

# Why Do You Work?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 10 November 2024

Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[ 0 : 00 ] This is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, sufficient, authoritative word for his people. Philippians 2, starting at verse 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross.

Therefore, God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and those on earth and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for his good pleasure.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

[ 1 : 37 ] Amen. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Lord, help us to receive your steadfast love once again today through the ministry of your word, as you've already ministered to us, Lord, through the reading, through prayer, through song.

Help us to know, Lord, how close you are to your people, how present your Holy Spirit is inside the believer and with your people when we gather in Christ's name in a special way.

Please illumine, Lord, these pages of the scripture to us and press it home in our lives. We ask that your Holy Spirit will give us clarity on how to walk with you and how it is that you want to apply this truth to our lives.

For your glory we ask. Amen. Well, you all came to church today. Why? You read your Bible this week.

[ 2 : 49 ] Why did you do that? You showed kindness. You served others. You served in many ways. Many of you prepare meals for this congregation. Why do we do these things?

Why is it that we work? Verse 12, it says, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

So, beloved congregation, my question for us today is, Why do you work? Why is it that you obey the Lord Jesus? First, I want to point out, this is from my own weakness, three fleshly ways that I'm tempted to work.

So, here are three wrong reasons why we should work and obey. My flesh wants to read those verses this way. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Satan wants to accuse me and tell me, You know that you've sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You've fallen with Adam and your own sin on top of that.

[ 3 : 55 ] You're weighted down. Picture a pit dug out in the middle of your backyard that's very deep. When we're in the gym at Mammoth Heights, as deep as that ceiling is, you are down at the bottom of a pit.

You have fallen short of the glory of God. And then I come to a verse like this, and it says, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. And my flesh wants to tell me three wrong ways to read that verse.

Here's one of them. I want to read, Work for your own salvation. In other words, Work to climb out of this pit that you're in. Earn your righteousness by being good enough.

Doesn't your flesh want to read that to you that way sometimes? Here's a second wrong way we can read this verse. Work at your own salvation. In other words, just be down there in the bottom of the pit and keep trying harder.

As if God were looking over this pit at everyone down there, and he's going to watch to see who's working at it, who's trying hard. And those are the ones that he'll save. And the third wrong way I can try to read this verse according to my flesh is that I can work toward my salvation.

[ 5 : 07 ] It's like God is throwing me a rope, but I got to now rock climb out of this pit with the rope supporting me. Work toward it. But look very carefully in your own Bible.

What does verse 12 say? It doesn't say work for, work at, work toward. It says work out your own salvation. So we just need to unpack what this means.

But then the back part of that same verse, it says work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. My flesh can want to read that this way. You need to work as a Christian because if you don't work, evil will prevail.

You need to tremble at the thought of not having done enough in this life to make it to heaven. Well, Proverbs 14, 12 says, there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

And if I'm still working in this wrong way, according to my own flesh, you're going to work hard your whole life and find out in the end there's death. If you're a Christian, this means you trust by faith that Jesus Christ has finished the work.

[ 6 : 23 ] He's already crushed the serpent's head. Evil cannot prevail. Jesus Christ came to give life and peace everlasting, but he only gives this as a free gift.

Romans 4, verse 5, couldn't make it any clearer. To the one who does not work, but believes in God, who justifies the ungodly, his faith in Jesus Christ, God counts as righteousness.

So don't think like a pagan. Don't let Satan twist your thoughts that you can work for or at or toward your own salvation.

Ascalus was a Greek tragedy writer, like a theater guy. And so he wrote some of the most famous tragedies about 500 years before Christ.

And in one of his plays, he had this famous phrase that's still quoted today, and it says this, the gods help those who help themselves. See, that's not what this verse is saying at all.

[ 7 : 37 ] And if we read it like a pagan, this is the way that leads to death. So what does this verse mean? I gave you three or four ways to not read it according to the flesh, but I want to now give you 12 correct reasons for why we should obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's go back to that analogy of the pit. So it's true. The Bible says, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You and I are helplessly all alone in the bottom of the pit.

But the verses that come right before verse 12, which we just read, it says that God himself got muddy and he went to the very bottom of the pit where you are.

And he finished the work that you could never do to climb out of that pit. And the father exalted him. And by faith, God brings you with Christ. So you're no longer in the pit.

That word work out in verse 12, that's the verb. It was used in the same first century by another Greek author named Strabo to speak of digging silver out of silver mines.

[ 8 : 49 ] Go work out the silver from the mine. Go work it out. So your salvation can be compared to this massive gift. It's a mine full of silver and gold and diamonds that need to be worked out.

