

God Encourages us to do Good Works by Promising to Bless our Work for Him

God owes us nothing for the works we do. Even if we carried out God's will perfectly, He would owe us nothing. We could only say that we had done what is our duty to do. Jesus said, "*When you have done everything you have been ordered to do, you also should say, 'We are worthless slaves. We have only done what our duty was to do'*" (Luke 17:10). No one has the right to feel that God is indebted to him for the work he has done. We cannot even come close to doing all God demands of us, much less think that God is indebted to us for what little we do in our sanctified lives.

Yet, though God owes us nothing for our works, in His grace He still promises to bless them. He does this to encourage us to serve Him with good works. Paul writes, "*Let us not become tired of doing good! For we shall harvest, each in his own appointed time, if we do not give up*" (Galatians 6:9). God promises to bless our work for Him in His own time and in His own way. The blessings He gives us, by grace, may be material or spiritual. They will come when God deems best and as He deems best.

For example, God promises to bless generous giving. Again, Paul writes, "*I say this: **The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully***" (2 Cor. 9:6). The Lord challenged the people of Malachi's day by saying, "*Bring the full tithes into the treasury, that there may be food in My house! Please test Me in this way!*" *the LORD of hosts has said, "whether I shall not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down a blessing for you until there is more than enough"* (Mal. 3:10). We cannot demand that God make us rich as a reward for our offerings. Greed is not a God-pleasing motive for giving. God's love in Christ is what empowers generous giving.

In connection with the matter of God's blessing our works, it appears as if there will be degrees of glory in heaven based on a believer's works in this life. Daniel writes, "*Many of those who are asleep in the land of dust will wake up, some to everlasting life and others to shame and everlasting abhorrence. Moreover, those who have insight will shine like the bright dome of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever*" (Daniel 12:2-3), and Paul's words quoted earlier (2 Cor. 9:6) also seem to indicate this.

However, whatever way God chooses to bless us is a blessing based on grace, not on merit. Also, there will be no jealousy in heaven, only perfect love, and there will be no degrees of enjoyment of heaven. We shall enjoy it as much as the twelve apostles and the prophets do!

Finally, our service to God is not motivated by a desire for a higher degree of glory in heaven. Far from it! The motivation for our service is always God's love in Christ, not a desire for something for ourselves. Whatever we do for God is a distinct privilege, for God gives us the ability to serve Him in His kingdom.

Thus God encourages us to do good works. Paul encourages us that our work in the Lord is not in vain when he writes, "*Therefore, my dearly loved fellow-Christians, stand firmly and immovably! Always do much work in the Lord, since you know that your hard work in the Lord is not in vain!*" (1 Cor. 15:58). We shall joyfully and zealously serve God until the day we bask in the glory of His love in heaven.