

An Inconvenient Truth Concerning Good Deeds

"And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful." (Tit. 3:14)

Have you ever felt like you were not doing your part in helping others? In doing good works for them? I certainly have! It's a struggle for me, personally. Above, Paul encouraged the Cretan Christians, through Titus, to devote themselves to living lives of good works. This was to prepare them for meeting cases of urgent need and avoid being unfruitful in their efforts. I want an application where I can do good for others. Christians can go through life going from home to work to church and still not apply this passage to themselves. I know this because if it can happen to a preacher, it can certainly happen to Christians in general. There is a reason this happens, an inconvenient truth.

The inconvenient truth concerning good works is this: Good deeds are often not done because it is often more convenient for Christians to not do them. Why do you suppose this might be? We live scheduled lives or disorderly lives. If we live disorderly (in idleness), we are encouraged to be admonished and use our time wisely. (1 Thes. 5:14) If we live scheduled lives, we may schedule many important things, such as work, meals, rest, but miss other important things such as quality time with one's spouse, children, family, friends, neighbors, enemies. In our free time, entertainment is scheduled, a regular show we watch, or unscheduled, we turn on the tube when we have free time. Entertainment is fine in general, but because it is more convenient to watch television, do I miss the good deed I could do because it is less convenient than my entertainment?

Productivity, effectiveness, and fruitfulness are often achieved by stepping outside of what is convenient and comfortable. Preachers and other writers know that offices/studies should not be very entertaining places. Why is this? Because work is done in an atmosphere where conveniences are pushed aside to perform another task. As Christians, let us decide to lay aside entertainment temporarily to help the greater good.

We may become more fruitful by applying this truth. Here are three steps to consider.

1. Set aside a certain time to be away from conveniences. A preacher has office hours for this reason. Make yourself go somewhere else, a library, another room in your house without a television, and keep yourself isolated there while you are working or planning a good work. Consider your neighbor, friend, family, enemy, and think of something good you could do for them based on the needs they have.
2. Use this time to do good deeds for other people. When our desire for something interesting emerges from any possible boredom, use it to act on your plan. Influence others for good. Spend time with the other person doing good.
3. Decide to first do what is more inconvenient.