

Imitate God in Doing Good (part 2)

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[0 : 00] And take your Bibles and turn to 2 Peter chapter 1. 2 Peter 1.

Let's listen to God speaking to us. 2 Peter 1. Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

Through these, He has given us His very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness, knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love.

[1 : 50] For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For if you possess these qualities in the divine nature, therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Well, the fountain of God's goodness has found us another week and has brought us to this day, and He has new mercies for us today. We are coming to the end, Lord willing, this morning, of our study on the goodness of God, and we've come to that application of His goodness.

What is our response to that goodness to look like? And we saw that last week, according to the Lord Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, that we are to respond to His goodness by imitating Him in doing good to others like He does.

[3 : 26] So we looked first at the examples of imitating God's goodness to others, and we saw that the Lord Jesus, the perfect man, perfectly exemplifies the Father's goodness to us.

In fact, His life was summarized by the Apostle Peter in Cornelius' household as He went about doing good, that highest good of which we just sang in laying down His life for us, that we might profit from His poverty.

And then we looked at Dorcas, who was always doing good, Joseph of Arimathea, and then Barnabas, that son of encouragement, and their example of imitating the Father in doing good. Secondly, we saw that doing good is impossible without a new heart. We're born bad, and it's impossible for us to do good apart from the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and His dwelling in us, bearing the fruit of goodness in our lives.

Thirdly, we saw that doing good is the very purpose for which God saved us. He redeemed us to have a people who are eager to do what is good. And then fourthly, we said, be sure that your goodness to others includes your enemies, even as Jesus taught us, to do good to those who hate you.

[4 : 49] Now, this response of imitating God's goodness to others is so big on God's heart that I have eight more points to give you from Scripture this morning.

So let's dig in. Number one, and this is just in addition to the other four, which makes a nice dozen. So, number one, we are to make every effort to do good.

Here we are in 2 Peter. If you've got your Bibles, look at it there. 2 Peter, chapter one. We find that God's goodness explains so much about our lives as Christians.

Brothers and sisters, why are you saved? Why, as you sit here this morning, is the righteousness of God, our Savior, Jesus Christ, yours?

Why do you have a faith as precious as Peter's? Why is grace and peace yours in the knowledge of God? And why has God's power given you everything that you need for life now and God, for life and godliness?

[6 : 02] Well, the answer, according to Peter, at the end of verse 3, is because he called you. He called you by his glory and goodness. Now, this is not his general call that he gives to all men to come to me.

Jesus is preaching that message through his messengers today all over the world. The general call is going out. Come to me, Jesus. Jesus says. But not everyone calls or comes and answers that call.

The call we're talking about that Peter's referring to here is a call that eventuates in coming to Christ and being justified. For all whom God calls, he justifies.

Romans 8.30. That's the call we're talking about here. His special call that attends the general call with power to effect the invitation and to bring the sinner to Christ.

So this call, he called you. He called you when he found you spiritually dead. He came and gave you life.

[7 : 11] He enlightened your mind. He redirected your affections and desires. He renewed your will. He overcame all your objections that were keeping you from coming to Christ.

He wooed you. He drew you. And enabled you to come so that you came willingly to receive Jesus Christ and salvation in him.

He called you. And what moved him to call you? Peter tells us his own glory and goodness.

You see that? The end of verse 3. Who called us by his own glory and goodness. Here we are right down at the very fountain of salvation. Why did he call you?

Because of his glory and goodness. His own glory and goodness. His good heart that delights to delight and bless others. And out of that goodness overflowed his action of calling you to Christ and effectively bringing you to Christ to be saved.

[8 : 22] And that's not all. It's through this same glory and goodness that he says he's given us his very great and precious promises so that through them we might participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption that's in the world because of evil desires.

Oh how thankful we are for the promises and partaking of the divine nature and escaping the corruption in the world. That came from his goodness. And what is to be our response then to such goodness in calling us to this Savior and this great salvation?

Verse 5. For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness. Now that's one of the many virtues that follows that are to be added to our faith and it teaches us that the Christian faith is not something static and dead like a stagnant puddle.

No, it's something alive and moving and it's advancing it's growing it's adding to our faith because he has been so good to you in salvation now you do good and do good like God.

Make sure that having received goodness you freely give it now. You be a channel of his goodness to others. So add to your faith goodness.

[9 : 57] Imitate him in doing good. And verse 8 tells us we're to possess these qualities goodness included in increasing measure. That means you should be gooder today than you were last year.

