

## “Of Good Works” part 10 WCF 16.2.7–9

### *Good Works Glorify God and Fit Us for Glory*

2021.11.28 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;<sup>a</sup> and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,<sup>b</sup> strengthen their assurance,<sup>c</sup> edify their brethren,<sup>d</sup> adorn the profession of the gospel,<sup>e</sup> stop the mouths of the adversaries,<sup>f</sup> **and glorify God,<sup>g</sup> whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,<sup>h</sup> that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.<sup>i</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> James 2:18, 22

<sup>b</sup> Psa 116:12-13; 1 Pet 2:9

<sup>c</sup> 2 Pet 1:5-10; 1 John 2:3, 5

<sup>d</sup> Mat 5:16; 2 Cor 9:2

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5, 9-12

<sup>f</sup> 1 Pet 2:15

<sup>g</sup> John 15:8; Phil 1:11; 1 Pet 2:12

<sup>h</sup> Eph 2:10

<sup>i</sup> Rom 6:22

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. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Philippians 1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, <sup>5</sup> for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; <sup>7</sup> just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

<sup>1</sup>Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, <sup>12</sup> 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.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. <sup>18</sup> And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**(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)**

So the paragraph as a whole enlistminster Confessions 16 that we've been covering these many weeks. I think this is our 10th lesson in Westminster Confession 16 as a whole and our seven or eight in this 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 mouse of the adversaries and glorified God, whose workmanship. They are created in Christ Jesus there unto that, Having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life. And so we have that last section, those those three footnotes GH. And I, if you're looking at your sheet 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.

Now, one of the things I've mentioned several times for you to watch out for as we've been in this chapter on good works is a tendency in In Christian circles that are, you know, even pretty close to hours to downplay the significance and even to, in some cases the reality or possibility of good works.

And you know I think as I've said there are those who have sincere desire to guard, a proper doctrine of justification that we are not made right with God at all by anything that we do. But only by what Christ has done and that we cannot be made more right with God or maintain our being right with God by anything that we do.

The those two are our errors that have been taught and reform circles in the last 20 years. If you're not familiar with the, you know what is called sometimes. The federal vision controversy just know that there are those who do teach that you can improve or maintain or sustain your right standing with God by what you do and they'll use language like final justification.

Not to mean that the Lord will have produced in us. Good works that correspond to our right standing. But you know if you hear that phrase you know beware of people who are saying that you maintain your, right standing with God and that on the by what you do and that on the last day, there's that combination of what Jesus has done and what you have done.

That is a lie. That is a that is a good life from the devil to combine what we have done with what Christ has done as far as what makes us right before. God. It's actually the Roman Catholic view and yet some in our circles have said that. So some out of a sincere desire to guard, a right teaching of how we are right before God, our doctrine of justification, or out of a desire, to fight against their own pride and maintain what they think is humility or perhaps even to appear humble before.

Others have made it have spoken in such a way that Christians should not emphasize doing good works. And that good works are not are not important. That of course would be something that God himself. The Holy Spirit himself has not followed at all in his in his word. We see everywhere.

This this emphasis on Christians doing good works as we've been seeing in these last last 10 lessons, or so while. We've been in, Westminster Confessions 16, and we're reminded in the coming reading in Colossians for next week and I think even today is already mentions this false humility. We supply the word false in the English translations.

Just says humility that man aware of our pride come up with ideas of how to be or appear humble and ways to supposedly humble ourselves before God. Well, one of the problems with coming up with ways ourselves to fight our pride is that if God has given you what to do and has given us what to do.

And we come up with our own thing instead and think that, that is how we're going to be humble. That's actually pretty. Arrogant? Isn't it to think that we will come up with how to be humble? To think that we will come up with the thing that will raise God up and bring man low.

We know we want God to be exalted and we want man to be brought low and we want our pride to be killed But part of killing that pride is subjecting ourselves to what God says, emphasizing things in the way he emphasizes it seeking to grow in him or to worship him.

The way he says that he grows us. And the way that he says for us to worship him And one of the things that would be lost if we did stumble into, if we did stumble into avoiding talking or thinking about good works Avoiding emphasizing pursuing them, is the glory of God in creating Christian's new so that they walk in good works.

And if we if we walk in good works, but we never talk about how we were dead apart from him and he had to create us new and how even now we can do nothing, apart from a abiding in him and he's the one doing it all. Then we will not be ascribing glory to him.

So if we just walked in good works, and that he has prepared beforehand for us but never noted, it Never praised him for it, never blessed His name for it. We would we would not be responding rightly to the glory of God and even worse. If we somehow, could be justified made right with God in Christ Jesus.

But then not proceeds to grow in holy living, not proceed to grow in the working out of the life and character of Christ in us. Then one of the great purposes of of our redemption in this life would would not be being fulfilled. If it was possible to live that way, We would not be glorifying our God by how we live.

So these scriptures that will be considering in the next 20 minutes or so emphasize. Or teach to us that God has specifically redeemed. Those who were dead apart from Christ and he sanctifies those who even having been made alive can still bear no fruit except that it comes from Christ.

