



Winter 2004/2005 *Go! Online* Bible Study

Action!

Materials:

- *Go! Online* Download Video: *Why Missions?*
- Computer, monitor or video projector to display video
- One copy of *Go! Online* Group Activity for each student
- A chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead projector or large sheet of paper on which to write
- Copies of Winter 2004/2005 *Go!* magazine for each student (unless they've already been distributed)

Silly Speed Round Introduction:

To kick things off, tell your students you're going to do a speed quiz of silly questions just to get all of your brains in gear for the study. You'll quickly run through a list of questions, and they should shout out the answers as fast as possible. Without any further explanations, start rattling off the following questions. (You can add more of your own if you want a longer list.)

What do football players do?

What do schoolteachers do?

What do pilots do?

What do gravediggers do?

What do racecar drivers do?

What do chefs do?

What do writers do?

Without hesitation, ask your final question: What do Christians do?

You might expect a short pause, followed by all kinds of different answers. Encourage your students to keep the answers coming. The first, obvious answers might include these: Pray. Read their Bibles. Tell others about Jesus. Go to church. Worship God.

Push for deeper ideas like the following: Love God. Love their neighbors. Help sick people. Show kindness. Give money to the church and the poor. Defend the innocent. Visit people in prison. Turn the other cheek. Forgive. Sacrifice for the good of others. Obey their parents. Tell the truth.



Answers like this could go on for a long time. It's important here to remind your students to stay focused on the positive. We're looking for things that Christians *do*, not things Christians don't (or shouldn't) do, like getting even, having sex outside of marriage, etc.

Once you've got a good collection of things Christians do (or should do), say something like this:

We spend a lot of time talking about what it means to be a Christian, how to grow in our relationship with God, and even how to tell others about Christ. Those are all important. Today, though, we're going to talk about what Christians *do*. What's our job description? We're going to move beyond what we should believe and the things we should say to talk about what Christians do when we spring into action. We're going to talk about good works.

[Note to leader: Two pitfalls to avoid when you start talking about this lesson: First, our point here isn't to introduce a "social gospel," teaching that Christianity is more about works than faith in Christ. Second, we don't want to open a can of worms about whether people are Christians or not based on their works. That's for another study.]

If those things come up, we encourage you to state the simple truth of Ephesians 2:8-9 that our salvation comes by God's grace, through our faith alone and not by works. Our emphasis in this study is from Ephesians 2:10, that Christians are created for good works, so we should be doing them—and that, importantly, doing good points unbelievers to Jesus.]

1. Christians are designed to do good works.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 out loud to your group. As mentioned above, emphasize the simple truth that salvation does not come through works. It's a free gift to those who trust in Jesus. Then go back to verse 10:

"For we are His creation—created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10, HCSB).

As believers in Jesus Christ, each one of us is designed to do good works. God built it into us when we were created. Doing good is what Christians do. It's who we are.

One answer to the question, "What do Christians do?" could be, "They follow Christ." Did Jesus do good works? Of course He healed the sick, did good to those who hurt Him, was kind to children. He said, "I have shown you many good works from the Father" (John 10:32, HCSB).



So people who follow Jesus do good works.

In fact, Paul wrote to a pastor named Titus that God wants believers to be “eager” to do good works (Titus 2:14). And the book of James teaches that good works always show up in people who trust God. Our job description as Christians is, partly, “do good.”

2. Christians are commanded to do good works.

So should we just sit around, waiting to see what good works pop up in our lives? After all, if that’s the way we’re designed, we shouldn’t really have to work at it, should we?

Some Christians think that way, but they’ve forgotten what we’re talking about: good *works*. These good things can still be hard to do. They take planning, effort, work, time. That’s why we’re commanded to get up and get going. It doesn’t always just happen.

Paul urged Pastor Titus to remind his people to get busy doing good works. And Paul also told Pastor Timothy to teach his people to do good and be “filthy, stinking rich” (that’s a paraphrase) in good works (1 Timothy 6:18). In other words, if good works were dollars, we should all have enough to buy SUVs.

The people in those churches needed to be reminded to do good works, just like we do, because it’s often not easy to do them. Christians are people who obey God’s commands to get to work doing good things—even when those things are hard to do.

