

That Which Works Good

- I. This study considers things that work good (particularly for the saint's soul). **ECC 6:3.**
- A. This touches on the sovereignty of God: His never-thwarted government over all things, good and evil. **PSA 76:10; PRO 16:4.**
- B. God is in no way the author of sin, nor is He the positive promoter of sin.
JAM 1:13-14; JER 19:5.
1. God never makes a person sin. The responsibility of sin is always attributed to the sinner. **PRO 5:22; GAL 2:17-18.**
 2. God never makes a man to lie since, if He did so, it would actually be God Who is doing the lying. But God cannot lie. **TIT 1:2.**
- C. Yet God uses sinners to fulfil His purposes.
ISA 10:5-7; ACT 4:26-28 c/w GAL 3:13; HEB 2:14.
1. God obviously brought about good by His use of sinners and their sin.
 2. One might conclude that "the ends justified the means" and therefore the negative concepts of sin and death are themselves "good."
 3. One might conclude that we should all be praising Judas, the wicked Jews, Pilate, and the wicked Gentiles for fulfilling God's purpose of saving sinners. Mind that it is they who forsake God's law that praise the wicked. **PRO 28:4.**
 4. One might conclude that since wicked men fulfilled God's will to bring about good by their wicked acts, they should not be held accountable. **ROM 3:5-7; 9:19.**
- D. Problems arise when men deem evil "good" and good "evil." **ISA 5:20.**
1. Fuzzy thinking in this area is what lead Dr. Scofield to state concerning the Law: "The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19. 8)." (SRB, p. 20)
 - a. Because of a faulty soteriology and faulty eschatology, Dr. Scofield deemed the law a negative thing to have been avoided.
 - b. The Law is good, and spiritual (**ROM 7:12-14**); the problem is the creature. **HEB 8:7-8.**
 - c. Dr. Scofield's logic would imply that the greatest good would have been facilitated by God making NO law which man could break and so be charged with sin. **1JO 3:4.**
 2. The perversion of good and evil (as God defines them) is the basis for the validation of all lifestyles which God abominates. We are now at a point where the maximum "good" of a society is assumed to depend on sodomy, gender-fluidity and (wait for it) pedophilia and bestiality.
 3. Mark it well: Satan's lies are designed to eliminate moral absolutes that restrict men's actions and relations.
- E. Problems arise when men adopt the principle, "...Let us do evil, that good may come..." (**ROM 3:8**).
- F. Problems arise when men perversely play God Who alone has power to kill and make alive. **DEU 32:39 c/w DAN 5:19.**
- G. Problems arise when men assume that negative forces like destruction are desirable in order to achieve a greater good.
1. "You have to break some eggs in order to make an omelette." (attributed variously to Robespierre of the French Reign of Terror, and to Communist leaders Lenin and Krushchev on how to perfect society through cruelty)
 2. "(The disaster) may lead to some temporary increments ironically to GDP as a process of rebuilding takes place." (Dr. Larry Summers, economic adviser to

