

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

Walking Zealous for Good Works

Series:
Walking in
Newness of Life

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General Considerations about Using This Material:

The subject presented in this material aims to provide support to knowledge and an in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian life.

Based on the understanding that in the Christian Bible is contained the consolidation of fundamental and formal records of the writings inspired by God for humanity and each person of it, the contents exposed in this material are not intended to add, ever, anything to the Bible, nor ever remove anything from it. The aim through this subject is to contribute to the exploration of what already was registered and passed on to us over thousands of years of history by the One Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

The contents presented on the next pages, of course, intend to address just a portion of the essential themes of life displayed with such great amplitude in the Bible. On the other hand, however, this subject is presented in a grouped, colligated, organized and systematized manner with the objective to serve as an aid to knowledge and understanding of the Christian life without losing sight of the main aspects of it.

Ecclesiastes 12: 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

Related words put together, as told in the biblical text above, serve as goads and nails for fixing supports and help for the life of people that hear and receive them. Therefore, one objective of this material is to study and seek a broader understanding of the truths handed down to us by the Unique Pastor and God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We would still like to suggest that the reading and studying of this material also should always be accompanied by prudence and proper investigation, believing that this is a very healthy habit to be practiced toward any material presented to a person.

The act of acceptance, rejection, or “retaining what is good,” is a personal and individual attribute given to those who receive the wisdom from God and which should be exercised or used by them toward all that comes into their hands.

Proverbs 8: 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion.

Acts 17: 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Proverbs 16: 1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.

3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.

More details about these initial considerations are posted at www.zoominchristianlife.org.

Ronald Gortz and Irmelin Gortz, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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*Revelation 21: 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

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*1Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at www.zoominchristianlife.org.

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C1. Called by God to Be Able to Walk in Good Works

This new material is a continuation of the subjects of the Walking in Newness of Life series and is preceded by the following themes:

- ⇒ 1) To Be, To Abide, To Live, To Walk, and To Bear Fruit in Christ;
- ⇒ 2) Rooted and Established in Christ;
- ⇒ 3) The Singular Freedom of Living and Walking in Christ;
- ⇒ 4) Walking in Newness of Life;
- ⇒ 5) Walking as Holy People or Belonging to the Lord;
- ⇒ 6) Walking in an Acceptable and Worthy Manner of God.

In the first three themes mentioned above, we addressed different aspects that are complementary to each other in the Lord's call for a Christian to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus and that support this call, starting to see the subject of walking in newness of life itself in more detail from the other three topics mentioned above.

Yet in the last three themes mentioned above, we aimed to show, through the Scriptures, that the fact that every Christian in the present world is called to walk in the newness of life also means that each one of them is called to present oneself personally to God in the vivified way one received from the Lord and as holy or belonging to the Lord who has separated this person from the path of darkness and death, putting him or her in the way of light and eternal life to walk pleasantly, acceptably, or worthy of God.

In the themes mentioned above, we highlight that the salvation offered by God to human beings is a “**from** --> **to**” so that a person can also effectively start to live and walk in the condition “**to**” which one has been saved. Therefore, presenting oneself personally to God in a way that is living, holy, and worthy of the Lord expresses three essential practical and integral aspects of effectively walking in the newness of life in Christ.

Since God's salvation allows a person to become constituted as a Christian, granting the newness of life and the condition of separation from the power of darkness to belong to the kingdom of the Son of Love of the Heavenly Father, it is also rational, sober, or evident to expect that each Christian starts to present oneself to the Lord according to one's new condition that God has granted.

Nevertheless, if we go a little further into the question of the purpose for which a Christian was saved in Christ Jesus, we can find from the Scriptures that the call for an individual also to present one's life to God in a living, holy, and acceptable way is still aimed at achieving a next step in this regard.

God's salvation, granted by heavenly grace to those who receive it through faith in Christ Jesus, has the purpose of giving, to those saved by it, all the provision so that each saved person or Christian can present oneself to God, including with one's body and its members, quickened, holy, and worthy of the Lord. In turn, however, this provision for the Christian to present oneself to God in a way that is alive, holy, and worthy of the Lord is also associated with yet another aspect of the purpose for which this call is extended to a Christian.

In other words, what we are seeking to highlight at this point is that God's salvation, which also grants the condition of a saved person or a Christian being able to present oneself to God in a living, holy, and worthy way, does not aim at a person only to be able to offer oneself in this new condition to God, but also that one may begin to experience results from one's new position before the Lord or in the Lord.

The salvation of God offered to human beings through heavenly grace, and which can be received through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross of Calvary, offers then, among other points:

- ⇒ 1) **The “from --> to,” that is, the way for people to leave the path of eternal perdition to receive eternal life in the Lord;**
- ⇒ 2) **An entirely new condition before God for those who have arrived at the “to” they were saved for;**
- ⇒ 3) **The possibility and provision for a saved person or a Christian to start practicing works according to the new condition “to” which one was saved or came to have in one's Lord.**

When God calls Christians to present themselves to Him in the condition of the newness of life that has already been granted to them, the Lord shows us that the granting of this novelty is not conferred on Christians for them to merely find themselves in this new condition but devoid of purposes for their lives. If so, the Lord would be calling people to receive the newness of life, but without the sense that this novelty is indeed lived, externalized, or applied in practical and profitable ways. It would be a concession of the newness of life for it not to be actually lived, experienced, or used.

The first objective of the salvation offered by God to human beings is undoubtedly to redeem them and rescue them from the condition of perdition and death, plus a second objective, which is the granting of the newness of life for which people are saved in Christ Jesus. However, what we are trying to underline at this point is that there is still a third aspect for which the newness of life is bestowed, which is that this newness of life is actually used or lived, which, in turn, is also expressed by the choices, works, or actions that a person can start to adopt due to the fact of having received the novelty of life granted by the Lord.

God's salvation is a “**from --> to**” for a person to find oneself in the “**to**” in which one has the newness of life, but this, in turn, so that one can start to act according to the “**to**” in which one has passed to be placed when saved.