3. What are good works?

Group Activity:

If you haven’t done so already, hand out copies of the Group Activity for this study to each student. It contains ten blank lines, numbered 1-10. Ask your students to take a couple of minutes by themselves to list ten things they would think of as “good works.” These might be things they themselves have done or that they’ve seen in the lives of other Christians.

Once they’ve all had a chance to complete the list, ask for volunteers to share some of their examples of good works. As they do so, add their ideas to a list on a chalkboard (or whiteboard, large paper, etc.). Collect 20-30 examples of good works.

Say something like: **These are great examples of good things to do. And good works can be anything we do for others, especially those things commanded in the Bible. Let’s look at just a few of those passages about good works.**



Read the following verses out loud or assign them to your students to read. (All passages quoted here are from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*.)

Matthew 25:35-36: “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you took care of Me; I was in prison and you visited Me.”

Ephesians 4:32: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.”

Romans 12:13-16: “Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Be in agreement with one another.”

1 Timothy 5:9-10: “No widow should be placed on the official support list unless she ... is well known for good works—that is, if she has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints’ feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to every good work.”

James 2:15-16: “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?”

James 1:27: “Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.”

Obviously, this isn’t an exhaustive list of good works. We could fill pages with Scripture about doing good for others. And we could come up with even more pages of specific examples of how to do good works in our own lives. The idea is not to follow a list of “have to’s,” but to just practice doing good all the time in our lives because that’s who God made us to be.

4. What do good works have to do with missions and evangelism?

We notice when a person’s talk doesn’t line up with their actions, don’t we? When someone who claims to be a believer doesn’t do good, it sets off a little alarm in our head. Paul put it this way to Titus: “They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works” (1:16, HCSB).

But the reverse is also true. One result of obeying God by doing good for others is that people will notice. Unbelievers will “catch” you doing good, and they’ll wonder what you’re up to. You can’t hide your good works (1 Timothy 5:25). God’s Word promises over and over



that when we show our love for Him by obeying Him and doing good, it draws non-Christians to Him.

Jesus said, “In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, HCSB).

And Peter taught Christian Jews to “Conduct yourselves honorably among the [unbelieving] Gentiles, so that in a case they speak against you as those who do evil, they may, by observing your good works, glorify God in a day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12, HCSB).

What an awesome idea—that our simple choices to do good could point people to God, even people who don’t really like us. I’d guess some of you have already seen that in action. Has anyone gone on a summer mission trip that involved helping the poor or participated in a workday for someone in need?

Ask volunteers to describe how that felt and what kind of responses their good works produced in the people who noticed. You might also ask volunteers to describe any time a choice to do something good caused a reaction from an unsaved person.

Mission Video:

Play the video *Why Missions?* for your group at this point. Explain that the people in the video participated in a World Changers mission week by showing God’s love to unbelievers through their good works of home construction, painting or other helpful things. The video is only 1 minute, 50 seconds long.

You don’t need to be an evangelistic genius. You don’t need to have all the right answers to the hard questions about the Bible. Without saying a word, you can point people to Jesus simply by doing what you were made to do—good works.

Conclusion

This might be a good opportunity to urge your group to take part in some organized good works together. If you’re planning a summer mission trip, challenge your students to join you in doing good for people who need the help. Or maybe you could organize a regularly scheduled event of helping at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.

Also challenge your students to “do what Christians do” when they’re away from church and youth group. Encourage them to demonstrate their faith in God by showing the world how He is changing them. Something as simple as patiently listening to a lonely person who



needs to talk or as big as starting a warm coat drive for those in need can turn heads in Christ's direction.

Close in prayer, asking God to remind all of you to do good when you have the chance. Ask that He'll use your good works to bring people to Himself and to bring His name glory. Thank Him for giving you all the ability to do the good things He wants you to do.

If you're planning and recruiting for a summer mission trip, be sure to encourage your students to read "Your Summer Mission" on page 12 of the 2004/2005 Winter issue of *Go!* magazine. And remind them to stop by *Go! Online* (go.studentz.com) for more ideas about reaching their friends, family and nation with the message of Jesus.

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