Excuse the language. Increasingly good. Doing more good than we did last month.

Well ever adding ever increasing in likeness to God our Father who does good is good and does good.

Nothing less is needed to keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord. Nothing less is needed to make your calling and election sure and is the way to receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What a passage. 2 Peter 1 1-11 Add to your faith goodness. So number one this morning make every effort did you see that verse 5 make every effort to do good.

[11 : 08] That's working with all out effort that's 100% exertion. Someone says but I thought you just told us last time that goodness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that it's the Spirit the good Spirit working in our hearts that produces good.

Yes I did and the Bible teaches that but that does not mean that we're passive and we just do nothing that we just sit by as spectators waiting for God to do good through us.

No no not at all he helps us as we make every effort to do good. In fact he even enables our making an effort to do good.

But we must do the good. He doesn't do it for us. He doesn't do it instead of us so we don't just sit around waiting for him to work in us.

We make every effort to do good. Those are the Holy Spirit's words. The one who produces this fruit in us. He says get with it John every effort after good and I'll be right there enabling you to do good at the very same time that you are making every effort.

[12 : 22] But if you don't make the effort it won't get done. And it is a sad and a destructive misunderstanding of God's way of salvation that says that if we are trying hard then we obviously are not trusting.

As if we were really trusting God to work in us then we wouldn't have to try hard. It would just flow out of us so naturally we wouldn't even be trying. That's faulty and damaging.

It fails to take into consideration our remaining sin that is against every good. That's got to be fought. That's got to be trampled on. That takes much effort to put to death that we might do good. Make every effort. Wrestle, fight, struggle. There's no letting go and letting God in the Christian life. Philippians 2, 12 and 13 has it so beautifully.

We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. You, you must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. And here's the encouragement verse 13.

[13 : 35] For it is God who is working in you both to will and to do what pleases him. But you see it's not one or the other. How do we add goodness to faith?

With all out effort to be good and with all out dependence on God to make us good. Choose one or the other and you'll end up in a spiritual ditch going nowhere only depending on God not making any effort ditch only making all out effort but not depending on God ditch what's the highway of holiness for the Christian it's living with the tension of both at the same time trusting and trying with all our effort working out our salvation for it is God who is working in so that's the first one and we must move along more quickly make every effort to do good 2 Peter 1 5 now secondly make plans to do good all the rest of these points along the way are really just showing us what does it mean to make every effort to do good well this is some other points that will show us what that would look like and secondly then make plans to do good you make plans don't you

I would imagine some of you planned to be here this morning didn't you that's why you're here what other things do you plan for well you plan for your health and the health of your kids those checkups at the dentist's office or the doctor's office maybe even plan for your exercise routine or your diet what you're eating there's some planning that goes into weddings isn't there and anniversaries and days off and vacations and hundred other things even plans for retirement you don't just leave these things to the spur of the moment why because they're too important to you and so you you want to be sure that you do that that you do them so you plan for them you may even write down in a calendar a day timer so that you don't forget you know usually things get done more faithfully more regularly when they are planned right your exercise routine you just leave it to spur of the moment not as faithful as when you plan for it well that's it make plans then to do others good that's godlike that's what father does and we're to imitate him in doing good god is good and does good but did you know he never works without purpose without purpose or plan the plans of the lord stand firm forever psalm 33 10 he planned to send his son into the world to live the perfect life we couldn't to die the death we should have to rise again victorious and live now for us and to come again for us one day he planned all of that for you he planned to send his

Holy spirit to you before the creation of the world visions one tells us so you too be like father and plan your good works to others it's father like again there's this debilitating doctrine that's often found among Christians it's just another form of the let go and let God it's the idea that if something is planned if it's not spontaneous well it's obviously not of the spirit now it may be of the flesh but it doesn't have to be of the flesh it can be as much of the spirit as not it's father like to plan it's god like it's christ like to plan three important texts on that topic of planning to do good Isaiah 32 verses 7 and 8 the scoundrel's methods are wicked he makes up evil schemes the scoundrel makes plans to do scoundrel deeds but it goes on the noble man makes noble plans and by noble deeds he stands three times noble it means good means excellent he is noble so he makes noble plans and those noble plans eventuate in noble deeds what you are who you are your identity determines the kind of plans you make whether wicked deeds or wicked plans with the scoundrel or good plans with the noble and those plans result in noble deeds that's