Again, in other words, God's salvation is the remission and redemption of people from the way of death and in which their works are equated to dead works in what concerns eternity. However, to salvation is also added the granting of a new condition of life in which, in addition to receiving the newness of life and its virtues in the heart, people still have the privilege of being able to present themselves made alive to God to practice good works and experience what results from living and walking in the novelty of life granted to them.

We understand that it is very significant to emphasize that in the newness of life, a Christian “can” start to practice or walk in good works, for due to the remaining mentalities similar to those of the First Covenant or the Law of Moses, already revoked or considered obsolete by the Lord, many people still see God's call to them to perform

good works as a call to an obligation or to submit to the rites and heavy burdens of slavery or religion.

Here it is worth clarifying, then, that it is not the good works to which God calls people to walk that enslave them, but it is the evil works, the works of sin, of the First Covenant, or the works called dead that enslave people under the heavy, arduous, and deadly yokes or burdens.

Therefore, **“being able to walk in good works or the practice of good works” is a privilege through which a person can sow the newness of life received or can collaborate for a greater manifestation of the newness of life granted by the Lord.**

“Being able to walk in good works or the practice of good works” is the normal or expected result of those who received the newness of life also to live and walk in the novelty of life received.

A person who has not previously received the newness of life is not able to sow and be productive in what results from the novelty of life because one does not have the newness of life in him or her to be able to act through it. That is, by being deprived of the Lord's newness of life, an individual does not become able to walk in good works or in the practice of good works in which God calls people to walk.

For a Christian, the call to walk in the good works of God, or to do good works in line with the will of the Lord, demonstrates how vast is the extent of God's provision and enablement of salvation in one's life, to the point of an individual, in the Lord, being able to produce good fruits for one's life, the lives of one's fellow men, and that also are cooperative with the kingdom of God.

A Christian, saved from the condition of perdition and the path of death, in addition to receiving eternal life in the Lord, still receives, also in the Lord, the privilege or possibility of bearing fruit and multiplying the newness of life received, thus becoming, in addition to being saved by the Lord, a cooperator or co-worker in the newness of life and God's work in the world.

The opportunity for people to be productive in the Lord and the call to be privileged to be co-workers with Him has always been part of God's purpose, which aspect is available to be achieved in Christ Jesus after receiving salvation and the condition of being in Him to be able to present oneself to God in a living, holy, and worthy of the Lord way, as clearly evidenced in the text that follows below:

Ephesians 2: 4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,**
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

In Christ Jesus, a person finds both one's remission and redemption from the path of perdition and death, as well as the conditions and capabilities to no longer be given over to the unfruitful works of darkness, being able, still, in the Lord, to become a fruitful instrument for a great variety of good works.

Christ is God's way of salvation for a person to come to the newness of life in God. However, Christ is also the way for a person to come to live, walk, and be fruitful in the novelty of life made available in God.

*Ephesians 5: 8 **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light***

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep. Arise from the dead. And Christ will give you light."

C2. Called by God to Walk in the Works That God Calls Good

After noting that a Christian's calling to the newness of life in Christ Jesus also includes walking in the good works of God, and that this also represents the granting of a privilege included in the salvation that God offers to human beings through His grace, we believe that an appropriate next step would be to focus more objectively on specifying the good works in which a Christian is called to walk.

And to move more specifically to the aspect related to good works themselves, let us look once again at the text already quoted in the previous chapter and which highlights the call of a Christian to walk in the works of the Lord:

*Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**
9 **not of works, lest anyone should boast.**
10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.***

When we come to look at walking in good works more closely or more specifically regarding the last text above, we can notice that the good works in which God calls Christians to walk, or grants them the privilege to walk in them, present two very evident characteristics, namely:

- ⇒ 1) **The works that God calls Christians to walk in are works resulting from salvation and not works that cause a person's salvation;**
- ⇒ 2) **The works for which God calls Christians to walk in them are works that were already prepared beforehand by God.**

Thus, firstly, regarding the reference that the works that God calls Christians to walk in are also works that Christians are called to do as a result of salvation in Christ Jesus, it should be noted, once again, that the text itself in reference teaches that no one is saved by the practice of good works, but by the grace of God, accessed through believing in the Lord. It is the grace that the Lord offers human beings to be received together with receiving Christ Jesus as Lord in the heart.

Believing in Christ Jesus and receiving Him as Lord in the heart, as instructed by the Gospel of God, is the work to which, before God, no other work can be added for the purpose of justifying a person from one's sins, iniquities, and eternal condemnations. Similarly, in addition to believing in Christ and the grace of God, no other work is accepted for an individual to receive the heavenly new birth, inclusion in the family of God, or the granting of the condition of saved, holy, or Christian, an aspect exemplified once again below by the following texts:

*John 6: 28 **Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"**
29 **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."***

*Romans 10: 9 ... **that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.***

*10 **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***

Now, secondly, regarding the reference to the works that God calls Christians to walk in them also being the works that Christians are called to practice as a fruit of salvation in Christ Jesus, the Scriptures teach us that these works refer to those which have already been prepared beforehand by God for Christians or the saved ones to walk in them.

But what would this expression of “*already prepared beforehand*” represent?

The expression “*works already prepared beforehand*” may also refer to what was foreordained as good works. That is, that which fits the criteria previously established for the categorization or qualification of what becomes a good work before the Lord, also categorizing, consequently, the works that will never be good before God.

In this way, when a Christian is called by the Lord to walk in good works, the Christian also has already pre-established, in the Lord Himself, the criteria to know or discern which works that are presented before him or her to be done are in fact of the type “good works” and which works are of the type “not good,” “dead works,” or “evil works.” An aspect that also means that a Christian does not need to elaborate, in one's generation, one's own criteria for categorizing works.

The Lord is not like human beings who change their criteria for categorizing works as they grow or decrease in knowledge, or according to what is most convenient for them. Before the Lord, what is good today is good from eternity. And the criteria that classify works as good or evil before God do not change with each new generation, for the conditions for good works do not originate in people of the most diverse ages but in God, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

*James 1: 17 **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.***

God, for example, already established in advance that for a work to be recognized or qualified as good, it is an inseparable condition that it is done based on eternal heavenly righteousness, love, and truth. An aspect that, consequently, highlights the principle that no work done based on lies or unrighteousness fits the criteria defined beforehand for categorizing works as good for Christians to walk in them.

