

# Moments *for* You

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Theme: Be A Doer



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).*

Before our thoughts turn to service to the Lord, and our work for Him, it is very necessary to have our hearts occupied with His service toward us. While you may be wondering, “What can I do for the Lord?” the answer is, “You must pause and see and believe what the Lord has done for you. You must stand still and see the salvation of God.” Consider these words of divine and evangelistic sweetness: “To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

If you are concerned about the eternal destiny of your soul, perhaps you think that “I must do this, I must do that, and I must do the other.” Let me tell you, with deepest earnestness, that you must cease altogether from your own doings, cease from your own reasonings, and cease from your own feelings. Be assured of this: forgiveness of sins is not found in feeling or thinking or reasoning or doing at all: it is only to be found in pausing and gazing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is received through hearing and believing. It is looking off from yourself and your service to Christ and His service. It is ceasing from your restless and worthless doings, and resting in full, unquestioning confidence in the one offering of Jesus Christ, which has perfectly satisfied and perfectly glorified God as to the great question of your sin and guilt.

Here lies the divine secret of

peace: peace in Jesus, peace with God—eternal peace. If you are occupied with your doings for Christ, you will never get peace. But, if you will take God at His word, and rest in the Savior He has provided, you shall possess a peace which no power of earth or hell can ever disturb. Remember that your first great duty, your primary and all-important work, is to believe in Jesus—to rest sweetly in Him, and in what He has done for you on the cross. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (John 6:29).

It is absolutely vital to understand that all true Christian service begins with the possession of eternal life, and is rendered in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, in the light and authority of holy Scripture. May the eternal Spirit fill our hearts with genuine love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so that our one grand and undivided purpose may be to live for Him and to wait for that moment when we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him and with Him forever.

—C. H. Mackintosh

## DOING OR DONE?

*“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25).*

What shall I do? No words can more plainly show the ignorance of a fallen sinner who does not understand his lost, fallen, helpless condition.

When man could do *nothing*, Jesus came to him where he was. What a journey of love! He came to do *all* for the sinner, and He has done it—it is finished! “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).

My reader, do you know Jesus? Are you resting on what Jesus has done on the cross? Have you been brought to know your utterly lost condition? Have you, by faith, seen Jesus taking your place on Calvary's cross, and now giving you *His place* in spotless purity for ever?

If you seek to earn eternal life by doing, you are rejecting and despising Jesus Christ. But if you know and believe the love of God in sending Jesus to die for you and rise again, you have eternal life. It is the gift of God. Let your doing now be to show forth the praises of Him who saved you. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

—Charles Stanley

## DOERS OF THE WORD

*"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25).*

It is not enough to hear the Word; we must do it. Many people have the mistaken idea that hearing a good sermon or Bible study is what makes them grow and get God's blessing. It is not the *hearing* but the *doing* that brings blessing. Too many Christians mark their Bibles, but their Bibles never mark them! If you think you are spiritual because you hear the Word, then you are only kidding yourself.

The Word here is compared to a mirror. The main purpose for owning a mirror is to be able to see yourself

and to make yourself look as clean and neat as possible. As we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves as we really are. James mentions several mistakes people make as they look into God's mirror.

### TAKE TIME TO LOOK

First, they merely glance at themselves. They do not carefully study themselves as they read the Word. Many sincere believers read a chapter of the Bible each day, but it is only a religious exercise and they fail to profit from it personally. Their conscience would bother them if they did not have their daily reading, when actually their conscience should bother them because they read the Word carelessly. A cursory reading of the Bible will never reveal our deepest needs. It is the difference between a candid photo and an X-ray.

### PAY ATTENTION

The second mistake is that they forget what they see. If they were looking deeply enough into their hearts, what they would see would be unforgettable! Think of how some in the Bible responded to the true knowledge of their own hearts. Isaiah cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone" (Isaiah 6:5). Peter cried, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). Job was the most righteous man on earth in his day, yet he confessed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).

