

## The Characteristic of Good Works (Ephesians 2:10, 4:11-12)

“Proclamation” and “demonstration” are both needed to communicate the Gospel in its fullness. “Proclamation”—preaching or teaching—is essential. Yet, the message is hindered unless there is also “demonstration.” “Demonstration” is practical expression of the Gospel of God’s love. It “demonstrates” the reality of God and validates the message. We, the church, were made alive in Christ to do specific good works that God prepared for us from the dawn of creation. Incidentally, the church is to do the good works that *God* has ordained for it—not the good works that the church itself chooses and then asks God to approve and bless! The Apostle Paul wrote:

*For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*<sup>8</sup>

Good works are an essential component of the Gospel. They are the practical ways in which the church will be used by God to accomplish His agenda to reconcile *all things*:

- They are discovered as the church stays in communication with its head, Christ.
- They are identified as churches seek and work at God’s agenda.
- They do not originate from an analysis of perceived needs in or around the church. They are identified through revelation from Christ, who knows the difference between perceived needs and real needs.<sup>9</sup>
- They are not the good works that the church decides and then asks God to bless.
- The works that *God* identifies, directs, and empowers are the works He will bless and use to accomplish His agenda.

Paul wrote of five ministry classifications for church leaders—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He wrote, though, of only one overarching job description for them all: “*to prepare God’s people for works of service.*”<sup>10</sup> Whatever a church leader’s ministry gift or calling is, it must result in God’s people being equipped for good works. The implication of this passage is both clear and challenging: *If the work of church leaders does not result in equipping the members to serve, they have not fulfilled the task they were assigned.*

The Gospel is not complete unless we reflect Christ’s servanthood. Paul wrote: “*For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.*”

<sup>11</sup> A Gospel that does not include works is not the complete Gospel. It may have the power to convert individuals, but it will lack the power to transform societies. Only the complete Gospel has power to do both. I encourage you to ask yourself:

- Does our church *equip* its people for good works?
- Is our church known for its good works?
- Do we allow God to direct us to the good works we choose?