

The Do Nothing Gospel

Neil Girrard

There is a strange perversion of the good news of Christ being taught these days that says we must do nothing – any work whatsoever is “self-effort” so as to be saved or a return to law as a way to earn one’s salvation. A simple perusal of the teachings of the New Testament, however, clearly refutes this do nothing “gospel.”

- Jesus said, “Whoever *does* the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.” (Mk. 3:35)

- Jesus said, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not *do* the things which I say?” (Lk. 6:46)

- Jesus said, “He who heard [My words] *and did nothing* is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” (Lk. 6:49)

- James wrote, “Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (Jas. 1:21-22) Those who only listen to the Word of God implanted in their souls are those who *deceive themselves!*

- Peter wrote, “With all diligence, [*you*] add to your faith goodness [good deeds, works]...” (2 Pet. 1:5) Your diligence is required to press into the things of Christ and God.

- Peter wrote, “Brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for *if you do these things* you will never stumble [fall away from the faith or from grace].” (2 Pet. 1:10) *You* - not God, not Christ, not the Holy Spirit - *you* must do these things.

- James wrote, “Therefore [*you*] submit to God. [*You*] resist the devil and he will flee from you. [*You*] draw near to God and He will draw near to you. [*You*] cleanse your hands, you sinners; and [*you*] purify your hearts you double-minded.” (Jas. 4:7-8) If we will not do these things as we have been instructed, who will do them for us?

- Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself [his own will and desires, especially for comfort and ease], and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” (Lk. 9:23) Having commanded *us* to *do* this, will He suddenly bend over and carry our cross for us while moving our feet in the right direction? No.

- Jesus said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so *doing* when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master’s will, and *did not prepare himself or do according to his will*, shall be beaten with many stripes.” (Lk. 12:42-47) This whole teaching is centered upon the need to *do* the Master’s will. Those who don’t do His will are dismissed or punished!

- Paul wrote, “My beloved, as you have always obeyed [God and His Word – remember they did not have the “New Testament” then!], not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work* out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Phlp. 2:12) Those who use Paul’s next sentence – “for it is God who works in you...” (Phlp. 2:13) – to excuse their responsibility to co-labor with Christ and God are those who take away from God’s truths.

- Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9) This is perhaps the most relied upon verse (virtual proof-text) used to show that we are not saved by works. This is indeed the truth but it is not the whole counsel of God because, even as Paul goes on immediately to say, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in [habitually practice] them.” (Eph. 2:10)

- Paul wrote, “[Jesus Christ] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless [what is right in our own eyes] deed and purify for Himself His own special people *zealous for good works*.” Paul even goes on to tell Titus, “Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you [because you speak these ‘things which are proper for sound doctrine.’]” (Tit. 3:14-15, also 2:1, 2 Tim. 4:3-4)

- Paul wrote, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but *I labored more abundantly* than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Cor. 15:10) Those who do nothing after receiving God’s grace are those who receive God’s grace in vain and who have, through ignorance, negligence and laziness departed from both grace and faith. (see also Paul’s claim that both he and Timothy did the *work* of the Lord – 1 Cor. 16:10; also consider Jesus’ statement, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been *working*.” – Jn. 5:17)

- James wrote, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. But even the demons [who will never be saved] believe – and tremble! But do you

want to know, O foolish man, that *faith without works is dead*? ...Do you see that faith was working *together* with [Abraham's] works, and by works faith was made perfect [complete]? ...You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith without works is dead* also.” (Jas. 2:20, 20, 22, 24, 26) This passage is ignored or subjected to violent “theological” twists, spins and distortions to avoid the plain meaning of what James wrote.

- Paul wrote, “Let *each one* examine *his own work*, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” (Gal. 6:4)

- Paul wrote, “[Christ gave graced or gifted men] for the equipping of the saints for the *work* of ministry [service of genuine needs]...” (Eph. 4:11-12) No one desires that the work of serving true needs be disrupted more so than does the devil, the enemy of God and our souls. Those who do nothing are his pawns and dupes.

- Paul wrote, “We give thanks to God always for you [Thessalonians], making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your *work of faith, labor of love*, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.” (1 Ths. 1:2-4) God’s call must result in the recipients’ *work* of faith and *labor* of love or it is a false “gospel.”