### READ AND OBEY

Mistake number three is: they fail to obey what the Word tells them to do. They think that hearing is the same as doing, and it is not. If we are to use God's mirror profitably, then we must gaze into it carefully and with serious intent (James 1:25). No quick glances will do. We must examine our own hearts and lives in the light of God's Word. This requires time, attention,

and sincere devotion. Five minutes with God each day will never accomplish a deep spiritual examination.

I have been fortunate with the doctors who have cared for me through the years, and I owe a great deal to them. Each of them has possessed two qualities that I have appreciated: they have spent time with me and have not been in a hurry, and they have always told me the truth. When Jesus, the Great Physician (Matthew 9:12), examines us, He uses His Word; and He wants us to give Him sufficient time to do the job well. Perhaps one reason we glance into the Word instead of gaze into the Word is that we are afraid of what we might see. After seeing ourselves, we must remember what we *are* and what God says, and we must *do* the Word. The blessing comes in the doing, not in the reading of the Word.

Why does James call the Word of God “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25)? Because when we obey it, God sets us free. “And I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts” (Psalm 119:45). “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). “If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31,32).  
—Condensed from *Be Mature* by Warren Wiersbe.

## LOVE GOD’S WORD

*“Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4).*

God’s Word is food for the Christian. Your growth, your power, and your life depend on how you deal with the Word of God. Therefore seek with your whole heart to learn how to use God’s Word properly. To this end,

receive the following suggestions.

**1) Read the Word with both your heart and your mind.** With the understanding I seek to know and comprehend; with the heart I desire, and love, and hold fast. Let your understanding be the servant of your heart. As you read, beware the understanding of the carnal nature, which cannot receive spiritual things (1 Corinthians 1:17,27; 2:6,12; Colossians 2:18). Wait in humility on the Spirit of God, and say to yourself: this Word of God I now receive in my heart, to love it and to let it live in me (Psalm 119:10,11,47; Romans 10:8; James 1:21).

**2) Read it with the resolve to be not only a hearer, but a doer of the Word.** It is a terrible delusion to be content with hearing the Word. Yet how common is the sight of multitudes of Christians listening to the Word of God every Sunday, and yet not doing it! So complete is the delusion, that Christians never realize they are not living good Christian lives. Why are we fooled in this way? For one thing, people mistake the pleasure they have in hearing the Word of God for Christianity and worship. The mind delights in having the truth presented clearly; the imagination is gratified by its illustration; the feelings are stirred by its application. To an active mind, knowledge gives pleasure, but this is not enough. True blessedness comes through the doing of God’s Word, and in the surrender of myself to be and to act just as the Word says (Matthew 5:19,20; 7:21,24-27; Luke 11:28; James 1:21,25). Be not only hearers, but doers of the Word.

**3) Love God’s Word.** Esteem it sweeter than honey: better than treasures of gold or silver (Psalm 19:9-11; Job 23:12; Jeremiah 15:16; 1 Peter 2:2). In the Word, God can and will

reveal His heart to you. In the Word, Jesus will communicate Himself and all His grace. In the Word, the Holy Spirit will come in to you, to renew your heart and all your thoughts, according to the mind and will of God. O, then, read not simply enough of the Word to keep you from spiritual decline, but make it one of your chief occupations on earth to be filled with His Word, so that He may fulfill His Word in you. —Andrew Murray, adapted

## READ + DO = BLESSING

About the year 1451 BC, God drew His people's attention to the importance of habitual meditation in His Word, saying, *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"* (Joshua 1:8).

Four hundred years later, the Lord needed to remind His people of this exceedingly important habit of life. In describing a truly blessed man, He says of him, *"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"* (Psalm 1:2,3).

