

Warm-up Activity or Question

Choose one and pursue it as a group.

- 1. Activity:** There are so many storage units in the USA that our entire population could stand in them (7.3 sf/person). Americans spend \$2.7B annually on storage units. Americans say 36% of their residential garages could not house a car.
 - Take 3 minutes of silence and write down with specificity three items that you can, should, and will give away or donate to charity by year end.
 - Then go around the group, describing:
 - The “stuff” that you have stowed away at your home or storage unit; and
 - The items you have resolved to give away.
- 2. Question.** 1st Corinthians 7:2 tells us not to have two spouses. Luke 3:11 tells us if we have a second item that we do not need, that we should give it away to someone who has none.
 - We take the former command seriously. Why not the latter?
 - What duplicate item that you have could you pass on to someone who has none?
 - Why would God require this of you?

Can You Relate?

This week’s Scripture speaks to the relationship between Christians and the culture around them. It is rich in two ways:

- with the Christian doctrine of salvation **not because of good works** done by us in righteousness, but because of God’s grace and mercy (v. 4-7); and
- with three more of the letter’s seven references to the importance of our salvation issuing-forth in eagerness to **do good works** for the Kingdom of God (v. 1, 8, 14).

1. Read aloud Titus 3:1-3.

Paul opens with seven behaviors for which Christians should strive and seven behaviors from life in the darkness before the scales fell from his eyes and everything changed in his life.

Seven Behaviors for Christians

Seven Behaviors Associated w/Unbelief

1. Submit to governing authorities/officials	1. Acting foolish
2. Obey God	2. Disobeying God
3. Always ready to do what is good	3. Being led astray
4. Avoid quarreling	4. Being enslaved to passions/pleasures
5. Speak evil of no one	5. Passing days in malice and envy
6. Be gentle	6. Being hated by others
7. Show courtesy toward all people	7. Hating many

Focusing on the left column and thinking of the past week or month-in-review, take a moment and jot down examples of folks (first names only) in your life:

- Who were too hurried, busy, or over-scheduled to be “ready to do good”?
- Who quarreled?
- Who spoke ill of someone who was not present?
- Who was abrupt, harsh, or otherwise ungentle?
- Who was discourteous?

Let’s take turns discussing briefly with the group.

2. Now turn those questions around. If the folks in your life were asked those same questions about you and your past week or month-in-review, which of these would stand out as areas where you got off track? Be fearlessly honest with yourself.

Let's take turns discussing with the group.

3. The behaviors of a Christian life are not questions on a standardized test that you grade like an SAT. They are a reflection of our intimacy with the Father. His love for us in Christ Jesus changes us.

Imagine a Fitbit or Apple Watch that tracked your thought life, prayer life, and all of your behaviors (acts and omissions) relevant to the commands and aspirations of Scripture.

- What would it tell you about your intimacy level with God in the past week/month?
- How in love are you two with each other?
- What's getting in the way? Where does change start for you in the week ahead?

4. If a doctor who extended your life through heart surgery asked you to eat more fruit and get in 10,000 steps per day, do you think you would do it? *Discuss.*

5. If a carpenter from Nazareth who died extending your life into eternity asked you to abide in Him in daily prayer, do you think you would do it? What would have to change? *Discuss.*

6. Scripture repeatedly tells us that those who abide in Him will be changed – they will be ready and eager for good works. From Titus 3:

¹*Remind them ... to be ready for every **good work**.*

⁸ ... *I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to **good works**.*

¹⁴ ... *let our people learn to devote themselves to **good works**, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.*

- What would that Fitbit tracker say about your good works in the past week/month?
- What would you like it to say for the week ahead? What needs to change?

Live It Out

Let's take a moment and go around the group to identify what we want to take away from this discussion. Any quiet-time reflection required?

- SOAP quiet-time journaling is a good starting point for intimacy. Consider pledging to do SOAP quiet time for seven days, texting one another for support as we go through it.
- Try resolving to start each day pouring your heart out to God in transparent prayer.
 - **How?** This week, **before you get out of bed** (making God your first priority), pick up your phone or tablet and play *Run to the Father* by Cody Carnes. Absorb the lyrics ("my heart needs a surgeon"). Play them back in your head thru the day. Report next time on how that went. That song is on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/QyCLC67GC9U>

Encourage members of the group to commit time to praying for one another, encouraging and meeting one another's needs, fellowshiping together, and interceding for the other members. Contact absent group members and encourage them to continue to meet and to return together at the next scheduled gathering.