

DOCTRINE OF DIVINE GOOD

- I. Introduction.
- A. This doctrine is designed to address the issue of what the directive will of God is for the believer following his Ph₁ salvation.
 - B. Many distortions exist, from the extreme that the believer is not expected to do anything beyond learning the Word of God, to the other extreme that he is just to stay busy, with no regard for scriptural mandates.
 - C. The truth lies in between the two extremes, taking into consideration the passages that stress the intake of Bible doctrine, as well as the passages that urge believers to engage in good works. Col. 1:9-10
 - D. Another issue that will be addressed is the reality that while Divine good production begins in the mental attitude, the actual focus is on the entire process that results in overt, visible applications of doctrine.
 - E. The will of God for the believer to produce acceptable works should not be confused with the issue of Ph₁ salvation, which does not admit human works, effort, or achievements. Tit. 3:5
 - F. Additionally, Divine good production has been distorted by various groups that are not committed to sound doctrine.
 - 1. It must be emphasized that fundamentalist Christianity has generally embraced the fallacious notion that if it is good, God must be in it.
 - 2. This has resulted in concepts like the “purpose driven life”, which promotes the distortion that if any activity brings people to the church/God, it is commendable
 - 3. The idea that “one should not criticize what God is blessing” implies that numerical growth in a church clearly indicates that God is in favor of anything that is done to achieve numerical or monetary success.
 - 4. Further, in some doctrinal churches there has surfaced another distortion that “if I see it as good, pray about it, and God does not shut it down, then it must be His will”.
 - 5. However, the reality is that believers often engage in operation energy of the flesh and then attempt to classify it as Divine good production. Acts 1:15-26, 21:10-14
- II. Greek vocabulary.
- A. ἔργον (ergon), generally, work, action or deed; it is used of God’s works as well as human duties and occupations.
 - 1. It is used in contrast to rest. Heb. 4:4
 - 2. It is used in contrast to word(s). IJn. 3:18
 - 3. James makes it clear that the emphasis is on the overt production of the believer and not what he thinks or says. Jms. 1:25
 - 4. Therefore, the believer has not fulfilled the will of God until his thoughts and words are complemented by the actions God desires. Matt. 7:24-25
 - B. ἀγαθός ἔργον (agathos ergon), 14X. good work, good deed. This phrase focuses on the moral quality of the works as being good, righteous, and acceptable by God’s standards.

- C. καλός ἔργον (kalos ergon), 15X. good work, good deed. This phrase focuses on the fact that our actions are appropriate, noble, and beneficial to others.
- D. καρπός (karpos), 66X, production, fruit, crops, or harvest. Rom. 15:28
 - 1. Metaphorically, this term denotes that which proceeds from, or is produced by something else, an effect or result.
 - 2. The reality is that the fruit must be visible in order for one to identify what kind of fruit it is; in fact, the nature of the fruit demonstrates the nature of the tree. Matt. 7:16
- E. While it has been previously taught that the Greek noun ἀγάπή (agape-love) can be a synonym for Divine good production, closer examination reveals that this is the motivation for the applications of doctrine and not the applications. Jn. 3:16, 15:13
- F. It should be noted that the terms above are not technical (they do not always refer to Divine good production in every context). In Romans 13:3, the phrase ἀγαθός ἔργον (agathos ergon) is used, but it does not refer to Divine good production; the context mandates that it be understood as law-abiding behavior, which any believer or unbeliever can exhibit.

III. Definition and description.

- A. Divine good production is defined as the application of resident Bible doctrine in the soul by the believer that is in fellowship.
- B. Divine good production must proceed from the correct internal considerations, and not be motivated by areas of fleshly lust. Matt. 6:1-8
 - 1. In that regard, believers may do admirable things simply so other believers will be impressed with them, and not because they are led by the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira are examples of believers that allowed approbation lust to motivate their behavior. Acts 5:1ff
 - 2. The pursuit of the details of life under the guise of Divine good production may meet with overt success, but it does not mean that God approves of or will reward such activity. I Tim. 6:5
- C. There are some applications that are made in the mental attitude and verbally that constitute Divine good production; however, the real emphasis of Divine good production is on the entire process, that leads to mental attitude, verbal, and overt application of doctrine.
 - 1. When one observes the Lord's table, the application is largely mental with a minimum of overt energy expended. I Cor. 11:26
 - 2. When one is led by the Holy Spirit to encourage another believer verbally, that also qualifies as Divine good production. Heb. 3:13
 - 3. However, the emphasis of the Word of God is clearly on the quality of the deeds we do; these are what will be evaluated at the Bema seat, not our intentions. II Cor. 5:10; Eph. 6:7-8
 - 4. Further, Jesus emphasized that our witness to the cosmos must be comprised of the applications that they can observe. Matt. 5:16
- D. Each believer must understand that God does not sanction, or reward any activity that is not Divine good, no matter how sacrificial or generous it may be. I Cor. 13:1-3; II Tim. 2:5
- E. By definition, the unbeliever cannot produce Divine good since he is unable to learn Bible doctrine, unable to secure and maintain fellowship with God, and is unable to please God. Rom. 8:8

