

WORKS

Part 6

The Kinds of Work IV

“Agathos Works”

INTRODUCTION

The fallen nature of mankind prevents men from doing “good (agathos) works” void of personal gain. Behind every so-called good deed that is done, there can be found some benefit for the performer; whether it be something gained in return, personal gratification, conscience or superstition. For example, I was told by an unsaved man, recently, that he did “good things” for people because he hoped that God would take that into consideration when he stood before Him.

Conversely, believers have the capacity to do genuinely do good. This type of good is described in Scripture as “agathos” works -- that which is done that is beneficial, being motivated by the goodness of the one doing the work. God provides for spiritual believers to do good works that He prepared for the believer to accomplish before the world began. We will see that these works have their origin in the desire to do that which is beneficial for the one to whom the good is performed. Such goodness was illustrated by the Father in the Old Testament when all men abandoned Him at the Tower of Babel. He did good to them, providing “rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:17)

Over the next couple of weeks, we will see that the believer has the potential to do good works while in this body and the implications of those works.

- I. AGATHOS IS A WORD USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DESCRIBE THAT WHICH IS BENEFICIAL.
 - A. Agathos is defined as those works performed that are beneficial.
 1. Agathos is ***inward goodness from a spiritual believer, that brings happiness and desires that good to be experienced in the life of others absent of personal gain; while kalos emphasizes the outward appearance of the work performed.*** -- K.D.J.
 2. ***“Generosity; justice, they say, is the quality which gives a man what is due to him; goodness is the quality which is out to do far more than that, and which desires to give a man all that is to his benefit and his help. The man who is just sticks to the letter of his bond; the man who is good goes far beyond it.”*** -- William Barclay “Flesh and Spirit
 - B. Agathos is used in contrast with the three primary evil words.
 1. It is used in contrast with kakos. Rom. 7:19; 12:21; 16:19
 2. It is used in contrast with poneros. Matt. 20:15; 5:45; 22:10
 3. It is used in contrast with phalon. Rom. 9:11; 2 Co. 5:10;

- C. *Agathos* is used in composition with *poieo* and *ergon* to emphasize **that which is beneficial; to do something which profits others; to be a good help to someone**. – Louw-Nida/Joseph Thayer
 - 1. It is used with *ergon* to emphasize the proper mindset to those who are rich in the age. 1st Tim. 6:18
 - 2. It is used in composition with *poieo* to emphasize the attitude Israel was told to have for those who were their enemies. Lk. 6:35
- D. “Doing good” is a spiritual sacrifice of the believer-priest. Heb. 13:15
 - 1. All believers are priests. 1st Pet. 2:5,9
 - 2. All believers offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. cf. 1st Pet. 2:5

II. AGATHOS DESCRIBES BENEFICIAL THINGS AND PEOPLE IN THIS LIFE.

- A. *Agathos* is used to describe inanimate things in life.
 - 1. It is used of gifts. Matt. 7:11 (that men give); Ja. 1:17 (that God gives)
 - 2. It is used of possessions. Lk. 16:25
- B. *Agathos* is used to describe the kind of life that can be lived. 1st Pet. 3:10
- C. *Agathos* is used to describe persons that are good.
 - 1. Used of those that belong to God. Mat. 5:45
 - 2. Used of Barnabas in the early church. Acts 11:24

III. GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR THE GOOD TO BE DONE IN THE WORLD IN CONTRAST TO THE EVIL WORKS OF THE DARKNESS.

- A. God allows the believer to participate with Him in providing “the good”.
 - 1. God provided good works for the believer to do. Eph. 2:10
 - a) A carnal believer cannot accomplish this good. Rom. 7:18-19
 - b) The believer is encouraged to be wise concerning this good. Rom. 16:19
 - c) It should be done from a willing heart. Philemon 14
 - 2. Believers are told to “mimic” that which is “good”. 3 John 1:11; 1st Pet. 3:13
- B. Those in authority are used by God to clear the way for “the good”. Rom. 13:4
- C. God uses things in the spiritual believer’s life to work towards the accomplishment of “the good.” Rom. 8:28
- D. Doing good is seen in the believer’s everyday conduct.
 - 1. It is seen in submission to governing authorities. Rom. 13:3
 - 2. Seen in laboring with one’s hands to give to others. Eph. 4:28
 - 3. Seen in providing the good to all men. Gal. 6:10
 - 4. Seen in the believer pleasing others for “the good”. Rom. 15:2
 - a) “Please” is the word *aresko* which means **“to accommodate one’s self to the opinions desires and interests of others.”** --

Thayer's Lexicon cf. 1st Co. 10:33; Rom. 15:1,3
b) "Neighbor" in this context is another believer.

CONCLUSION