It's like Jesus already owns it. This mine is his. He bought this mine with his precious blood. And he's sending you in there.

You already have the deed in your hand. You just need to go and walk out with what is yours. Go work it out. That's a better picture of our state. He tells you to work it out and understand how these treasures can be for someone like you.

How is it that this verse can be true? 2 Corinthians 8, 9. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you, through his poverty, might become rich.

So why should you work out your own salvation? Why should you obey King Jesus? Number one, let's go into this mine of God's word and let's pull out a treasure.

[ 9 : 59 ] You should obey the Lord Jesus Christ because it's the logical thing to do. Another way of saying that is if you don't obey this Savior who humbled himself to such an extent and who is exalted above all, if you don't obey him, you're crazy.

The word therefore, it means it's the only logical, consecutive response. The word therefore means it's designed as the result of his mission.

Christ's mission to descend and to save you. The purpose of that is so that you would obey him as your king. For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of work so that no man may boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2, 8 through 10. So obey Jesus Christ. Therefore, obey him because it's the only logical response. It's the designed result of his mission for your life.

[11:08] Number two, obey Jesus Christ because you are beloved in Christ. Look at verse 12 again. This is how he addresses the church. He calls them my beloved.

He can say, these are my beloved people because Christ has called me beloved. And in him, we are the beloved bride of Christ. The New Testament, every single book by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit refers to Christians, to you and me, to the church, as the beloved of Christ.

That's your identity. You should obey him because you have been adopted lovingly into his family. If we have the mind of Christ in us, this is how we will view one another as a beloved brother or sister in Christ.

We obey in love as a child. Like the prodigal son who's now in the father's house. The father needs something, notices something, or just has regular work that needs to be done.

It's a delight for that prodigal son. I'm just happy to be in my father's house. It's no chore. I love my father. John Calvin commented, obedience is the evidence of that honor which children owe their parents.

[12:23] So obey because you are a beloved child of God in Christ. Number three, obey our Lord Jesus Christ because you are called by God.

Obey Jesus Christ because you are called by God. When he says in verse 12, just as you have always obeyed, that word obeyed, it means listen, attend, answer.

To give you an example, in Acts 12, 13, when Peter knocked at the door of the gate and a servant girl named Rhoda came to respond, it's the same word.

She came to obey, to answer, to attend, or to respond to that knock at the door. In the book of Revelation, Revelation chapter 3, verse 20, to the church in Laodicea, Jesus says, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me. And he's calling the church collectively to respond, to obey, attend, come to Christ.

[13:36] He calls you. He's calling you by name. So you obey our Lord Jesus Christ because you are called by God to respond. Number four, you obey our Lord Jesus Christ for his sake alone.

You obey him for his own sake. Paul writes to the church, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence. You'll notice how he said, in my presence, you obeyed.

But now he says, much more in my absence, work it out. And so when Paul is with them, it's this sense of obey, obey, you know, like little children. Do what you're told, follow the instructions.

Now he's absent. The Lord has removed him. They need to mature. They need to go into the mind and work it out for themselves from the scriptures. They need to, they need to own it for themselves now.

Don't just do what the apostle's telling you. Go work it out. Grow in your maturity. Do it for Christ's sake alone. Let me put it this way.

[14:37] We can only work out what God has worked in us. So if you are not a follower of Jesus, you don't have to obey these things. In fact, if you do, it'll be probably under the flesh trying to save yourself.

Don't take the commands of the Bible as rules if you don't have a relationship with God. famous expression is that rules without relationship produce rebellion.

But if Jesus is the one who has called you, if you know him, if you've tasted of his steadfast love toward you and his kindness and you don't deserve it, you have a relationship with him, he's your king, he's exalted, then your behavior will flow from your belief.

you will obey King Jesus because you have a relationship with him and you will do it for his sake alone. Verse 5, I'm sorry, verse 12 says, work it out.

So I said, don't work it out unless God's worked it in you. What do we mean by that? I mean that you should only obey Jesus if he has already worked his salvation in you.

[ 15 : 52 ] And how does he do that? The Bible teaches that God implants by the ministry of the Holy Spirit the redemption of our soul. He puts it inside of you.

Christ accomplished the redemption one time for all. And the Holy Spirit applies the redemption that Christ accomplished in his timing in each individual soul.

As we work out the new life that God implanted in us, his saving grace becomes more and more evident within the Christian community. Moses Silva commented that personal salvation will manifest itself primarily in healthy relationships within the Christian community.

