

# Works of Faith

According to God's own purpose and grace, He saves and calls us in Christ Jesus through the testimony of the Lord (2 Timothy 1:8-9). Salvation and the holy calling are not according to man's works, but according to divine purpose and heavenly grace. The predetermined counsel of God has now been revealed through the gospel with the coming of the Savior Jesus, "who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light" (v. 10). That grace of God that has appeared bringing salvation teaches us what changes we must make and how we must live (Titus 2:11-12).

Fellowship with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit is dependent upon what a man does and does not do. A believer must respond and act in harmony with the will of God. Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother." (Mark 3:35). John wrote, "He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9). Paul admonished, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Through Jesus Christ, believers become God's workmanship created for good works (Ephesians 2:10). The Lord redeems men from lawless deeds and purifies them for Himself that they may be a people "zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). God has determined what works are good and commands us to do them. Thus, the gospel equips men of God "for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). The believer who examines "the perfect law of liberty" and becomes "a doer of the word" will be blessed "in what he does" (James 1:25).

Works of faith must be distinguished from works of merit. Works of merit are deeds of men of which they may boast (Ephesians 2:9). Salvation by meritorious works demands perfection in righteousness (Titus 3:5). But all men have sinned; none are righteous (Romans 3:10, 23). Hence, God's mercy, grace and love give salvation to those who have a "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). In response to an inquiry about what men should do, Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." Believing is a work, not a work of merit but a work of faith. The believer who abides in Christ's teaching is His disciple (John 8:31). Peter explained to Cornelius' household, "In every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." (Acts 10:35). That day Cornelius and other Gentiles were "baptized in the name of the Lord" (v. 48). When a person receives the word of the Lord and submits to the heavenly will, obeying the Author of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9), he has not earned salvation by perfectly keeping God's righteousness. He has simply done what God has commanded through His Son. Trusting in the divine promises of redemption and reconciliation, a penitent believer does the works of faith that God in Christ has ordained and revealed.