And since God calls Christians to walk in the works that He has already classified as good in advance, He does not call Christians to try to establish new criteria of what a good work is or to try to remove criteria that God has eternally established in this regard. The criteria of eternal righteousness,

the love of the Lord, the truth, and many others that characterize works as good, already exist in God even before human beings were created.

Therefore, **understanding that it is God's exclusivity to define the criteria that determine which works are good and which are not is a crucial point so that a Christian is not also deceived with propositions of works that have "the appearance of good," according to the claim of the very human beings, including those clothed with "an appearance of godliness and devotion to God," but concerning which God never actually called people to walk in them.**

Just as the Hebrew people who left Egypt wanted to have the Law of Moses because they rejected what God qualifies as good works, a law already considered by God revoked and obsolete due to its weakness and unprofitableness, so too the world's religions and their leaders, for similarly not submitting to the criteria established by God about what is eternally good and what is not good, seek to propagate the works that they themselves call good. These works are the expression of practices and rites of what God has established precisely as "not being" good works before Him, but which religions and their leaders seek to propagate to confuse people and distance them from true good works according to what God established as good and that should be carried out in the simplicity of faith and trust in God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Romans 10: 2 **For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.***

*3 **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.***

*4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

Thus, **discerning the aspect that it is God's exclusiveness to define the criteria that determine which works are good and which are not is central even for a Christian not to be deceived by propositions of groups or ministries that call themselves Christians, but that are daring to try to set up the premises and rules of their own minds as if these were the proper conduct and works of the Christian life.**

Those who think and propagate that they themselves can establish in their lives and ministries what is or is not a good work, not recognizing that this prerogative is exclusive to God, are seen by the Lord according to the categorization that follows below:

*1 Timothy 6: 3 **If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,***

*4 **he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,***

*5 **useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.***

From such withdraw yourself.

Reiterating, then, the first aspect of works seen in the text referenced at the beginning of this chapter, we see that any work that a person wants to do to obtain salvation, and that is not by simply believing in Christ Jesus and by receiving in the heart the salvation of God by heavenly grace, is a work contrary to what God has already predetermined for centuries. And yet, it is a work that, in addition to not being good, also directly confronts God's statement that no individual is saved by works so that no one can boast before God.

Similarly, the works that want to build temples or material houses made by human hands for God to dwell in them, so that people can offer their gifts, sacrifices, and offerings in these temples, are works that oppose what God in advance called people to do *in Christ Jesus*, in whom, in turn, there is no need for material sanctuaries. *In Christ*, the Christian oneself is the sanctuary or the house of God in which the Lord dwells so that He may also manifest Himself through His people in the present world.

The insistence on building temples made by human hands is a work of resistance to the Holy Spirit and the simplicity of newness of life that God offers to all through the dwelling of Christ Jesus in the hearts of those who receive Him. It is a work that aims to lead people, who dedicate themselves to temple services, to spend their lives in works that God never asked them to do and, consequently, also distances them from practicing what they were actually called by God to do.

The set of works that God pre-defined as being good works encompasses everything that a Christian does in one's daily life when one does it under the instruction of Christ and for the glory of the Lord. An aspect that religious leaders try to distort by claiming that the works done for their religious institutions, their temples, or their meetings are holier or more important than the simple actions that a Christian practices in one's daily life.

The good works that God prepared beforehand for Christians or the saved ones to walk in them include, for example, parents teaching children to have faith in Christ, walk and act according to the righteousness of the Lord, and speak the truth. Similarly, they encompass all the actions of Christians in their professions when they perform it in the fear of the Lord and aim at the good in all that they do, and so on.

To cooperate with the above considerations, let us recall some texts below:

1 Corinthians 10: 31 ***Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***

Colossians 3: 17 ***And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***

2 Corinthians 11: 2 ***For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.***

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

*Acts 7: 48 "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:
49 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest?
50 Has My hand not made all these things?'
51 You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."*

*Isaiah 66: 1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?
2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.
3 He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,
4 So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight."*

Given the above, knowing that good works are those that God has defined as effectively good, approved, or acceptable, and not what human beings have defined or define in their most varied imaginations and religions, shows to be a central point for both walking in good works and to refrain from not walking in works that are not good and whose harvests result in death and not in life.

Therefore, **bearing in mind that the works that are considered good before the Lord already have their criteria pre-established by God and that Christians are called to follow them respectively in each of their generations, and not to try to redefine these criteria, it is necessary that each Christian also accesses these characteristics previously established by the Lord to be able to discern each type of works properly, remembering that the good works of God are those that are also done in Him, with Him, or through Him.**

For this reason, we also recall below the following texts:

*Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,
7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

**9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;
10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**

1 Corinthians 1: 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 5: 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

**15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,
16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

John 15: 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

John 3: 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

Finally, in this chapter, and due to the crucial condition that exists in the fact that a Christian needs to know that it is from God that comes the definition of what is recognized as good works before Him, we sought to elaborate a specific and broader approach of the Scriptures concerning the theme of the works in which the Christian is called to walk. This, in turn, is presented under the theme Works, Labors, and Services and under the theme Vocation, Calling, and Election, in addition to the always indispensable theme about The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, through which the Lord teaches us amply what is necessary to achieve justification before Him and what results from this justification.

C3. Called by God to Be Zealous for Good Works

The call to Christians to walk in good works that God beforehand has already defined for them to walk in them, not because they are worthy of salvation through works, but because they have already received salvation from God by His grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, has proven to be a very challenging topic for every generation throughout human history.

Getting to see the subject specifically related to the performance of so-called good works with an appropriate measure of sobriety when also taking into account the matter of God's salvation being granted through heavenly grace, and not by works, has been an enormous challenge due to two central motives, among others.

First, we see that a difficulty to be overcome lies in the fact that many people, who even claim to be Christians, position themselves against the grace of God by insisting on carrying out works with the aim of trying, through them, to deserve God's salvation and favor. However, as a second point, there are also people who, upon hearing that salvation and God's favor are granted by the Lord through His grace, begin to give shelter and propagate a false idea that since salvation is not based on one's works, but on justification by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus and His work on the cross of Calvary, there is, then, no relevance for a Christian to practice or walk in good works.

