

Never Give Up in Doing Good

Galatians 5:22; Galatians 6:10

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Doing good to others is a universal teaching of all religions. So what distinguishes the biblical teaching of doing good to others from the teaching of all other religions? What makes the biblical view of good works uniquely different from a worldly view and from every other religious view of good works?

There is a worldly ethical system that defines a person to be good and to do good who does what is in the best interests of the majority of people, so that goodness is defined not by the good and sovereign God who has created us and who has given us His gospel and His commandments, but by what a society believes to be good (utilitarian ethics). If it is best for a society to abort and murder unborn children to prevent unwanted children, then abortion is good (according to this perverted view).

There is a worldly ethical system that defines a person to be good and to do good who deifies the concept of love, so that whatever a person believes to be loving to another person in any particular situation is that which is good (situational ethics). If it is best to commit adultery, lie, or steal in a particular situation in order to promote love toward the helpless or the needy, then it is good to do so (according to this corrupt view).

There is also a worldly ethical system that defines a person to be good and to do good that acts in such a way that promotes his/her own self-interests, so that one's own personal happiness is the highest good (self-actualization ethics). Since no one outside of yourself can tell you what will make you happy, all that you do should be viewed through the grid of

your own purposes, your own goals, your own happiness—that is what is truly good (according to this immoral view).

The biblical ethical system is altogether contrary to other ethical systems because the good we should do is defined by an infinitely good and infinitely wise God as revealed in Holy Scripture. Good and doing good is that which pleases God (not that which pleases society, not that which pleases a deified concept of love, or that which pleases the individual). Since we are created by God, our chief end (and good end) is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (*Westminster Shorter Catechism* #1). We exist to reflect His glory and His good image in all that we think, do, and say. The problem is that due to sin and the corruption of our nature inherited from Adam, none of us by nature is good or does good (Romans 3:10-12). But praise be to our good God, for He has implanted His goodness (as His own DNA and family characteristic) within us by the Holy Spirit, and is growing us in the fruit of goodness throughout our Christian life. In fact, those who trust alone in Christ alone for their justification have been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

Let us now turn to our text in Galatians 6:10 as we focus our attention upon the following two main points: (1) The Exhortation To Do Good (Galatians 6:10); (2) The Extent To Doing Good (Galatians 6:10).

I. The Exhortation To Do Good (Galatians 6:10).

A. Paul’s inspired letter to the Galatians is a letter about freedom: (1) the freedom of the Christian from the curse of the Law (**Galatian 3:13**), and (2) our freedom from the power of sin over us (**Galatians 5:13**).

B. As Paul concludes his inspired letter to the Galatians in Chapter 6:10, he uses the conjunction, “therefore”, which alerts us to the fact that Paul is bringing his practical exhortations beginning in Chapter 6 to a conclusion. Paul says in effect, “In light of the exhortations I have just given to you, let me bring it all to a conclusion. Paul in no way would have the Galatian Christians to walk away from this letter thinking that their freedom in Christ consisted of a freedom from obedience to God’s commandments or a freedom from doing good works.

C. The exhortation (in Galatians 6:10) is in the present continuous tense: “Let us do good” (literally, “Let us continuously work good”). This is not a suggestion that we as Christians can take or leave as we please, but is the authoritative will of our sovereign and good God. It is an exhortation that is to characterize our lives as Christians (the present tense). We have stated earlier in the sermon that doing good is doing that which pleases God (as revealed in Holy Scripture). But let us consider this more closely.

D. What are good works?

1. **First, good works are foreordained by God that we should walk in them** (Ephesians 2:8-10). They are the work of God in the Christian. That is simply to say that apart from the sovereign work of God in raising us spiritually from the dead, we would never do a good work that was acceptable to God (for “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” in the sight of God according to Isaiah 64:6). Good works are not meritorious in making us more justified (which is impossible in as much as we are justified on the basis of Christ’s absolute righteousness), but rather good works grow us into greater conformity and family resemblance to Jesus Christ (contrary to the merit of works in Rome).

