

You Are God's Good Workers

Matthew 5:16a

March 23, 2025

INTRO: *What is your life's greatest contribution???*

(**NOTE:** *I did NOT ask about **accomplishments**. Are you a good worker?*)

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Gospel of Matthew on The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Incarnation... Initiation... Inspiration...
- **Prolific sermon... Blessed beatitudes... 5 !!!!!'s**
- Today: #4 *"You Are God's Good Workers"*

BIG IDEA: God's biblical salt & light unite...

(as cities) to BE & DO God's good works.

(God's good workers do God's good works! – JDP)

PREVIEW:

1. Good Workers **CONTEXT**
2. Good Workers **CONTENT**
3. Good Workers **COMMISSION**

TEXT:

Matthew 5:16a

*In the same way,
let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works...*

I. Good Workers **CONTEXT**

“In the same way...”

- This phrase is both blessing & building...
- This phrase is both directional & discipling.
- This phrase is both helpful & healing!
- This phrase is both instruction & imperative!
- This phrase is both God’s salt & light for His city!

A. Literally... **BE** metaphorically **JESUS**

B. Literally... **BE** metaphorically **BEATITUDES**

a. **BLESSED** as you are *“poor in spirit”*

b. **BLESSED** as you are *“mourning”* you sins

c. **BLESSED** as you are *“meek”* with God’s strength

d. **BLESSED** as you *“hunger & thirst after R”*

e. **BLESSED** as you are *“merciful”* to others

f. **BLESSED** as you are *“pure hearted”* in motive

C. Literally... **BE** metaphorically **SALT** *of the earth*

D. Literally... **BE** metaphorically **LIGHT** *of the world*

E. Literally... **BE** metaphorically the **CITY** of **GOD**

II. Good Workers **CONTENT**

“let your light shine”

- See (no pun intended) the clear command of Christ!
- **EACH** word is mission-critical & Gospel-rich...

“LET”

- Define **“let”** = allow, permit, give way to...
- Contrast **“let”** vs. **“make”**
 - How do you defend a tiger... just let it out...
 - How do you convince others? **Let them see.**
 - How is darkness defeated, *by letting light in.*
 - You **ARE** the light... so **LET** your light shine!
 - Sovereign grace & human responsibility
 - Let Jesus **IN** you... shine Jesus **thru** you!
 - His command *here* is to **BE everywhere.**
 - His command is **do NOT “hinder”** (BE-ing)
 - Don't cover-up/put anything over you.
 - **Hebrews 12:1-3a**
 - None can **make** THE Light shine w/out Him!

Beware ALL unloving “letting!” -JDP

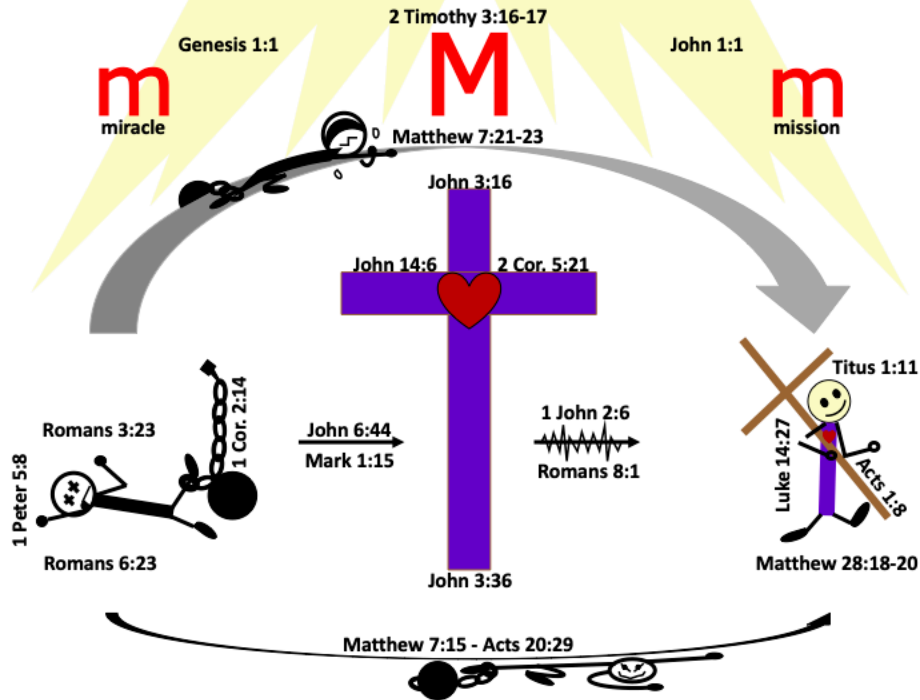
- Beware the bad lights being let in & out
- Beware the man-made counterfeit light
- Beware light-talkers vs. light-walkers!

“YOUR”

- This is a 2nd person, personal pronoun...
- BOTH you individually & the collective city...
- NOTE here that **“your” is POSSESSIVE...**
 - You are the reflective source (moon vs. sun)
 - You = represent authority (**ambassador**)
 - **You are the harbinger** (a person who goes ahead & makes known the approach of another... a herald... a foreshadow)

“LIGHT”

- **Jesus is YOUR Light & THE Light of the world!**
- NOTE: your light is also a NOUN and VERB
 - **NOUN light:**
 - That which illuminates
 - That which enables seeing
 - That which dispels darkness
 - **VERB light:**
 - Make illuminated
 - Enable seeing & visibility
 - Actively destroy darkness
 - **Christians are to embrace & BE both...**
 - NOUN = **BE** what you **ARE!** (*Matthew 5:1-16*)
 - VERB = **DO** what you **DO!** (*Matthew 28:18-20*)
- Light is also a **METAPHOR**
 - Miracle
 - **MESSIAH**
 - Mission



“SHINE”

If the Lord has called you to it,
He's equipped you for it!

- ***Whatever pleases God shines....***
- Acts of faithful obedience are rays of His Light.
- ***To shine is to share... & to share is to shine!***
- Light shining is the opposite of dark sinning!
- ***BE-ing a biblical, missional witness is shining!***
- Both individual lights & collective cities shine!
- ***Shining light penetrates & destroys darkness!***
- Shining often soothes but will sometimes sting...
- ***Biblical shining seeks to build & bless... not blind.***
- Shining is ALWAYS God honoring & glorifying...
- ***Beware! Shining can be copied & counterfeited***

- Shining brings BOTH the warmth & light of love.
- *To shine is to lead & leading well = shining well*
- To shine is to serve... Serving well is shining well.
- *To shine is to praise & worship...*
- To shine is to unite/witness ecclesia in koinonia!

