

THE GOOD WORK OF GOD



THE GOOD WORK OF GOD IS EFFECTIVE,
EVIDENTIAL AND ENDURING
(P.S. AND WHOLLY OF GRACE)

THE GOOD WORK OF GOD IS EFFECTIVE

1. God began his good work in us when he brought us into fellowship with him through the gospel, 1:5.

A. The good work was God bringing them into true fellowship with himself through the gospel.

- (Philippians 1:5 ESV) **Because of your partnership [fellowship]** in the gospel from the first day until now.

A note on translating κοινωνία [koinonia] as fellowship and not partnership. Partnership seems to place the emphasis more on taking part in something than being brought into the intimate sharing of life with God and all the saints.

B. The good work was God justifying them bringing them into a relationship of peace with himself through the gospel.

2. God will bring his good work to completion, 1:6.

- (Philippians 1:6 ESV) **And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you** will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

A. Paul was convinced that God would bring his good work to completion in their lives.

I am sure ... πεῖθω [peitho] – to be convinced; to be persuaded or sure of the truthfulness or validity of something; to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with; to trust, have confidence, be confident.

B. God is faithful and will perform his work of sanctification with the believer's glorification being the ultimate goal and completion of this work.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 ESV) **Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely**, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 **He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**

Sanctification is God transforming us into the image of his Son Jesus, and glorification is the finished work where God presents us before himself as holy.

- (John 17:17 ESV) **Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.**
- (Romans 8:29a ESV) For those whom he foreknew he also **predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.**
- (Philippians 3:21 ESV) **Who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body**, by the power that enables him even to

subject all things to himself.

- (1 Corinthians 15:49 ESV) Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.**
- (Colossians 3:10 ESV) And have put on the new self, **which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.**

It would be inconceivable to Paul (and should be to us) that God would begin and not complete this amazing work in a person's life.

3. The good work of God is a work of regeneration and transformation.

A. We must be born again by which we become a new person by a supernatural birth.

- (John 3:3 ESV) Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"

Born again ... to be conceived from above; to be or become refashioned by a supernatural source; as undergoing conception by a heavenly source.

- (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation.** The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

B. The born again new person will be transformed by the renewing of his mind.

- (Romans 12:2a ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.**

C. The born again new person will be (sanctified) set apart from the old person by God's truth through a continuous wash cycle by Christ and the Spirit with the word of God.

- (Titus 3:5 ESV) He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.**

Regeneration ... παλιγγενεσία [paliggenesia] – new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation, regeneration; the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better.

- (Ephesians 5:25b–26 ESV) ... as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 **that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.**

D. The born again new person will undergo the purifying work of obedience to the truth based on the living and abiding word of God.

- (1 Peter 1:22–25 ESV) **Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth** for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 **since you have been born again**, not of perishable seed **but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God**; 24 for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 **but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached [the gospel] to you.**

THE GOOD WORK OF GOD IS EVIDENTIAL

4. The good work of God is an evidential work of the Spirit in the life of the person who has been made new and is being transformed.

Evidential means constituting, serving as, providing or relating to evidence; something that provides proof, validates a claim, or establishes the factual basis for a conclusion.

A. Although we must exercise caution in view of our human limitations and biases, we should not ignore clear teaching regarding the evidential nature of fruitfulness or unfruitfulness.

- (Luke 6:43–45 ESV) **For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit.** For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 **The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good**, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, **for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

B. The born again new person must with diligence and eagerness grow in faith or he will become ineffective, unfruitful and spiritually blind.

- (2 Peter 1:5–9 ESV) **For this very reason, make every effort** to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and

brotherly affection with love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, **having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.**

C. The born again new person will display evidence of the effective work of the Spirit of God in his life.

- i. The born again new person will no longer find his fulfillment in human desires.
 - (Galatians 5:16 ESV) But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not** gratify the desires of the flesh.
- ii. The fruit of the Spirit will be visible and growing in his life.
 - (Galatians 5:22–23 ESV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

THE GOOD WORK OF GOD IS ENDURING

5. The good work of God will have its ultimate completion at the day of Jesus Christ and will endure throughout all eternity.

- (Ephesians 5:27 ESV) So **that he might present the church to himself** in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, **that she might be holy and without blemish.**
- (Ephesians 1:4–6 ESV) Even as he chose us in him **before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.** In love 5 he **predestined us** for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
- (Colossians 1:22 ESV) He has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, **in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.**
- (Jude 24 ESV) **Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.**

CONCLUSION: THE GOOD WORK OF GOD IS GRACE

6. Paul states that his assurance of the work of God in their lives is right thinking because their bond of grace with him authenticates their grace relationship with God, 1:7-8.

- (Philippians 1:7 ESV) **It is right for me to feel this way about you all**, because I hold you in my heart, **for you are all partakers with me of grace**, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

WHY IS THIS RIGHT THINKING?

A. The ESV translation of the word "to feel" is somewhat misleading.

To feel ... φρονέω [phroneo] – to feel, to think thus; to dispose the mind in a certain way; to have understanding, be wise; to have an opinion of one's self or think of one's self in a way that does not exceed the bounds of modesty; to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek, to strive for.

- (Philippians 1:7a LSB) For **it is only right for me to think this way** about you all.

B. **It takes one to know one:** He holds them in his heart in this way because he shares the bond of true gospel fellowship with them.

C. True believers are partakers of grace and so know and openly acknowledge their dependence on grace.

- (1 Corinthians 15:9–10 ESV) For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 **But by the grace of God I am what I am**, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, **though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.**

- i. We know that we are what we are in Christ Jesus only by the grace of God.
- ii. We know that we do what we do in Christ Jesus only because of the grace of God.

D. True believers steer clear of pretense and false modesty and live with genuine humility and the deep conviction of absolute dependence on the grace of God which authenticates their genuine faith.

E. Their bond of grace was authenticated by their unwavering commitment to Paul in suffering for the gospel and in standing by him as he defended and proved the reality of the truth of the gospel.

- (Colossians 1:5b–6 ESV) Of this **you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel**, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, **since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.**

F. So, yes, this was a right way to think and feel about them because of the reality of life they shared because of the bond of the saving grace of God.

G. Those who live in this wonderful realm of the bond of grace joyfully and freely extend the bounty of God's grace to others.

GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES THIS MORNING ...

Do I live by grace?

Do I share in this common bond of the saving grace of God?

Is grace reigning in my life through righteousness?

- (Romans 5:21 ESV) So that, as sin reigned in death, **grace also might reign through righteousness** leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do I extend grace to others?