

Working With God

by Bob Hoekstra

To be effective servants of God, we must learn to work with Him, relying on His power and guidance, and being humble and dependent on Him.

Duration: 52:23

Scripture: John 5:19, John 14:10, 1 Corinthians 3:9, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Galatians 2:8, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 3:7, Ephesians 3:20, 2 Timothy 2:21, Titus 2:14, Titus 3:8, 1 Peter 4:10-11

Topics: "Faith And Works", "Spiritual Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of working with God in our lives, focusing on being vessels for honor, sanctified and prepared for every good work by God's grace. It highlights the need to cleanse ourselves, seek God's power at work in us, and be zealous for good works, all while acknowledging our dependency on God for effective service. The sermon draws parallels to Jesus' dependency on the Father and encourages a life of faith, humility, and prayer in working with God.

Transcript

We'll start in a moment in our scriptures in Titus chapter 2 verse 14 Titus chapter 2 verse 14 and our subject of study is going to be working with God and I think you'll note by the scriptures as we go along that that little preposition with is a strategic one in how we are to be effective servants of God working with God. Well let's pray together about this time.

Lord we're so grateful to be gathered in your name we're so thankful Lord that you are here with us that you are in our lives but also Lord that you're working among us and Lord it is our desire that your will be accomplished in this hour that you reveal yourself your ways to us Lord we do want to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and Lord who could estimate how much of eternity and heaven above you could pour down here on earth below into our hearts in this finite limited section of time Lord we do ask you to do today even exceeding abundantly beyond all we could ask or think in Jesus name we pray amen.

Working with God Titus 2 14 speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself his own special people zealous for good works the gospel is included here the glory of God sending his son to give himself for us in our place that he might redeem us buy us back from restore us from every lawless deed how many lawless deeds were we engaged in before we embrace the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ I must say I indulged in many

many of them but he has redeemed us from every lawless deed everything we ever did or would do contrary to the holy law of God we have been redeemed and God wants to purify for himself our lives make us a uniquely owned and transform people and then the last phrase is right on our subject

today really good introduction for it zealous for good works zealous for good works having a fiery zeal in our heart to be engaged in good works and good works how many directions that can run in the Word of God prayer and service and sacrifice and kindness ministering the Word helping people with their burdens it's the scope of a whole lifetime for us to march into and the Lord wants to make a people zealous for good works now we know according to Ephesians 2 through 10 that salvation is not of works the Lord wants to make the saved zealous for good works but salvation is not by works were saved by grace through faith not of works specifically declared not of works not something we could earn or deserve or merit it's the undeserved goodness of our great God that saved our souls but verse

10 makes it very clear that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works or for good works not saved by working to earn it but once saved zealous for good works and praise the Lord for that desire that stirs in our hearts to work for the Lord Titus 3 8 puts it Titus 3 8 this is a faithful saying and these things I want you to affirm constantly that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works these things are good and profitable to man the good works that God has prepared before that we should walk in they're good things our God is good he loves to do good for people Jesus went about doing good and we're called to be that kind of a people maintaining sustaining a life of good works I thank the Lord that early on the Lord laid on the heart of myself and my wife

a desire in those days it came out like this we want to work for the Lord and that matches these scriptures and that is in the spirit of the Lord it's as well in his way but I'll tell you through the years it was so helpful to begin to see in the Word of God that we not only are called to work for God but here's the glory of it we're invited to work with God working for God is a good motive a good direction but there comes the big question how are we going to do that how are we going to be effective in a life of good works a an active doing that applies the goodness of God to other lives well it's going to be critical to learn how to work with God in fact it's a very helpful distinction to see that such a life of service hinges on this difference between this distinction between working

for God and working with God all of our lives should be a sacrifice of service for the glory of God and the blessing of others but to actually accomplish that it's critical to understand what the scriptures say about working with God with God you know like like a scalpel works with a surgeon what would it be without the surgeon like sheep walk closely with a shepherd what would the sheep be without a good and able shepherd like a branch works with the vine where would the branch be without the vine well we've been taught by Jesus apart from him we can do nothing how radical is that it's very clear that if we're going to be those zealous for good works and willing to be growing and maintaining good works that we need the Lord fully engaged with us and this is clearly what the scriptures

declare 1st Corinthians 3 9 1st Corinthians 3 9 for we are God's fellow workers or as it is translated in some versions we are workers to gather with God that's us we that's the corporate expression of the body of Christ Paul his missionary team the saints at Corinth he was writing to and all of us that God through his word speaks to we are God's fellow workers co-laborers it's not just that God is way off there and we're way down here and we have a heart for him and we are laboring to please and serve him that doesn't quite catch the picture a lot of that swallowed up in this but this is bigger than that it's the Lord is right here with us right in our lives and we're fellow laborers with God we're here crying out to him depending upon

