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WALKING IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

Before We Begin...

If you are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, God calls you a “saint” (1 Corinthians 1:2). Every believer is a sanctified member of His church.

Regarding those who have not yet met Christ as their Savior:

Some of you may not yet know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. This Bible study will be beneficial because any time that God’s principles are applied to our lives there will always be a positive result. However, we will never experience God’s best in our activities and relationships until we meet Him personally in our own individual lives.

If you have not yet made the wonderful discovery of knowing Christ, please take time to carefully read the preceding page: “Becoming a Follower of Christ.” Attempts to live the Christian life without having His power in your life will end in frustration. If you want to experience the abundant life that the Lord has created you to enjoy, before you begin this Bible study, begin to follow Jesus.

Regarding those who already know Jesus Christ as their Savior:

God’s Word is clear in delineating that a woman’s primary responsibility is found in caring for her husband, children, and home. Yet, the Lord has called Christian women to a high and holy position within the broader scope of functioning within His church. He says that men and women are all “one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Yet, in Scripture the Lord lays out both specific instructions, as well as warnings, for women as they function within His church.

The Lord also directly addresses the issue of Christian women’s involvement in the world through their social, community, and political activities.

As we study “Walking in the Church and in the World,” open sharing and interaction among women from all walks of life will be essential and valuable. Regardless of our unique, personal circumstances, every woman is a precious creation; a treasure to God Himself (Psalm 83:3).

All of God’s Word is for all of us. We need each other; so ***let’s get started!***



**Prayer
Points:**

**“Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness.”
I Timothy 2:9, 10**

While kindness is the inner disposition that causes one to sincerely desire the best for another, good works are those actions that make the desire become a reality. Kindness is the good intention; good works put feet and hands to that intention. Good works are kindness in action.

When the subject of “doing good works” comes up, many women become gripped with fear and panic. Images of volunteer sign-up sheets circulating around the room whirl through the imagination. Visions of harried women tethered by ball and chain to the church nursery abound.

What is your feeling, or attitude, as we delve into the topic of women being doers of good works?

The term “good works” is a combination of two Greek words; “agathos” meaning kind or good, plus “ergon” meaning work or task.

Webster’s New World College Dictionary defines “good” this way:

- 1) *morally sound or excellent; specifically:*
 - a) *virtuous;*
 - b) *pious;*
 - c) *kind, benevolent, generous, sympathetic, etc;*
 - d) *well-behaved; dutiful,*
 - e) *proper; becoming - as good manners.*

“Work” is defined as being:

- 1) *physical or mental effort exerted to do or make something;*
 - a.) *purposeful activity;*
 - b.) *labor;*
 - c.) *toil*

God Himself is the ultimate example of “being a Doer of good works.” The Lord’s kind intention toward us (Ephesians 1:5) manifested itself by taking action. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son....” (John 3:16).

Christ came to earth to serve those whom He loves (Matthew 20:28). Scripture tells us that He took on the nature of a servant (Philippians 2:7) and “He went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

Real love affects real life; viable affection is evidenced by visible action.

What we “do” as believers is the outward manifestation of our inward hearts. Living faith will always affect life actions (James 2:20-22). Each day in the life of a believer provides opportunities to be “doers of good works.” Yet, it is apparent that within the Body of Christ there are three basic types of responses to the Lord’s command to do good works.

There exists in the body a large group of women who exhibit limited good works. They are “artful dodgers” when it comes to evading most commitments to others. These women will not say “yes.” They are **rusting out**.

There is a second group of women who have overburdened themselves with good deeds; feeling obligated to accept every opportunity for service put before them. They cannot say “no.” These women often complain that they are **burning out**.

A third group of women has an accurate biblical grasp of what it means to be a doer of good works. Relying on God’s strength to flow through them, they are setting aside their personal comfort as they make themselves available for God’s use. These women have learned to say “wait” as they seek His will. They are being **cleaned out** as channels through which God’s love can flow.

Of the three groups mentioned above, which one best describes your life?

