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MINISTRIES

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Created for Good Works: Torah as the Foundation of Righteous Living

Do Christians still need to keep the law? What place does the Torah have in the life of a believer today?

These are foundational questions—questions that cut to the heart of our identity, our obedience, and our relationship with YHWH.

Let’s begin with a foundational truth that is often misunderstood or misapplied.

We are not saved by observing God’s law, called his Torah in Hebrew. We are not saved by obedience. We are not saved by anything we do.

Paul states this very clearly:

Ephesians 2:8–9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast.

That’s the truth. We can’t earn salvation...it is a gift. A gift we do not, and could not, deserve. No one is debating that.

However, that is not where the passage ends.

Paul continues in the very next breath:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

So, we need to ask a serious question.

If we are created in Messiah for good works...

If those works were prepared beforehand...

Then what exactly are those “good works”?

That is not something we want to answer based on tradition, culture, or emotion. If we care about truth, we must allow Scripture to define Scripture.

We are not interested in what modern church tradition says is good. We are not interested in what the world says is good. We want to know what God defines as good.

If Scripture says we were created for *good works*, then the definition matters.

This teaching is not about legalism. It’s about alignment. Alignment with the design that our Creator built us for. We are saved by grace...but we were saved unto obedience, meaning we are saved in order to obey God not saved because we obey God.

And the questions we will now explore together are these:

What does the Bible, not tradition, teach about what good works really are?

And what role does the Torah play in defining and equipping us for those good works?

Let’s *test everything...and hold fast to what is good.* (1 Thessalonians 5:2)

So we need to take a step back and look at what the Bible actually means when it speaks of “*good works*.”

The Greek word translated as “*works*” in Ephesians 2:10 is *ergon* (Strong’s G2041). It’s a word that appears throughout Scripture and carries a consistent meaning: actions, deeds, and efforts—but not just any actions. These are works tied directly to obedience.

They are not “*good*” just because we feel they are. They are not *good* because culture celebrates them or because a church tradition has labeled them as such. Works are only *good* if God says they are *good*. That’s why we must look to the Scriptures for that definition.

Paul gives us that connection directly:

2 Timothy 3:16–17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Now pause for a moment. When Paul wrote this, *what Scriptures* was he referring to?

The New Testament had not yet been compiled. Paul was speaking about the TANAKH...the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. Many today refer to this as the Old Testament.

So what equips the believer for “every good work”?

All Scripture...including the Torah.

This is not our opinion. This is not theological inference. This is what the text says.

The Torah equips us for *good works*.

If we want to know what pleases God...if we want to know what “*good works*” are...then we must look at the instructions YHWH gave us from the beginning.

Let’s keep going.

Too often today, people speak of the Torah as if it were some outdated or even negative part of the Bible.

But how does the Bible itself describe the Torah?

Romans 7:12

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

That’s Paul. In the New Testament. After the resurrection.

And he doesn’t call the law bondage. He doesn’t say it’s weak. He says it’s holy, *righteous*, and *good*.

The Torah is not a curse. It is the revealed will of God. It is the instruction manual for how his people are to live. And it goes even further.

Deuteronomy 6:25

And it will be **righteousness** for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD [YHWH] our God, as he has commanded us.

Righteousness is not an abstract virtue. It is defined, in Scripture, as obedience to God’s commandments.

Psalm 119 echoes this:

Psalm 119:172 (KJV)

for all thy commandments are **righteousness**

Let’s connect the dots.

If *righteousness* is obedience to God’s commands...

And *good works* are called *righteous* acts...

Then *good works* must involve doing God’s commands.

That may feel radical to some, but it’s actually the most biblical approach we can take.

The further we drift from the Torah as the standard of *righteousness*, the more we rely on human opinion, emotion, and tradition to define what is *good*. And when that happens, we begin to call things “*good*” that God never called *good*— and we begin to ignore the things he does call good.

So the question becomes:

Do we want to walk in the “*good works*” that God prepared beforehand?

Then we must return to what he prepared beforehand—his Torah.

Let’s keep testing everything.

In Matthew 5, Yeshua offers a well-known teaching:

Matthew 5:16

Let your *light* shine before others, so that they may see your *good works* and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Many stop right there and assume “*good works*” just means being nice, doing charity, or having a positive attitude—and while those are certainly good, that is not the full picture.

As always, we must allow Scripture to define Scripture.

Just two verses earlier, Yeshua says:

Matthew 5:14

You are the *light* of the world.

But what is this light?

The answer is found in the TANKAH:

Proverbs 6:23 KJV

For the commandment is a lamp and the **law** [Torah] a **light**, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a **light** to my path.