That's the natural outworking of a regenerated heart. They will know you are Christians by your love. Love one another. This is the outworking of that redemption that the Holy Spirit applies.

Number six, obey the Lord Jesus Christ because the salvation is already your own. Obey because this salvation is already yours.

[ 17 : 04 ] He's already redeemed his people. And when he says work out your own salvation, it's in the plural. It's for the church congregation gathered together. It's mutual.

It's corporate. He says, Church, when you are gathered together in the name of Christ, grow in your understanding of all that Christ accomplished for you.

First Peter 1.9 says, The end of your faith is the salvation of your souls. The end of your faith is the salvation of your souls. This whole walk by faith in this life is for your final salvation.

Salvation takes the whole scope of our life in Christ now on this earth. Every outworking of it. Salvation means delivered, preserved, safe.

So he's saying, Church, go dig through the scriptures together. Come to Sunday school. Discuss what's in the Bible. Meet with one another. Gather in his name.

[ 18 : 09 ] Study the Bible together. Ask these questions. Work it out. How is it that you are delivered? How is it, Christian, that you are safe in Christ? How is it that we, as his church, already belong to him?

How is it that this salvation is already our own? It's already ours. Let's grab hold together of his promises and encourage one another with the word of scripture.

number seven, obey our Lord Jesus Christ with fear. Obey without ever forgetting that you live in the holy inner courtroom of God the creator.

Romans 13, seven says, we are to show fear to whom reverential fear is due. There's a healthy fear of respect and reverence that every man owes to an authority.

Sinclair Ferguson's comment is that God is God and you are but one of his creatures. Your only joy is to be found in obeying him.

[ 19 : 13 ] So obey God in this reverential fear because that's what you owe him. Now fear is also the emotion that causes us to flee and run away from something. The Bible does tell Christians to flee temptation.

We need to obey him with fear of ever grieving such a loving Savior. That should be a fear in our lives. This one stretches me but according to scripture we are also to fear the thought of forsaking God.

See, he gives us the gift of faith and he's also the one who preserves us with faith so that we won't forsake him. But we need to have a healthy fear that if it were left to myself I would forsake him.

My faith would run out. Hebrews 4, 1 says, since a promise remains for entering his rest let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

We obey him knowing that this life is temporary and the eternal state of our souls is with God. We obey him with a reverence and a fear a total dependence on him preserving us.

[ 20 : 21 ] Number 8 obey the Lord Jesus Christ with trembling. tremble at God's majestic glory. See, the glory of the Lord will knock us on the floor.

The angels swarm around the presence of the Lord and the angels have to cover their glorious spiritual faces in the presence of the Holy God. And when just one of those angels who's at the throne of God appears on earth look at the reaction of a human being like us.

Mark 16 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James they came and they saw Christ's tomb empty and the angel appeared to them just one.

Then they went out and fled from the tomb for trembling and astonishment were gripping them and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid. When we realize that we're living our life quorum Deo before the face of God we should tremble.

we should tremble at the thought that if Christ were not there to shield us from the holiness of God we would melt. We should tremble at the thought of if Christ had left us going on the way that our flesh wants to walk our fate is eternal death and destruction.

[ 21 : 45 ] We should tremble and it's a good loving tremble because it pulls us back to submission to be on our face before God and to obey Him with such trembling.

See God is the one who made you able to respond to Him by grace and that doesn't diminish the fact that we are now responsible.

He made us able to respond and John Chrysostom who was also a native Greek speaker he commented very early on in the history of the church the language is so strong here to work out your salvation with fear and trembling it implies great effort with every care bring about this obedience run as though you're trembling before God the Holy God not to work for any salvation but because you realize how great is the salvation He's already given you in Christ there's a healthy trembling in our obedience.

Number nine obey our Lord Jesus Christ with confidence that He is working in you. Obey the Lord Jesus Christ with the confidence that as you obey it is God Himself who works in you.

Do you see this in verse 13? Hold on to this promise it is God Himself who works in you. How does God work in His people?

[ 23 : 14 ] It's the Holy Spirit dwelling inside the believer and it's through the means that He's provided through the ministry of His Word through prayer and through the sacraments. 1 Thessalonians 2.13 says the Word of God is at work in you who believe.

And our verse here for today says that it is God Himself who works in you. Matthew Henry's encouragement to us is work for God works.

Be ready to comply with every discovery of the will of God. Go on in the Christian faith in utter dependence upon the grace of God. Obey with confidence that God is working in you.