In general, for the natural mind, perhaps it is not very simple to understand that something can be granted to people not because of their merits, but because God loves them and is kind and merciful to them. This is a lack of understanding that may, on the one hand, make many people, from generation to generation, fall back into the thought that the motivation to practice good works must be the ambition for a supposed payment that they will receive if they practice good works or that, on the other hand, may cause many people to fall back into thinking that since salvation is by grace, the works a person does or does not do is a secondary or even irrelevant matter.

Nevertheless, in both cases cited in the previous paragraphs, people do not stick to the fact that God's call for Christians to practice the works pre-defined by the Lord as good is a call to a privileged condition of freedom granted to them. And this, so that, after being saved, they can begin to perform good works because this is what is appropriate, correct, righteous, and good to be practiced, something that they, in a condition dissociated from Christ, would never be able to do.

Also thinking, for example, of works to pay the eternal debt that a person owes because of one's association with sin expresses a lack of understanding of how this debt is unpayable by a human being, whether one tries to pay it under the idea that through it one might receive salvation or whether one tries to pay it after one has received salvation through grace.

By the grace of God, a Christian already has, in the Lord, the payment of one's eternal debt to sin and death, and one does not even need to do works after one becomes a Christian to pay retroactively to God what was granted by heavenly grace. When a person is saved by God's grace, one does not take a loan to pay one debt with sin and death so that after, as a saved person, one must pay God a type of loan granted to him or her.

The Scriptures tell us that God, out of love for human beings, "gave" His Beloved Son for the salvation of everyone who believes in Him, as follows:

John 3: 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Romans 6: 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The salvation given by God is a gift from the Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus to all who receive this gift. And the Heavenly Father never charges a set of accomplishments of good works for anyone to receive this gift and will not charge anyone to pay for this gift retroactively.

On the other hand, once a person is saved from a life subject to the way and works of perdition and, as a result, comes to be in the way of eternal life, it is also to be expected that the saved person, because of the understanding of what has been extended to him or her, makes the choice to walk in the way and the works of the newness of life received, no longer wanting to return to the path and the works of death to which one was subject before receiving salvation in the Lord.

Thus, doing good, certainly, also has the fruits of doing good as a harvest, as this is related to the principle of sowing and reaping. However, as for the Lord's grace towards those who receive it, it should be noted that God first offers human beings, not because of their previous works, all the conditions so that they, equipped with what is needed to do good, can then practice it, in a certain sense, simply because they are now in a position to do what is correct and righteous.

When God calls Christians to live and walk in the newness of life given to them, God calls them to do so out of understanding and that they themselves may not throw away the eternal gift of salvation in Christ Jesus, which was given to them through heavenly grace. Thus, it is also because of an understanding of the greatness of what has been bestowed upon them that Christians are called to walk in good works or in the practices that are consistent with the way of salvation.

A Christian is not called to do good works in the sense that, with this, one will obtain the right to salvation, for this is freely given by heavenly grace. And a Christian can never do anything to deserve or pay for it. On the other hand, however, a Christian is called to walk in the way of eternal life or of good works so as not to expose oneself to the risk of throwing away the gift of God or allowing that one's eternal salvation, given by God Himself, through His grace, comes to be taken from this Christian.

Christ is the only gift and way of salvation that the Heavenly Father has to offer human beings. So, if a person rejects or gives up this gift offered by the heavenly kingdom, God has nothing better to offer as a means to one's salvation and eternal life. Therefore, also by understanding this aspect of the truth, a person is called to abide in Christ and walk in the way of the novelty of life or living works in line with eternal life.

Revelation 3: 11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

Hebrews 3: 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;
13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,
15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

Hebrews 10: 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

The grace of God and the understanding of some central aspects of this grace go together so that a person can serve the Lord by understanding that this is the good choice and the path of life, and not that it is a path of arduous obligation and heavy bondage to the damage to the one who follows God's instruction to walk in the works prepared beforehand by the Lord.

The obedience that God calls Christians to follow or adopt is the obedience of faith. It is the obedience that receives, understands, and believes that whatever God calls them to walk is also the expression of what is appropriate, good, and righteous in everything for their lives.

Romans 7: 25 I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 16: 25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began
26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith,
27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

On the one hand, the Christian life is also a call to obedience to God. On the other hand, however, it is a call to obedience to walk in the way of works of the very newness of life already available to those who believe in the Lord, and not because someone needs to pay something to God through works, sacrifices, or obedience to laws of carnal commandments according to the Law of Moses or similar to it.

Repeating here once more, heavenly salvation is according to the mercy and grace of God because a sinful human being could also never pay, by any means, this great

salvation that is offered as a free gift, as we have seen previously and as also the following psalm declares:

*Psalms 49: 6 Those who trust in their wealth And boast in the multitude
of their riches,
7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to
God a ransom for him,
8 For the redemption of their souls is costly, And it shall cease
forever (or their resources will run out before).*

...

*15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, For He
shall receive me.*

The call to the Christian life is a calling in which a person can voluntarily choose to remain on the path one has been placed on by the grace of God. And this, because one also, through the same grace, has access to the understanding of the greatness and dignity of righteousness, truth, and goodness that are in the Lord and the way of life that He offers, as well as by the understanding of how vile is the way to perdition, even though the gate to the latter and its path are wider.

We recall here yet that the mentality that even nowadays seeks to propagate the mistaken thought that salvation needs to be “paid,” “achieved,” or “sustained” with previous or retroactive works always refers, directly or indirectly, to the aspects of the law and practices of the First Covenant. That is, the Old Covenant that the people territorially freed from Egypt made the option to follow and that, in a way, they made in similarity to the mentalities that existed in the pagan peoples and not in conformity with what God offered them to follow. (Topic widely addressed in specific materials on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God and The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ).

