



GOD'S ANSWERS: Session Six

What does this mean? The role of God's truths and our culture's worldviews in shaping our thoughts.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, Your Word is truth. Keep us steadfast in Your Word even as the evil one seeks to whispers his lies into our ears. Keep us with Your Son who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

God's revealed truth – Augsburg Confession Article Six

Read Aloud:

"It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God's sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God. For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ himself says, "So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants'" (Luke 17:10). The Fathers also teach thus, for Ambrose says, "It is ordained of God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, and he shall have forgiveness of sins, not through works but through faith alone, without merit."

Q: How is this Truth undercut in our world?

A: Allow for some discussion about this question in general, then focus the thoughts on the fact that many Christians still believe that their works are things they do to earn favor with God. Some believe that they will earn heaven through them while others believe doing them is a way to manipulate God into dispensing earthly blessings in the area of health or wealth. Other Christians talk so little about doing good works that they at the very least give the impression that they are altogether unnecessary. Choose one or more of the examples on the next sheet entitled "Cultural Attempts to undermine this truth" to help show how these lies continue to deceive. Then return here to finish this session.

Q: How is this truth revealed in the Scriptures. Why does it matter?

A: Read the following verses that speak about how we are to view good works as Christians. Emphasize that these works are a natural and expected part of the new life we have in Christ. They are an expression of our thankfulness to God since we know that God's favor rests on us already because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. We do not do them to try to get something from God. We do them just as part of who we are, thankful to be included in God's kingdom. We pray that God will use any work our hands do for the benefit of His kingdom.

- *Ephesians 2:8-10: "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."*

- *Luke 17:7-10: "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"*
- *Matthew 5:16: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, You have given us not only eternal salvation to be enjoyed forever with You but also new life to be lived out right now. Grant that all we do may be pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Cultural Attempts to undermine this truth:

Example 1:

Play the clip of then presidential candidate Donald Trump found at <https://youtu.be/9vnQT3vQiCl>. He is seeking to motivate people to give to his campaign by promising them a place on his “wall of fame.” Talk about how often we are motivated to do things in life to get recognition before man. Then talk about how we often think the same about God. We think that if we do something for Him, He owes us His appreciation to be shown in some tangible way in our life. This example is not given at all to make any commentary on President Trump but just to show a quick example of how easily people are motivated by recognition or rewards. You could use any number of other examples.

Example 2:

Play the clip from Jesse Duplantis found at <https://youtu.be/EWucqlcsGLY>. Note that he begins by giving a brief beautiful reminder that Christians upon Jesus’ return will return to an Eden-like world to live with God. Then note how the commercial following swallows up that good teaching with bad. He suggests that we must sow good things in order to get God’s blessing. He speaks in the brief clip about sowing money to unlock God’s blessing. This false teaching is often called the “Prosperity Gospel.” In general, it teaches us that all good works are simply ways to manipulate God into giving earthly blessings to us. This teaching directly opposes the biblical idea of doing good works out of thankfulness and not expecting any reward for them.

Example 3:

Talk about the idea of participation awards. Point out that our world often likes to give the idea that being on the team is enough, even if you do not necessarily do anything that is asked of you. While it is true that our works do not earn us anything before God, we do want to be clear that being on the team means having things to do. God intends to use everyone He saves to do good works He has planned for them.

Example 4:

Talk about the idea of “Sunday-only Christianity.” Talk about how some people believe and live as if their faith only matters when they are gathered in church on Sundays. They forget that being saved gives us a whole new life which is lived out in all of the places we are called to live each day. Again, God has not only saved us for a future life with Him, but a present life of service to Him shown in serving others.