- IV. Necessary prerequisites for maximum Divine good production.
- A. First and foremost, one must be a believer in Jesus Christ to be qualified positionally to produce Divine good. Jn. 15:3
 - B. Since Divine good production is part of the Divine decree for all believers (Eph. 2:10), new believers should be immediately instructed about this critical aspect of the Christian way of life. IThess. 4:1
 - C. In fact, a new believer that is being led by the Holy Spirit, regardless of time under doctrine, is capable of producing Divine good, since some applications are obvious even to a spiritual novice.
 1. While a believer's frame of reference may limit his application in certain areas, some applications are relatively simple and straightforward. Matt. 7:11a, 10:42
 2. How much time under doctrine does one have to have in order to understand and apply the golden rule, rebound, or the necessity for assembly in Bible class? Matt. 7:12
 - D. Ideally, the believer should be exposed to the correct form of teaching that will produce a proper frame of reference, allowing him to understand what constitutes maximum Divine good production. Rom. 6:17
 - E. The consistent teaching of Bible doctrine by the pastor-teacher is designed to instruct each believer in the particulars of his niche, allowing him to identify and exploit opportunities for Divine good production. IITim. 3:16-17; Heb. 12:1
 - F. In that regard, in the current dispensation, God has provided all that is necessary for the believer to assimilate His plan and maximize Divine good production.
 1. The local church. ITim. 3:15
 2. The pastor-teacher. Tit. 1:5-9
 3. The completed canon of Scripture.
 4. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. ICor. 2:12
 5. The ability to be restored to fellowship. IJn. 1:9
 - G. The believer must be in fellowship to produce Divine good; when a believer sins, he cannot produce Divine good until he is restored to fellowship. Jn. 15:4-7; Gal. 5:22; IJn. 1:9
 - H. Once a believer has isolated the sin nature and is in fellowship, has the proper motives and understanding, then he is able to identify the various opportunities for Divine good production in his niche, and make the appropriate application. Jn. 15:4,7
 - I. In the parable of the soils, the following are necessary components for Divine good production and ultimate growth to maturity. Lk. 8:15
 1. Hearing. The believer must consistently assemble and listen to the issue of sound doctrine.
 2. Intellectual honesty. The believer must be willing to evaluate all things in light of the Word of God, and not simply based on his current understanding.
 3. Positive volition. The believer must want to know the truth and do all that is necessary to gain it.
 4. Tenacity. The believer must hold fast to the truth, recognizing that it will be attacked on many fronts.
 5. Patience. The believer must be willing to endure whatever comes his way, and continue to make applications under difficult circumstances.

- V. The necessity of Divine good production in Ph₂.
- A. Divine good production is a part of the Divine Decrees from eternity past and thus constitutes a very important part of the plan of God for each believer. Eph. 2:10
 - B. Although believers may volitionally decide not to engage in good works; these works are nevertheless commanded of every believer. I Tim. 2:10; Tit. 3:1,8,14
 - C. Our Divine good production is a necessary ingredient in our witness to those on the outside. Matt. 5:16; IPet. 2:12
 - D. Apart from Divine good production, the maturity adjustment is impossible. Lk. 8:15; Col. 1:9-10
 - E. Jesus Christ taught that believers are to focus on every opportunity for Divine good production during the limited time we have on planet earth; Divine good production is impossible after death. Jn. 9:4
 - F. It is interesting to note that the reason for the setting aside of Israel was clearly related to the lack of Divine good production. Matt. 21:33-43; Lk. 13:6
- VI. Hindrances to Divine good production.
- A. In the angelic conflict, it should be evident that Satan is opposed to any activity that brings glory to God; therefore, he will seek to obstruct every application of Bible doctrine. Eph. 6:12ff
 - B. The sin nature, which generally takes the path of least resistance, is not going to enjoy the discipline, suffering, and attendant sacrifices that are sometimes necessary to produce Divine good.
 - C. Therefore, STA activity, which destroys fellowship with God, neutralizes the believer in terms of Divine good production. Jn. 15:1ff
 - D. Clearly one cannot apply what he does not know; thus, the lack of a proper frame of reference limits the ability of the believer to understand what application is appropriate or necessary in a given situation. IITim. 3:17
 - E. The pursuit of the details of life hampers Divine good production, slows spiritual momentum, and may keep believers from the maturity adjustment. Matt. 6:24; Lk. 8:14
 - F. Interestingly enough, continued associations in violation of the doctrine of separation have an adverse effect on Divine good production. IITim. 2:20-21
- VII. Divine good production must be distinguished from human good (which actually forms a hindrance to Divine good production), which involves things done with the wrong motive and/or engaging in actions not sanctioned by the Word of God. ICor. 3:12
- A. Human good is defined as any activity that is not clearly mandated by the Word of God, which proceeds from human systems of wisdom, and does not ultimately glorify God.
 - B. It is part of the cosmic system, consisting of people that are alienated from God, who function under the sin nature 100% of the time, and yet often feel justified. Prov. 14:12
 - C. Human good is characterized by the adjective **worthless** when it is evaluated from the Divine viewpoint. IICor. 5:10
 - D. Satan promotes and encourages human good for unbelievers, as part of his activity to deceive the human race and keep them blinded with respect to the true issues. IICor. 11:13-15
 - E. At the Bema seat, all human good will be destroyed by fire and the believer will lose the rewards he could have had for Divine good production. ICor. 3:15