*Jeremiah 7: 22 "For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in
the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning
burnt offerings or sacrifices.
23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I
will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the
ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'
24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the
counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward
and not forward."*

On the other hand, the mentality that seeks to propagate another mistaken thought, in which it is insinuated that since salvation is by grace it also becomes irrelevant to practice good works, has as reference the remnants of the mentality of the lifestyle called in the Scriptures as *Greek*. The mentality through which many try to turn the understanding of God's grace into unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, or wantonness to try to prevent people from experiencing the true freedom that grants them a new condition to walk voluntarily in the good works prepared beforehand by the Lord. An aspect also recalled by the text bellow and discussed more widely in the

materials on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God and The New Creature in Christ Jesus.

*Jude 1: 4 **For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Therefore, repeating once again, contrary to the mentality of the works of the Law of Moses and the one so-called Greek, what God offers in Christ Jesus is the justification and acceptance of people before Him by grace, through faith, and without works as payment for justification. And this, so that, once justified, each individual can live and walk according to the righteousness of God due to the understanding or knowledge that this is the true path that every human being should choose to follow. An aspect also discussed more widely in the theme on The Law of Understanding and also recalled by a few more texts below:

*Ephesians 2: 4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,***
*5 **even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).***

*Romans 4: 5 **But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,***
*6 **just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ...***

*Galatians 5: 1 **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.***

...

*13 **For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.***

So, after remembering the Christian's privileged condition of freedom so that one can choose to practice good works, and returning to the objectified focus in the title of this chapter, we would like to highlight that **God, in addition to calling each Christian to walk in the path of works already defined as good, also calls every Christian to be intense or zealous in keeping walking in them or to be zealous in practicing them continually.**

Reviewing once again this aspect that God's salvation and newness of life are granted by the Lord, through His grace, so that a person can enjoy a condition in which one, voluntarily, can do good for the fact of this being the right thing to follow, we can

see how necessary it is to have an understanding that properly combines the comprehension of God's grace and good works as a result of this grace.

In this way, when we perceive in the Scriptures that God still adds to the call of Christians the aspect referring to them also being zealous to walk in good works, we can see that the Lord also expects Christians not to be held back in the face of a repeated need to be convinced that it is suitable for them to walk in good works. On the contrary, the Lord expects them to actually reach the point where they will advance to an effective and continuous practice of what they are called to do in the Lord.

When we notice that God, when calling Christians to walk in good works, also calls them to be zealous in doing so, it seems to us that the Lord is calling Christians to overcome the phase of seeking, time after time, to become convinced that it is indeed good to walk in the ways and works that He proposes to them. It is the Lord calling His children to move forward to the aspect of actually being continual doers of what God has saved and called them for according to His love.

By realizing that God calls Christians to be zealous for walking in the good works to which He has called them, it seems to us that the Lord is calling Christians to be attentive to the fact that the call that He makes to them is truly for their good, that this call is actually possible to be experienced, and that it is given to Christians so that they too may indeed move forward to experience it in their lives. It seems to us that it is as if God is calling Christians not to be shy or not to withhold themselves concerning starting to live and walk in what they are called to in the Lord.

Once understood that walking in good works is the option to walk in the path of the novelty of life or eternal life and the option for actions that cooperate with this life, not having the Christian to pay a debt to God since the newness of life was granted by the Lord, nor does God have to pay something to the Christian for doing good works, we can further see that every Christian is called not only to walk on this path but also to do it with zeal so that one can indeed make intense and continuous use of this inestimable privilege that was granted along with the newness of life *in Christ Jesus*.

Considering that to be zealous is to be intensely dedicated to what one has in great value or to cherish someone or something with high esteem in the heart and external practical actions, God, when calling Christians to be zealous in walking in good works, also shows to them what a noble and high condition before Him is for Christians to be able to have the freedom to choose to practice what is in line with the divine will.

The offer of the newness of life *in Christ Jesus*, which manifests itself initially as the saving grace, and then as the grace that is willing to teach Christians to abstain from the path of perdition, still advances to the point of making possible the privilege of each Christian also to walk in works that cooperate with one's life, the lives of people of one's generation, and who knows even the next generations, and even with the Lord Himself who called the Christian to the newness of life in Him.

Christ indeed gave Himself as the eternal sacrifice to redeem and rescue people from eternal perdition. However, He equally offered Himself so that the saved ones could receive the newness of life to also be intense and continuous in practices resulting from the newness of life granted to them.

*Titus 2: 11 **For the grace of God that (1) brings salvation has appeared to all men,**
 12 **(2) teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,**
 13 **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**
 14 **who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, (3) zealous for good works.***

Therefore, the grace which (1) manifests itself as the saving gift, and redeems people from subjection to sin and iniquities, advances to (2) the cleansing of their consciences from dead works, and, yet, (3) enables an individual to be a vessel of honor to the Eternal Lord, to the point of being able to be part of the own special people of Christ called to be zealous for the good works that God previously established and for the exaltation of the Lord by whom one is called to the newness of life in Him.

*Hebrews 9: 14 ... **how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**
 15 **And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.***

Even though starting from a curriculum of a person enslaved to sin, the law of dead works, and the condemnation manifested by this law, a person, by the grace of God, can (1) obtain salvation from the path of perdition and death, (2) receive the newness of life in Christ, and still (3) participate in the inheritance of those who are called in Christ Jesus also to see the newness of life acting intensely in good works or being manifested in good and beneficial fruits.

For all this, a Christian is called not to be negligent or apathetic with the newness of life granted by God but called to be fervent in spirit and to serve the Lord.

*Romans 12: 11 ... **not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;***

The salvation that the Lord offers people to be freed from the path of eternal condemnation and death is a salvation that also makes a person alive so that one can start to live and walk in good works in which one could never walk before redemption, showing us how complete is the salvation that He extends to all human beings, even if these previously have departed so far from fellowship with their Eternal Creator.

Romans 5: 17 **For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

John 1: 16 **And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.**

Thus, **considering that the Lord grants a redeemed person such a great privilege to cooperate through good works with heavenly righteousness and truth, He also calls a Christian to do so with zeal, fervent in spirit, and in the Lord, but never by one's own effort or strength.**

In Christ, the Christian already has salvation. Therefore, one is also free to choose to serve through good works or according to the good, acceptable, and perfect will of the Lord. And if before knowing Christ, the thought of doing good works was a heavy burden and without hope of actually being able to participate in this type of works, now, *in Christ*, the Christian can do the good works "together with Christ" by whom one becomes instructed, guided, and strengthened to accomplish these works. In this way, faced with the understanding of how precious one's new condition in the Lord is, the Christian is called to do it with zeal and without losing heart.