him seeking him and he is reaching out to us and

working in and through our lives 2nd Corinthians 6:1 we then as workers together with him with God we are co-laborers the Lord has not left us without his presence he's not left us without his help if you've known the Lord very long you've served the Lord much probably already I know many of you are zealous for good works many of you maintain a life of good works praise the Lord for all of that but haven't you noticed it gets hard it gets difficult it gets challenging you get weary you feel inadequate you're crying out for wisdom and the magnitude of our calling just keeps growing all of our lives someone said to me not long ago you know you've walked with the Lord for decades plus does it get easier in the trials and battles dissipate and everything grows everything grows insight to the

Lord but opportunity for the Lord a picture of the victory we have in Christ over the enemy but the raging action of the enemy kind of like a parable seen in life all around us as people grow up they grow into new perspective new opportunities new impossibilities and certainly when you raise children you protect them when they're young from so many things in the more mature they get the more you give them room to get out into all that life engages for us we need the Lord we need to be working with God in our ministry we need to be doing that in outreach 2nd Corinthians 5:20 reaching out for those who need to be reconciled to God we need the Lord at work in our lives in that context 2nd Corinthians 5:20 now then we are ambassadors for Christ there's that that picture of laboring for him

right in this verse it's described how it actually happens as though God were pleading through us we implore you we beg you on Christ's behalf be reconciled to God when we are sharing the gospel and urging someone to give consideration to that gospel if we're walking with the Lord as he intended here's what's going to take place the Lord who is present in our life has called us out of darkness to light has made us ambassadors for Christ well that's a thought ambassadors the world might look at us and dismiss us swiftly who are you what are you into some religious thing you know just kind of get out of the way and yet in God's economy and heaven's plan and the Lord's perspective we're his ambassadors that's quite a role that's quite a calling ambassadors represent a ruler a leader a

kingdom and represent such to another people or domain and we represent the king of kings the Lord of the kingdom of heaven right here on this earth and we go forth we go forth in his name and he's with us and he said I'll never leave you know forsake you so when we are urging people to consider the gospel we're sharing if we're walking that kind of dependent relationship with the Lord here's how it works in outreach now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were pleading through us can't you see the difference it's one thing for a human to plead or debate or argue or verbally joust with another even with good motivations wanting their salvation and their blessing how about if you bring the Lord into the picture realize he's right there he's in our lives he's called us to be as

representatives and he wants to write through our heart our voice our newly developing relationship with that person he himself wants to be pleading with that person who would you rather have reaching out in a pleading conviction and explanation to touch a heart for Christ the best you can do or the fullness that God can bring there's no comparison in outreach we're ambassadors for Christ have the privilege of the Lord God who called us reaching right out through us in the words we share in line with his word anointed by his Holy Spirit but it's not just an outreach it's in any kind of good work for the Lord Galatians chapter 2 Galatians chapter 2 verse 8 for he who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me Paul writes toward the

Gentiles all of us can minister to all kinds of people and we all have a word for the Jew and the Gentile but Peter's ministry was especially targeted toward the Jewish people Paul's strangely enough with all of his Jewish background notwithstanding his primary focus was to be on the Gentiles upon the nations they both became amazingly effective servants of God Peter early on we sort of kid around about he was how he was impulsive and and didn't know when to be silent and all of those things that we find in his early walk with the Lord but you keep watching Peter's life and you watch him in the book of Acts and you see who he was when he wrote those epistles first and second Peter Oh God was building a mighty servant of the Lord and God worked in and with Peter for he who worked

effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised apostle Peter's life was exceedingly effective but here we're given direct insight really as to who was the agent behind this effectiveness he who worked effectively in Peter for this apostleship to reach out to the Jews was God Peter learned to work with God and then Paul adds the same one worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles what a phenomenal ministry the apostle Paul had to the Gentile nations such a harvest of fruitfulness such an impact in life but it wasn't a story of human capability it really was a story of human availability it was God working effectively in Paul touching those lives that he reached out to and so it is to be with us the Lord has callings upon all of our lives he's gifted all of his people we have

a general call to take the gospel out into all the nations and make disciples of all the nations but each of us will have as we go along the way we'll find kind of a particular rise personalized calling of the Lord how are we to expect to be effective in these things well the way a man would be well you just give it all you've got what if you find out in the Bible that you don't have much what if you find out in your experience that you don't have near what you thought you had what if you find out that you must be numbered among the poor in spirit or to paraphrase that numbered among the spiritually bankrupt now what are you going to do well the more we see that truth of our lack and need through the Word of God all the more interested we are in this matter of working with God working