After a lapse of a thousand years, in AD 60, God speaks—for the third time—to impress upon forgetful minds the highly essential practice of steadily going on, day after day, with the thoughtful reading of His Word: *"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"* (James 1:25). —F. Ferguson

***We can never tell how far our acts of kindness, or other service for the Lord, may cast their blessing. Deeds which may be directed at one person, can have an effect which touches many others. Because this is true about all deeds—both good and bad—we are solemnly bound to examine our motives and guard our doings, so that they may bring only honor and glory to the name of Jesus.***

—Selected

## SERVICE TO OTHERS

An unknown author captured eloquently the way in which we so religiously fall short of Christ's demand of service for others:

- I was hungry and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger.
- I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.
- I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.
- I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health.
- I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.
- I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me.
- You seem so holy, so close to God. But I'm still very hungry and lonely and cold.

We must hear again the words of James: "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

## LEARNING VS. DOING

I read about a man in New York City who died at the age of 63 without ever having had a job. He spent his entire adult life in college. He had acquired so many academic degrees that they looked like the alphabet behind his name.

Why did this man spend his entire life in college? When he was a child, a wealthy relative died who had named him as a beneficiary in his will. It stated that he was to be given enough money to support him every year as long as he stayed in school. And it was to be discontinued when he had completed his education.

The man met the terms of the will, but by staying in school indefinitely he turned a technicality into a steady income for life—something his benefactor never intended. Unfortunately, he spent thousands of hours listening to professors and reading books but never “doing.” He acquired more and more knowledge but didn’t put it into practice.

This reminds me of what James said: “Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only” (1:22). If we read the Bible or listen as it is taught but fail to put to work what we have learned, we are as bad as that man with his string of degrees. His education was of no practical benefit to anyone.

—Richard De Haan, *Our Daily Bread*

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Christ had passed through the awful hour of agony and death. He then came back from the grave a victorious conqueror, and proclaimed to His disciples, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Then He immediately added, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to

every creature.” As followers of Jesus Christ, we are expected to serve.

Some are called to preach, as Paul said: “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16). Others may not be called to preach, but every believer is to “do the work of an evangelist” in one way or another (2 Timothy 4:5).

There is a place of service and a work for each Christian. None can look to the Master and say, “I do not have the privilege of doing something for You.” We may not all have five talents—or even two—but we are all responsible for putting to good use what He has given us. God has beautifully arranged and adapted spheres of labor, so as to meet all the diversity of capacity and talent among His people. To each believer He has given power and opportunity to do something.

What are *you* doing for Christ? What are *you* doing for the salvation of souls? What are *you* doing for the help of the feeble among the lambs and sheep of Christ’s flock?

Let us say, with the apostle Paul, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

—Condensed from *Young Christian*

## WORKS OF FAITH

*“Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:17,18).*

I wish to point out the difference between good works and *works of faith*: acts which in themselves prove that the doer of them has faith. Perhaps James refers to deeds of this sort when he encourages us to show our faith through our works.

### PROOF OF FAITH

Feeding the hungry does not necessarily show that I have faith. But Abraham was willing to slay his son at God's command (James 2:21). Our natural sensibilities reject this as a dreadful notion, but Abraham's direction came from God and his obedience was born of faith—faith in the God of resurrection (Hebrews 11:19).

James also mentions the work of Rahab, who assisted the destroyers of her city (James 2:25). According to natural thinking, her conduct was disgraceful. However, her faith recognized that she and her people had revolted against the God of heaven and earth. By helping the spies, she reverted to her only true allegiance. This made her a traitor to Jericho, but demonstrated her obedience to God.

### OPPORTUNITIES FROM GOD

If you read the famous list of heroes and sufferers of faith in Hebrews 11, I do not think you will find even one person who is included for their "good works." What I mean is, those actions which demonstrate the possession of faith are not usually or necessarily good works in the ordinary sense. In fact, they may seem to be bad actions, or foolish, or crazy. For example, it is not rational to build a ship, as Noah did, when he had never seen a flood (Hebrews 11:7). It also seems foolish for soldiers to attempt to take a city by marching around it for seven days, but God commanded it (Hebrews 11:30).