Romans 6: 19 **I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**

Galatians 6: 9 **And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**
10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Romans 12: 17 **Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.**

2 Thessalonians 3: 13 **But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.**

Philippians 4: 13 **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

To walk in good works is to do good in all things as God directs, knowing that this walking is also one of the items that attest that a person has indeed received the newness of life granted by the Lord.

3 John 1: 11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

Titus 3: 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

When we also look at the example of David, who came to be in great distress for having strayed from the Lord's way at a certain point in his life by giving way to sin, we see that he then did not forget that God was powerful to forgive him if he presented himself with a broken heart to the Lord and dependent on His grace. However, David also knew that, in the Lord, there was an overflowing goodness that accompanied God's forgiveness and mercy toward him. For this reason, David asked the Lord that, after forgiving him, He would also grant him a voluntary spirit again so that he could return to zealously serve the Only God worthy of worship and honor. And this same David is the one who declared that "***blessed is the one to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works,***" as we saw earlier.

Below, then, we recall the very precious prayer of David with particular attention to his hope of being able to be active again with willingness and intensity in the way of the Lord:

Psalms 51: 1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.

4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight, That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

- 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.**
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.**
- 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.**
- 15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.**
-

Finally, in this chapter, although this is not its primary focus, considering that if the objective of practicing good works is not to pay for the salvation received from God, but to walk in good works because the Christian has been made alive to live and walk in them, and that not even God is indebted to a person for having done good works for the Lord, a person might be able to think again about how, then, one can have a payment to continue having the provision for the novelty of life and the support to be able to remain in it?

When a Christian walks in the way of works according to heavenly righteousness and in the truth of God, one reaps good because, in this same way, there is the provision of goodness. If a person remains living and walking in Christ, in Christ Himself one has the provision both for him or her and for doing good, for it is through abiding in Christ and in His grace that the Lord also protects, instructs, and cooperates to provide for a Christian in everything according to what is necessary for one's life.

When a Christian is called by God to practice good works, this Christian finds in the Lord Himself the provision to do the good works, as well as encounters in the Lord the way or the orientation of the provision for what is also necessary for one's personal life and one's abiding in Christ Jesus.

As we addressed in the themes The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, The Christian and the Riches, Conscious of the Context of Life and Destination of the New Creature, as well as in other themes of the Systemic Teaching about the Christian Life, since God calls the saved ones to them also be part of the army of those who walk in the good works that God has prepared beforehand, the Lord also promises to show them the way for the provision of their lives, to walk in the good works in general that the Lord shows them, and to carry out each of the specific works for which the Lord calls them.

Thus, God calls Christians to be zealous to continually stand firm or unshakable in living and walking in Christ Jesus because, in the Lord Himself, there is also the inexhaustible source of wisdom for the provision for their lives and for the practice of works which are according to the heavenly will or kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15: 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 9: 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

9 As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,

11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

C4. Zealous for Good Works because of the Dignity of God and the Proclamation of the Glory of God to the World

Recalling the theme Walking in an Acceptable and Worthy Way of God, we would like to highlight once again the consideration that although walking in the newness of life is aimed at the benefit of the person who walks in this novelty, a Christian is also called to walk in newness of life because of the very marvelous, perfect, and sublime dignity of one's God and Lord.

And the purpose of recalling the walking worthy of God, because the Lord is worthy of every Christian to walk in this way, is to point out that this same principle similarly applies to walking zealously in good works to which God calls Christians to walk in them, for the Lord is equally worthy that Christians choose to walk in good works for the greatness of their Lord's dignity, love, and sovereignty.

Although, throughout the present theme, we have presented that a Christian is called to walk in the way and in the actions of good works to which one has been called by God because this is beneficial to the Christian, we want to highlight in this new chapter that a Christian should also be zealous of good works because one's God, one's Eternal Lord and Savior, is fully worthy that one does so.

When a Christian is willing to be zealous to walk worthy of the Lord in one's daily life, which also includes acting in everything as one who is always serving God and practices the good works to which one is called by God, this Christian recognizes the sublimity of the Lord and that everything that God proposes is good and righteous. That is, one recognizes that all of God's judgments, opinions, or interventions are according to the truth and the heavenly righteousness. An aspect also proclaimed in songs by countless people before the Lord, as follows:

Revelation 15: 2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!

4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

When a Christian is willing to know the works that God has already established as being good works to walk in them and perform them, and still does so because of the worthiness of God, one recognizes practically, and not just with one's mouth, how much trustworthy the Lord is and how worthy in everything the most diverse immeasurably precious virtues of the Heavenly Father, the Beloved Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are.

So, here again, we see that the fact that a Christian can be a co-worker with the Almighty God, who is righteous in all things and full of grace and mercy, has no reference to a call to an obligatory subjection to a heavy burden. On the contrary, it is a

call to a privileged condition in which the Christian can praise one's Eternal Lord by whom one was created, but by whom one also was bought and redeemed, through the blood of Christ Jesus shed on the cross of Calvary, from a life subject to sin and the consequences associated with it.

When the Lord, through the Scriptures, teaches Christians that He has called them to good works also for the praise of His glory and that His name may be exalted among the nations, He is not calling them to vile servitude. Instead, He is calling them to voluntarily glorify the God who loves them and through whom Christians too can love God Himself and their fellow men.

In the voluntary choice of a Christian to walk in the works that God determines as works in line with His righteousness, the Lord is exalted in a very special way and whose exaltation the world awaits to see revealed, for the world that is under the yoke of bondage aims to see examples of people opting for good and the worship of God because they are free to do so and because they have found the One who is worthy of being the Eternal Beloved of their lives.

Yes, the world awaits the revelation of Christians through good works done out of love for God, voluntarily, and because of their privilege to be able to choose to serve the One who is worthy of all worship, and not because an obligatory service is imposed on them as essentially occurs in the models of the world dissociated from fellowship with the Lord or dissociated from the newness of life that is in Christ Jesus.