- President Obama, concerning the Kobe, Japan earthquake and tsunami)
3. “Ghastly as it may seem to say this, the terror attack – like the original day of infamy, which brought an end to the Great Depression – could do some economic good.” (Dr. Paul Krugman, Nobel Laureate economist, concerning the 9/11 attack)
 4. The logical conclusion of this reasoning is that the most positive forces for good are destruction and death. We should be praying for natural disasters, sinister attacks and totalitarian leaders with their own unique vision for society.
 - a. This is the essence of the philosophical/political mantra, “order ab chaos” (order from chaos) in which struggle between forces is deemed necessary to produce superior rule and order.
 - b. The “superior order” which results from the chaotic struggle must then enforce its will absolutely to maintain its status. This is tyranny and a claim to be God.
 5. Christian accommodationists who try to mingle atheistic evolution with the Biblical record of creation fall into this trap of confusing good with evil. Any theory which promotes suffering and death prior to Adam’s sin ends up with God calling suffering and death “very good.” **GEN 1:31.**
- H. Problems arise when we think that our personal sin actually works to our benefit or to God’s glory (a half-truth).
1. “I am so thankful that I became a promiscuous fornicator: I would never have learned the humility that comes from a lifelong STD and child-support payments without that.”
 - a. That God’s judgments for sin humble one and bring him to repentance is one thing. That someone had to learn humility the hard way is another.
 - b. One could humble himself before God’s law to *avoid* sin and its judgments. **JAM 4:6-7.**
 2. “God is glorified in showing mercy to sinners so I am going to sin and give Him an opportunity to glorify Himself when I seek forgiveness.”
 - a. This is premeditated, presumptuous sin which is very unpopular with God. **NUM 15:27-31; LUK 12:47-48.**
 - b. God also gets glory by judging sinners and withholding repentance from them. **2CO 2:15-16; ROM 1:25-28; 2TH 2:10-12.**
 3. Sin NEVER works good for you.
- I. Problems arise when we confuse a godly way of processing a negative event in our lives with the folly of self-inflicted injury.
1. The former is commendable in that it accepts such as from God (**JOB 1:21**), seeks to magnify God in spite of loss or weakness (**JOB 13:15; 2CO 12:7-10**) and weans one’s affections from this world to the world to come. **ROM 8:18.**
 2. The latter is the basis of extreme asceticism which denies the body its natural needs and desires. **EPH 5:29 c/w COL 2:20-23.**
 3. The latter is the basis of ritual self-immolation which pretends to show God how loving and pious one is, or attempts to entice God to do one’s will. **1KI 18:28.**
 4. The latter is the basis of self-mutilation associated with emotional distress, transgenderism or Body Integrity Identity Disorder which falsely assumes it necessary to alter one’s form against nature to achieve an improved self-image, sense of fullness or to alleviate false guilt. NOTE: Mutilating or altering one’s body *against nature* (self-mutilation; sex-change surgery) is not the same as *enhancing one’s natural body* (hair dye, cosmetic surgery, laser fat removal, etc.).
- J. Problems arise when we errantly presume upon God’s promises of care, supply and

protection: “God’s power and providence operates for my good and His glory; therefore, I will intentionally give Him an opportunity to exercise them.”

1. This was one of Satan’s ploys against Jesus. **MAT 4:6-7.**
2. “God will supply all my need, per **PHIL 4:19**, so there is no need for me to work, save or be prudent. My indifference to reality will give God an opportunity to manifest His power.”
 - a. But God commands work to supply for our own present and future needs, to support the genuinely needy and His ministry.
2TH 3:10; EPH 4:28; 1CO 9:14; PRO 21:20.
 - b. Labor also works good for the *soul of man* in the enjoying of its fruits (**ECC 2:24**). There are few things in this life that are as satisfying as a sense of accomplishment and just reward derived from wholesome labor.
3. “God promised protection from poison and venom (**MAR 16:18**), so I will prove Him by sticking my face in front of a cobra and drinking strychnine.”
 - a. God may let you do this and die as a warning to others to not tempt Him.
 - b. The death of fools for their folly is expensive for them but good value to those who are warned thereby. **1CO 10:7-12.**