That he is redeemed us in that way so that he would get all the glory by whatever fruit is produced in the Christian's life. And that that is one of the great purposes of good works. And that as he does produce that fruit, he gets us ready to enjoy the final end for which he has redeemed us to glorify God, and fully enjoy him forever, as the first question, or the first answer of the larger expands or embellishes for us.

So glorify God, we by our good works glorified God. He gives they give us three proofs texts for that. The first is John 15, verse verse 8 By this, my father is glorified that you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples Again. I want to would have wanted to take a little bit more before and after but we'll just look at verses 5 through 8.

Jesus says, 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. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered and they gather them and throw them into the fire.

And they are burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and that shall be done for you by this, my father is glorified that you bear much fruit. So you will be my disciples. So the one apart from Jesus.

What can they do? That is genuinely righteous and good. They could do nothing, we can do nothing, apart from Jesus. And even if you are righteous in Christ, whatever you do from yourself in yourself, that cannot be good at all only that which comes in Christ by the life of Christ is good.

And if we abide in Him, we will bear much fruit. Incidentally, I know we have to move quickly through these passages now, but verse 7, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you, The big qualification, right?

We know what we are going to desire, right? If Christ is our life and it is his word abiding in us, that will form what we ask. It's like delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. You have passages like that. One passes.

Like this one, they can't be used as these turn. God into a genie texts where you are in control of what you get from God. If you if you delight in God, then you can you know rub that lamp and and tell your wishes and poof they'll appear. No, If you delight, in God, God is your delight.

He'll, He's the desire of your heart that you get. If you abide in Him and his words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, which is him and to have the fulfillment of his word and it shall be done. Done for you anyway. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.

So when we do bear much fruit, the father is glorified in the way that he has given his son to be our life and from him. The fruit will come The next proof text is Philippians won 11. Philippians 1:11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Starting further up, though. In verse 3 of Philippians 1. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine, making requests for you all with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day. Until now. So God is the one he has produced in them fellowship in the gospel from the first day.

God is the one who is produced their fellowship in the gospel even until now. And so, God is the one who is thanked, God is also the one in him. He has confidence for six confidence, for their spiritual growth for their bearing fruit. Being confident of this very thing that he who has begun.

He who has begun a good work in, you will complete it until the day of Christ, Jesus. Just So until the day of Jesus Christ, just as it is right, for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart and as much as both, in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace for God, as my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

And this I pray that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge, and all discernment. That you may approve the things that are excellent that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ being filled with the fruit, fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

So he thanks God for the Philippians faith and fellowship in the Gospel for their partnership, and in the work of the Gospel, believing in the gospel and spreading the gospel. He's confident in Christ and God is confidence about them as in God, when he desires that they would grow more.

Who does he ask to do that? He is writing right? He's writing a letter. Hoping that, that God who is inspiring carrying him along? God, the spirit who is carrying him along as he writes these words that are the words of God that he will also bless us words to the Philippians.

But he's praying to God that their love would abound more and more in knowledge and discernment and and he's praying that these fruits of righteousness in their life would fill up. Because those don't come from them, they are the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, and so he's also praising God.

And looking forward to the glory and praise of God. When this confidence is realized and when these prayers are answered and this hope is fulfilled to the glory and praise of God. So the fact that it has to be all of God's work as partnered with the fact that God does do that work.

And he does produce that fruit and he is glorified in our lives. Yes. Jeff is the fruit that he's talking about here, is it? Characterize and limited to the fruits of spirit in Galatians 5:22. And The word characterized is better than the word limited there. If by limited. You mean fruit that the fruit that are described in Galatians, 5 are exemplary of the fruit of the spirit.

Then I would say, yes, it's limited to whatever fruit, the spirit produces, but I'm not I'm not prepared at the moment, and I'm not sure I would get there to say that. That's an exhaustive list of what the Spirit produces in Galatians, 5, certainly it being one of the primary lists that we have of the fruit that the Spirit produces.

Just like if you go further up in Galatians 5, that's not an exhaustive list of all of the works of the flesh, right? It's it's exemplary of what the works of the flesh. Are. Thank you for that. Yeah, I guess I want to say with the psalmist the law of God has exceedingly broad.

So there's there's much to be flushed out in the scripture of what that fruit would look like. The final proof that we get for by our good works. We glorified God. The final proof that they gave us is first Peter chapter 2 verse 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.

And so God has glorified. We talked about this at some length last week, already talking about stopping the mouths of the adversaries. But you hear the motivation motivation there if we just back up one verse. And again, I understand it's less context than we've been taking, but you listen to the apostle, beloved, my loved ones.

I beg you as Sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. And so you know one of your children can imagine hopefully you don't have to imagine too hard. Hopefully it's similar to what your parents have said to you. Oh my love. Oh my dear don't don't let yourself want that and run after that.

That is something that is at war with your soul. And and verse 12, when you, when you live a godly life, when you conduct yourself honorably verse 12 among the Gentiles are in front of others and the if even if they speak against you as evildoers on the last day, when the goodness of your works, the fact that what you have done has been done in Christ Jesus when, when that is revealed and attested by God, even those who have hated you and who have called you evil, will will have no option.

