Christian slave of a master that teaching that's what doctrine means. The teaching of the good news about Jesus is going to be something that their master is familiar with. We can't really even take time and it would be mostly speculation for me because I, you know, it didn't probe that any further how that would come to be.

But the name of the purpose of honoring your master is not because he's good to you, not because you get something out of it. Not the primary purpose here at least in 1st Timothy. 6:1 is so that the name of God would not be blasphemed and so that God's doctrine God's teaching would not be blasphemed.

So backing up then to chapter 5 and 24 to grab a little bit of the context, Some men's sins are clearly. Evident preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later, Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Let us many bond servants as our under the yoke count, their own masters worthy of all honor so that the name of God and his doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved teach and exhort these things.

So there's definitely the teaching here that our works will be exposed. This is something that I came to see from scripture later in my Christian walk And so I don't want you children to make the same mistake that I did growing up in church, which I thought that being forgiven in Jesus, meant that what I did wouldn't matter and nobody would ever find out Yet.

The Bible tells us that at the judgment, we will be rewarded according to our deeds, done in the body. That doesn't mean that you get punished for your sins of the judgment. If you're a Christian, it doesn't mean that you earn the rewards that you get at the judgment of your Christian.

Jesus is the one who has earned them. In fact, we are going to If it's not later in this chapter but we can, we can see elsewhere in our confession and catechisms that the reward for good works is not according to merit, but according to grace. Jesus is the one who has earned the reward and God is glad to bless those things that we have done imperfectly, because they come from Jesus, in us.

And Jesus is the one who's being rewarded, But at the judgment what everyone has done will be known Now and John chapter 3. We learn that. Those who love sin. Hate the light. Those who love darkness hate the light. They because their deeds are evil But those who love the Lord and believe in the Lord and walk with him, they love the light and they want it to be seen that their deeds and the way John 3 puts it are done in God.

Isn't that a wonderful way to put it that their works have been done in God? In other words, we want everyone to see not how good we are because we and ourselves are sinful. What we have contributed to our salvation is the sin and the guilt from which we needed to be saved.

But when we do good works, we want it to be seen how great a Savior God is. And that he is the one who not only forgives sinners, but who transforms them. So it's an important principle. It's important. Reminder has been helpful to me later in my Christian life after after I realized the number of times that Jesus or one of the epistles described works being revealed at the judgment.

It's been helpful to me, either to want to do something for the honor of God. And if I'm, if I'm gonna be honest, I would have to admit probably more times than that, the knowledge that this would come out, no matter what it is, it's going to come out.

God has used to help me to say no to a number of sins, which it would have been many more than it has been but it's a great mercy. So some men sins are clearly evident preceding them to judgment. Everybody knows about them, but those of some men follow later and now in the age of the internet and constant news and increasing surveillance and there's no such thing as privacy or private browsing or anything like that.

Even earthly speaking, humanly speaking, but Christians have known that eternally speaking for thousands of years. But we have had lots of sad examples in the churches even with some of the men who were best respected. Sometimes after they die, Sometimes late in their ministries and a great deal of damage is done to what they are professed.

One of one of the most famous defenders of of the gospel in our own nation. In fact, I could, you know, I could say just his first. Well, we'll go ahead. I don't mean to slander him. But many of you know, what happened with Ravi Right? I don't need a last name.

It's more common name in India, I guess. But But one of the most defended most helpful defenders, lots of people much helped by him. And yet what has been done to the usefulness of his profession of the gospel because of that, which came out about him and, and his sins.

So some men sins are clearly evident preceding them to judgment those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden. This is very, very helpful for if you were listening last week and we're hearing and talking about let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven and then some of you, some of you were probably thinking, but doesn't Jesus say that when you do good works and when you give charitably with your right hand, don't let your left hand know what the right hand is doing.

And doesn't Jesus say, When you are fasting, don't droop into church. People say, how are you doing this video? Oh, I'm barely making it because I've been fasting and you know when you pray. Yeah, you don't get up in front of the whole church with everybody else is having a fellowship time and start praying loudly so that everyone can hear what a wonderful Christian who praise, you are?

Doesn't Jesus say stuff like that? Oh, yes, he does. But here the Holy Spirit, says The good works of some are clearly evident. There are some good works. You just can't hide and even the ones that you do according to Jesus's instructions, in such a way that it doesn't draw attention at first.

Those will be revealed to. So, we were thinking a minute ago, about how It's helpful against sin to know that it's going to come out, but it's also helpful for the honor of God, If you want him to be known as the one who's produced good works in, you to know that it's going to come out And so don't get like, you know, super caught up in or bound up in wanting to keep it a secret from everyone because that's how we're gonna follow Jesus.

Well, just follow. What the Lord Jesus does and know that if he grants unto you, that it would be kept secret all the way to the judgment. Well, by the time it comes out your desire for. His honor will have been perfected. You won't have that mixture of of emotions and you're trying to kill pride and not wanting people to notice you and you will be consumed with the glory of the Lord Jesus who has done this in you and the glory of the Holy Spirit who was applied Christ to you and all of your brothers and sisters will be perfectly consumed with the glory of the Father, whose image is produced reproduced in his adopted children and the glory of the only begotten Son to whom they have been conformed in whom they have been adopted in whom they've been transformed and the glory of the Spirit who is who has applied all of this to them.