John 17:20-26

20“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21*****that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*** **22*****The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,*** **23*****in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*** **24**Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. **25**O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. **26**I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

- *To shine is to disciple others...*

Biblical shining is ALWAYS God’s loving,
 grace-empowered, Gospel-fruit; filled with
 good-works, true-worship, narrow-walking,
 and victorious warfare!

III. Good Workers **COMMISSION**

*“before others, so that...
they may see your good works...”*

“before others”

- You were saved to SHINE!
- **(SHINE) in view, to be seen, with intentionality**
- You were saved to be SENT & to SERVE brightly!
- *Do NOT put your light under a basket...*
- **Battleships are not made for the harbor...**
- You're a lifeboat attached to God's aircraft carrier
- You are like the 2nd seat on God's tandem bike...

You've been sparked by God's grace.

You've been sparked to ignite...

You've been ignited to light.

You've been given light to shine.

You shine for God's glory & other's growth in The Gospel!

Do NOT hide God's Son
from those in the dark...

VIDEO: *Persecuted Workers Shine*

“so that”

THIS WORD/PHRASE IS AMONGST THE MOST IMPORTANT, IMPACTING, & INSIGHTFUL IN ALL THE BIBLE...

(If you have ever brought your “Why?” questions to the Bible, only to realize they are often inappropriate & unfruitful to ask, take heart, because every time you find a biblical “so that,” God is expressly telling you/us “why” He has said/done so...)

STRONGS’ LEXICON & HELPS Word-studies

Usage: The Greek conjunction ὅπως (hopós) is primarily used to express purpose or result... In context... essential for connecting clauses and expressing complex ideas... where precise language was necessary to convey theological truths and instructions.

HELPS Word-studies

an adverb that is also used as a conjunction... focusing on the necessary measures (factors, desires) that are required for the intended goal to be reached.

“so that” is stronger than simple “that,” because it emphasizes the method (qualities, prerequisites) involved to accomplish the objective (purpose) at hand.

Here’s a small sampling of other *“so that”* passages:
(John 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 1:8; John 17:20-23)

“they”

- **ANY** & *“ALL in THE/God’s oikos/house”*
 - Cosmos
 - Church
- **EVERYONE** in God’s creation
 - Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20
 - *“No one has the right to hear The Gospel twice until everyone has had an opportunity to hear it at least once?”*
– Oswald Smith
- Those dark witnesses to your light witnessing...

VIDEO: *Persecutors SEE Shining*

- All your light-enabled brothers & sisters in Christ
- OR all your potential brothers & sisters in Christ.

“may see”

MAKE VISIBLE & TANGIBLE GOD’S TRUTH IN LOVE!

- Show them the way... ***Come & see! Follow me!***
- Show your walk that backs up your talk...
- Witness to the Word, will, & way(s) of God!

VIDEO: *Prisoners & Preachers*

Produce fruit that informs, inspects, impacts & inspires others!

“your”

➤ PERSONAL

- **Christian**
 - *Every grain of salt*
 - *Every ray of light*
- **Church**
 - *Every house in the city of God*
 - *Every true, biblical “oikos”/family*

Jesus is talking to every - ONE
&
EVERY - one at the same time.

- JDP

➤ MISSIONAL

- **ACTIVELY:** *Shining your light*
- **PURPOSELY:** *For ALL in the house to see*
- **MARTYRS:** *(i.e. Lives Given, Not Taken)*

Here are some notable quotes from Christian martyrs, highlighting their unwavering faith and willingness to die for their beliefs:

Those who are still afraid of men have no fear of God, and those who have fear of God have ceased to be afraid of men. All preachers of the gospel will do well to recollect this saying daily.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- *"I would prefer to die in Jesus Christ than to rule over all the earth."*
- **Ignatius**
- *"You can kill us, but you cannot harm us." - Justin Martyr*
- *"The Church has never failed to grow during times of persecution - in fact, the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church!"*
- **Tertullian**
- *"Trouble me not, friar, I have confessed my sins to God, and obtained absolution through the merits of Jesus Christ. I maintain no doctrines of my own; what I preach are the doctrines of Christ, and for those I will forfeit my blood, and even think myself happy to suffer for the sake of my Redeemer."*
- **John Foxe** (Author of Foxe's Book of Martyrs)
- *"The tyrant dies and his rule is over, the (Christian) martyr dies and his rule begins." — Soren Kierkegaard*

God will judge us not according to how much we endured, but how much we could love."

—**Richard Wurmbrand**, imprisoned & tortured for 14 years in Romania

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

— **Jim Elliot**, martyred January 8, 1956

“good”

- **NOT** like a “good” (uneventful) flight...
- **NOT** like a “good” (inconsequential) meeting...
- **NOT** like a “good” (flavorful & digestible) meal...

NO! *Instead...*

Definition: Good, beautiful, noble, excellent, honorable

Meaning: beautiful, as an outward sign of the inward good, noble, honorable character; good, worthy, honorable, noble, and seen to be so.

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: This word is used in the Old Testament to describe God's creation, moral goodness, and the blessings of God.

Usage: **IT OFTEN CONVEYS A SENSE OF MORAL GOODNESS OR ETHICAL BEAUTY, EXTENDING BEYOND MERE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE TO INCLUDE QUALITIES OF CHARACTER AND ACTIONS.**

Cultural and Historical Background: In ancient Greek culture, the concept of "kalos" was closely associated with the ideal of "kalokagathia," which combined physical beauty with moral virtue.

Martin Luther:

“The most damnable and pernicious heresy that has ever plagued the mind of man is that somehow he can make himself good enough to deserve to live forever with an all-holy God.”

Though self-righteousness is condemned throughout the Bible ([Ezekiel 33:13](#); [Romans 3:27](#); [Titus 3:5](#)), we are, in fact, commanded to do good works. Paul explained that we cannot do anything to save ourselves, but our salvation comes only as a result of God’s grace ([Ephesians 2:8–9](#)). Then he proclaimed that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” ([Ephesians 2:10](#); see also [2 Corinthians 3:5](#)).

“good works...”

- What’s it take?
- How do you authenticate?
- How do you differentiate?
- **Who can BE good workers & DO good works?**
 - [2 Peter 1:3](#)
 - [Philippians 4:13](#)

Our “good works” are those grace-based righteous, Christ-like, salty, and well-lit endeavors that intentionally bring God glory.

