

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

STUDY GUIDE

Module 5:
**SOTERIOLOGY—
THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**

Lecture 9:
**THE DOCTRINE OF
GOOD WORKS**



The John Knox Institute
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Module 5

Soteriology—the Doctrine of Salvation

1. Introduction to Soteriology
2. The Doctrine of Union with Christ
3. The Doctrines of Effectual Calling & Regeneration
4. The Doctrine of Saving Faith
5. The Doctrine of Repentance
6. The Doctrine of Justification
7. The Doctrine of Adoption
8. The Doctrine of Sanctification
- 9. The Doctrine of Good Works**
10. The Doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints
11. The Doctrine of Assurance of Grace and Salvation

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Module 5:

SOTERIOLOGY—THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Lecture 9:

The Doctrine of Good Works

Introduction

In Matthew 7, verses 16 to 20, Jesus says, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Those with an evil heart of unbelief will bring forth evil fruit unto disobedience, whereas those with faith, rooted in Christ, will bring forth fruit by the Holy Spirit, unto holiness and good works. You cannot sever the connection between the root and the corresponding fruit. The works of men, whether good or evil, bear evidence to where they are rooted.

Theme: *The doctrine of Good Works.*

I. Scriptural Basis

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”—Ephesians 2:8–10.

1. Salvation is by grace, through faith alone, not by good works.
2. The believer, on their own, is incapable of producing good works.
3. Those who are saved by grace through faith are God’s workmanship.
4. Those united to Christ are created in him unto good works.

Questions:

1. According to Ephesians 2:8–10, where do Good Works not belong? Where do they belong?

2. What is the true source of Good Works according to Ephesians 2:8–10? Are good works absolutely necessary in the Christian life?

II. Doctrinal Overview

1. Good Works is an important component of Sanctification—Titus 3:8 and 14.
2. Defining Good Works.
 - a. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 16, paragraph 1.
 - b. Good Works are defined by Scripture, as God prescribes them.
 - c. Good Works include internal graces and external actions.
3. Good Works are the fruit of faith.
 - a. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 16, paragraph 2.
 - b. If no fruit, there is no faith, Hebrews 2;14.
4. The ability to do Good Works comes from God.
 - a. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 16, paragraph 3.
 - b. The Spirit produces Good Works—Galatians 5.
 - c. The believer is active in the pursuit of Good Works.
5. Even the believer’s best Good Works are tainted with sin—Luke 17:10.
6. The believer’s Good Works are accepted in Christ.
 - a. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 16, paragraph 6.
 - b. God enables his children to please him, then he rewards them for it.
7. The goal of Good Works is to glorify God—John 15:8.
 - a. God displays his glory in vessels of mercy, for his own praise.

Questions

1. How does the Apostle Paul, in his epistles, explain the importance of Good Works?
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2. According to what standard should Good Works be defined? Are they based on good motives? What two things are included in Good Works?

3. How are Good Works related to faith? What is the connection?

4. Where does the ability to do Good Works come from? How does the Scripture prove that?

5. Is the believer passive in the pursuit of Good Works? What resources does God provide to the believer for diligent pursuit of Good Works?

6. What does the Bible tell us about even our best Good Works? What is the implication for us?

7. If the believer's Good Works are tainted with sin, are they worthless? How is this related to the believer being accepted in Christ?

8. What is the relation between Good Works and heavenly rewards according to the New Testament Scriptures? What did Jonathan Edwards say about this?

9. What is the ultimate goal of all Good Works? How does God display his glory in believers?

III. Polemical Exposition

Error #1: *Legalism*.

Error #2: *Antinomianism*.

Questions:

1. What is the core error of legalism? What happens to the gospel when Good Works is added to God's grace for Justification?

2. What is Antinomianism? What happens to the gospel when Good Works is removed from Sanctification?

3. How can the believer resist both Legalism and Antinomianism?

IV. Practical Exposition

1. The motivation for pursuing Good Works in Sanctification.

2. The benefits of Good Works.

- a. They strengthen the believer's assurance.
- b. They edify other believers.
- c. They adorn the believer's profession of faith.
- d. They can be a witness to unbelievers.

3. Make a thorough use of God's promises.

- a. Exercise faith in dependence on Christ.
- b. Exercise the soul in the work of Sanctification.
- c. Ask the Lord to bring forth fruit of Good Works.

Questions:

1. What should be the believer's main motives in pursuing Good Works?

2. What are the benefits of Good Works? Which are most encouraging for you?

3. How can the believer make use of God's promises for pursuing Good Works?

V. Self-Reflection

Are you a believing Christian pursuing Good Works? Does this lecture help you to understand what Good Works are? Does it encourage you to be actively seeking to do good? Since the Good Works you do are only possible because of your union with Jesus Christ, what should your attitude be if you think you did well?