II. Consider the error, “...Let us do evil, that good may come...” (**ROM 3:8**).

- A. Because Paul had affirmed salvation by grace over Jewishness, circumcision, Moses, law-works righteousness, etc., some had falsely accused him of promoting licentiousness (disregard of rule or correctness).
 1. The implication they assumed was, “If it is true that men are freely saved by God’s grace without the law, that is an open door to lawless living and, the greater the lawlessness, the greater is God glorified when He saves by grace.”
 2. But Paul made clear that God’s abounding grace should instill in believers a death to sin. **ROM 6:1-4, 14-15.**
 3. Paul constantly affirmed that teaching men about God’s method of saving sinners does not void law, but establishes it. **ROM 3:31; TIT 2:11-12; 3:5-8.**
 4. Paul’s teaching about grace demanded godly living. It was wicked reprobates who had wormed their way into the churches that were “...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness...” (**JUDE 1:4**).
- B. In the secular world, the doctrine of “Let us do evil, that good may come” is commonly referred to by such phrases as, “The ends justify the means,” “For the greater good,” “Urban renewal,” or “Eliminating obstacles to progress” and such like.
 1. The preeminent example of this was the reasoning of the Jewish elders concerning Jesus Christ. **JOH 11:47-50.**
 2. The desire to “build” (c/w **ACT 4:11**) a better, safer, wealthier world generally demands that the individual’s or minority’s rights to life, liberty and property be trampled upon.
 3. Some innocent “lambs” may have to be sacrificed by forced marches across the country, a U-boat torpedo, an avoidable attack, or a mass killing.
 4. Eminent domain laws by which private property may be taken by the State (with compensation) for general public benefit (blight reduction, highway, utility, etc.) is one thing, but the seizure of non-blighted private property to be turned over to a private developer so as to increase government revenues is another.
 5. Natural affection and a sense of preservation tend to get in the way of the worst forms of *doing evil that good may come*.
 - a. Wicked devisers try to overcome natural moral revulsion of evil by such

means as *delegitimizing* the victim (**PSA 94:20**) or *dehumanizing* the victim.

- b. If one can be persuaded that another is insane, a criminal or an enemy of the state, then otherwise immoral treatment of that person is justified. This is what our Savior experienced. **JOH 10:20; 19:7, 12.**
 - c. If one can be convinced that an African, Aborigine, Jew or child in the womb is not human, then inhumane treatment of such is impossible. Their being abused or purged is therefore morally acceptable.
 - d. This is the perversion of the definitions of good and evil, per **ISA 5:20.**
- D. Can not sin/evil work for my good?
- 1. The sin of others may work for your good. **PRO 28:8; ECC 2:26; HEB 2:14-15.**
 - 2. The sinfulness of others may be exploitable for your good. **ACT 23:6-9.**
 - a. This principle can be perverted. **HOS 4:8.**
 - b. We are to discourage, not embolden others in their sin. **LEV 19:17.**
 - 3. God can overrule the sin of others against you for your good and even for their good. **DAN 3:30; GEN 50:20; DEU 23:5.**
 - a. Joseph's godly construction on all the evil that had been done unto him did not justify the evil. That he showed *mercy* (unobliged compassion where severity is merited) proves their deeds were wicked and deserved wrath.
 - b. God could have orchestrated Joseph's exaltation in Egypt by other means. **PRO 22:29; 12:24.**
 - c. God's overruling of Balak and Balaam (**NUM 22-24**) justified neither a wicked king nor a compromised hireling prophet. God could have blessed Israel without either of their input.
 - 4. Your sin never works for your good.
 - a. Some interpret **ROM 8:28** to mean that God works good in you and for you through your sin as long as you love Him.
 - b. It is good to draw near to God (**PSA 73:28; JAM 4:8**) but sin separates you from God. **ISA 59:2.**
 - c. Sin deafens God to your pleas. **ISA 59:2; 1PE 3:12.**
 - d. Sin **WITHHOLDS** good things from you! **JER 5:25.**
 - e. Sin incurs judgment and death. **PRO 13:21; ROM 2:8-9; JAM 1:15.**
 - f. Loving God is keeping His commandments, not breaking them. **JOH 14:21.**
- E. Another form of "Let us do evil that good may come" is "Let us do evil to prevent possible evil."
- 1. Johanan assumed this was an appropriate tactic in recommending a preemptive assassination of Ishmael in **JER 40:13-15.**
 - 2. This is judgment and execution before a crime is committed, a dangerous concept.
 - 3. "...if it be lawful to kill for prevention, who then can be safe, since malice always suspects the worst?" (Matthew Henry)
 - 4. Plots and threats are better handled by diligent inquisition, arrest and trial for conspiracy, and punishment of the guilty. **DEU 13:14; EST 2:21-23.**

III. Sin is not the only thing that does not work good for our souls.

- A. Ignorance is contrary to the wealth of the soul. **PRO 19:2; 10:21 c/w PRO 19:8.**
- 1. Ignorance is bad but the *illusion of knowledge* may be worse since it solidifies one in an error and prejudices the mind against genuine inquiry. **PRO 26:12.**
 - 2. The primary ignorance is from a lack of the fear of God. **PRO 1:7; 9:10.**

