

The Work of the Lord—a Mark That Matters

The work of the New Testament church is a mark that matters. To replicate the New Testament church is to replicate the work that the church does. The Bible is specific when it tells us what we should be doing. I Cor. 15:58 says: “. . . stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” The phrase *work of the Lord* tells us what kind of work we are to be doing—the Lord’s work. The Scriptures instruct us on the nature and type of work that we are to be doing: “All Scripture in God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (II Tim. 3:16).”

Not just any work will do. Throughout the Bible, men have sought to innovate when it comes to doing what the Bible commands. “Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before Jehovah,” we learn in Numbers 26:61. God has always required that his servants do his work. Jesus taught: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers (Mt.7:21-23)!’” To Jews that believed on him, Jesus said: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.” The work of the Lord is the only work that will do. The scriptures thoroughly equip us for his work.

What do the Scriptures tell us to do? *The Work of the Church, Part 2* will study in detail the specific items of the work that the church is to do. In brief, there are four functions. One function is the worship, which will be studied in the lessons on worship. The remaining three are preach the gospel, edify and teach the church members, and do benevolent work as required by the New Testament. The following passages will help you study for Part 2:

- Preach the gospel: Mark 16:15-16; Mt. 28:19; Eph 3:10; II Tim.3:2
- Edify and teach the church member: Eph. 4:12; Tit. 2:1-15
- Benevolent work: Acts 2, 6, 11; I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 8, 9; I Tim. 5:9.

What things are not included in the Scriptures? The biggest obstacle to imitating the New Testament pattern for work is a prevailing notion that the gospel is a social gospel. People with this idea change the focus from preaching the Gospel to save the souls of the lost to ministering to their social and physical needs. The Social Gospel idea emphasizes such works as feeding the hungry, creating recreation for the young, and solving the social problems of homes and society. All of these are good works; and in the proper place and with the proper emphasis, they are appropriate for individuals and sometimes for the church. However, the good works label alone is not enough to justify them. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven.”

The Work of the Lord—a Mark That Matters

Nature of the Lord's Work I Cor. 15:58

- Stand firm
- Don't move
- Always
- Give yourselves fully
- Labor in the Lord
not vain

Authority for the Lord's Work Mt. 7:21-23

- Old Testament examples
Ex. 26:61
- Scriptures thoroughly equip for
good work I Tim. 3:16
- Do the Will of the Father
Mt. 7:21-23
- Some work is of the devil
Jno.6:44

The Work of the Church

- Preach the gospel: Mark 16:15-16; Mt. 28:19; Eph. 3:10; II Tim.3:2
- Edify and teach the church member: Eph. 4:12; Tit. 2:1-15
- Benevolent work: Acts 2, 6, 11; I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 8, 9; I Tim. 5:9

Beware the Social Gospel with Its Good Works Label

The Work of the Lord—a Mark that Matters

Questions and Answers

Read I Cor. 15:48 .

1. List four characteristics that describe our work for the Lord. 1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
2. When is your labor in the Lord not vain? _____
3. Read Mt. 7:21.
4. Who were the priests who offered strange fire (Ex. 26:61)? _____
5. What was wrong with their fire? _____
6. What did God do to them? _____
7. What equips us for every good work (I Tim. 3:16)? _____
8. To what degree are we equipped? _____
9. Who will enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 7:21)? _____
10. List three groups to whom Jesus will say, "I never knew you, away from me." _____
11. What did he call these people? _____
12. Who are the children of the devil (Jno. 6:44)? _____
13. The church is charged with doing what three categories of work? _____
14. List four scriptures that tell us to preach the gospel. _____
15. List two scriptures that tell us edify and build up the church. _____
16. List four scriptures that tell us do certain benevolent works. _____
17. What is the social gospel? _____
18. Does the end ever justify the means? _____
19. Name some good works that are not the work of the church (For a clue see I Tim. 5:11 and 5:8). _____
20. Can you discuss the difference between individual and congregational responsibility? _____
21. Can you identify some works that both individuals and congregations are to do? _____