2. **Second, good works are according to the right standard—God’s Word** (not according to what is deemed in the best interests of

society, not according to a deified concept of man's understanding of love, and not according to the dictates, desires, and pleasures of the self-actualized individual)—2 Timothy 3:16-17. The good works of a Christian are simply his/her loving obedience to God's commandments (summarized in the Ten Commandments).

3. **Third, good works have the right motive—love for God from a heart of gratitude for all that the Lord has bestowed upon us** (1 John 4:11). Yes, we are certainly to love our neighbors in doing good to them, but the supreme motive in doing good to our neighbor is love for God because He first loved us. Only this motive of love for God in doing good will make our obedience and good works a joy and not a burden to us (1 John 5:3).

4. **Fourth, good works have the right goal—the glory of God** (1 Corinthians 10:31). Who do we want to receive the honor, praise, and glory for our good works? How often do we do what is good (according to the right standard), but do it in order to be seen by man, in order to receive the approval of man, in order to receive the praise of man, or in order to please ourselves? How often do we do what is good, but if we don't receive a thank you, a pat on the back, a word of encouragement or praise, we become upset, insulted, and wallow in self-pity? That is not to condone the unthankfulness or lack of appreciation on the part of others, but it is simply to point out that our feelings are often hurt because our good works are more man-centered than God-centered.

E. What are some incentives we should reflect upon in doing good to others?

1. Doing good to others is an evidence that we are the children of God (Titus 2:14). It brings assurance of faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Doing good to others shuts the mouths of adversaries (1 Peter 2:15).

3. Doing good to others brings a joy of heart ("It is more

blessed to give than to receive” Acts 20:35).

4. Doing good to others encourages the hearts of fellow Christians (Acts 9:36-41).

5. Doing good to others brings God’s gracious rewards (not meritorious rewards) here on earth and in heaven (Ecclesiastes 11:1; Matthew 6:3-4).

II. The Extent To Doing Good (Galatians 6:10).

A. First, Paul qualifies this exhortation to do good with the words, “As we have therefore opportunity [“time”]”. Calvin rightly states,

By saying that we must make every effort (while we have opportunity) to do good, he is setting before us the brevity of our life...Thus we say, ‘Oh, I’ll do that some other time...’ Be we never find opportunity to do good with our resources; we all prefer it if a friend steps forward first, not so that we can follow his example in well-doing, but so that we can remain tight-fisted. However, Paul shows us that if we were wisely to consider things as they really are, we would see that we will not always have great opportunities throughout our lives.

B. Second, the extent of Paul’s exhortation embraces all men (believers and unbelievers alike). We are not to set boundaries around those to whom we will and will not obey this exhortation of the Lord. God Himself does good to the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:44-45).

1. At times, it is doing good to others not to give them that for which they ask because to do so would be to do them evil (what is not good for them) rather than good (what is good for them and what pleases God)—2 Thessalonians 3:10. Or is there always an excuse we offer as to why we cannot help those in need?

2. But is there the desire to help those who are in need that God has placed in your path whether they are believers or unbelievers, whether they are Covenanters or not? If there is no prayer for those in need, there will be no desire. If there is no desire, there will be no action in doing good to all men.

C. Third, Paul's exhortation to do good to all men is further qualified by these words, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Though our English Authorized Version translates these words in the singular "the household of faith", the Greek text is actually in the plural, "the households of faith". I point that out because in the plural the emphasis would seem to be "especially unto the households of faith" i.e. "especially to Christian families", rather than "especially to those of the household of faith" i.e. the Church of Christ.