3. God's people are destroyed for lack of the knowledge of God. **HOS 4:6.**
 4. Rejecting the knowledge of God destroys soul and body. **ROM 1:21-27.**
 5. Emotion is not a substitute for knowledge. **GAL 4:16-17; ROM 10:2.**
 6. Knowledge of the truth of God in Christ alone makes one free. **JOH 8:31-32.**
 - a. It is a false liberty that is in bondage to a lie or a lust. **JOH 8:33-34.**
 - b. "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." (J.W. von Goethe)
 7. Learning and living Christ yields rest for the soul. **MAT 11:28-30.**
 8. Cornelius had sonship and life before the gospel but only received Christ's knowledge and rest by the gospel. **ACT 10:1-4, 34-35 c/w 1JO 2:29; 3:7.**
- B. We are warned against making decisions based on what pleases our flesh to the disregard of what is best for the soul.
1. Lot chose the well-favored region of Sodom to the vexing of his soul. **2PE 2:6-8.**
 2. We should be discerning in our choices where there is a potential for soul-damage. **ROM 13:14; GAL 5:13.**
 - a. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (**1CO 15:33**).
 - b. Some carnal pleasures may have to be cut. **PRO 23:29-33.**
 - c. Some places and acquaintances may have to be avoided. **PRO 23:20-21; 13:20; 22:24; 9:6.**
 - d. Even the wealth of another's soul is to be considered. **ROM 14:21.**
- C. We are not to prioritize needs of the body over the interests of our God. **MAT 6:31-33.**
1. Elimelech abandoned the promised land during a difficult season and it did not pan out well for his household. **RUTH 1:1-5.**
 2. The remnant Jews in defiance of the word of God insisted on going to Egypt and burning incense to a false goddess because of perceived carnal benefits. **JER 44:16-18.**
- D. We are not to be controlled by improper fear to the disregard of righteousness.
1. We should fear God rather than man or loss. **MAT 10:28; HEB 11:24-27.**
 2. We should not fear death. **HEB 2:14-15; PHIL 1:23.**
 3. We should not fear the curse of the Law. **ROM 8:15; GAL 3:13.**
 4. Fear does not work good but torment. **1JO 4:18.**
- E. We should not be ruled by negative thoughts and emotions. **PHIL 4:8.**
1. Anger is not sin of itself but when it has no legitimate cause or is our default emotion to anything that disagrees with us, it rules and exposes us. **EPH 4:26; MAT 5:22; PRO 16:32; 25:28; JAM 1:19.**
 2. Hatred, bitterness, despair, envy, evil surmising, paranoia, depression, worry, etc., are hardly the fruit of heaven where we are bound and should have our affections (desires, emotions) set. **COL 3:1-2.**
 3. We will all from time to time experience negative thoughts and emotions: the answer is not to give into them but overcome them with God's promises. **PSA 43:5; 119:81; 130:5; ROM 8:24.**
 4. Instead of cursing the darkness, light a candle (**MAT 5:14-16**). Give yourself and those who see you some light and hope. **JOH 8:12.**
- F. Trusting in feelings rather than God and His wisdom never works good for us. **JER 17:9 c/w PRO 28:26.**
1. Both positive and negative emotions can be enemies of faith. **LUK 24:36-41.**
 2. We are creatures of fickle emotion, and Satan capitalizes on this. **EPH 4:22.**
 3. The heart must be the trainee, not the trainer. **PRO 23:19.**