But to admit that what you have done is is right, and good because the great judge against whom and after whom there's no appeal to appeal His decision, He will be glorified that he is the one who produced this in you in the last day. Love the glory of the one who has saved you.

These sins are at war with you, the devils at war with you. But Jesus is saved you my dear one, my loved one urge you to glorify Him and to seek His glory, with how you live. It's a very different way of instructing and correcting. And then, then we in our fleshliness, as parents, kind of default, to, And there's many good motivations for our children's obedience and our own obedience.

But you see how he expresses affection and he's speaking in such an urgent manner with them. And one of the things that he holds before them as a goal as a reason to live honorably and not to indulge the flesh, is that your God will be glorified in the day that Christ returns in the day of Christ Jesus by the good that you do.

Yeah. You know, it's kind of Romans, you know, that that early Romans two section in reverse as you as those who are not being brought to repentance by the kindness of God, persist in their evil evil works even though the the wrath has not fallen on them yet, they're storing up wrath against the day of wrath.

When the dam will break and the, the wrath of God will that has been stored up against their sin will come upon them. Well, for the believer, you have kind of the opposite, we're storing up the glorifying of God for the good that we have done, It. May not yet be recognized by men, but it will be on that day and how our God who has produced.

Those good works in our lives will be glorified. When know the curtain is pulled and the judgment of God on those good things that Christians have done in Christ. Jesus is declared and how he will be magnified. As the one who has done that in your life, You might not be getting commendation, praise recognition yet, but your God will get the recognition in that day.

Do you see the way the apostle is holding out before us? How our Redeemer, how the one who creates us new in Christ? Jesus will be glorified as a motivation for our obedience. It's something that good works do. Now, think about the tendency in in some circles to downplay, the genuineness of the good works of believers over against that motivation.

We don't want to downplay it. We want to be honest about how much more there is to do and that we still continually need forgiveness and but we don't want to downplay or diminish. Those good works for which our our Redeemer will be glorified in the last day. Oh, even trying to speed along, we don't really speed.

Do we Created in Christ, Jesus, they're unto. We've actually quoted from Ephesians 2. Right? Two verse 10. A couple of times already. You've got it on the page in front of you, Right? Basically, we were dead and trespasses even to be a made alive that had to that to had to happen in Christ.

As by grace, that we have been saved only through faith. Even the faith is God as God's gift. And yet, one of the things that God gives to faith is the production of these good works that we walk in because it's in Christ Jesus, that we have been created for good works.

If we've been created in Christ Jesus for good works then we ought to walk in. Those good works that he has prepared for us. And then the Romans 6 passage verse 22 of is the the proof text for how good works have as their end eternal life. You are familiar with the verse that comes after.

Many of us are the wages of sin is death. But before, you know, that's the second part of a comparison, verse 22 is now having been set, free from sin and having become slaves of God, okay? Those are you, if you haven't become God's slave, you have not been set free from sin, you know.

There are no free agents, you're a slave of one or the other. You have your fruit to holiness and then the end your fruit to holiness and the end everlasting life. So, one of the fruits that God produces in those who have been set free from sin, is that they become slaves of God, and this becoming a slave of God shows up in what your mind now exists for and what your mouth now exists for Well they already did But what you know your mind to exist for and what you know your mouth to exist for and what you know your hearts to exist for and what you know, your hands to exist.

For, for whom, and for what do your minds and hearts and mouths and words and hands exist. Dear children. That's not a hard question, is it, You know, that the answer is the the God who has given himself for us in Jesus Christ. And as you live that way more and more as you grow in holiness, that's the means by which he is bringing you to the end, which is eternal life.

The same apostle in chapter 13 is going to say our salvation is nearer. Now to us than the day that that we first believed. And in that context, he's going to be saying, stop living. According to the world from which you're being saved and live, according to the world, for which you are being saved.

As you are being made more and more. Holy you are being made fit. You're being prepared for the heaven that Jesus has earned for you and Hebrews. 12 teaches very, very similarly that we must have

holiness with in order to see the Lord without it, no one will. And so God who created us in Christ Jesus to walk in these good works has earned for us or bought for us by Christ Jesus.

To enjoy his glory fully forever to come into his glory. And yet we would not enjoy that glory. If we were not holy and we would not be admitted to that glory except with holiness and so one of the marvelous things as we grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with him is that God is fitting us out.

Outfitting us for the glory to which he is bringing us in Christ. Let's pray.

O Lord, we pray that you would increase our desire to see you glorified and that you would make us to know what a privilege it is to be those through whose lives. And by whose actions, you have decided to give yourself great glory in the last day produce in us.

We pray the the fruit of the Spirit and so give us the working of your spirit that we might walk in those good works that you have prepared beforehand make us to embrace the fact that when you bring us to faith in Jesus Christ, you have given us who are dead life.

You have created us new that that we being new creatures. In him, might bring glory to you who have now not only created us but newly created us. So we glorified in our life, be glorified in our holiness. Be glorified in our eternal life. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.