

**The Theology of the Westminster Standards**  
**WCF 16.6 – The Acceptance of Good Works**

*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10)*

**I. Review**

A. The Definition of Good Works

*Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy Word ... (WCF 16.1)*

1. **Micah 6:8** – *“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”*

B. The Place of Good Works in the Christian Life

*These good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith ... (WCF 16.2)*

1. **James 2:18** – *“Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”*

C. The Ability to Do Good Works

*Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And ... there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will, and to do, of his good pleasure ... (WCF 16.3)*

1. **Phil 2:12–13** – *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”*

D. The Imperfection of Good Works

*They who, in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life ... fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do. (WCF 16.4)*

*We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God ... but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants ... (WCF 16.5)*

**II. The Acceptance of Good Works**

*Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprovable in God’s sight; but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections. (WCF 16.6)*

- A. What does Section 6 say is necessary condition for our good works to be accepted by God? How do the following verses support this idea?
1. **Ex 28:36–38** – “*You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the Lord.’* <sup>37</sup> *And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban.* <sup>38</sup> *It shall be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”*
  2. **Gen 4:4–5** – “*... and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering,* <sup>5</sup> *but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.”*
  3. **1 Pet 2:4–5** – “*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*
  4. **Heb 13:14–15** – “*For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.* <sup>15</sup> *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*”
- B. If your worship is made acceptable because of your union with Christ, how should this affect how you view Christ? What about his goodness to you? How should it affect how you worship each week? What about how you pray?
- C. Section 6 says God is pleased not just to accept but also to “reward” that which is sincere. Does this mean that our good works “merit” a reward after all, *albeit through Christ*? What do you think?

*“In the dispensation of the gospel, the gracious work of the believer and the gracious reward he receives from God are branches from the same gracious root. The same covenant of grace provides at once for the infusion of grace in the heart, the exercise of grace in the life and the reward of the grace so exercised. It is all of grace—a grace called a reward added to a grace called a work.” – A.A. Hodge, *Commentary on the WCF*, p. 309*

- D. Do you think it is proper to be motivated towards good works for the sake of such a “reward” from God? What *is* the reward?

“... ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’” (Luke 15:31)

“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.” (Heb 6:10)