with God Ephesians 3:7 Paul's testimony of service speaking of the gospel of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power what a testimony of how to serve God Paul became a minister that is a servant of God what that word means and he became that according to in line with by the means of the gift of the grace of God and this is not a testimony of his salvation this is a testimony of his service he's not directly relating to us here how he got saved he's talking about one saved how he became a servant of God according to the gift of the grace of God you know that's how we got saved it was according to the gift of the grace of God here Paul's applying that same truth to service he became a servant of God according to

the gift of the grace of God another reminder that the means by which a person is saved the means by which all of us were saved is the same means by which we are to grow get shaped and equipped to serve God we know we were saved according to the gift of the grace of God salvation is a gift God's grace poured out brothers sisters let's not shift from the way we got saved to the way we're going to serve God they are both by the grace of God early on I remember so grateful to the Lord for saving my soul how many pledges and promises and vows I made to him of the great things I was going to do for him and I meant them out of gratitude that he would save a sinner like me but oh how I overestimated what I would be able to do I thought you could build a ministry on devotion oh devotion stirs the

heart to make you want to minister but if I could pick a truth out of Romans 7 but the how I was not finding here's how of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God how do you get shaped

to minister and then actually serve God by the gift of his grace you're continually looking to the Lord to supply this outpoured grace as a gift that he might use it in and through your heart and life and words and relationships and understanding and perspectives priorities and all of that it's according to the gift of the grace of God and Paul said given to me by the effective working of his power when humble hearts trust in the Lord by the effective working of his power graces poured out to enable us to serve those who walk humbly with their God trusting dependently upon their

God God gives grace to the humble many don't progress in service because there's really a self-sufficient pride God opposes the proud but he gives he pours out he gives undeservedly to the humble those who admit they need such and are asking the Lord to provide because trusting God accesses the grace of God we know that's how we first found grace for forgiveness how do you find grace for equipping and serving same way you humbly cry out to the God who has it admitting to him how much you need it and you're counting on him to be true to his word the way we began in the Lord is the way we proceed in the Lord the way we were birthed into the kingdom is the way we grow up and become servants of the kingdom of heaven 1st Corinthians 15:10 but by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace

toward me was not in vain but I labored more abundantly than they all yet not I but the grace of God which was with me this great testimony verse notice it is not a testimony of salvation it's a testimony of service Paul does give his testimony of how he was saved written in the Word of God and we can give ours to others for God's glory and their insight and this is a testimony verse if you notice the words carefully it's not about being saved it's about how he served you see that right in the middle of the verse I labored more abundantly than they all that's his testimony in this verse I ask you what was the cause that produced this wonderful effect of abundant laboring of a man zealous for good works of a man maintaining good works was the cause that produced that effect obvious

mentioned three times by the grace of God I am what I am what was the dynamic that brought forth this reality the grace of God those who live by the grace of God do not become selfishly indulgent that's not grace that is called what licentiousness trying to turn the kindness and favor of God into a license to please the flesh that's not grace that's the spirit of self that is the flesh in control those who live by the grace of God they labor abundantly the grace of God becomes a dynamic that motivates strengthens their heart to good works for the glory of God and blessing of others his grace toward me was not in vain that was Paul's testimony if you and I put all of our hope in the Lord for effective ministry we will find that is not a vain thing to do they means futile ineffective

non-productive barren those who trust God to work in their heart by his grace they will not become vain and fruitless rather they will labor abundantly and lest anyone think he was bringing credit to himself he adds yet not I all right I did labor more abundantly than they all but I was not the cause behind it the glory goes to God not me he's the explanation not me our flesh likes to think that there's just something significantly capable and sufficient about us that we're just able to make ministry work that's robbing the glory from God that's contradicting the Word of God and that's vain yet not I that's our testimony when folks encourage me they've been blessed in our ministry I first thought more and more is wow praise the Lord why is that an appropriate response because it was true

ministry and it had true impact on someone you can be convinced by the Word of God the Lord was at work the Lord did it yet not I that's a confession of humility and God gives grace to the humble his final testimony of how he served but the grace of God which was with me the God of grace dwells in our lives first Peter 5:10 calls in the God of all grace all kinds of great he dwells in us he wants our hearts set on him

who knows what great things he may want to do in any of our lives our focus trust him seek him hope in him call upon him be in the word to learn of him that's when faith grows that's also what our view of self diminishes because the Lord lets us know in the word we need him desperately we need him desperately first Peter 4:10 and 11 speaking of the Apostle Peter as each one