The Bible is defining *light* as the *Torah*...the commandments of God. So when Yeshua tells us to let our *light* shine so that others may see our *good works*, he is teaching us to live out the *Torah* in full view of the world. That’s what causes others to glorify the Father.

This isn’t about self-righteousness...it’s about visible obedience, light. Our lives are supposed to reflect the instructions of our King, and when they do, people see the difference and are drawn to the Source of that *light*.

Deuteronomy 4:6

Keep them and do them [Torah], for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

This verse directly connects the Torah (God's commandments) with Israel's witness to the nations. When the nations observe Israel keeping YHWH's commandments, they're supposed to respond with admiration, recognizing the divine wisdom embedded in the Torah. This shows that the Torah wasn't meant to be a burden or something negative, but rather a light and a testimony.

It aligns with passages like:

Isaiah 2:3

...For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD [YHWH] from Jerusalem.

and

Micah 4:2

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [YHWH]...that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Together, these verses affirm that the Torah is both for Israel and a light to the nations. It's not just a instruction for one people group, but something designed to provoke awe and eventually lead the world to seek YHWH's ways.

Yeshua wasn't introducing a new metaphor—he was reintroducing an ancient truth.

Let your *light* shine...is to say...let the *Torah* shine...let your *good works* shine...

After telling us to let our light shine, and in the same context, Yeshua immediately says this:

Matthew 5:17

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

That phrase “*do not think*” is important. It means that many would think it—and indeed, many have.

But Yeshua is clear: he didn't come to do away with the Torah. He came to fill it up—to walk it out perfectly, to give it full meaning in the flesh, to show us what it looks like when a human life is completely submitted to the will of the Father.

And in case we still weren't sure what he meant, Yeshua continues:

Matthew 5:19

Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven...

These aren't the words of someone abolishing anything. They're the words of a teacher doubling down *on* the authority of the Torah in the lives of his followers.

Yeshua didn't just teach Torah—he lived it.

He is the *Light* (John 8:12) because his life reflected perfect obedience to the *Torah*.

1 John 2:6

Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

So how did Yeshua walk?

He kept the Sabbath (Luke 4:16), celebrated the feast days (John 7:2–10), taught and upheld the commandments (Matthew 22:36–40), and rebuked those who nullified the Word of God by their traditions (Mark 7:6–13).

Yeshua is our model. If he walked in Torah obedience—and he did—then those who abide in him are called to walk the same path.

This isn't legalism. This is discipleship.

Some might ask: “*But didn't the apostles teach something different after the resurrection?*”

Let's look.

Paul writes in **Titus 2:14**:

...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all **lawlessness** and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for **good works**.

The word “*lawlessness*” here is anomia—literally “without law,” or Torah-lessness.

Yeshua gave himself not just to forgive us of sin, but to redeem us from Torah-breaking. He didn't die to free us from the commandments. He died to free us from the penalty of breaking them—and to purify us so we would now be zealous for obedience.

Romans 2:13

It is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

Paul is not saying that hearing the Torah is enough—righteousness comes through action. This echoes what James teaches:

James 2:17

Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James doesn't dismiss faith. He simply says that true faith, by its very nature, produces *works*—and again, *works* as defined by the commandments.

He gives examples straight from Torah:

- Abraham offering up Isaac
- Rahab protecting the spies

Both are acts of faith... demonstrated through obedience.

James 2:22

You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works.

So what do we find in the lives and teachings of the apostles?

Not a rejection of Torah—but a call to obedience.

Not grace instead of commandments—but grace that empowers obedience.

They walked in the path of Yeshua. And they taught us to do the same.

Many believers today have been taught to think that walking in the Spirit means walking away from the Torah.

But is that what Scripture teaches?

Romans 7:6

But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

Some stop there and claim Paul is dismissing the Torah. But is he?

Let's just keep reading...

Romans 7:7

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means!

Paul immediately corrects any misunderstanding. The Torah isn't the problem. The problem is our sinful flesh. Without the Spirit, the Torah only reveals our disobedience. With the Spirit, it becomes our path.

This is not a new concept. It was prophesied long ago.

Ezekiel 36:27

And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

The Spirit does not replace obedience—it empowers it.

Romans 8:4

...in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Paul is clear. The Spirit doesn't release us from the law so we can ignore it—it empowers us to fulfill its righteous requirements. The Torah isn't set aside; it's written on our hearts and walked out through the Spirit.

This is also the central point of our teaching, "[*Dead to the Law*](#)," where we explore what it truly means to die to the law—it's not dying to obedience, but to condemnation and law-breaking.

The Torah shows us what obedience looks like, and the Spirit enables us to walk in it.

The very purpose of the indwelling Spirit is to cause us to walk in obedience. That's what Ezekiel says. That's what Paul teaches. That's what Yeshua lived.