Definition: **WORK, DEED, ACTION, TASK, LABOR**

Usage: It encompasses a wide range of activities, from physical labor to moral actions and spiritual deeds. The term is often used to describe the works of God, the deeds of individuals, and the actions that demonstrate faith.

In a theological context, "ergon" can refer to both good works, which are the fruit of faith, and works of the law, which cannot justify a person before God.

Cultural and Historical Background:

The concept of "ergon" was integral to both Jewish and Greek thought, where it was associated with fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities. In Jewish tradition, good works were seen as expressions of obedience to God's commandments. In the early Christian context, "ergon" took on a deeper spiritual meaning, emphasizing the importance of faith manifested through actions.

HELPS Word-studies

"to work, or worker who accomplishes") – that carries out (completes) an *inner desire* (intension, purpose).

- Satan could see God's good work in the Garden...
- Humanity could & can see God's good work...

Psalm 19:1

*The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

- Cain could see Abel's good works...

CAUTION!

Per God's Word, will, & ways...

We need to **see Satan's BAD works/workers:**

- ***SEE the serpent(s) exposed by the Light***
- ***SEE the snakes DISGUISED as angels of light***
- ***SEE the sharks devouring God's agents of Light***
 - Matthew 10:16
 - Acts 20:29
 - Read 1st John; Jude; 1st Peter; Hebrews... ALL Scripture
- **SEE the Savior's commands to His saints:**
 - Matthew 18:15-17... ("church discipline")
 - **Romans 16:17-18**

17 I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. 18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

○ [1 Corinthians 5:1-12](#)

[v.11](#)

But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

○ [Titus 3:10](#)

*As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, **have nothing more to do with him,***

○ NOTE: God & His Word tell us “what” to watch out for (*“wolves in sheep’s clothing”*)

○ [Psalm 37:37-38](#)

Psalm 37

He Will Not Forsake His Saints - Of David

[1](#)Fret not yourself because of evildoers;
be not envious of wrongdoers!

[2](#)For they will soon fade like the grass
and wither like the green herb.

[3](#)Trust in the LORD, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

[4](#)Delight yourself in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

[5](#)Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.

[6](#)He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
and your justice as the noonday.

7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,
over the man who carries out evil devices!

8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

9 For the evildoers shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more;
though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.

11 But the meek shall inherit the land
and delight themselves in abundant peace.

12 The wicked plots against the righteous
and gnashes his teeth at him,

13 but the Lord laughs at the wicked,
for he sees that his day is coming.

14 The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows
to bring down the poor and needy,
to slay those whose way is upright;

15 their sword shall enter their own heart,
and their bows shall be broken.

16 Better is the little that the righteous has
than the abundance of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
but the LORD upholds the righteous.

18 The LORD knows the days of the blameless,
and their heritage will remain forever;

19 they are not put to shame in evil times;
in the days of famine they have abundance.

20 But the wicked will perish;
the enemies of the LORD are like the glory of the pastures;
they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.

21 The wicked borrows but does not pay back,
but the righteous is generous and gives;

22 for those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land,
but those cursed by him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a man are established by the LORD,
when he delights in his way;

[24](#) though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong,
for the LORD upholds his hand.

[25](#) I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or his children begging for bread.

[26](#) He is ever lending generously,
and his children become a blessing.

[27](#) Turn away from evil and do good;
so shall you dwell forever.

[28](#) For the LORD loves justice;
he will not forsake his saints.

They are preserved forever,
but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

[29](#) The righteous shall inherit the land
and dwell upon it forever.

[30](#) The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
and his tongue speaks justice.

[31](#) The law of his God is in his heart;
his steps do not slip.

[32](#) The wicked watches for the righteous
and seeks to put him to death.

[33](#) The LORD will not abandon him to his power
or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial.

[34](#) Wait for the LORD and keep his way,
and he will exalt you to inherit the land;
you will look on when the wicked are cut off.

[35](#) I have seen a wicked, ruthless man,
spreading himself like a green laurel tree.^d

[36](#) But he passed away,^e and behold, he was no more;
though I sought him, he could not be found.

[37](#) *Mark the blameless and behold the upright,
for there is a future for the man of peace.*

[38](#) **But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed;
the future of the wicked shall be cut off.**

[39](#) The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD;
he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

40The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

Psalm 55:21

*His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart;
his words are more soothing/softer than oil,
yet they are drawn swords.*

- **He even called some out by name:**
 - ***Cain***
 - ***Korah***
 - ***Prophetic exhortations & curses...***
 - ***Demas***
 - ***Judas***

➤ **12 BIBLICAL NOTABLES:**

- Noah's boat
- Isaac's sacrifice
- The boy's courage
- Nehemiah's 52 days
- Mary & Joseph's responses
- The widow's faithful mite
- The tax collector's prayer
- Zacchaeus' zeal & repentance
- The blind man's passionate testimony
- The woman at the well & her "come & see!"
- The "good" Ananias' faithful obedience...
- Stephen & Paul's no-matter-what preaching!

REVIEW:

ALWAYS remember & champion [Ephesians 2:1-10](#) when it comes to The Gospel & good works!

We are saved not merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church ([Ephesians 4:12](#)).

This reconciles the seeming conflict between faith and works.

OUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS DO NOT *PRODUCE* SALVATION BUT ARE, IN FACT, *EVIDENCE OF OUR SALVATION* ([JAMES 1:22](#); [2:14–26](#)).

In the end, we must recognize that even our righteous acts come as a result of God's righteous acts & residence within us, NOT of ourselves.

CLOSE:

When it comes to “*good works*” we’ve seen:

- **WHAT?** = salt, light, & a God-pleasing witness
- **WHERE?** = local, regional, & global cosmos
- **WHEN?** = 24/7/365 **“We BE what we are!”**
- **HOW?** = dying, living, BE-ing all-in!
- **WHY?** = the glory of God (Isa. 43:7 & 1 Cor. 10:31)
- **WHO?** = EVERY - ONE... no excuses!

*Show me where, in the full context of the Holy Bible,
you can find rationalizing or compromising
with God put in a favorable light...*

You CAN'T do it! NOBODY has/can do it!
Many have tried... but they've all lied!

*His commanding & commissioning call for
comprehensive cross-carrying, coupled with
Christ-like devotion & discipleship...*

- Good works are God's works.
- Good workers are God's workers!
(MATTHEW 12:30)
- Less than good works are lost works.
- Less than good workers are lost workers.