has received a gift minister it to one another there is good works ministering serving minister out of that gift to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God a steward is one who serves a master using the provision of the master for the will and the pleasure and the glory of the master and we are stewards what a privilege because our master is the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord God Almighty and we've all received gifts that the word for spiritual gift is charisma that's the word for grace in the New Testament spiritual gifts are grace resources charisma grace resources sort of a specialized package of God's grace that distinctively is the mark our individual lives and ministries we've each received such ministrations serve one another with that as good stewards of the manifold

grace of God the grace of God and his gifts and giftings are so many and diverse so many varieties so many kinds so many different applications for them and that's our most particular impact on this earth is in the area of our calling and gift then these grace gifts are divided into speaking gifts and action gifts if anyone speaks let him speak as the oracles of God if God is called you with a primary gift of speaking teaching or counseling let it be as the oracles of God let the words that come forth through the gift God has given you let it be just a flow and representation of the living and abiding word of God if there's a speaking gift don't use it to somehow give a flowery demonstration of human oratory but just let it be as it were the oracles of God through the years of

pastoring and teaching the Lord just kept laying on my heart more and more get more and more of the word Bob into the studies you share just get more and more of the word and you know the sad general trend in the church world is less and less of the word more and more entertainment more and more opinions if anyone speaks let him speak as the oracles of God let our speech if that's the gifting just more and more be about what God has to say the reading of it and then the meditation kind of out loud upon it privately in your heart and home as you prepare but just reconsidering what has been read and correlating with the rest of God's word let it be the oracles of God and if someone has an action gift like mercy or help something like that if anyone ministers serves in action contrasted here

with if anyone speaks let him do it as with the ability which God supplies it doesn't matter whether one is a preacher and teacher of the Word of God a counselor in the Word of God or they are a physical labor in action gifts before the Lord God if it's speaking let it be the oracles of God if it's an action service let it be with the ability which God supplies whether it's words or actions that were primarily called to with our gift let it be God at work another picture of working with God not just for him and of course this brings glory to God that in all things words and deeds speaking and action service that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever to picture of working with God God at work in and through us you

know that this is how it works in the life of Jesus Jesus is the way the truth and the life he's the ultimate example of how to please God how to live how to serve God John the gospel of John chapter 5 verse 19 then Jesus answered and said to them most assuredly I say to you the son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the father do for whatever he does the father the son also doesn't like manner how is it that God the son God the eternal son could say the son can do nothing of himself well because he humbled himself when he came to this earth he'll come back again someday out of the clouds riding on a white

horse revelation 19 and he will establish his thousand-year reign on the earth he did not come that way when he rode in that first coming it was on a humble little donkey and

even then he ended up rejected and crucified he humbled himself Philippians 2 humbled himself as a man John 1 the word became flesh oh clearly he never ceased being God but Philippians 2 tells us he laid aside the divine right to exercise his deity on his own he became a humble servant which is what we're called to obedient he was unto death even the death of the cross so the Lord Jesus when he was serving said the son can do nothing of himself and how did he serve he worked with the father he worked with the father John chapter 14 verse 10 one of the most astounding insights on that truth do you not believe that I am in the father and the father in me the words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority but the father who dwells in me does the works the father and Jesus of

course were one united in one essence and reality from eternity past when Jesus was on this earth they were still one he was in the father the father was in him and the spirit came up on him and remained and when Jesus did all the phenomenal good that he did all the good works that he was so zealous to complete he did that working with the father his confession on his own do nothing of myself then what's the explanation the father who dwells in me does the works this is a picture of the life of Jesus have you noticed in the scriptures were called to a same to a similar dependency and it's not just a suggestion by application or parallel passage elsewhere though that's a totally valid documentation of this truth but Jesus himself made this connection for us in his teaching John chapter 6

verse 57 the truth of this in our lives how he lived with the father is how we are to live with the son the Lord Jesus John 6 57 as the living father sent me Jesus said and I live because of the father so he who feeds on me will live because of me you see the comparative structure of the verse as so as in the first case so it is to be in the second case what's the first case how Jesus lived on earth with the father as the living father sent me and I live because of the father Jesus came forth from heaven above born of a virgin the word became flesh dwelt among us the living father sent him forth many explains Jesus explains how he lived that perfect life he lived on earth below and I live because of the father he's not saying I live because that's who I am I am God and God is life that's