Number 10. Obey because it is God who works in you to will. Obey because God is giving you the will to obey Him. James Montgomery Boyce pointed out there are three aspects of your life and mind that we have zero willpower over.

It's our physical aspect, intellectual aspect, and spiritual aspect. So physically you can't have enough willpower to be in the NBA most of you and me.

[ 24 : 31 ] You can't have enough willpower to sing in the opera. Maybe you know you just don't have the vocal cords or the lungs or the ear to hear the pitch. So we don't have willpower over the physical aspects of our life.

We also don't have willpower over our intellectual aspect. I can't will or choose to have 50 points higher on the IQ. I just can't. And how about spiritually?

We also don't have willpower spiritually until God does what He says in verse 13. He works in you to will. Ephesians 2 says you are dead in your trespasses and sins until like John 3 the Spirit blows wherever it wishes and regenerates you makes you born again to open the eyes of faith makes you responsible.

So spiritually a dead man would never choose to pray. A dead man will never decide to follow Jesus. But it's God who works in you to will to wish to desire.

Ephesians 3 20 says He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask. We ask what we want what we wish what we will even beyond what we understand.

[ 25 : 54 ] And how does He do this? According to the power that works within us. It's God who causes you to will to obey Him.

Number 11 obey because it's God who works in you to do. It's God who also works in you to do. James 2 14 says what does it profit my brethren if someone says he has faith but does not have works?

Faith by itself if it does not have works is dead. Well how can that be? This means that if your life is detached from Christ if you are not utterly dependent on Christ you can have no hope of producing anything good.

Why? Because verse 13 says it is God who works in you to do. Put it the other way have you done something in obedience to God this week? Most likely all of us have.

Who gets the glory for that? You or God? If you did something in obedience to God this week it's because God was the one working in you to do that very thing. This is so humbling and also so liberating.

[ 27 : 09 ] Charles Spurgeon felt this beautiful tension and the liberty that comes with it. He said I desire because God gave me that will to press forward for my master in all things but if I start trusting my own obedience for my righteousness then I'll be ten times worse than a madman.

Calvin pointed out the same thing. He said there are in any action two principal parts the will and the effective power. Both for sure Paul prescribes to God what more remains for us to glory in. See we can't do anything without a will and without the power to do it. And this verse 13 says very clearly both the will and the power come from God so that he gets all the glory. and number 12 obey our Lord Jesus Christ for his good pleasure. Obey the Lord Jesus Christ for his good pleasure.

This word can be translated as for his satisfaction for his approval. in Luke 2 14 the angels show up and they say glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom God is pleased.

[ 28 : 28 ] It's that same word for his good pleasure. And the word for means according to or in alignment with that which pleases God which brings satisfaction satisfaction to God.

So we act in a way that is pleasing in alignment with God's good pleasure God's satisfaction. We put ourselves in the path of God's favor. We obey because it brings pleasure to God and it puts us in the path of his satisfaction his love his blessing.

Someone pointed out the only acceptable activity on our part is that which is good and pleasing to God. So it controls our good works. And it's for the purpose of God pouring out his pleasure his loving kindness beyond himself through you so that you also and those you are serving will benefit from the overflow of his grace.

Those are the 12 reasons I see in this passage for Christians to joyfully obey him have the mind of Christ to put the passage all together the teaching here is this Christians therefore in view of Christ's humiliation and work to make you his beloved because he has caused you to obey him ever since he began a good work in you now work out your own salvation with fear and trembling trusting that it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure Christians brothers and sisters if Christ has pulled you out of that pit and brought you to the silver mine that's packed full of treasure we have full access to the bounty of heaven in Jesus Christ we need to go into it dig in it's the word of God at work in you who believe we need to carry out in our pockets all the diamonds the silver and the gold that we can find every day we will have all the supply we need from God for life and godliness the salvation this deliverance the safety is already yours in Christ don't sit passively at the edge of your salvation ask God to grow your desire and your energy to go in and get what he has given you in Christ to grab hold of it to possess it even better to know each truth to enjoy each promise to savor each blessing and then thank

God for the abundance of his riches for you what else could you do but want to share this this glorious abounding love of God in Christ with others and that's the mission of the church work out our salvation together all glory be to God let's pray father thank you that you made yourself poor so that we might be rich thank you for your word how it reveals to us how you have acted in history and what you intend to accomplish in our lives now as your people we pray father that you will continue to provide supply for us every need lord in life and in godliness we bring these requests to you lord we pray that we can sharpen one another that we can share the treasures that you provide us by the ministry of your holy spirit in the church in Jesus name we pray amen