Isaiah 64:6

“ALL your good works are like filthy rags...”

Make no mistake... this blessing & building for the family of God is for ALL of us... every grain of salt, every ray of light... ALL of us. The best of us, the worst of us, everyone in between, to include the least of us – NO good worker of God is to BE without their good works & Gospel witness. **Come & shine like a pumkin!**

VIDEO: *Something Special About Pumpkin*

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *I Am A Miracle Child & Sweet Jesus*

STUDY NOTES:

Matthew 5:16

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
3779 [e]	οὕτως houtōs	Thus	Adv
2989 [e]	λαμψάτω lampsatō	let shine	V-AMA-3S
3588 [e]	τὸ to	the	Art-NNS
5457 [e]	φῶς phōs	light	N-NNS
4771 [e]	ὑμῶν hymōn	of you	PPro-G2P
1715 [e]	ἔμπροσθεν emprosthen	before	Prep
3588 [e]	τῶν tōn	-	Art-GMP
444 [e]	ἀνθρώπων, anthrōpōn	men,	N-GMP
3704 [e]	ὅπως hopōs	so that	Conj

3708 [e]	ἴδωσιν idōsin	they may see	V-ASA-3P
4771 [e]	ὑμῶν hymōn	your	PPro-G2P
3588 [e]	τὰ ta	-	Art-ANP
2570 [e]	καλὰ kala	good	Adj-ANP
2041 [e]	ἔργα erga	works,	N-ANP
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
1392 [e]	δοξάσωσιν doxasōsin	they should glorify	V-ASA-3P
3588 [e]	τὸν ton	the	Art-AMS
3962 [e]	πατέρα patera	Father	N-AMS
4771 [e]	ὑμῶν hymōn	of you	PPro-G2P
3588 [e]	τὸν ton	-	Art-AMS
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep

3588 [e]	τοῖς tois	the	Art-DMP
3772 [e]	οὐρανοῖς. ouranois	heavens.	N-DMP

hopós

Strong's Lexicon

hopós: "so that," "in order that," "how"

Original Word: ὅπως

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: hopós

Pronunciation: ho-pos'

Phonetic Spelling: (hop'-oce)

Definition: "so that," "in order that," "how"

Meaning: how, in order that, so that, that.

Word Origin: Derived from the combination of the relative pronoun ὅς (hos, "who, which") and the particle πῶς (pōs, "how").

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: While there is no direct Hebrew equivalent for the Greek conjunction ὅπως, similar expressions of purpose or result can be found in Hebrew using phrases like לְמַעַן (lema'an, "in order that") or כִּי (ki, "that").

Usage: The Greek conjunction ὅπως (hopós) is primarily used to express purpose or result. It is often translated as "so that" or "in order that," indicating the intended outcome or goal of an action. It can also be used to introduce indirect questions, translated as "how."

Cultural and Historical Background: In the context of Koine Greek, which was the common language of the Eastern Mediterranean from the time of Alexander the Great until the Byzantine Empire, conjunctions like ὅπως were essential for connecting clauses and expressing complex ideas. The use of ὅπως in the New Testament reflects the Greek-speaking world of the early Christian church, where

precise language was necessary to convey theological truths and instructions.

HELPS Word-studies

3704 *hópōs* (an adverb that is also used as a conjunction – derived from *ho*, "which" and [4459](#) /*pós*, "how, in what way," J. Thayer) – *that*, focusing on the necessary measures (factors, desires) that are required for the intended goal to be reached.

[3704](#) /*hópōs* ("so that") is stronger than simple "that," because it emphasizes *the method (qualities, prerequisites) involved to accomplish the objective (purpose) at hand*.

[[3704](#) (*hópōs*) occurs over 50 times in the Greek NT.]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [hos](#), and [pós](#)

Definition

as, how, that

NASB Translation

end (1), how (4), order (2), so (26), what (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 3704: ὅπως

ὅπως (from [πῶς](#) and the relative ὅ), with the indicative, a relative adverb but, like the Latin, assuming also the nature of a conjunction (cf. Winer's Grammar, 449 (418f)).

I. As an adverb; **as, in what manner, how**; once so in the N. T. in an indirect question, with the indicative: οὐκ ἔγνων, ὅπως κτλ., [Luke 24:20](#), where cf. Bornemann, Scholia etc.

II. A conjunction, Latin, answering to the German dass, that; in classical Greek with the optative, and subjunctive, and future indicative; cf. especially Klotz ad Devar. ii. 2, p. 681ff But the distinction observed between these constructions by the more elegant Greek writings is quite neglected in the N. T., and if we except [Matthew 26:59](#) L T Tr (ὅπως θανατώσουσιν) ([1 Corinthians 1:29](#) Rec.elz), only the subjunctive follows this particle (for in [Mark 5:23](#),

for ὅπως ... ζήσεται, L text T Tr WH have correctly restored ἵνα ... ζήση); cf. Winer's Grammar, 289 (271); Buttmann, 233f (201f); (214 (185)).

1. It denotes the purpose or end, **in order that; with the design or to the end that; that;**

a. without ἄν — after the present, [Matthew 6:2, 16](#); [Philemon 1:6](#); [Hebrews 9:15](#); after ἔστε to be supplied, [1 Peter 2:9](#); after the perfect, [Acts 9:17](#); [Hebrews 2:9](#); ὅπως μή, [Luke 16:26](#); after the imperfect, [Matthew 26:59](#) (R G (see above)); [Acts 9:24](#); after the aorist, [Acts 9:2, 12](#); [Acts 25:26](#); [Romans 9:17](#); [Galatians 1:4](#); ὅπως μή, [Acts 20:16](#); [1 Corinthians 1:29](#); after the pluperfect, [John 11:57](#); after the future, [Matthew 23:35](#); and Rec. in [Acts 24:26](#); after an aorist subjunctive by which something is asked for, [Mark 5:23](#) Rec.; after imperatives, [Matthew 2:8](#); [Matthew 5:16, 45](#); [Matthew 6:4](#); [Acts 23:15, 23](#); [2 Corinthians 8:11](#); ὅπως μή, [Matthew 6:18](#); after clauses with ἵνα and the aorist subjunctive, [Luke 16:28](#); [2 Corinthians 8:14](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:12](#). Noteworthy is the phrase ὅπως πληροθῆ, i. e. **that according to God's purpose it might be brought to pass or might be proved by the event**, of O. T. prophecies and types (see ἵνα, II. 3 at the end): [Matthew 2:23](#); [Matthew 8:17](#); [Matthew 12:17](#) (where L T Tr WH ἵνα); .

b. ὅπως ἄν, **that, if it be possible**, [Matthew 6:5](#) R G; **that, if what I have just said shall come to pass**, [Luke 2:35](#); [Acts 3:20](#) () (R. V. **that so**); ; [Romans 3:4](#) (Buttmann, 234 (201)); examples from the Sept. are given in Winer's Grammar, § 42, 6.

