

What Role Do Good Works Play in Assurance?

[Hebrews 10:32-39](#)

Hebrews, Day 37

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For,

*“Yet a little while,
and the coming one will come and will not delay;
but my righteous one shall live by faith,
and if he shrinks back,
my soul has no pleasure in him.”*

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

- Hebrews 10:32-39, ESV

I drive a gold 2002 Buick Century. It is not a Jeep. If I were to take it off-roading on the Rubicon trail, that would not make it a Jeep. It would, in fact, show how very much non-Jeep my car is. Taking a vehicle off-road does not make the vehicle a Jeep, but if you have a Jeep Wrangler Rubicon and you take it off road, it will soon demonstrate its distinct quality.

Christians are made Christians by the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts, making us born again, giving us the gift of faith, and uniting us to Christ by faith. Christians are called to do good works. We are called to love God, love one another, share the Gospel with our neighbors, and endure hardship and persecution. We do not become Christians by doing these works. If a non-Christian, who is not born again by the power of the Spirit, tries to do the works a Christian is called to do, he may succeed in some of them for a time, but before long, he will quit in despair.

In doing good works, Christians are called to bear the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy peace, patience, etc. These are not fruit we produce ourselves. This is the fruit of the Spirit!

When we are doubting our salvation or are filled with fear, we can look back at the fruit of the Spirit we have displayed and the good works we have done and be encouraged. This is what the author of Hebrews is encouraging his readers to do: Look back and remember what God has done in and through them in the past.

The author of Hebrews has just written some hard and sobering words. He has sternly warned his readers that they will not escape the wrath of God if they reject Christ and abandon their profession of faith. His last words were ""The Lord will judge his people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (vv. 30-31) But now he wants to reassure them: "*But recall the former days . . .*"

Sometimes we feel overwhelmed as believers. It may be temptation or doubt or peer pressure, but whatever it is that overwhelms us, we need to learn to look up and look back. The author of Hebrews has been continually urging his audience to look to Jesus, which he will do again. Now he is telling them to look back and remember how much they were willing to endure in the past because of their strong hope in Christ. When we look up to Jesus and look back for evidence of the Lord's work in our lives in the past, God can bring us through whatever is threatening to overwhelm our faith!