

And, yes, we need to maintain good works — good works as determined by God’s revealed will. “The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people” (Titus 3:8). “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8–10).

God’s grace, alone, should be more than enough fuel for the fires of our zeal. It really is just a matter of us deciding for ourselves how much God’s grace has affected us and how much we will do for His name’s honor and glory.



If God’s grace is nothing more to you than a grudging necessity, then it’ll show. Our attitude toward God’s grace will affect our service to Him and to our brothers and sisters — “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (HEBREWS 10:24–27).

Chiefland Church of Christ

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THINGS ABOVE

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth”

—[Colossians 3:1–2]—

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Rekindling the Flame

By Jamey Hinds

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession *who are zealous for good works*” (Titus 2:11–14).

There is such a great and continuing temptation to allow ourselves to be lulled into a spiritual slumber. But heaven is not for

those who have given in! When Jesus was asked by someone, “‘Lord, are there few that be saved?’ And he said unto them, ‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able’” (Luke 13:23–24). The word *strive* comes from the Greek *agonízomai* from which we have the words *agonize* and *agony*. The idea is simple enough — if we really desire heaven we will struggle in this life now just as the Lord himself did, and as his apostles did too.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11–12). “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:12–17).

Heaven is not owed to us at all. “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not

because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4–7).

We need to lay hold on eternal life (cf. 1 Timothy 6:12, 19). This means that we need to “get a grip.” As Christians, we have a reality set before in heaven that we can be confident of if we trust and obey. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God” (1 John 3:18–21).

We need to pray more diligently, more fervently. We need to study God’s word finding in it the jewels of wisdom the Father of lights has put in it — “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:44–46). “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23).