Isaiah 32 7 and 8 so the wicked men make plans for their wicked deeds good men make plan for their good deeds proverbs 14 22 do not those who plot evil go astray but those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness both are planning one's planning evil the other's planning what is good the wicked plot evil why shouldn't the righteous be planning what is good God's word says they do and they should and then psalm 36 4 description of the wicked snapshot of the wicked even on his bed he plots evil he commits himself to a sinful course and does not reject what is wrong so long before he's ever out there committing evil he's plotting evil do you see him there he's on his bed he's not doing anything he's lying there motionless but his mind is running 100 mile an hour and he's plotting the planning the evil deeds he's going to do and he's even committing himself to that evil not rejecting even as he lies there he's committing himself to his plan and then he gets up and he's at it you see now why shouldn't we be plotting good on our beds as we lie there planning committing ourselves to good deeds for the next day the next week you see our problem is we were born with a mindset on ourselves weren't we that's the that's the mindset that we came into the world with and it drives our behavior from our diapers to the grave unless

[20 : 37] God intervenes it's all about me and so first we're in this box if you will then we're born in this box of self and we view life from this box of self and whatever we're considering we're always considering what's in it for self what's in it for me what will this mean for me and and first Corinthians 10 24 says no one should seek his own good but the good of others well then let's have some sessions when we intentionally step out of the box of self and start to consider the needs and desires of others and how we will meet them I couldn't think of a better time than the Lord's day maybe in the evening maybe some other time is better for you that's that's when

I find time I'm freed up from my usual work of the week other concerns of life let's do some holy plotting of good let's sit down and let's think who can I do good to this week how can I do them good when will I do them good brainstorm what can I do with my time my talent my money my words my prayers my deeds you see if it's right to do good it's!

even better to make plans to do good as noble men do usually things are done better when given some forethought and planning so let's put some planning into good deeds this week put it down on your planner your calendar lest it be forgotten or overlooked or even swallowed up by the tyranny of the urgent well God planned his good work of salvation for you remember the very purpose for which he saved you was to have a people of his own who are zealous for good works well then let's plan to be such people third not only plan to do what's good be always ready to do what is good here's titus chapter three in verse one it's something that ministers are told to be reminding their people so I'm reminding you remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities to be obedient to be ready to do whatever is good there it is to be ready to do whatever is good whatever good the situation calls for be ready to do it now this takes us beyond our planning session when we step out of the box and make plans and put it on the calendar yes we are to do good then but this is saying always be ready to do what is good this is outside our planning this is just spur of the moment there's the opportunity do it's the boy scout motto be prepared be ready always ready to do whatever is good now what does that look like being prepared to do what's good always prepared to do what's good what contributes to a state of such awareness readiness

I mean what qualities do you need to be always prepared to do good well let me give you a few suggestions awareness that everyone you meet has needs sometimes I think we were mistaken here and we think that needy people are a rare bird right now there's about 8 billion needy people on the planet we all have needs every single person you meet has needs and I think that's where being ready to do good starts with the awareness that everybody I meet today has some need doesn't mean that I will necessarily be the one to fulfill those needs but to start there second humility humility a humility that esteems others better than myself a humility that says there's no job that I would say well that's beneath me excuse me I'm refined

I'm cultured that's beneath me to do that you know that was the problem that night at the last supper what was the great need the great need was a bunch of smelly feet and dirty feet that needed to be washed but nobody was ready to do that good deed except one he took off his outer garment clothed himself with a towel and got down and washed their feet just like the next day he would go to the cross and wash their souls in his blood it's our savior it's his example he said what you've seen me do now you do to one another humility necessary if my pride is saying I'm too important for that job I'll not be ready another compassion and pity it the old the old King James I think often speaks of compassion Jesus was moved in his bowels his gut was moved at the point of need

when he saw need he was moved by it and he moved toward it it all too easy to see need and to go away from it we don't know what to do with that need we have a hard time relating to that need and so we just we get comfortable which is to get further from the need compassion pity pulls us toward need what does it mean to be ready it means to be filled with love that's willing to sacrifice for the good of others that seeks their good above our own it means conviction!