- Paul wrote, “If anyone *cleanses himself* from [having been a vessel of dishonorable use], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified [set apart] and useful for the Master, *prepared for every good work*.” (2 Tim. 2:20-21)

- Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction [training, discipline] in righteousness [what is right, good and true in God’s eyes], that the man of God [that is *every man* in Christ!] may be complete, *thoroughly equipped for every good work*.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17) While those who are led into all truth by the Spirit of truth (the Holy Spirit of God – Jn. 15:26, 16:13) are able to rightly divide the teachings of Christ, the do nothing “gospel” must scissor out and explain away many things. While Paul spoke here of the rightful use of Scripture, Peter clearly warned that those who have not been taught by the Spirit of truth but have concocted their own private interpretations twist and distort the Scriptures to their own and their listeners’ destruction. (2 Pet. 1:20-21, 3:16)

- Paul wrote, “They [the insubordinate, idle talkers and deceivers, the defiled and unbelieving] profess to know God, but in works [or the lack thereof] they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and *disqualified for every good work*.” (Tit. 1:16)

- The writer of Hebrews exhorts us, “Consider one another in order to stir up love *and good works*...exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day [of Christ’s return] approaching.” (Heb. 10:24-25)

- John wrote, “Everyone who has this hope in Him [to be like Him when He is revealed] *purifies himself*, just as He is pure.” (1 Jn. 3:2-3)

- John heard a great multitude at the wedding supper of the Lamb saying, “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and *His wife has made herself ready*.” John then goes on to write, “And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the *righteous acts of the saints*.” (Rev. 19:6-8, also see Mt. 22:11-14 where the man not properly attired is *removed* from the wedding feast.)

- John wrote, “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged *according to their works*, by the things which were written in the books... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:12, 15) “Theologians” and prophetic prognosticators are quick to point out that “the dead in Christ” (1 Ths. 4:16, etc.) could not possibly be in this resurrection and thus the deeds of Christians are not the basis of how a believer will be judged. (see however Mt. 16:27 where Jesus promises “the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each *according to his works*.”) Jesus also warned His followers of the need to overcome. “He who *overcomes* shall be clothed in white garments, and *I will not blot out* [remove, erase, mark over] his name from the Book of Life...” (Rev. 3:5, also see Rev. 7:14 where those who have come out of the great tribulation “washed their [own] robes and [they themselves] made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”) It is never a wise idea to pin one’s hopes for a blessed eternal destiny on what the “theologians” and prophetic prognosticators argue over!

These are not a few, isolated “proof-texts” – these are the Scriptures that convey the whole counsel of God whereby those led by the Spirit of truth can rightly divide and apply these truths. The truly amazing thing is that a person under this false do nothing “gospel” will be able to read all of the above Scriptures and be able to twist, spin, distort and dismiss away all the plain meanings of what was written. If this is not strong delusion (2 Ths. 2:11), it would be difficult to know what to call it!

For those who insist upon a simple restatement of the whole of the New Testament’s teaching, we can safely say that *all* of salvation is a work of God – but part and parcel within a genuine salvation experience (process is probably a better word) will be the works that give evidence of a true regeneration. The true gospel is not a gospel wherein salvation is acquired by doing certain works – but any true salvation will be proven by the works a person does *because of* the new life of Christ within. Not a salvation *of* works but a salvation *that* works! Anyone who does not receive the grace (power) of God to do the works described above truly needs to question whether they have ever received the grace (power) of God that gives new, abundant and

eternal life. Those “theologians” who try to differentiate between works done “of” salvation contrasted with those done “for” salvation are misguidedly trying to write laws that discern the hearts of men – a work reserved for the Word, the Person of Jesus Christ, the Man Who Is God. (Heb. 4:12)

We must put our faith in *Him*, repent of our misdeeds and bear fruit worthy of a true repentance. (Mt. 3:8) We must not dismiss the godly sorrow stirred up in our hearts as “just the devil putting us through a guilt trip.” “Godly sorrow produces repentance [that leads] to salvation, not to be regretted.” (2 Cor. 7:10) We must reject the “its” – the doctrines, the creeds, the dogmas of men – that replace *Him* as the focus and source of all of our life in God. When we desire to do His will, we will be able to discern when men are speaking truth or simply trying to draw us after themselves or their own deceptions. (Jn. 7:17) This is the true gospel.

Let he who has ears hear.

Neil Girrard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org

Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org

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