4. Life would be bland without emotions but uncontrolled emotions ruin life.
- G. Setting light by one's parents does not work good for oneself. **DEU 27:16.**
 1. set light by: to account of small value, to despise, slight, undervalue.
 2. Cursing a parent openly merited a death penalty. **EXO 21:17.**
 3. **DEU 27:16** covers inward despising that the magistrate does not hear but God does.
 4. Are you living under a curse and perplexed as to why things don't seem to work out for you?
- H. An unbridled tongue does not work good for oneself. **1PE 3:10; JAM 3:6.**
 1. We all have a piece of the Gadarene's madness behind our teeth. **MAR 5:4 c/w JAM 3:8.**
 2. Intoxication unbridles it. **PRO 23:33.**
 - a. "The drunken man's words are the sober man's thoughts." (Chinese proverb)
 - b. Excess alcohol dissolves bridles. Your friends and enemies alike will know exactly what you are really like and react accordingly.
 - c. Many a man has tried to later cover unbridled words with "But that's not the real me, it was the booze talking." No, it was the real man exposed.
 3. Purifying the heart is the key. **MAT 12:34 c/w JER 4:4.**
 4. (**PRO 21:23**) Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.
- I. Debt does not work good. **PRO 22:7.**
 1. The goal is to owe no man anything but your love. **ROM 13:8.**
 2. If liberty is attainable, use it. **1CO 7:21.**
 3. "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." (J.W. von Goethe)
- J. Immodest apparel does not work good, especially for women. **1TI 2:9.**
 1. It displeases God and discredits His wisdom in covering nakedness. **GEN 3:21.**
 2. The more meretricious the garment, the less respect.
 3. It doesn't only stir the lusts of guys with self-control.
- K. Preoccupation with subtle ways of darkness does not work good. **JER 4:22; ROM 16:19.**
 1. We are to be wise as serpents but harmless as doves. **MAT 10:16.**
 2. We are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (**2CO 2:11**) but giving oneself over to knowing the depths of Satan is unwise. **REV 2:24.**
 3. The Gnostics were given over to mystic interpretation of Scripture that assumed the message of God was not the words but hidden, esoteric concepts covered by the words. They spoiled themselves by pretended superior knowledge. **COL 2:8, 18.**
- L. Devotion to carnal cares, riches and pleasures does not work good. **LUK 8:14; 1TI 6:9-10.**
 1. The heart of fools is in the house of mirth. **ECC 7:2-6.**
 2. "A wise man gets more use from his enemies than a fool from his friends." (Baltasar Gracian)
- M. Untempered perfectionism does not work good. **ECC 7:16.**
 1. Vain is the man whose righteousness exceeds God's. **MAR 7:1-3.**
 2. Troubled is the man whose hope is more in his own flawlessness than in God's grace. **1JO 1:8; 2:1-2; ROM 7:22-25.**
- N. Undue concern about others' opinions of oneself does not work good. **1CO 4:3-4 c/w GAL 1:10.**
- O. Not showing mercy where appropriate does not work good. **PRO 11:17; JAM 2:13.**