[26 : 48] of the importance of this thing that we're talking about of doing good this isn't somewhere in the footnote of scripture this is something that is spoken of so often I've taken two weeks to try to show you that our response to God's goodness is to be good to others so that means that we meet every day with a sense of its importance and then flexibility to live in a state of readiness means that you're flexible with your calendar your schedule and you are ready for interruptions to your schedule so that you might meet needs and fulfill God's schedule for you today well what does all this look like well it looks like Jesus the good Samaritan in Jesus parable that's what it looks like you remember that guy he's a Samaritan despised by the Jews and he's on some business he's got places to go things to do people to see and as he comes around the bend there he is it's a needy man he's been robbed stripped beaten and left half dead and here

I am and here he is well he checks his appointment book and he's not on the appointment book no he didn't do that did he that's more like the Levite and the priest who passed by first and they had things to do and people to see and places to go and so they passed by on the other side he wasn't on their schedule for the day and they missed and walked right past the need and then the Samaritan comes along and he sees the man in the pitiful condition he too had as much if not more perhaps to do that day plans of his own but he was ready to do whatever was good so he sees him and he has pity in his heart that draws him toward him rather than to walk around him on the other side like the rest he humbled himself he was humble he was ready to get down and dirty and bloodied and dressing his wounds and then he was flexible and adjusted the schedule that he had for the rest of the day to fit with

God's priorities he sacrificed that he had love that sacrificed his own ride and he put the man on his own donkey and he walked to the inn and he spent his own money to care for him and promised to pay the innkeeper the next day when he left to continue to keep caring for him the man the beaten man's needs trumped all these other concerns that the Samaritan had and Jesus says that was the man that was neighbor to him that's always being ready to do whatever's good well number four be always ready number four be devoted to doing good again we're in Titus chapter three and verse eight to seven verses after be always ready is this statement Titus 3:8 this is a trustworthy saying and I want you Titus to stress these things so that those who have trusted in

God say might that be anyone here today those who have trusted in God that you what may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good these things are excellent and profitable for everyone what is to be careful to devote yourself to doing what is good now if you have devoted to jogging and then with a little prying you find out he only jogs once a month and only if it's not rainy and only if it's between 70 and 80 degrees and only if he feels like it and only if he doesn't have anything else to do and what do you say you say you have slaughtered the word devoted you are not devoted whatever you are you are not devoted to running why not because when a person is devoted to something it's high on the priority list it's something you do whether you feel like it or not whether the conditions are just right or not no you do it because you're devoted to it it has your heart it has your mind your interest and so you pour yourself into that activity that's to be our commitment to doing good to others it's that important to

God that he demands our hearts devotion to this work not just to doing it but to have our heart devoted to it are you all in with doing good to others but Titus 3:8 not only says this is!

[32 : 01] to devote yourself to it says be careful to devote yourselves to doing good do you see the difference there be careful kicks it up another notch be devoted yes but be careful to be devoted in other words give careful concern show care to what to being devoted so when's the last time you've even thought about am I devoted to good deeds this is to be something I'm careful!

mothers you're careful with what you do and feed your children you're careful about it because you love them now God's saying be careful to be devoted!

to doing to doing what is good number five spur one another on to love and good deeds I trust those are familiar words to you they come from Hebrews 10 and verse 24 let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds you see this is so important to God that he not only commands you to be devoted to one another but he commands you to spur one another on to this

business of doing good that's really important to God now to spur a horse on is to encourage it to go faster and when we spur one another on we're encouraging as a spur does in the side of a! it causes such interactions with each other that when people walk away from you they're faster and quicker to do what's good and loving what would that look like well you see that's why he says let's consider how to do this so you go home and figure that out how would my interaction with the saints be what would it look like such that when we turn apart from each other that person is spurred to run faster after good deeds to others you see this is why the gathered assembly is so important why the meetings of the church are to have top priority in our lives as the next verse goes on to say let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another and all the more as we see the day approaching this is one reason we pray that this whole coronavirus will be behind us that we might gather together and linger and talk to each other and pray with each other and spur each other on to love and good deeds it's just that important that God wants it to be a part of our gatherings each time we gather are we considering on the way to the gathering well there's so and so and so and so how could I be a spur to her how could I encourage him were to consider it that was number five spur one another on to good deeds number six use your money to do good to others it's not the only way but it is one of the predominant ways the Bible speaks about doing good to others it's acts of charity it's it's giving of our substance our money our possessions our food whatever it is to others so we can't hardly speak about doing good without speaking of what the Bible often speaks of and that's to do good with your money use your money to do good to others now you'll be glad to know that you're only accountable for what you have and not for what you don't have so we all give an account for what we have in the way of money and possessions and food to share one of my favorite verses is 2nd

