

SESSION 1: DO GOOD TO PLEASE GOD

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Matthew 6:1-4; Galatians 2:20

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to you to “do good”? (see Galatians 6:10 and Ephesians 2:10)
2. What are some examples of good things that we can do to please God?
3. Matthew 6:1-4 clearly shows Jesus’ desire for us to do good works out of our love for God, and for no other reason. What are some “ulterior motives” that can sometimes exist when we do good works?
4. Read Luke 9:23-24. Jesus’ words here are connected to the “crucifying of self” mentioned in the video/script. Describe what it means to crucify the self. How does this differ from the “cult of self” also discussed in the video/script?
5. What do you think is your responsibility to society?
6. How does a person “live in Christ”? (reference Galatians 2:20)
7. How does doing good bring God glory and satisfy a believer’s soul?

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SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

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Today we will start by diving deeper into what Jesus said about doing good in Matthew 6:1-4:

Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Jesus is making the point that we should serve and do good out of love for God and each other and for no other reason. In all that we do we should ask ourselves, "what is my motivation?" When the love of God continues to develop and grow in us, we allow His Spirit to move us to do good. This in turn will glorify God and please Him. The love of God was poured into our soul on the day of our Holy Sealing. We want to develop into this love and have it become a driving force in our lives. What are some of the forces today, which can hinder this love?

Our Chief Apostle, described this force today as the "cult of the self". It is a real scourge of our time. It is absolutely incompatible with Christian faith. To live in Christ, we must "crucify" the self and allow the spirit of Jesus in us to develop.

God does not ask us to discard our personality and will, but rather align our will with His, and renounce the cult of the self, which manifests itself through three traits:

1. **Egoism** – which consists of seeking the satisfaction of our own needs and desires without taking into account those of our neighbor. We could think of this as "*me first.*"
2. **Egocentrism** - which we could think of as self-centeredness or "*it's all about me.*" The egocentric considers the outside world only in terms of their own person.
3. **Individualism** - is when a person considers themselves more important than the community to which they belong and their interests take precedence over the common good. Basically, their mindset is "*I am better.*"

Life in Christ has very concrete repercussions on our behavior, first within society. We are aware of our responsibilities and willingly contribute to our community. We do not retreat into ourselves under the pretext that we do not need anyone or do not care about them. Even in personal relationships, we seek the happiness of each other and build them on Jesus' teachings about love. Another place to do good is in the congregation. Within the body of Christ, the well-being of each member depends on all. The love of Christ prompts us to sacrifice some of our personal interests for the good of the congregation.

Let us follow the advice of Apostle Paul in Galatians 2, verse 20: *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.*

When Paul made this statement, he did not mean that our faith prevents us from loving and enjoying the pleasures of life. We can work for our personal and professional success, but money, pleasure, and glory do not fully satisfy our soul. Rather, it is our faith in Christ that will give us an abundant and fulfilled life.

Doing good does not call into question our uniqueness or personality. On the contrary, it contributes to the fulfillment of the "good works" that God has called us to do. We become the person that God created us to be, with our gifts, passions, and interests. When we follow His calling to do good, we will love as He loves, become a blessing for others, and experience a fulfilled life in Christ.