The world awaits the revelation of Christians through good works done out of love for God, voluntarily, and because of their privilege to be able to choose to serve the Lord with an understanding of the way of truth and eternal life, and not because they have to serve by the spirit that terrifies, or by fear, through which the devil seeks to enslave multitudes.

In the Lord Jesus Christ, a person has the freedom to serve for having been freed from the power of death, but also from the fear that this power seeks to impose on human beings, as also exemplified in the following texts:

*Hebrews 2: 14 **Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.***

*Romans 8: 15 **For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."***

*1 John 4: 18 **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.***

Yes, the world awaits the revelation of Christians through works done in God or in the light to know that it is possible for a person not to need to live and walk only in the weakness of mere natural strength and in obscurity regarding the heavenly will, but that there is a divine provision that accompanies those who are willing not to walk in the path of evil to also walk in the way of truth and eternal peace.

The world awaits a more comprehensive witness that enables those who believe in the Lord to resist evil, but also not to remain only in resistance, being able yet, in the Lord, to move forward to also effectively do good.

Let us see below some more texts that cooperate with the considerations of these last paragraphs:

- 1 Peter 2: 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*
- 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"*
- 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.*
- 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*
- 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

2 Timothy 1: 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Romans 8: 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

When we see the possibility that a Christian can be a living witness of God through what one does and says, whether before God or before one's fellow men, not out of obligation but as a privilege granted by the Lord to walk in good works, we can also understand the texts such as those that follow in one more brief list below:

John 17: 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

John 15: 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

*Philippians 4: 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men.
The Lord is at hand.*

Luke 10: 16 "He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

John 13: 20 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

John 7: 18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him."

*1 Peter 2: 11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,
12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

*1 Timothy 2: 1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,
2 for kings and all who are in authority (or eminence), that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.
3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ...*

*John 17: 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.
20 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:*

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

As we saw in the texts above, the Scriptures, in some respects, even compare the possibility of Christians being able to bear witness to the glory of God with some similar situations through which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself testified of the Heavenly Father to the world.

Therefore, **when one enters firmly or with zeal in the practice of walking in the good works for which a Christian is called to walk in Christ Jesus, also aiming to do it in love to glorify or exalt the Eternal Lord, an immeasurable horizon of possibilities for a Christian to be able to cooperate with God is uncovered, because one can do it every day in everything one does, starting where one lives, moving on to where one works or studies, as well as when one meets other fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Corinthians 10: 31 **Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

Philippians 1: 9 **And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,**
*10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,
*11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

Furthermore, many other details and texts could be considered here concerning the topic addressed in this chapter. However, since the emphasis in it is to focus on “being zealous because God is worthy for a Christian to live and walk in the Lord and His ways,” and also considering that a more comprehensive detail of the role of Christians in the present world is already covered in the series *The Life of the Christian in the World*, and especially under the themes *Works, Labors, and Services, and Vocation, Calling, and Election*, we would like in this chapter just briefly to recall four aspects or attributes for which the Lord has appointed Christians to be in the world to glorify Him, as well as to manifest good works according to the heavenly kingdom to witness to the world about the Eternal Lord who grants them the freedom to do so, as follows:

1st attribute: **You are the salt of the Earth:**

Matthew 5: 13(a) **You are the salt of the earth.**

In antiquity, salt certainly already had the connotation of contributing to food taste. However, it also had a connotation particularly associated with cooperation in preserving food so that it did not deteriorate.

Thus, by attributing to Christians the characteristic of the salt of the Earth, it seems to us that God, most likely, was teaching the Christians that He sees them as the salt of the Earth so that the people of the world will always have near them the flavor of the testimony that there is in a differentiated life in God, but also so that life in the world does not deteriorate in the extreme. And this, that the people in it also may have abundant opportunities of knowing the way of remission and eternal salvation.

When a Christian abides in the Lord so that one can walk in Him and practice one's most diverse actions and utter words in a manner that is worthy of the Lord, one, through these postures and works, does a beneficial work for oneself, but also a work on behalf of many who still live in the present world.

Colossians 4: 5 **Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.**

6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

A Christian's prayer on behalf of the people of the world and one's appropriate posture in what one does can cooperate with the Lord and represent a significant resistance to the actions of darkness. If, on the one hand, the Scriptures teach that not contained evil is like a destructive fire and that it does not stop plowing and consuming for destruction, on the other hand, the same Scriptures also teach that in the presence of those who walk in the righteousness of God, of those who are "the salt of the Earth," evil finds limitations and impediments to progress. So, also by this, a Christian is called to pray continually to the Lord and to take one's stand in Christ for that which is according to heavenly righteousness.

Isaiah 9: 18 **For wickedness burns as the fire; It shall devour the briers and thorns, And kindle in the thickets of the forest; They shall mount up like rising smoke.**

Luke 18: 1 **Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,**

...

7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?

2nd attribute: **You are the Light of the World:**

Matthew 5: 14 **You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.**

- 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.***
16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Highly sublime is the condition that a Christian receives before God to the point of being called the light of the world, which, once again, makes it evident why it is very significant for a Christian to be attentive to the call to also be zealous in everything one speaks, does, and to not omit oneself from one's function in the world through works that manifest one's light.

On the other hand, it seems to us that it is also appropriate to point out once again that the light of a Christian or the light by which one becomes enabled to be the light of the world is Christ, having the Christian, by walking in the good works that God prepared to walk in them, great opportunities for this light to become also manifested in this way to the world.

When a Christian does works according to the instruction and strength of the Lord, and yet recognizes that one does them in the Name of Christ so that the light of the Lord may be evidenced to the world, one, through good works, also cooperates with the greater work of bringing light to the world that became subject to darkness. And so, one shows people who observe one's works that there is a real possibility of knowing the glory of the Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus and that these people too may be illuminated by the same heavenly light to similarly have the privilege of walking in the light of the Eternal Lord.

3rd attribute: **The Good Fragrance of Christ:**

- 2 Corinthians 2: 14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.***
15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.
16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

The Lord Jesus Christ taught us that eternal life is knowing God and the Son sent by the Heavenly Father to the world so that those who believe in the Eternal Gospel may be redeemed and saved in the Lord.