[36 : 37] Corinthians 8 and verse 9 for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich what a sweet verse what a gospel what a savior what a Jesus to become poor to make us rich to make us rich forever do you know where that verse is it's tucked right into two chapters where Paul is urging the believers at Corinth to be cheerful and generous in their gifts that they're taking an offering up for to be sent to the saints in Judea who were in need these were people they never met in their lives never would meet until the day that they go to heaven and meet in heaven and Paul stirring them up to give cheerfully and you know the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be enriched now he's done that for you've tasted such goodness from him now you do good to others just like he's done to you the very next chapter goes on remember this whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly whoever sows generously will also reap generously each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give not reluctantly not under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver and God is able to make all grace to abound to you so that in all things at all times having all that you need you will abound in every good work what if I'm generous maybe my needs won't be met no God's able to fill your seed bag again you've been sowing seed and giving

God is able and willing to fill your seed bag again so that you can be generous on every occasion and he ends this whole discussion two chapter discussion ends with verse 15 of chapter 9 thanks be to God for his indescribable gift I'm encouraging you to give generously and cheerfully remembering the indescribable gift that God gave us in giving us his own son well use your money to do others good so why does God financially bless some more than others if not to give them the greater opportunity of enriching others for he commands those who are rich in this present world to do good and to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share in this way they will lay up treasure!

So what's your first thought when you bring the paycheck home? Or more searching perhaps when some unusual increase comes your way that's unexpected not every week perhaps is the thought first what can I buy with this or is it thinking outside the box who can I bless with this maybe it's some of each but where is the who can I bless with this that's father like doing good to others with our money as God did by meeting my greatest need with the blood of his own son well that's number five use your money to bless to do good to others number six we must move on it's use the gospel to do others good now think of this do you realize that the gospel is what kind of news good news so it's good it's something it's doing your neighbor good to give them the good news if it's good to share our bread our physical bread with the hungry so as to keep them alive for a few more

years here what is the good done when we share with them the bread of life which if a man eat he will live forever there can be no higher good than giving someone the good news about Jesus because if they trust him and if you're here without him or watching and you're without this savior if you take this Jesus if you receive him to save you from your sins then you will receive Jesus Christ himself and eternal life in him and a reconciled relationship with God the father for he who has the son has life eternal life abundant life and he has not the son of God has not life so in giving the gospel you see we we can enrich people boys and girls men and women we can enrich them for eternity so having tasted ourselves that the Lord is good we can now say to others who are as lost as we were lost taste and see for yourself that the Lord is good he's promised to forgive! [42 : 26] every sin you have if you come and trust in! Savior and what he did for sinners at Calvary so come and receive taste it you ever try to describe what a strawberry tastes like it's hard work to do there's nothing like giving a strawberry and having someone eat it oh yeah that's good it's hard for us to explain to you who are lost how good it tastes to be forgiven of our sins to have them all blotted out to know that as we stand before God he he will not bring up our sins against us but has enriched us with the righteousness of Jesus on our account and so he looks at Jesus righteousness and has eternal life for us and those ugly sins of mine they have been put over on Christ's account and he bore them to the cross and took every bit of damnation that

I deserve for those sins I can try week by week to explain to you what that tastes like but there's nothing like tasting yourself dear friend taste and see just how good God is you see we are to do people good with our words with our witness we are God's mouth pieces here in this world to do people good he delights to do good and the highest good is to do them the good of salvation that's what Philip was doing he was on the road and he met that Ethiopian eunuch you remember he's reading Isaiah 53 doesn't have a clue what it's about Philip hops up on the chariot with him and says well let me explain to you this one who who was crushed was bruised and broken for our iniquities that was Jesus if you receive him your sins will be paid for and for you will know this forgiveness of sins and he believed he believed right there on the spot first time he's heard the explanation of the gospel and he believed and he stops the chariot and he's baptized and then it says and he went on his way rejoicing

Peter Philip goes down to Samaria he preaches the gospel there such power and many many believed and it says that there was great joy in that city do you know that God delights to make people glad he's made you glad brothers and sisters he's made me glad and now he's saying now go spread the gladness share the gladness psalm 67 make the nations glad you've been made glad by the gospel now you go and make others glad with the gospel that's his goodness now you be his instrument and do good to others with the gospel that's number six thank you I numbered them wrong we're at our last point you got us there quicker than I I was still on six all right that's number seven number eight and our last one don't grow weary in doing good now some of you maybe you're here this morning just because of that you've been doing good but you're growing weary of doing good listen to this word from

God for you Galatians six nine and ten let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not quit if we do not give up therefore as we have opportunity let us do good to all people especially to those who belong to the family of believers doing good is not always easy we've seen that haven't we sometimes it demands sacrifice and so persevering in doing good is even harder than doing good and especially when your good goes unrewarded! good because in this world that's often the way it is your good deeds are often unseen some of you do many good things here every week and most people here don't have a clue what you've done you can grow weary they're unseen they're unthanked they're unrewarded your good is not appreciated you're taken for granted your good is received with ingratitude I think of a mother's good work with her young children and there's just not the appreciation for it's easy to grow weary of doing good then why should I do it it's not appreciated and it's really worrisome when your good is paid back with evil which is often what happens when we are doing good to those who hate us so for these and many other reasons the temptation to grow weary and quit is strong to give up this business of doing good or just to settle with the bare minimum instead of being devoted always ready abounding in every good work so any of you growing weary!

