

## **WORK HEARTILY FOR THE LORD**

Colossians 3:23-24 “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.”

Because of God’s underserved love you have received His riches at Christ’s expense. There is nothing for you to do nor is there anything that you can do to receive these riches. (Ephesians 2:8-9) The very next verse says, you are “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”

There are times when the Bible appears to contradict itself. Ephesians 2:8-9 says you cannot earn God’s riches, rather it is given to you as God’s gift. Yet, the very next verse says you are to do good works. Colossians 3:23 encourages you to “work heartily . . .for the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 10:31 exhorts, “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

So, which is it? Are you saved because of God’s gracious gift of faith in Jesus or by your works or is it a combination of faith and works? James addresses this question, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? . . . faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James 2:14,17)

A way to understand that faith and works go together is to think of a vineyard owner planting grapes. He puts the vines in the ground fully expecting that when mature, the vines will produce grapes. Think then of your works as the “fruit of your faith.” Jesus said, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)

By your baptism Christ was incorporated into your heart. As a result, Jesus says, “apart from me you can do nothing.” Jesus in you and in your heart prompts, leads, guides, directs your life and all you do (your works) to God’s glory. A living faith in Christ overflows with works that are good in God’s sight.

Prayer: Lord God, gracious Father, I pray that you will help me so that all I do is in accord with Your will and gives glory, honor and praise to You and Your holy name. Enable me to do good for Your sake and the benefit of those around me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing, May we ripen and increase,  
Fruit to life eternal growing, Rich in love and joy and peace.

Laden branches freely bearing Gifts the Giver loves to bless;  
Here in fruit that grows by sharing, Patience, kindness, gentleness.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master, Christ our pattern and our goal.  
Teach us, as the years fly faster, Goodness, faith, and self control.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit tending, May we grow till harvests cease;  
Till we taste, in life unending, Heaven's love and joy and peace.  
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