Nevertheless, so that people estranged from God may know His offer of eternal life in Christ Jesus, the Lord manifests Himself in multiple ways so that they may become aware of the grace offered to them, also doing so by widely spreading the fragrance of His knowledge or His glory.

As much as the power of darkness wants to make people turn away from God and forget Him entirely, the Lord exudes His fragrance throughout the world. This fragrance, in turn, causes people to be frequently reminded of how close God is to

them. And every Christian is an expression of those who carry the fragrance of Christ and spread the knowledge of His glory wherever they go in the world.

Even though, on the one hand, people distance themselves from their relationship with God because of the veil of unbelief or subjection to sin, the Lord, on the other hand, continues to remind them of His love for them, providing that the Good Fragrance of Christ always is close to them to let them know that in Christ Jesus they continue to be called to salvation by grace to the newness of eternal life in God.

Christians are propagators of the Good Fragrance of Christ. In this way, when they do good works with love for the Lord, they exhale a perfume that can penetrate even the places that have been closed off from the light of God, reminding those who are in darkness that even though they are subject to darkness, the Heavenly Father continues to offer them salvation and eternal life in Him so that they may be redeemed from darkness to become part of the kingdom of the Son of His Love.

The Good Fragrance of Christ, spread throughout the world through Christians, expresses a continuous way of remembering the hope of the novelty life that there is in Christ Jesus for those who have already received salvation in the Lord. However, it is also manifested to those who are on the way that leads to death or perdition, warning them that the end is approaching in the sense that people may remember God and that they should turn their hearts to the Lord, to Him who is the fragrance and essence of the newness of life for the present and the eternity.

*2 Corinthians 3: 16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.***

Thus, it is very precious to see a person carrying out one's daily task with disposition and joy because one does it as for the Lord. It is sublime to see a person positioning oneself in righteousness and honesty because one has the fear of the Lord in one's heart. It is highly valuable to see a person acting with true mercy amid a brutalized and cold world because one has the love of God in one's heart, for all these acts, in addition to cooperating with the one who practices them, still spread a pleasant fragrance amid a world subject to a lot of pain, anguish, and afflictions, consoling those who already belong to the Lord and calling to salvation those who are still dissociated from it.

4th attribute: **The Living Epistle or Letter from God for People of the World to read:**

*2 Corinthians 3: 2 **You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;***
*3 **clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.***

Like the previous ones, this fourth characteristic of the lives of Christians is also highly relevant and sublime, for Christians are walking living letters that circulate everywhere in the world.

Many people may refuse to read the Bible or hear the preaching of the Gospel of God done in some specific place, but how will they avoid reading what happens in the lives of those who are of Christ and continually or often close to them?

When, for example, a person wants to convince oneself that one is not loved by God, that God does not interact directly in favor of people's lives, or even that God does not exist, it may happen that one suddenly comes across a Christian who does a work by which God is glorified, thus showing to this individual testimony of life in the Lord in contrast to what one was inclined to think.

Therefore, a Christian, as a living letter, can carry a communication to whom the Lord wants it to be communicated. Furthermore, a Christian is a living epistle that is continuously being read by people who know this Christian.

People read and follow the excerpts of the letter that is being written each day by the postures, words, and actions of a Christian. If people detect life in the epistle, the possibility opens up for them to observe it even more. However, if they detect evil or dead works, they get annoyed with the letter, to the point that some may distance themselves even more from God because of what the letter transmits to them.

Eventually, a Christian may commit mistakes. However, when one recognizes one's mistakes, repents of them, and receives the forgiveness granted by God, this action of repentance and humility is also recorded in the living epistle, which, in turn, signals to others that in Christ there is also the path of forgiveness and restoration of life.

*Psalms 37 :23 **The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.***

*24 **Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.***

*1 John 2: 1 **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.***

*2 **And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.***

In the Scriptures, the lives of many people were recorded as a letter so that we could observe them and learn from their example about the faith by which they lived despite their weaknesses and the circumstances in which they lived, as well as the mistakes they made and the stumbles they incurred. However, also from what was witnessed about these lives, we can notice the central aspect that supported them, which is the action of God towards them, forgiving them, saving them, and sustaining them even if they found themselves in fragile and temporal vessels.

As a living epistle from God to the world, a Christian is not called to simulate a personal strength that one will never have as a natural human being, nor is one called to dissimulate about the struggles and challenges one encounters because one is still in a fragile and temporal body. However, when the Christian, despite one's weakness, presents oneself made alive by faith in Christ and with a firm hope of life in the Lord,

one communicates to people dissociated from God's salvation that it is in the Lord that they too can equally reach the newness of life that they so much need.

Although many people think that the world needs more naturally strong people, Christians are also brought before them to testify that what human beings need is the strength of God to be able to live and walk in the novelty of life, and that this can be achieved for those who believe in the Lord even if naturally their life is a very fragile vessel.

2 Corinthians 4: 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.
8 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;
9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.
11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Galatians 2: 19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.
20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2 Corinthians 4: 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

Christians are called to be living epistles to those around them in a similar way as those whose lives were recorded in the Scriptures. And for this reason, too, it is so crucial for Christians to be zealous so that what is written in them is written by the Holy Spirit of God.

And finally, in the present subject, we want to reiterate that **God is worthy of a Christian being zealous for good works for what this Christian became in Christ Jesus and for what it is possible to accomplish in Christ.** However, along with all this, or even above all this, because one's Loving God is eternally worthy of all honor, worship, and praise both in what the Christian believes in one's heart and what the Christian practices as the fruit of one's faith and trust in God.

2 Corinthians 9: 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

- 9 *As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."*
- 10 *Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,*
- 11 *while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.*

- Ephesians 2: 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*
- 5 *even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*
- 6 *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*
- 7 *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

- Romans 7: 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.*

- Colossians 1: 9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*
- 10 *that you:*
- 11 *may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*
- 12 *strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*
- 13 *giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.*
- 14 *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,*
- 15 *in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*
- 16 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*
- 17 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*
- 18 *And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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