Works of faith can only be appreciated by faith until God vindicates them. Furthermore, it is *not* our responsibility to seek out works of faith. But as we walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), and live by faith (Romans 1:17), God will give us opportunities to perform acts of faith. David does not seek a bear to slay. The gold does not seek the furnace (1 Peter 1:7).

### OUR RESPONSIBILITY

But when we come to good works, it is quite different. The Bible makes it clear that we should diligently maintain them. What God looks for in His people is that they should be good people. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Followers of Jesus Christ are branches in the true vine, and He nurtures and cultivates us for the purpose of bearing fruit (John 15).

God's Word tells us in Titus 3:8, "they which have believed in God" should be "careful to maintain good works." Ephesians chapter 2, which stresses salvation through faith, also reminds us that believers are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

Would it not be beneficial for the health of our souls—and the testimony of Jesus Christ—if, when we had a little time, or strength, or money that we could spare, we looked around to see what good we could do? And how much greater would be the blessing if the entire course of our lives was identified by service to Him. Dorcas was this kind of a person: her death was such a loss that she was brought back from the dead (Acts 9:36-41).

### OUR GREAT EXAMPLE

If we examine the life of our Lord Jesus, both good works and acts of faith abound. He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Blessed truth! And He was "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). He ran the whole race. The invisible joy of Heaven was the crown before the eye of His faith, and for that reason He "endured the cross, despising the shame." May the Lord grant us the grace to seek His footsteps, and to win His praise. —C. D. Maynard, adapted

## CONSTRAINED

*“The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).*

If we belong to Christ, we want to do something for Him. We all want to serve Him if we are really saved. But I suggest to your heart and mine that we will never be able to serve the Lord properly unless these verses get a hold of us.

### MOTIVE FOR SERVICE

When it comes to service for the Lord, or anything in the Christian pathway, it is not he or she who *knows* the most that walks the best before the Lord, nor even he or she that *reads* the most, but he who *loves* the most. Intelligence in divine things does not come through the intellect: it comes through the heart and conscience.

Sometimes, sad to say, we don't do anything for the Lord, and that is a real problem. We get so occupied with our own interests and ideas and getting ahead in this world that we don't have any time left for Him. Other times we go ahead and do something because we feel we ought to. Perhaps it will not be done in the right way or for the right reason, and God may not be able to bless it fully. Nevertheless, we can do something for the Lord without really being in communion with Him. But isn't it better when our service springs from a heart of love because we are in communion with the Lord?

### POWER FOR SERVICE

Our verse says, “The love of Christ constraineth us.” You will never do anything for the Lord properly unless it is the love of Christ compelling and

controlling you. Oh, you say, “I wish it would constrain me.” Let me use an illustration that is a bit simple, but it makes the point. If I have a magnet in my hand, and a pile of nails across the room, will the nails be drawn to the magnet? No, of course not. What's wrong? They are too far from the magnet! That is the problem with me, and maybe with you. The magnet is fine, but we need to get closer to it. That is what I want to impress on you and me. When it comes to service for the Lord, we will never serve properly until we are close enough to Him.

When we get close to Him (I say it very humbly, because I don't pretend to live it out in my own life), we find it is not that difficult to know what He would have us to do. But if we are at a distance from the Source, we may find that the love of Christ doesn't seem to be compelling or controlling us. Has His love changed? Not at all, but I am too far away. I have allowed things into my life that have put a wall between me and the Lord. Then I say, “I don't feel the love of Christ constraining me.” The Lord is saying, “I want you closer.”

### RESTORING TO SERVICE

When there comes a time that we aren't as on fire for the Lord as we used to be, we need to go back and read Matthew 27, or Luke 22, or Mark 14 and 15, or John 19. Read and meditate on those accounts of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. And above all, if there is something that has come between you and the Lord so you don't feel that warmth and love toward Him, kneel down and ask Him to show you what it is and then ask Him for the grace to remove it. Rest assured that the Lord will show you what it is, because it is His delight to restore you to happy communion with Himself.

—W. J. Prost