RUSTING OUT

A woman’s inaccurate perspective of God’s purpose for her life may result in missed opportunities. Women who avoid participating in



**Prayer
Points:**



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Points:**

good works often are unaware of the importance that God places on serving others and using their time wisely (Ephesians 5:15, 16).

What do the following verses reveal about doing good works?

1. Ephesians 2:8-10

***Optional:** Using your Greek dictionary, look up the meaning of the word “workmanship” in Ephesians 2:10. Note any additional insight that this definition provides regarding how God wants to use your life.

2. Titus 3:5, 8

3. Colossians 3:23, 24

4. I Corinthians 3:10-15

Though our salvation is not dependent upon doing good deeds, our good works are a demonstration of the faith that we have (Titus 1:16). According to the above verses, is there any benefit to doing good, aside from our own personal sense of satisfaction?

Scripture admonishes women in the church to adorn themselves with good works, rather than with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive garments (I Timothy 2:9, 10). Believers are the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:31, 32). What do the following verses reveal about the clothing of the bride of Christ at the future marriage feast in heaven?

5. Revelation 19:7, 8

What comprises the “fabric” of the bride’s wedding gown?

In light of these verses, if the wedding dresses were given out today, describe what yours might look like.

What would you like for your dress to look like?

There are many who, though filled with good intentions, are rusting out due to lack of follow-through. “There’s many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip,” and often the inner motivation of kindness is short-circuited, never coming to fruition in good deeds.

The Lord exhorts us to love each other not only with words, but also with actual deeds (I John 3:18). He also warns believers to follow through on commitments so that we may not fall under judgment (James 5:12; II Corinthians 9:7).

How sad for the woman who chooses to rust out, neglecting the opportunities that God has set before her. She is missing much of the beauty and fulfillment that the Lord has for her in this life, and the reward in the life to come.

BURNING OUT

Since the Lord says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, why do so many people seem to be straining under the heavy load of serving Christ (Matthew 11:30)?

Much like the motor of a kitchen hand-mixer which burns out when given a task for which it is not designed, women may assume tasks for which they are not designed (Ephesians 2:10). We always have time to do what God wants us to do. It has been said that if we have too much to do, then we are doing too much.

There are several reasons why so many Christian women are suffering from burn out today.



**Prayer
Points:**



**Prayer
Points:**

Misplaced Priorities:

Burn out may occur when one has misplaced priorities that sap one's strength and time. When a woman's priorities are aligned with her Creator's, she will not fall prey to the tyranny of the urgent, or impulsively respond to needs for which she was not designed. Reacting to every apparent need without prayer may actually hinder God's work (John 18:11).

We need to seek discernment as we meet others' needs. For example, though we are to feed the hungry, perhaps the Lord may be using their hunger to teach them to work (II Thessalonians 3:10). Though we are to be kind, friendly and welcoming to all, we are to shun false teachers (II John 10, 11). Perhaps the prodigal son may not have returned home if others, lacking discernment, had met his apparent physical needs (Luke 15:11-32).

6. Romans 14:23

Can doing good works ever be sin?

Lack of Personal Organization:

Burn out may result from a lack of personal organization in life. What does the following text reveal about the nature of burn out, and possible solutions to the problem?

7. Numbers 11:10-15

Moses certainly suffered "burn out after the burning bush!" He became overwhelmed by the problems and bad attitudes of others. He expected too much of himself by misunderstanding his assignment, and assumed responsibilities that were God's alone (11:12). Moses had forgotten that his "responsibility" was to "respond" to God's "ability" to work through Him. This led him into personal depression and the desire to die.

8. Numbers 11:16, 17



**Prayer
Points:**

SUMMARY:

Define “doing good works” in your own terms. You could use a synonym, a motto, a poem or a prayer, or even make a drawing to show your understanding of this concept.

DISCUSSION:

Hebrews 10:24 exhorts believers to consider how to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” Getting practical, how do we go about motivating each other in this way?

APPLICATION:

A young Christian woman breaks down in tears at a committee meeting explaining that she is suffering from “burn out.” What counsel can you give her?