

Good Works

Christians have the great privilege of being engaged in good works each day for the Lord and others. Good works are deeds of love done toward others (Acts 9:36). They cause others to look to God (Matthew 5:16) and they must be authorized by God's word (Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:17). Paul writes much about "good works" in the little book to Titus. Let's consider four things he says.

First, **good works follow salvation** (Titus 2:14). Christians are zealous and active in good works because they are saved. They are not lazy after baptism.

Second, **good works are a part of obedience** (Titus 3:1). Christians are zealous and active in good works because these works are a part of obeying the Lord. Good works are not optional or just a suggestion.

Third, **good works keep us out of trouble** (Titus 3:8-10). Christians are zealous and active in good works because those works keep us from saying and doing things that cause trouble in the church.

Fourth, **good works take care of urgent needs** (Titus 3:14). Christians are zealous and active in good works because there are necessary tasks, urgent and pressing needs that have to be taken care of in the church. Needs like visiting, encouraging, benevolence, teaching, personal work, etc. - *Chris Reeves*

News and Notes

- September 21-24: Gospel meeting with Tim Haile, 7 pm weeknights, regular times on Sunday.
- A warm "welcome" to the Marria family who has placed membership with us. Let's get to know them!
- A gospel meeting flyer is in your mailbox. Please use it to invite someone to our meeting. Let me know if you need more.

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

Website
WBCOC.org

Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

Everyone Is Welcome!
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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

No Creed But Christ - Part I

What separates the Lord's church from man-made churches? There are many factors, but one major factor is the matter of creeds.

Many members of denominational churches today do not even know they have a creed. In contrast, New Testament Christians follow the New Testament only; no man-made creeds. We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where the Bible is silent.

What is a creed? The word "creed," from the Latin *credo*, means "I believe". A "creed" is a statement of belief and a confession of faith. It is not, "I believe that..." but rather, "I believe in..."

The following definition of creed comes from *Webster's New World Dictionary*: "1. A brief statement of religious belief; confession of faith. 2. A specific statement of this kind, accepted as authoritative by a church; especially the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, or the Athanasian Creed. 3. A statement of belief, principles, or opinions on any subject." (p. 346).

Here is another definition of a creed: "A concise formal and authorized statement of important basic points of Christian doctrine" (*The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 270).

Historically, creeds began as statements made by religious individuals, and

then moved to statements made by religious groups. The key to understanding creeds is this: they are an authorized statement other than the Bible, composed by a group of men, and used as a standard for religion. Here are examples of three classic creeds.

The Apostles' Creed. This creed was one of the first attempts to systematize belief. It took on its present form in the 6th or 7th century.

The Nicene Creed. This creed was drawn up by the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 and completed by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 381. This creed was recognized as an official formula at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. A revised addition appeared in the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553. A further revision was found in the Council of Toledo in A.D. 589. Later, the Greek and Latin Church divided, in part, over how this creed should be understood.

The Athanasian Creed. This creed emphasized the doctrine of the trinity and pronouncements of damnation were made for those who did not keep this creed.

Creeds have also been found in other forms as well. "Confessions" (common in the Protestant Reformation) are usually longer than a creed and more detailed and systematic. They are designed more for reference than for recital.

Here are a few examples of confessions.

The Augsburg Confession (1530). This was a two-part creed composed by Melancthon with the approval of Martin Luther, and primarily written to defend the orthodoxy of Protestantism. It was later endorsed by John Calvin. It is the creed of the Lutheran Church.

There is the Waldensian Declaration of Faith (1532), the First Helvetic Confession (1536), the Geneva Confession (1537), the Gallican Confession (1559), the Thirty-Nine Articles (1571), the Canons of Dort (1619), and the well-known Westminster Confession of Faith (1647). "Symbol" and "rule of faith" are other terms used for creeds.

What are the basic functions of a creed (c. 4th century onward)? They are as follows. The baptismal function: what a candidate says prior to baptism. The instructional function: a syllabus for catechetical instruction in Christian doctrine. The doctrinal function: denounces heresies and serves as a test of orthodoxy. The liturgical function: used in a worship service with a response from the congregation (recited, or put to song). The commendatory function: used as a proof of identity and a test of fellowship in a particular religious group.

In Part 2 of this article, we will examine what is wrong with classic, denominational creeds, and we will find that they are not authorized by God. - *Chris Reeves*