2. As in the Greek writings also (cf. Winer's Grammar, 338 (317); (Buttmann, § 139, 41)), ὅπως with the subjunctive is used after verbs of praying, entreating, asking, exhorting, to denote what one wishes to be done: [Matthew 8:34](#) (here L ἵνα); ; [Luke 7:3](#); [Luke 10:2](#); [Luke 11:37](#); [Acts 8:15, 24](#); [Acts 9:2](#); [Acts 23:20](#); [Acts 25:3](#); [James 5:16](#); after a verb of deliberating: [Matthew 12:14](#); [Matthew 22:15](#); [Mark 3:6](#) (from which examples it is easy to see how the use noted in II. arises from the original adverbial force of the particle; for *συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν ... ὅπως αὐτόν ἀπολέσωσιν*, **they took counsel to destroy him** is equivalent to **how they might destroy him**, and also to to this end that they might destroy him; cf. Kühner, § 552 Anm. 3, ii., p. 892).

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

because, how, so that

From [hos](#) and [pos](#); what(-ever) how, i.e. In the manner that (as adverb or conjunction of coincidence, intentional or actual) -- because, how, (so) that, to, when.

see GREEK [hos](#)

see GREEK [pos](#)

2570. kalos ▶

Strong's Lexicon

kalos: Good, beautiful, noble, excellent, honorable

Original Word: καλός

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: kalos

Pronunciation: kah-LOS

Phonetic Spelling: (kal-os')

Definition: Good, beautiful, noble, excellent, honorable

Meaning: beautiful, as an outward sign of the inward good, noble, honorable character; good, worthy, honorable, noble, and seen to be so.

Word Origin: Derived from a primary root word in Greek, related to the concept of beauty and goodness.

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The Hebrew equivalent often associated with "kalos" is טוב (tov), which also means good or pleasant. This word is used in the Old Testament to describe God's creation, moral goodness, and the blessings of God.

Usage: The Greek adjective "kalos" is used to describe that which is inherently good, beautiful, or noble. **IT OFTEN CONVEYS A SENSE OF MORAL GOODNESS OR ETHICAL BEAUTY, EXTENDING**

BEYOND MERE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE TO INCLUDE QUALITIES OF CHARACTER AND ACTIONS.

In the New Testament, "kalos" is frequently used to describe good deeds, noble actions, and the inherent goodness of God's creation and commandments.

Cultural and Historical Background: In ancient Greek culture, the concept of "kalos" was closely associated with the ideal of "kalokagathia," which combined physical beauty with moral virtue. This ideal was highly esteemed in Greek philosophy and society, reflecting a holistic view of goodness that encompassed both external and internal qualities. In the context of the New Testament, "kalos" is often used to describe the moral and ethical standards expected of believers, reflecting the transformative power of the Gospel in producing good works and noble character.

HELPS Word-studies

2570 *kalós* – *attractively good; good that inspires (motivates) others to embrace what is lovely (beautiful, praiseworthy); i.e. well done so as to be winsome (appealing).*

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

beautiful, good

NASB Translation

beautiful (1), better (5), better* (2), commendable manner (1), excellent (1), fair (1), fine (2), good (79), high (1), honest (1), honorable (1), right thing (1), sound (1), treasure* (1), what is right (2).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2570: καλός

καλός, καλή, καλόν (probably primarily 'sound,' 'hale,' 'whole'; cf. Vanicek, p.

140f; Curtius, § 31), the Sept. for **כָּלִים** beautiful, but much more often

for **טוֹב** good; **beautiful**, applied by the Greeks to everything so distinguished in form, excellence, goodness, usefulness, as to be **pleasing**; hence (according to the context) equivalent to "beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable";

a. beautiful to look at, shapely, magnificent: λίθοις καλοῖς κεκόσμηται (A. V. goodly), [Luke 21:5](#).

b. good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends: joined to the names of material objects, universally, [1 Timothy 4:4](#) (equivalent to pure); especially of things so constituted as to answer the purpose for which that class of things was created; good of its kind: **τά καλά**, of fish, opposed to such as are thrown away (**τά σαπρά**), [Matthew 13:48](#); **σπέρμα**, [Matthew 13:24, 21, 37f](#); **καρπός**, [Matthew 3:10](#); [Matthew 7:17-19](#); [Matthew 12:33](#); [Luke 3:9](#) (L WH brackets **καλόν**); ; **δένδρον**, opposed to **σαπρόν**, [Matthew 12:33](#); [Luke 6:43](#); **γῆ**, [Matthew 13:8, 23](#); [Mark 4:8, 20](#); [Luke 8:15](#); **καλόν τό ἄλας** (is an excellent thing), [Mark 9:50](#); [Luke 14:34](#); so too **ὁ νόμος**, good in its substance and nature, and fitted to beget good, [Romans 7:16](#); [1 Timothy 1:8](#); **διδασκαλία**, true and approved teaching, [1 Timothy 4:6](#); **καρδία καλή καί ἀγαθή**, [Luke 8:15](#); **παραθήκη** (which see) (containing (rather, consisting of) **καλά**), [2 Timothy 1:14](#); **μέτρον**, ample measure (rabbinical, המדה ; English **good measure**), [Luke 6:38](#); **βαθμός** (firm (but see **βαθμός**)), [1 Timothy 3:13](#); also **θεμέλιος**, [1 Timothy 6:19](#); equivalent to **genuine, approved**, **πάντα δοκιμάζετε, τό καλόν κατέχετε**, [1 Thessalonians 5:21](#); equivalent to **precious** (A. V. **goodly**), **μαργαρίται**, [Matthew 13:45](#); equivalent to **superior** to other kinds, **οἶνος**, [John 2:10](#); joined to names of men designated by their office, **competent, able, such as one ought to be:** **ποιμήν**, [John 10:11, 14](#); **διάκονος**, [1 Timothy 4:6](#); **οἰκονόμος**, [1 Peter 4:10](#); **στρατιώτης**, [2 Timothy 2:3](#); joined to nouns denoting an effect estimated by the power it involves, or by its constancy, or by the end aimed at by its author, equivalent to **praiseworthy, noble:** **στρατεία**, [1 Timothy 1:18](#); **ἄγων**, [1 Timothy 6:12](#); [2 Timothy 4:7](#); **ὁμολογία**, [1 Timothy 6:12f](#); **ἔργον**, [Matthew 26:10](#); [Mark 14:6](#); [John 10:33](#); [1 Timothy 3:1](#); plural [John 10:32](#). **καλόν ἐστιν**, **it is expedient, profitable, wholesome:** followed by an infinitive as subject, [1 Corinthians 7:1](#); with **τίνι** added (so in 1 Corinthians, the passage cited also), [Matthew 18:8f](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, 241 (226); Buttman, § 149, 7); [Mark 9:43, 45, 47](#), R G (also L Tr marginal reading in 47); [1 Corinthians 7:26](#); [1 Corinthians 9:15](#); **καλόν ἐστιν** followed by the accusative and infinitive, [Mark 9:43, 45, 47](#), L (but see above) T Tr (but not marginal reading, see above) WH; [Hebrews 13:9](#); followed by **εἰ** (cf. Buttman, 217 (187f); Winer's Grammar, 282 (265)), [Matthew 26:24](#); [Mark 9:42](#); [Mark 14:21](#); followed by **ἐάν** (Buttman and Winer's Grammar, as above), [1 Corinthians 7:8](#); **it is pleasant, delightful**, followed by an accusative with an infinitive: [Matthew 17:4](#); [Mark 9:5](#); [Luke 9:33](#).

c. beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy; morally good, noble, (Latin *honestus*);

(cf. Aristotle, *τό καθ' αὐτό καλόν*)): *διάκρισις καλοῦ τέ καί κακοῦ*, [Hebrews 5:14](#); *ἔργα*, [Matthew 5:16](#); [1 Timothy 5:10, 25](#); [1 Timothy 6:18](#); [Titus 2:7, 14](#); [Titus 3:8, 14](#); [Hebrews 10:24](#); [1 Peter 2:12](#), and Lachmann in [2 Peter 1:10](#); *ἀναστροφή*, [James 3:13](#); [1 Peter 2:12](#); *καλή συνείδησις*, consciousness of good deeds (A. V. **a good conscience**), [Hebrews 13:18](#); *καλά, καλόν ἐνώπιον τίνος*, in one's judgment, [Romans 12:17](#); [2 Corinthians 8:21](#); [1 Timothy 2:3](#) and Rec. in [1 Timothy 5:4](#); *ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῶ*, [Galatians 4:18](#); *τό καλόν κατεργάζεσθαι*, [Romans 7:18](#); *ποιεῖν*, [Romans 7:21](#); [2 Corinthians 13:7](#); [Galatians 6:9](#); [James 4:17](#); *καλόν ἐστιν*, **it is right, proper, becoming**, followed by an infinitive: [Matthew 15:26](#) (L T ἔξεστιν); ([Mark 7:27](#)); [Galatians 4:18](#) (here Tr marginal reading imperative); [Romans 14:21](#).

d. honorable, conferring honor: *μαρτυρία*, [1 Timothy 3:7](#); *ὄνομα*, [James 2:7](#); *οὐ καλόν τό καύχημα ὑμῶν*, [1 Corinthians 5:6](#).

e. affecting the mind agreeably, comforting and confirming: *Θεοῦ ῥῆμα* (the Sept. for רַב־דָּבָר, which is spoken of the divine promises, [Joshua 21:45](#); [Zechariah 1:13](#)), the gospel and its promises full of consolation, [Hebrews 6:5](#). Compar. *καλλίων, κάλλιον*, **better**: neut, adverbially, *σύ κάλλιον ἐπιγινώσκεις*, i. e. better than by thy question thou seemest to know, [Acts 25:10](#) (Winers Grammar, 242 (227)). The word is not found in the Apocalypse. (Cf. Trench, § cvi. at the end; Zezschwitz, Profangrätigkeit as above with, p. 60f (cf. *ἀγαθός*, at the end); Westcott on [John 10:11](#).)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

good

Of uncertain affinity; properly, beautiful, but chiefly (figuratively) good (literally or morally), i.e. Valuable or virtuous (for appearance or use, and thus distinguished from [agathos](#), which is properly intrinsic) -- X better, fair, good(-ly), honest, meet, well, worthy.

see GREEK [agathos](#)

Strong's Lexicon

ergon: Work, deed, action, task, labor

Original Word: ἔργον

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: ergon

Pronunciation: ER-gon

Phonetic Spelling: (er'-gon)

Definition: **WORK, DEED, ACTION, TASK, LABOR**

Meaning: work, task, employment; a deed, action; that which is wrought or made, a work.

Word Origin: Derived from a primary (but obsolete) root word ἔργω (ergo), meaning "to work."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: - H4639 (מַעֲשֶׂה, ma'aseh): Work, deed, act

- H4399 (מְלָכָה, melakah): Work, occupation, craftsmanship

Usage: The Greek word "ergon" is commonly used in the New Testament to denote work, deed, or action. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from physical labor to moral actions and spiritual deeds. The term is often used to describe the works of God, the deeds of individuals, and the actions that demonstrate faith.

In a theological context, "ergon" can refer to both good works, which are the fruit of faith, and works of the law, which cannot justify a person before God.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, work was a significant aspect of daily life, with a clear distinction between manual labor and intellectual pursuits. The concept of "ergon" was integral to both Jewish and Greek thought,

where it was associated with fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities. In Jewish tradition, good works were seen as expressions of obedience to God's commandments. In the early Christian context, "ergon" took on a deeper spiritual meaning, emphasizing the importance of faith manifested through actions.

HELPS Word-studies

2041 *érgon* (from *ergō*, "to work, accomplish") – a work or worker who accomplishes something. 2041 /érgon ("work") is a deed (action) that carries out (completes) an *inner desire* (intension, purpose).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from a prim. verb *erdó* (to do)

Definition

work

NASB Translation

action (1), behavior (1), deed (13), deeds (52), doing (1), effectual (1), labor (1), result (1), task (1), what...done (1), work (34), works (62).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2041: ἔργον

ἔργον, ἔργου, τό, anciently Φεργον (German Werk, (English **work**; cf. Vanicek, p. 922)); the Sept. for עֲבָדָה, פְּעֵל and countless times for מְלָכָה and מְשָׁמָה; **work**, i. e.

