

"GOOD WORKS" START WITH PRAYER

*"For we are God's handiwork,
created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Ephesians 2:10*

REFLECTION

We live in a world densely populated with action: epitomized by memorable slogans through the ages like NIKE's "Just do it!" and quotations like "Don't just stand there, do something!" attributed to the late Mr Lee Iacocca (1924-2019), that American automobile executive celebrated for his visionary style of leadership and the absence of fear of taking risks. So, when we read this verse about "good works", we naturally think of "works" that are outward expressions of our faith in God, our lives and lifestyles that have been transformed by His salvation and His grace, and a love for others now renewed and rejuvenated.

There's nothing wrong with all this. Just don't go overboard with ostentatious shows of piety for others to see, admire and compare, with the urge for immediate action and with our expectations for immediate and positive outcomes. We also need to look out for the other extreme: our limited understanding of what our transformed lives and lifestyles are. It will lead us to a limited understanding of ourselves as God's handiwork, and in turn, the type and extent of "good works" that He as our Maker has prepared in advance for us to do.

To set us on the right path for "good works", let's start with prayer. After all, before "good works", God has already commanded us to pray - without ceasing - always and not to give up - and even for our enemies. Let's pray for wisdom to see how God has made us - values that we have been raised with for life and lifestyle, resources and capabilities that we have been blessed with, and spiritual gifts imbued by Him for service and ministry. Finally, let's pray for hearts open to the Spirit's prompting, eyes to discern opportunities and a focus to make full use of them.

PRAYER

Almighty God, my Heavenly Father, I thank You for setting me up with values, resources, capabilities and spiritual gifts. I ask now for Your prompting of how You want me to exercise them, Your discernment of the opportunities and Your focus on making full use of them. Lead me to a fuller understanding of the "good works" that You have prepared in advance for me to do. May Your purposes be fulfilled in all that I do. In Jesus' Name, I pray, AMEN.

SUPPLICATION

- Pray for wisdom and discernment on what the "good works" are in your station and season of life and in your prevailing circumstances. Make notes of what comes to mind. Cross check with your spouses and children (and with those whom you are in a serious relationship with). If there is a need to ascertain the spiritual gifts that you have been blessed with, look for proper assessments to work through and ask those whom you trust for their views. Record and pray over all that you hear from them. This will be a start to help you discern and decide what the "good works" that God has already lined up for you.
- If you have not already done so, first look at your family circle, immediate and extended, pray for opportunities to do "good works". It may not be as easy as you think. They may not share your values. They may not be as close as you would like them to be. Worse, is there anyone whom you prefer not to even say "hello"? Were you greatly relieved of not seeing that person during the recent Lunar New Year visits? Perhaps, this should be your starting point, unique to you, to reach out and demonstrate your life and lifestyle, transformed by God and salvation through Christ Jesus.
- Consider extending the scope of your "good works" to joining in agencies and groups that are involved in community work. As we move into the phase of living with COVID-19 endemically, there is still need for strong social action and support for the low-income households, those with special needs, the elderly who are vulnerable, the homeless and the migrant workers. Consider then your involvement in BRMC's ministries such as **OUTREACH & SOCIAL CONCERNS, PRISONS, EPWORTH and OASIS BRMC MINISTRY**
- Pray for those who are asking themselves what their "good works" would be in spite of their even more difficult living circumstances. Think of the believers in Hong Kong. Caught in between the geo-politics of "one country, two systems" and limited by confusing and progressively restrictive movement, what does "good works" mean for them? Let us pray for them as they pray for themselves. Pray that they will find their own answers and the love to make full use of the opportunities available.

"...take time to let the story of God's grace in Ephesians 2:1-10 sink in. Grace changes us. It changes our stories. Let grace rewrite your story."

posted on ZA blog

<https://zondervanacademic.com/ephesians-2-10>

*If you need any prayer or pastoral care support,
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