IV. Consider things which work good for us. **MAT 5:1-12.**

- A. Seeking God diligently works good. **HEB 11:6.**
 1. He is the Rewarder and the Reward. **GEN 15:1.**
 2. This must be done whole-heartedly. **JER 29:13 ct/w JER 42:20.**
 3. This yields knowledge of God's doctrine. **PRO 28:5; JOH 7:16-17.**
 4. This yields rest and security. **2CH 15:15; PSA 34:4.**
 5. This yields true liberty. **PSA 119:1-3, 45.**
 6. Delay not to seek Him. **ISA 55:6 c/w HOS 5:6.**
- B. Godliness works good. **1TI 4:7-8; 6:6; PSA 23:6 ct/w PRO 13:21.**
 1. godliness: The quality of being godly; devout observance of the law of God; piety.
 2. God sets apart the godly for Himself. **PSA 4:3 c/w 2CO 6:17-18.**
 3. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. **2PE 2:4-9.**
 4. The godly confess their sin to God for forgiveness. **PSA 32:5-6.**
 5. Godliness in Christ yields persecution unto joy. **2TI 3:12 c/w LUK 6:22-23.**
 6. Godliness is not measured by outward form. **2TI 3:5 c/w MAT 23:28.**
 7. Since godliness is *devout observance of the law of God* which defines righteousness (**PSA 119:128**), those who seek it ARE blessed and SHALL BE filled. **MAT 5:6.**
- C. Scripture intake works good. **2TI 3:15-17; ROM 15:4.**
 1. It feeds the soul. **MAT 4:4.**
 2. It makes one wiser than ancients, teachers and enemies. **PSA 119:98-100.**
 3. It tells us where we came from, who we are, why we do what we do, and declares the only Relief to our guilt and damnation, giving us a lively hope beyond death. We therefore yield to its Author Who is the Author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. **HEB 5:9.**
- D. Church membership works good.
 1. It evidences a conscience freed from the guilt of sin. **1PE 3:21.**
 2. One is in the body and connected to its Head, Jesus Christ. **EPH 1:22-23.**
 3. Members drink of the Spirit Who indwells the church and Whose gifts perfect them. **JOH 14:16-17; 1CO 12:13; EPH 4:8-12.**
- E. Assembling for worship works good.
 1. Members collectively present themselves a living sacrifice to God (**ROM 12:1**) and God in turn showers them with spiritual blessings.
 2. They enjoy the presence and blessing of their Lord and Savior. **EXO 20:24; PSA 82:1; REV 1:12-13.**
 3. They meet and embrace brethren of *like precious faith* (**2PE 1:1**) and are able to edify, exhort, comfort one another in person.
 4. They have the honor of conducting kingdom business, determining cases of law and executing justice (**MAT 18:17; 1CO 5:4-5**), proving potential new ministers and helpers (**1TI 3:10; 1CO 16:3**), and have a sumptuous state dinner in commemoration of their King's loving sacrifice. **LUK 22:29-30.**
- F. Prayer works good.
 1. Receiving of good implies asking. **MAT 7:7; 6:11-13; LUK 11:13.**
 2. Prayer promotes healing. **JAM 5:16.**
 3. Prayer delivers to God our burdens, giving us peace. **PHIL 4:6-7.**
 4. Prayer works to others' good. **EPH 3:16-19; 2TH 3:1-2.**
- G. Rejoicing in Christ works good. **1PE 1:7-9 c/w NEH 8:10.**
- H. Giving works good to the giver and the receiver. **ACT 20:35; HEB 6:10; LUK 14:12-14.**
- I. Humility works good. **1PE 5:5-6 ct/w PRO 16:18.**
- J. Self-denial works good. **MAR 8:34-35.**
- K. Judging ourselves works good. **1CO 11:31-32 c/w PHIL 2:14-15; 1CO 5:6-7.**

- L. Growth in Christ works good. **2PE 1:10-11.**
 - M. God saying, “No” should work good. **PRO 1:32; JAM 4:3.**
 - N. Hardship should work good. **DEU 8:16.**
 - O. Affliction should work good. **PSA 119:67, 71, 75.**
 - P. Tribulation should work good. **ROM 5:3-5.**
 - Q. Trials of faith should work good. **JAM 1:12; 1PE 1:6-7.**
 - R. Persecution should work good. **MAT 5:10-12 ct/w MAT 13:21.**
 - S. Chastening should work good. **HEB 12:11.**
 - T. Whether they be pro-active obediences, positive reactions to unpleasantness, or loving punishments from God, all are for our good. **ROM 8:35-37.**
- V. The most important things that work good for us are the things that God Himself does. **ROM 8:28-30.**
- A. As noted earlier, God does not purpose our sin nor promote our sin, and our sin never works good to us.
 - B. The “all things” that work together for good to them who love God are explained in the context.
 - 1. “The called” are a group God purposed to save by grace through Christ. **2TI 1:9; 1PE 5:10.**
 - 2. They are foreknown in covenant. ct/w **MAT 7:23.**
 - 3. They are predestinated to adoption as God’s children and certain conformity to the image of Christ. **EPH 1:5; 1JO 3:2.**
 - 4. They are justified by God in Christ. **ROM 5:9 c/w ROM 8:33.**
 - 5. They are glorified in Christ’s person as an earnest of future glory. **EPH 2:6; PHIL 3:20-21.**
 - 6. *These things* which are *freely given* are the “all things” of v. 28. **ROM 8:31-32.**
 - 7. All whom God planned to save unto glory are unfailingly foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified by Christ. He loses none. **JOH 6:39.**
- VI. A prayer: “Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts” (**PSA 125:4**).