1. **business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied:** [Mark](#)

[13:34](#) (διδόναι τίνι τό ἔργον αὐτοῦ); [Acts 14:26](#) (πληροῦν); [1 Timothy 3:1](#); thus of the work of salvation committed by God to Christ: [διδόναι](#) and [τελειουν](#), [John 17:4](#); of the work

to be done by the apostles and other Christian teachers, as well as by the presiding officers of the religious assemblies, [Acts 13:2](#); [Acts 15:38](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:13](#); [Philippians 1:22](#); τό ἔργον τίνος, genitive of the subjunctive, the work which one does, service which one either performs or ought to perform, [1 Thessalonians 5:13](#); ἔργον ποιεῖν τίνος to do the work of one (i. e. incumbent upon him), εὐαγγελιστοῦ, [2 Timothy 4:5](#); τό ἔργον τίνος i. e. assigned by one and to be done for his sake: τό ἔργον τοῦ Θεοῦ τελειοῦν, used of Christ, [John 4:34](#); (τοῦ) Χριστοῦ (WH text Tr marginal reading κυρίου), [Philippians 2:30](#); τοῦ κυρίου, [1 Corinthians 15:58](#); [1 Corinthians 16:10](#); with genitive of thing, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, [Ephesians 4:12](#), which means either to the work in which the ministry consists, the work performed in undertaking the ministry, or to the execution of the ministry. of that which one undertakes to do, **enterprise, undertaking**: [Acts 5:38](#) ([Deuteronomy 15:10](#); Wis. 2:12).

2. any product whatever, anything accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind (equivalent to ποίημα, κτίσμα): [1 Corinthians 3:13-15](#); with the addition of τῶν χειρῶν, things formed by the hand of man, [Acts 7:41](#); of the works of God visible in the created world, [Hebrews 1:10](#), and often in the Sept.; τά ἐν τῇ γῇ ἔργα, the works of nature and of art (Bengel), [2 Peter 3:10](#); of the arrangements of God for men's salvation: [Acts 15:18](#) Rec.; τό ἔργον τοῦ Θεοῦ, what God works in man, i. e. a life dedicated to God and Christ, [Romans 14:20](#); to the same effect, substantially, ἔργον ἀγαθόν, [Philippians 1:6](#) (see ἀγαθός, 2); τά ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου, sins and all the misery that springs from them, [1 John 3:8](#).

3. an act, deed, thing done: the idea of working is emphasized in opposed to that which is less than work, [James 1:25](#); [Titus 1:16](#); τό ἔργον is distinguished from ὁ λόγος: [Luke 24:19](#); [Romans 15:18](#); [2 Corinthians 10:11](#); [Colossians 3:17](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:17](#); [1 John 3:18](#) (Sir. 3:8); plural ἐν λόγοις καί ἐν ἔργοις, [Acts 7:22](#) (4 Macc. 5:38 (37)); for the same or similar contrasts, common in Greek writings, see Fritzsche on Romans, iii., p. 268f; Bergler on Alciphron, p. 54; Bornemann and Kühner, on Xenophon, mem. 2, 3, 6; Passow, under the word, p. 1159; (Liddell and Scott, under the word, I. 4; Lob. Paralip., pp. 64f, 525f)). ἔργα is used of the acts of God — both as creator, [Hebrews 4:10](#); and as governor, [John 9:3](#); [Acts 13:41](#); [Revelation 15:3](#); of sundry signal acts of Christ, to rouse men to believe in him and to accomplish their salvation: [Matthew 11:2](#) (cf. ἔργα τῆς σοφίας [Matthew 11:19](#) T WH Tr text), and especially in the Gospel of John, as [John 5:20, 36](#); [John 7:3](#); [John 10:38](#); [John 14:11](#); [John 15:24](#), (cf. Grimm, Instit. theol. dogmat., p. 63, edition 2); they are called τά ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς, i. e. done at the bidding and by the aid of the Father, [John 10:37](#); [John 9:3f](#), cf. [John 10:25, 32](#); [John 14:10](#); καλά, as beneficent, [John 10:32f](#); and connected with the verbs δεικνύναι, ποιεῖν, ἐργάζεσθαι, τελειοῦν. ἔργα is applied to the conduct of men, measured by the standard of religion and righteousness — whether bad, [Matthew 23:3](#); [Luke 11:48](#); [John 3:20](#); [Revelation 2:6](#); [Revelation 16:11](#), etc.; or good, [John](#)

3:21; [James 2:14, 17f, 20-22, 24-26](#); [James 3:13](#); [Revelation 2:5, 9](#) (Rec.); ; νόμος ἔργων, the law which demands good works, [Romans 3:27](#); with a suggestion of toil, or struggle with hindrances, in the phrase [καταπαύειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ](#), [Hebrews 4:10](#); to recompense one [κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ](#), [Romans 2:6](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#); [Revelation 2:23](#) ([Psalm 61:13](#) ()), cf. [2 Corinthians 11:15](#); [Revelation 18:6](#); [Revelation 20:12f](#); the singular τό ἔργον is used collectively of an aggregate of actions (German dasHandeln), [James 1:4](#); τίνος, the genitive of person and subjunctive, his whole way of feeling and acting, his aims and endeavors: [Galatians 6:4](#); [1 Peter 1:17](#); [Revelation 22:12](#); τό ἔργον τοῦ νόμου, the course of action demanded by the law, [Romans 2:15](#). With epithets: ἀγαθόν ἔργον, i. e. either a **benefaction**, [2 Corinthians 9:8](#); plural [Acts 9:36](#); or every good work springing from piety, [Romans 2:7](#); [Colossians 1:10](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:17](#); [Titus 1:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:21](#); [2 Timothy 3:17](#); [Hebrews 13:21](#) (T WH omit ἔργον); plural [Ephesians 2:10](#); or **what harmonizes with the order of society**, [Romans 13:3](#); [Titus 3:1](#); ἔργον καλόν, a **good deed, noble action** (see [καλός](#), b. and c.): [Matthew 26:10](#); [Mark 14:6](#); plural (often in Attic writings), [Matthew 5:16](#); [1 Timothy 5:10, 25](#); [1 Timothy 6:18](#); [Titus 2:7](#); [Titus 3:8, 14](#); [Hebrews 10:24](#); [1 Peter 2:12](#); τὰ ἔργα τὰ ἐν δικαιοσύνη equivalent to τὰ δίκαια, [Titus 3:5](#); τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Θεοῦ, the works required and approved by God, [John 6:28](#) ([Jeremiah 31:10](#) ()); [1 Esdr. 7:9, 15](#)), in the same sense ἔργα μου i. e. of Christ, [Revelation 2:26](#); ἔργον πίστεως, wrought by faith, the course of conduct which springs from faith, [1 Thessalonians 1:3](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#); ἔργα ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας, [Acts 26:20](#); ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, [Revelation 3:2](#); ἔργα πονηρά, [Colossians 1:21](#); [2 John 1:11](#), cf. [John 3:19](#); [John 7:7](#); [1 John 3:12](#); ἔργα νεκρά, works devoid of that life which has its source in God, works so to speak unwrought, which at the last judgment will fail of the approval of God and of all reward: [Hebrews 6:1](#); [Hebrews 9:14](#); ἄκαρπα, [Ephesians 5:11](#) (ἄχρηστα, [Wis. 3:11](#); the wicked man [μετὰ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ συναπολεῖται](#), the Epistle of Barnabas 21, 1 [ET]); ἄνομα, [2 Peter 2:8](#); ἔργα ἀσεβείας, [Jude 1:15](#); τοῦ σκότους, done in darkness, [Romans 13:12](#); [Ephesians 5:11](#); (opposed to ἔργα τοῦ φωτός, [Romans 13:12](#) L marginal reading); in Paul's writings ἔργα νόμου, works demanded by and agreeing with the law (cf. Wieseler, commentary iib.

