

Good Works Do Not Justify Believers, but They Do Identify Who Is a Believer

What do you do with a lightbulb that doesn't work?

¹⁵ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit... ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ([John 15:1-6](#), ESV)

How is an unfruitful branch like a burned-out lightbulb?

Does the idea of changing a lightbulb fill you with a sense of injustice toward burned out lightbulbs?
Why Or why not?

What kind of fruit should a grapevine produce? What kind of fruit should a disciple produce?

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ([Matthew 5:14-16](#), ESV)

What kind of light should a lightbulb produce? What kind of light should a believer produce?

What's the difference between what Jesus said about producing fruit and what he said about producing light?

Jesus has a very specific definition for producing light. What is it believers can do that will produce light?

Protestant Christians spend a lot of time pointing out that works cannot save us.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#), ESV)

Can our good works save us?

Notice verse 10. How important is it for believers who are saved by the work of Christ, and not their own efforts, to do good works?

What does God consider to be good works?

²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." John 6:28-29 (ESV)

If good works originate from faith in Jesus Christ, which is what Jesus said, then where does faith originate?

Elijah saw God send fire down, but when God spoke directly to him what did it sound like?

¹¹ And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 1 Kings 19:11–13 (ESV)

God does not always reveal Himself in the loudest or biggest ways. Because God indeed the believer's heart God is behind their good works (2 Cor 9:8; Titus 2:11-15). So, how do our good works reveal what God is doing in our lives?

What do you think it would be like to be a part of God revealing Himself to a lost world?

Where does the ability to do good works that please God come from?

²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:21 (ESV)

¹¹ To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 2 Thessalonians 1:11 (ESV)

²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:27 (ESV)

Where does the ability to do good works that please God come from?

What is God's purpose in creating human beings to good works (Eph 2:10)?

Good works don't **justify** believers, but they do **identify** believers as believers

¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:12 (ESV)

¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Matthew 7:16 (ESV)

Those who perform those good works get to be part of the story of the revelation of God and who He is and what He has done, and what He will do, and what He is doing right now. And what's the alternative to being part of God's revelation of Himself to the world?

If we are lightbulbs, then God is the electricity.

Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

Does that statement make a clear statement that agrees with what scripture teaches?

A Good Work Sizzles, While Dead Faith Fizzles