F. Therefore, all believers should consider what they are doing, why they are doing it, use their time wisely, and seek to limit that which has no eternal value. Eph. 5:16

VIII. Divine promises for those that fulfill the mandate for Divine good production.

A. God will, through His grace, supply all that is necessary for every believer to excel in the various areas of Divine good production. IICor. 9:8-10

B. Divine good production will be the basis for the eternal rewards that are administered at the Bema seat. ICor. 3:12-15

C. Divine good production will be rewarded with an appropriate increment of SG₃, based on the nature, difficulty, and sacrifice associated with the particular application. Matt. 5:12, 10:41-42; ICor. 3:8; Col. 3:24

D. Since believers receive the rewards at the revelation of Jesus Christ, they are exhorted to focus on the importance of SG₃ as part of the motivation to produce Divine good. IPet. 1:13

E. This focus on eternal rewards was certainly the focus of the great believers of history, as they made the appropriate applications in their niches. Heb. 11:13-16,26

F. Further, it was the promise of future reward that motivated Jesus Christ to the ultimate Divine good production. Heb. 12:2

G. There are both temporal and eternal blessings promised to those that will persevere in Divine good production during Ph₂.

1. Temporal blessings. Ps. 19:11, 58:11, 127:3; Prov. 22:4, 25:22; Jn. 15:7

2. Eternal blessings. Lk. 6:23; IIJn. 8; Rev. 2:26-27, 3:10

IX. Concluding observations on the importance of Divine good production.

A. All believers have many opportunities in their respective niches for Divine good production; the Word of God sets forth the particulars for:

1. Ladies. ITim. 2:10, 5:10; Tit. 2:3-5

2. Men. Tit. 2:2,6

3. The prosperous. ITim. 6:18

4. Young people/children. Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20

5. Parents. Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21

6. Husbands and wives. ICor. 7:4ff; IPet. 3:1-7

7. Employers. Col. 4:1

8. Employees. Col. 3:22ff

9. Pastor-teachers. ITim. 3:1-7; IPet. 5:1-4

10. Deacons. Acts 6:2-3; ITim. 3:8-12

11. Widows. ITim. 5:5-6

12. Those with any sort of authority. IICor. 10:8, 13:10

13. Those under the authority of the ECC and RCC. Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17

B. The pastor-teacher plays an important role in the lives of believers with respect to their understanding.

1. He is to instruct them as to the appropriate applications. Eph. 4:12

2. He is to exhort believers to follow through when necessary. Tit. 3:8

3. He is to set an example by persevering in his niche over the years. Tit. 2:7; IPet 5:3

4. He is to pray for his congregation to excel in the matter of Divine good production. Col. 1:10; IIThess. 2:17

- C. Divine good production and God.
 - 1. God is keenly aware of your niche and your applications. Rev. 2:2,19, 3:15
 - 2. He cannot overlook or forget Divine good production. Heb. 6:10
 - 3. He is a fair and impartial judge of Divine good production. IPet. 1:17
 - 4. Divine good production glorifies Him in time, and the blessing of SG₃ provided to those that produced Divine good will glorify Him in eternity. Matt. 5:16; Jn 15:8; ITim. 1:17
 - 5. The fact that He will reward all Divine good production should motivate believers to persevere in time. ICor. 15:58
- D. The correct attitude toward Divine good production is seen in the epistle to Titus. Tit. 2:14
- E. Believers are to spend time considering how they can encourage other believers to excel in the various areas of Divine good production. Heb. 10:24
- F. In fact, despite all suggestions to the contrary, Divine good production is an infallible standard by which believers can correctly evaluate anyone that claims positive volition.
 - 1. The example of the tree. Lk. 6:43-45
 - 2. Paul indicates that one's theology is critical, since an understanding of the truth forms the basis for effective Divine good production. Tit. 1:16
 - 3. James declares that Divine good production is an acid test of one's doctrine and positive volition. James 3:13,17
- G. Believers are exhorted not to grow weary of Divine good production, no matter what others may do. Gal. 6:9
- H. Failure to properly orient to doctrine and produce Divine good destines the believer for Divine discipline and possibly the sin unto death. Jn. 15:2,6
- I. Believers in this local church should receive first priority in our applications of Divine good. Gal. 6:10
- J. However, we should be ready, willing, and prepared to **do good to all men, especially those of the household of the faith.** Gal. 6:10

*...he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit;
for apart from Me you can do nothing.
Jn. 15:5*