And what does this life look like?

Galatians 5:22–23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

These aren't just feelings. These are the outward expressions of a life aligned with God's instructions. The Torah defines love. The Torah defines kindness. The Torah defines goodness.

Romans 7:14

For we know that the law is spiritual...

Paul said that. The Torah is spiritual. Which means that walking in the Spirit and walking in the Torah are not in opposition—they are the same path.

We've been given a new heart, and a new Spirit. The question is: *what are we doing with them?*

We've heard it said so often:

“God doesn't want religion—He just wants relationship.”

And while that sounds nice, we need to ask a deeper question:

What does a *relationship* with YHWH look like—biblically?

Yeshua tells us plainly:

John 14:15

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

That's not legalism. That's love.

He's not saying, “Obey me so I'll love you.” He's saying, “If you love me, this is what love looks like.”

Love is not just a feeling—it's obedience to the One we serve.

The apostle John echoes this:

1 John 5:2–3

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome.

There it is. Love is defined as keeping his commandments.

And again, John writes:

1 John 2:3–4

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him...**

These are strong words—but they’re not ours. They’re Scripture.

Let’s connect the dots:

- Good works = Obedience
- Obedience = Love
- Love = Keeping his commandments

Modern church tradition often teaches that love replaces law. But the Bible teaches that love fulfills the law.

And love, biblically defined, is walking in obedience to the Torah.

Yeshua walked in love—and that meant he walked in obedience.

And if we say we follow him, we ought to walk as he walked (1 John 2:6).

This is not about earning salvation. It’s about expressing our love.

It’s not about legalism. It’s about loyalty.

Let’s not just say we love Yeshua—let’s live it.

Let’s walk as he walked.

Let’s obey as he obeyed.

And let’s love the way Scripture teaches us to love.

Let’s be honest—there are few passages in the New Testament more sobering than the words of Yeshua in Matthew 7:21–23.

Matthew 7:21–23

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Let that sink in.

These people were doing things in his name—powerful, visible, religious things. They thought they were serving him. But they were still rejected.

Why?

Because their works were not defined by obedience. They were lawless.

The Greek word here is *anomia*—meaning “*without law*” or “*Torah-lessness*.” They may have been doing good things in the eyes of men, but Yeshua said they were not doing the will of the Father.

They were doing things for him—but not doing things his way.

Let’s not be deceived.

Good works apart from Torah are not good. They are man-defined, not God-defined.

And in the end, what matters is not what we thought was good, but what he calls good.

The book of Revelation gives us a crystal-clear picture of what true, faithful obedience looks like in the last days.

Revelation 12:17

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Yeshua.

Revelation 14:12

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Yeshua.

This is not two separate groups—Torah keepers or believers in Yeshua. It is one group. One body.

Those who obey and believe. Those who walk as Yeshua walked.

This is the prophetic picture of the remnant.

The end-time saints are not lawless. They are obedient. They are faithful. They uphold both the commandments and the testimony of Messiah.

And that’s the path we’re all called to.

Let’s not redefine righteousness. Let’s return to it.

Let’s bring everything together.

Yes—we are saved by grace through faith. Not by works.

Ephesians 2:8–9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

But don’t stop reading there.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We are not saved by works. But we are saved for works.

And Scripture tells us what those works are.

They're not random. They're not cultural. They're not defined by feelings or church traditions.

They were prepared beforehand—revealed in the Torah itself.

The Torah doesn't just point to the good works—it is the definition of good works.

The Torah defines righteousness.

The Torah equips us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The Torah prepares us to walk out these works by training our hearts and minds to love what is good and to hate what is evil.

The Torah is the light Yeshua told us to let shine before men (Proverbs 6:23; Matthew 5:16).

The Torah is what the Spirit causes us to walk in (Ezekiel 36:27).

This is not about legalism.

Legalism is trying to earn salvation through obedience—we reject that.

This is about loyalty.

Loyalty to the King is displayed through love and obedience (John 14:15).

Loving obedience to the Father. Through the Son. By the Spirit.

- Yeshua taught obedience.
- Yeshua modeled obedience.
- Yeshua commanded obedience.

And those who say they abide in him... must walk as he walked.

1 John 5:3

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

This is the restoration of obedience.

Not man-made religion. Not dead works. But Spirit-empowered, Messiah-centered, Torah-defined love. The question is not whether we're saved by works. The question is whether we are walking in the works he defined.

Let's be the kind of people who love him—not just in word, but in how we live.

Let's walk as Yeshua walked. Let's return to the whole Word of God. Let's test everything... and hold fast to what is good.

We hope that you have been blessed by this teaching, and remember, continue to test everything. Shalom.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/119Ministries#