1. It is interesting how an entire household, even one that might likely have infants who are too young to believe within that household are no doubt included within "households of faith". Certainly infants and small children are not excluded from "households of faith" to whom we are to do good. Because they are the children of believing parents, infants and small children are included in the household of faith (just as was Isaac in Abraham's household of faith and therefore received the sign of circumcision). So likewise, we find that when Lydia believed in Christ (and others like her), the entire household became a household of faith and was therefore baptized (Acts 16:14-15).

2. The parallel that I see here is that just as we should not exclude infants from a household of faith when doing good to that household (Galatians 6:10), so likewise we should not exclude infants from a household of faith when administering baptism (Acts 16:14-15).

a. Doing good to households of faith tells us that doing good begins at home (1 Timothy 5:8). We do not shut the mouths of adversaries, but rather open wide the mouths of adversaries when we treat strangers, co-workers, casual acquaintances with more goodness than we do our own families members.

b. Jesus sent the cleansed demoniac back to his own family and friends to bear testimony first before going out to places where he was not known (Luke 8:39).

3. What good deeds are we to do to households of faith?
 - a. Restoring backslidden brethren (Galatians 6:1).
 - b. Bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
 - c. Providing for the ministry (Galatians 6:6).
 - d. The list of doing good in Romans 12:9-18.
 3. The list of doing good in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-22.

D. Dear ones, note that Paul warns the Galatian Christians about the temptation of growing weary in doing good and then throwing up our arms and quitting ("And let us not be weary in well-doing" Galatians 6:9). The workers of iniquity seem never to tire of doing evil (they lay in bed strategizing how to do evil), let us not grow weary and give up, for the Lord will reward those who don't give up, who persevere to the end ("for due season we shall reap, if we faint not" Galatians 6:9). God's grace is sufficient, and the hands of fellow brethren are always timely to bear us up (like the hands of Aaron and Hur who lifted up the arms of Moses until the victory for God's people was assured and the enemy was destroyed (Exodus 17:10-12)).

E. What is it in your life and mine that has caused you to become weary in well-doing to point of wanting to surrender and quit?

1. Perhaps you have become resentful and bitter toward someone, due to being hurt and mistreated, which issues forth in anger and vengeance (perhaps even a silent vengeance). Your resentment is self-destructive.

2. Perhaps you have become discouraged over the compromise in your own life or in the life of others—who are not willing to stand up for Christ and His truth, but following the multitude to do evil (**Exodus 23:2**). Compromise is not doing good to others, it is doing evil to others.

3. Perhaps you have become discouraged over the hypocrisy

in your own life or in the life of others—who have a knowledge of the truth, but not a practice of the truth.

4. Perhaps apathy and indifference to sin in your life has led you to want to give up and walk the broad path.

5. Perhaps seemingly endless trials, tribulations, afflictions that you face in your family, at work, or in your body are tempting you to give up.

6. Perhaps the rampant evil that is in the world seems so overwhelming that you think, “What is the use!”

7. In most cases of such discouragement in wanting to give up in doing good to others, it is the result of not enjoying daily fellowship with Christ and His Word whereby we know and experience the love and goodness of God for us and our eyes are taken off of people and the things of this world as the source of our joy and peace. Enjoying Christ alone will keep us from not growing weary in well doing.

From September 7, 1940 to May 21, 1941 (for nearly 37 straight weeks) Hitler had sought to bomb England into complete submission and devastation. The destruction of London (attacked some 71 times during that period of time) was awful—not only because of the bombs, but also because of the massive fires that swept through the city. To the podium stepped Prime Minister Winston Churchill on October 29, 1941, a few months after the bombing raids had ended, while the city of London was still in shambles and the outcome of the war yet undetermined (at least from man’s perspective). There in the midst of so much darkness and discouragement, Churchill rallied the faculty and students at Harrow School with a rousing speech that included the following memorable lines.

Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in.... Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

Dear ones, never give in, never give up, do not grow weary in well-doing, even if it seems as if you are walking that narrow path alone. Never, never, never give up in doing good to others, regardless of what others do to you or how you feel! For you shall reap if you not.

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