

HC Q&A 91–How Does God Expect You to Respond to your Conversion?

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 被重生. The new man **show his new life by doing good works**. God expects nothing less.

From this statement some natural questions arise: **What are good works?** How can I know what good works are? What is the standard of determining good works? These are important questions because there are a wide variety of beliefs in what good works are! Some people believe that helping the old and the sick to die (euthanasia 安乐死) is a good work. Others believe that the government’s sharing of wealth equally to all members of society is a good work. Many believe that public education is a good work as it comes “free” of cost to poor people. Other people believe that killing “infidels” (异教徒) is a good work that takes them to Paradise. There are people in the church who believe that democracy is a good work. **So please let God speak to you on 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 Vine.

Hebrews 11:6 - But **without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

If you do not have a new heart from God, based on knowledge of what Jesus has done, then you can’t do good works. Your soul must always be resting in and **drawing from Jesus Christ** as the source of your 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. Why is it sinful if your action is not from faith? Can one not simply do a good deed by himself?

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

Romans 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned (被定罪) 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 (动机) is imperfect. God wants a pure heart for every action. So even the most splendid thing you would ever do...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 (需要保留、隐讳的事) about what you do. Roman Catholic teachings allow mental reservations...but not God’s teaching!

3. What about those who say: “I let my conscience (良心, 良知) be my guide?”

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 (人的堕落) and is no longer pure. So it must not be your standard.

4. A the same time, you must never violate your Christian conscience.

Though your conscience is a lower standard and tarnished (被玷污) by sin, you must never do something that your conscience convicts (定罪, 谴责) you is sin. **Examples:**

1. **If you bought food on the Sabbath (安息日) for someone who is starving, which is not wrong) (饥饿的), but in your heart you think it is wrong, that is a sin.**
2. Apostle Paul pointed out that if you believe it is **wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols** (which might be good to eat) but you think it isn’t good and you still eat it, it is sin to you.
3. RC Sproul said: “...if a person is taught and comes to believe that **wearing lipstick is a sin** (It is not.) and then wears lipstick, that person is sinning. **The sin resides not in the lipstick (or the buying of food on the Sabbath) 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?

It may be. But others can only judge your outward actions. God doesn’t call your work good if you lack faith in Jesus Christ. Others might. 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, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

God knows the heart. So make sure it is working well –working to please him!

Matthew 15:17 - "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile (玷污) a man. 19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries (奸淫), fornications (通奸), thefts, false witness, blasphemies (亵渎).

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 have helped the victims of Hurricane Harvey or the victims in the Las Vegas shooting, or the people who lost their homes in California’s wildfires, but if you did not do it through faith to Christ, it is not a good work.

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 (义) exceeds the righteousness of the scribes (文士) and Pharisees (法利赛人), 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, regardless of what the Premier says.

Those who marry out of the faith because they made a good effort to find a Christian spouse but couldn’t aren’t doing good deeds.

Those who **think they are wise by not spanking (打) their children for disobedience,** aren’t doing good deeds.

Those who believe **they need to adjust worship so that it is more appealing (有吸引力的) to young people, or adding female leadership,** 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! Good intentions are not good enough!

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

The Sermon on the Mount (登上宝训) is filled with examples of how 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.字句叫人死, 精义叫人活

3. You may not even break the smallest, seemingly most insignificant law, or your "good" work would not be considered good.

If you break one law, you break them all. They are part of one package. 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 God.

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 (外邦人), 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.

Matthew 5:16, emphasized the manner of work...your good works must be done in such a way that men would glorify God in heaven. 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?** Yes and Yes!

3. So don't do good works 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!

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 not 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.

3. While your good works don't merit your salvation, you must respond to your salvation by doing good works for God's glory.

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, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

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 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 our human sentiments (感情, 观点) and self-importance, but it is the truth. You need to start training your children early so that 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:

What are good works? Good works are works to show you are converted - works that proceed from faith, done according to God's law, and 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 yet, by doing good works God rewards you.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

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

2. May you receive his help by his Word, Spirit, and the mutual encouragements of each other to do these good works. This is the only way you are able to do good works.

Finally, have you done everything you should to please God? If not, 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!