not his confession in his day-by-day walk that's a confession of who he was this is a confession of how we live I live because of the father in our ministry at our weekly devotions we've been studying a lot of the promises of God and we've been on Isaiah on the messianic promises it's astounding how many promises are there that the father would make to the son prophetically about his mission of salvation coming to this earth and how the son replied that the Lord the father above would be his strength in his mission of salvation here Jesus reveals that as the living father sent me and I live because of the father so here's how it's to be in the second case so he who feeds on me will live because of me Jesus lived the life of service that he had because of the father he trusted in the

father he depended upon the father how are we to live let the Lord Jesus now be our spiritual nutrition faith in Jesus the living word how do you feed on the Lord Jesus he had already taught this in John 6 35 I am the bread of life he who comes to me shall never hunger he who believes in me shall never thirst those who live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ it's as though they are feeding on the one who is the bread of life what does that produce a life what would that life look like the further we go in that path of living depending upon Jesus the life we live on this earth will be more and more Christ like why so because the Lord Jesus will be expressing his very person and character in life through hours will be working with him with him 2nd Corinthians 9 8 sort of touches on how this

works using the language of grace and God is able to make all grace abound toward you that you always having all sufficiency in all things may have an abundance for every good work there we are again back to good works and there's all kinds of good works and the Lord wants us to engage in every kind of good work how are we going to be able to do that is this some big load on our shoulders that we've got to perform up out of our own ingenuity and resolve and personal or personality strength is that it quite the contrary not only contrary to the verses we looked at but to this verse look where the ability is anchored here that we need second Corinthians 9 8 and God is able I'm sure you've had this experience open the word read it see what God's called us to and the thought goes through your

mind oh well I be able to do that and the answer is no you put it there because you need help but with the literal actual biblical help of God you can do it hinges on God's ability see that and God is able what we need for a life of service and good works we need the resources of God's grace and that hinges on the ability of God and God is able to make all grace abound towards you just flood across your life like the ocean surf that's the kind of language here that you having all sufficiency in all things God's sufficiency may have an abundance for every good work whatever God has called us to collectively or individually the resources of God are abundantly available that's how our lives are supposed to work let's go back with a concluding reflection and response to this issue of good

works motivated by our great God 2nd Timothy 221 therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter that would be the previous verses things of iniquity things of this earth things of dishonor if anyone cleanses himself through humble confession and repentance before the Lord anyone cleanses himself from the latter he will be a vessel for honor sanctified set apart and useful for the master prepared for every good work day by day to take before the Lord those things that he brings to our attention convicts us of their dishonorable that are sinful that are indulgent and just laying them before him with confession and knowing he's faithful to cleanse us and forgive us and go on in that path of growing and serving the Lord that's what God has called us to even our failures cannot prevent

this from happening if we cast all those cares and those transgressions upon the Lord and this great benediction in Ephesians 3 maybe a great reminder of the way God wants us to think and pray when it comes to good works and us working with God Ephesians 3 verse 20 now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think again the ability of God is in view according to the power that works in us what is that power the power of God the power of the grace of God unleashed in a humble and trusting heart according to the power that works in us to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever this is a great way to think and pray when we're talking about serving God our God is able that's our hope is able to do way way out beyond what

we've ever thought about asking him or actually even have got down to asking him the field is wide open the resources infinite they can flood and fill a lifetime that's the way this great prayer in Ephesians 3 concludes so write down practically personally how would we proceed day-by-day in working with God as we've seen it taught about and testified to in the scriptures well number one desiring this God is taught of this exemplified in his servants he wants us to have a heart for this Lord that's what I need to walk in what your word speaks of I need that work of you in my life and then seeking him for a day-by-day Lord I'm looking to you you're the one who's taught me this you're the one who's revealed this Lord I want to stake my hope no other place than right here certainly tell the

Lord you're available a vessel a vessel is only explained really by its contents a vessel itself is empty we want to be filled by the grace of God working in and through our lives unto good works just tell him we're

available and then be trusting him for this the just shall live by faith just trust him for this and you know the great way to express humility and faith is prayer we pray out of a stirring of humility why do we pray because we sense our need we pray we pray to express faith because we believe God is listening and that he will do what he's committed himself to do let's pray together Lord we are so blessed to be the children of God we thank you for calling us to yourself Lord we want to live for you we want to be engaged in good works unto you for your glory and the blessing of

others but Lord we desperately need you in this Lord we're vessels without any content otherwise we're a branch without a vine we're sheep without a shepherd so Lord we call upon you humbly grant unto each of us a growing walk with God at work in and through our hearts and lives we humbly pray in Jesus name amen

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qmkyz2Aj5Rg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-hoekstra/working-with-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net