d. Br. an d. Gal., p. 194ff): [Romans 3:20, 28](#); [Romans 9:32](#) Rec.; [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 3:2, 5, 10](#); and simply ἔργα: [Romans 4:2, 6](#); [Romans 9:12](#) (11); [Romans 9:32](#) G L T Tr WH; [Romans 11:6](#); [Ephesians 2:9](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#) (see [δικαιόω](#), 3 b.). τὰ ἔργα τίνος ποιεῖν, to do works the same as or like to those of another, to follow in action another's example: Abraham's, [John 8:39](#); that of the devil, [John 8:41](#).

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

deed, doing, labor, work.

From a primary (but obsolete) ergo (to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication, an act -- deed, doing, labour, work.

Pliny QUOTE:

“Nothing is more useful than salt and sunshine”

The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew

The witness of the kingdom (5:13–16)

V.16 = JESUS DRIVES THE METAPHOR HOME.

What his disciples must show is their “good works,” i.e., all righteousness, everything they are and do that reflects the mind and will of God. And men must see this light. It may provoke persecution (vv. 10–12), but that is no reason for hiding the light others may see and by which they may come to glorify the Father—the disciples’ only motive (cf. 2 Cor 4:6; 1 Peter 2:12). Witness includes not just words but deeds; as Stier remarks, “The good word with out the good walk is of no avail.”

Thus, the kingdom norms (vv. 3–12) so work out in the lives of the kingdom’s heirs as to produce the kingdom witness (vv. 13–16). If salt (v. 13) exercises the negative function of delaying decay and warns disciples of the danger of compromise and conformity to the world, then light (vv. 14–16) speaks positively of illuminating a sin-darkened world and warns against a withdrawal from the world that does not lead others to glorify the Father in heaven. “Flight into the invisible is a denial of the call. A community of Jesus which seeks to hide itself has ceased to follow him” (Bonhoeffer, p. 106).

[GOT QUESTIONS. ORG](http://GOTQUESTIONS.ORG)

Why are all of our righteous acts considered filthy rags?

“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” ([Isaiah 64:6](#)). This passage is often used as a proof text to condemn all our acts of goodness as nothing more than “filthy rags” in the eyes of God. The context of this passage is referring specifically to the Israelites in Isaiah’s time (760—670 B.C.) who had strayed from God. Isaiah was writing concerning his nation and their hypocrisy. Yet he includes *himself* in the description, saying “we” and “our.” Isaiah was redeemed and set apart as a prophet of

God, yet he saw himself as part of a group that was utterly sinful. **THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY IS TAUGHT CLEARLY ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE**

(E.G., [EPHESIANS 2:1–5](#)), and the illustration of [Isaiah 64:6](#) could rightly be applied to the whole world, especially given Isaiah’s inclusion of himself in the description.

The term “filthy rags” is quite strong. The word *filthy* is a translation of the Hebrew word *iddah*, which literally means “the bodily fluids from a woman’s menstrual cycle.” The word *rags* is a translation of *begged*, meaning “a rag or garment.” Therefore, these “righteous acts” are considered by God as repugnant as a soiled feminine hygiene product.

As Isaiah wrote this, the Israelites had been the recipients of numerous miraculous blessings from God. Yet they had turned their backs on Him by worshiping false gods ([Isaiah 42:17](#)), making sacrifices and burning incense on strange altars ([Isaiah 65:3–5](#)). Isaiah had even called Jerusalem a harlot and compared it to Sodom ([Isaiah 3:9](#)). These people had an illusion of their own self-righteousness. Yet God did not esteem their acts of righteousness as anything but “polluted garments” or “filthy rags.” Their apostasy, or falling away from the law of God, had rendered their righteous works totally unclean. “Like the wind, [their] sins were sweeping them away” ([Isaiah 64:6](#)).

[Martin Luther](#) said,

“The most damnable and pernicious heresy that has ever plagued the mind of man is that

somehow he can make himself good enough to deserve to live forever with an all-holy God.”

Though self-righteousness is condemned throughout the Bible (Ezekiel 33:13; Romans 3:27; Titus 3:5), we are, in fact, commanded to do good works. Paul explained that we cannot do anything to save ourselves, but our salvation comes only as a result of God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8–9). Then he proclaimed that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10; see also 2 Corinthians 3:5).

Our salvation is not the result of any of our efforts, abilities, intelligent choices, personal characteristics, or acts of service we may perform. However, as believers, we are “created in Christ Jesus for good works”—to help and serve others. While there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation, God’s intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service.

We are saved not merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church (Ephesians 4:12).

This reconciles the seeming conflict between faith and works.

**OUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS DO
NOT *PRODUCE* SALVATION BUT ARE, IN
FACT, *EVIDENCE OF OUR SALVATION*
(JAMES 1:22; 2:14–26).**

In the end, we must recognize that even our righteous acts come as a result of God within us, not of ourselves.

On our own, our “righteousness” is simply *self-righteousness*, and vain, hypocritical religion produces nothing more than “filthy rags.”