[48 : 01] in some good work what is that good work here's encouragement for you weary saints at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up so take another step and do the next thing of doing good and don't quit don't give up keep on doing good do you know that Jesus was

tempted to quit doing good do you know no one ever did more good and have it repaid with more evil than he did do you know no one was more treated with unthankfulness for all he was doing than Jesus he was tempted to give up Isaiah chapter 50 he was tempted in every way like us but he didn't give up and he says to you that your father who sees in secret will reward you so you're not you're not being rewarded now your father sees what's done in secret and he will reward you he sees your good work that men forget that they overlook won't he can't he's too just for that

Hebrews 6 10 God is not unjust he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you've helped his people and continue to help them so no labor for him is in vain 1st Corinthians 15 58 but you say it's hard John it's hard to keep on doing good when the wait can seem so long well you're right it is a long wait perhaps in one perspective but remember our good works are just for this brief lifetime and then the reward is eternal eternal so be encouraged we have a little more time to love a little more time to do good and then the night comes when no man can work in our labors we will rest from our labors and enjoy being with our savior so that's the future reward but did you know there's an immediate reward for doing good to keep you from quitting it's a double reward first there's your pleasure in seeing the pleasure that you brought to others by your good deeds it really is as

Jesus said more blessed more happy to give than to receive because you get a you're made happy at seeing others made happy that what you did blesses others there's joy in that there's pleasure in that the proverb says a generous man will himself be blessed no small part of his blessing is just seeing the joy that he brings to others but there's an even higher and immediate reward than that and it's God's pleasure in your doing good to others Hebrews 13 16 and do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased the sacrifices you make in doing good with those he sees and he's pleased Colossians 1 10 says we're to please the Lord in every way bearing fruit in every good work every good work it's pleasing to the

Lord fathers you feel the pleasure of your young son's effort to be like you our heavenly father far more pleasure in seeing his children trying to be like him imitating him in doing good to others Stephen Sharnock says God is so delighted with this kind of imitation of him that a cup of cold water when there's no more to be done shall not go unrewarded now that's a father who's delighting in his children that just a cup of cold water he will reward he delights it's his pleasure his delight in us is enough then to keep us from growing weary and doing good I closed with an illustration from Eric Little Great Britain's gold medal winner in the 400 meter race back in the 1924 Paris Olympics as portrayed in the movie chariots of fire he had a godly sister and she wanted her brother Eric to devote himself to ministry in China as a missionary in China well Eric had worked with her in outreaches there in Scotland and so he said he'd pray about it he prayed about it he sought the Lord and he decided I'm going to go to China I'm going to minister to people there in China and he told her that but only after training to run in the Olympics he said well that running part didn't sit well with Jenny you see and so he's trying to explain to her why that was important to him Jenny I do believe God made me for a purpose meaning to go to China spend his life there which he did died in a Chinese concentration camp in China he says I do believe God made me for a purpose but he also made me fast and when I run I feel his pleasure maybe you can't run fast but brothers and sisters in Christ

[53 : 42] Jesus you can do others good and when you do others good you have every reason to feel the pleasure of God in your hearts to know that he is pleased that he is smiling when you do that is unto him when I run I feel his pleasure and you can say when I do good I feel father's pleasure you see that's why he made you that's why he saved you that you might imitate him and enjoy him and enjoy his pleasure in you what a reward in the words of C.S.

Lewis to know that I am an ingredient in the pleasure of God is there anything higher than that well heaven's weight in us that surprises we haven't tasted but it's not bad tasting the pleasure of God in us even now to know that as he says with such sacrifices doing good sharing with others with such sacrifices God is pleased he takes pleasure in it because he sees his own image being reflected in his children so then let us not grow weary in doing good but as we have opportunity let us do good to all people especially to those who belong to the family of believers now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our father who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good word and deed we pray in Jesus name amen amen