

Useless or Useful in God's Work? Titus 3:8-11, 14

Introduction:

1. For many years I thought that when I stood before God, my good works would be weighed against my bad works. If my good works were greater, I would be allowed to enter heaven.
2. What a glorious day when I realized that eternal life is the **gift** of God.

Romans 6:23

- It cannot be earned, but it is the gift of God given by His grace.
 - Christ purchased and provided for it on the cross. I'm simply admonished to believe it and receive it by faith. **Ephesians 2:8-9**
3. While you were not saved **by** your good works, did you know that you were saved **unto** good works? **Ephesians 2:10**
 4. This is a recurring theme in the book of Titus. 2:7, 14, 3:1, 8, 14
 5. Titus describes two kinds of people in our text. One is valuable to the work of God and one is absolutely useless.

Three ways to be useless in God's work

First, possess an argumentative spirit – vs. 9a

- "Foolish" literally means "stupid, absurd."
- Have you ever met someone who just loves to argue? They argue over the most ridiculous things that really don't matter.
- People with an argumentative spirit are not out to edify others, they are out to win a fight. **1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 2:23** ("strifes" means "battles")
- This kind of person is poison to any local assembly.

Second, exhibit an unteachable spirit – vs. 9b-10

- Paul mentions those that love to strive about the law. Paul taught that today we are not under the law but under grace. We are dead to the law that we might live unto God.
- The ordinances and commands of Israel's law were given to Israel, not to the Gentiles, nor the church today. **Romans 9:4**
- The people that Paul refers to here in verse 9 were **Biblical**, but they weren't **dispensational**. They didn't recognize the divisions that God places in His Word. They failed to recognize the message of grace given to us through Paul.
- They were reverting back to Israel's "time past" program.
- They were sitting around trying to get the square peg of the law to fit in a round hole (the dispensation of grace) and Paul said it was unprofitable (useless) and vain (profitless).
- If Titus tried to teach these people sound doctrine and they wouldn't listen, Paul said to reject them. In other words, don't sit around and keep arguing with them.

Third, demonstrate a self-willed spirit – vs. 11

- They are perverted in doctrine, but refuse to turn to sound doctrine. They stubbornly continue to fail to recognize the unique apostleship of Paul to the Gentiles and the gospel of grace committed to His trust. **1 Timothy 1:10-11, 16**

Three ways to be useful in God's work

- To be useful in God's work is to be fruitful (vs. 14). What does it mean to be fruitful? It means that the believer is actively involved in good works.

Philippians 1:11

- Christ is living through you, and you are bringing praise and glory to God.

First, possess a zeal for good works - 2:14

- Webster's defines "zeal" as "eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something."
- It starts with a desire. After a person is saved and redeemed by Christ, there should be a strong desire on the part of the believer to serve the Lord.
- When believers are saved, they are made new creatures in Christ. This inward change should lead to an outward change. Our new identity leads to a new way of life.
- We are now zealous of good works - we are looking for ways to serve Christ and live out our new life in Christ.

Second, be prepared to do good works - 3:1

- This word "ready" simply means to be prepared.
- I think this carries the idea that we insure that we are making time to serve the Lord.
- It is important to us, and therefore it is a priority on our schedule. Many times our schedules get so full that there is no time to serve the Lord.
- So much of what we do is for **us** and for **our** personal benefit. "*Good works*" carries the idea that we are doing something in the name of our Lord for someone else (end of verse 14). We are giving of our time and energy so that someone else can profit, benefit, be helped, and be ministered to.
- We take the blessings of God and use them to bless others. You were created in Christ to be a blessing to others.

Third, exhibit faithfulness in doing good works - 3:8, 14

- In both verses, Paul tells Titus to admonish the believers to **maintain** good works. This simply means to practice.
- In other words, good works aren't something that the believer does occasionally. Good works are a regular part of his daily life. He is careful to maintain them.
- I like what verse 14 says - the believer has **learned** to maintain them. We have learned that there is no contentment in a selfish, self-centered life. It is barren, impotent, sterile, and unproductive.
- God created you to be fruitful, and when you are actively engaged in good works, you are useful and profitable in God's work (end of verse 14).
- Christians who are faithful to maintain good works are such a blessing to the cause of Christ on this earth. Flashes in the pans are a dime a dozen, but a faithful man is a diamond in the rough.

In Conclusion:

1. Allow me to end this message by showing you in God's Word two incredible examples of men who were **useful** in God's work. These men were commended by the apostle Paul.
 - Timothy - **Philippians 2:19-22**
 - Epaphroditus - **Philippians 2:25-30**
2. Paul could have never accomplished all that he did without men like these. These men were zealous, prepared, and careful to maintain good works. Paul knew he could count on them.
 - Are you a Timothy? Are you an Epaphroditus? They were human beings just like you and I.
3. Remember, God did not save you **by** your good works, but He saved you to **do** good works.