And on that day, all of the good works that you have done in this life are going to redound unto the praise and the glory of the Father, and the Son and the Spirit. And to the extent that he has already given you to love him and his name.

You already think that's wonderful but just think what it will be like when we all love him perfectly and love his name perfectly how wonderful it will be to see those good works and not have a single difficulty with what's going on in our own hearts but know that it is all for his good.

So this is actually a a very strong and powerful motivator. Likewise the good works of some are clearly evident And those that are otherwise that are not clearly. Evident cannot be hidden. All right, so we ought to be ones who are telling the gospel, and we ought to be living in such a way that brings honor to God in the gospel and his salvation.

Same point Titus chapter 2 and they gave us verse 5 to be discrete chased homemakers good, obedient to their own husbands. That the word of God may not be blaspheme not just God himself, but his word. There's a delicate balance for wives and this is talking about wives and We'll see that when we zoom out to to read the passage as a whole, There are wives all wives ought to be telling the good news to their husbands, Be the opposite of Job's wife who was probably a godly woman and was under a lot of pressure and was not as godly as Job who, you know, God was having a, there's no one else like him contest with the devil.

So yeah, her husband probably outclassed her spiritually and that's fine. But notice he doesn't get a new wife in the end. He's got the same wife with all of those new children and and we are glad to give her the same benefit of the doubt that we would want for ourselves, right?

Wives, and husbands and children. If in a moment of horrible, circumstantial pressure, we said our thought, the most wicked things. So, since her private conversation with the husband was recorded in Scripture, don't be too judgmental of Job's wife, okay, commercial for Job's wife over but she should. She basically said, why are you still holding on to your integrity?

Why not just curse God and die? A believing? Why should we be doing the opposite with her husband? She should be saying, Jesus is worth this. Jesus would get you through this. Jesus will be glorified by how He gets you through this. Consider him who who suffered and died and rose for us.

Dear husband, Your efforts are not lost. You're godliness in this matter. Will not be fruitless. That's the kind of speech that should be on on the wife's lips and yet we learn. If you look at first Peter 3, that there are even husbands who will not listen to that kind of speech and they are disobedient to the Word and Peter in 1st, Peter 3, gives similar counsel there as these older women in the church, here are instructed by the Apostle, Paul in Titus 2, to be giving to the younger women.

Well, if they won't listen to the Word, at least make sure that your behavior commends that same gospel that you have been telling them and it's implied. By the way. Wives, if this becomes a difficult dynamic in in your marriage that having spoken, these words enough that there's a fallback and when he says that, they may be one without a word in first Peter 3.

Think about God's blessing on the conduct of a godly wife. He honors His Word everywhere in the Bible. And then when he talks about winning the husband without a word, there's a special value placed there by God and 1st, Peter 3 on the godly conduct of a wife. This young ladies is one of the reasons why you should make the pursuit of your life to be to trust in Jesus and love him and know his love for you and obey him with all that you are, because you will have years and decades of practice, and strengthening of godliness of mind and heart and habit that when you come into the season, if God should give you a husband of bringing honor to the Savior and to his gospel, on your lips and your husband's ears, you will have in place a godly character for what could end up being the most difficult situation of your life?

We could go to the first Peter 3 and talk about that more there. So to be discreet, chased homemakers good, obedient to their own husbands. That The word of God may not be blasphemed. And then again, the bond servants in verses 9, and 10, exhort bond servants, to be obedient to their own masters to be well, pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine.

Again, that's the teaching of God, our Savior and all things verse 11 and 12. Then for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should live soberly righteously and godly in the present age. We know that God has saved us.

We know that there is glory for which He has saved us by Christ and that knowledge should be reflected in holding on to the glory that Jesus has won for us more than anything else that this world could have to offer and we'll see that in verses 13 through 14.

So very briefly reading the whole passage but as for you speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. That older men be sober. Reverent temperate sound in faith. In love, in patience,

older women. Likewise that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine teachers of good things that they hadmonish.

The young women to love their husbands, to love their children to be discreet. Chase. Homemakers. Good. Obedient to their own husbands that the Word of God may not be blasphemed, Likewise exhort the young men to be. So reminded in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works.

Indoctrine showing integrity. Reverence incorruptibility sound speech that cannot be condemned. That one who is an opponent? May be ashamed. Having nothing evil to say of you, exhort bond servants, to be obedient to their own masters to be well, pleasing in all things, not answering back, not puffering, but showing old good fidelity that they may adorn.

The doctrine of God, our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should live soberly righteously and Godly in the present age. Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ who gave himself for us.

That he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself. His own special people zealous for good works. Oh, that we had time to open about 20 things from that reading, But hopefully, you can hear it just in the text of the scripture. Let's pray.

O God, have mercy on your church, in an age in which those who claim to be, teaching the things of grace, teach against zeal for good works. Grant taught us to know Jesus as our God and Savior who has redeemed us and out of love for whom and unto whose glory, we ought to be zealous for these.

Good works that the truth about Him that we believe. And that we tell would be shown to be beautiful and true and real, and that he would be glorified as God and Savior, which we ask in His name, Amen.