

Cause and Effect

What is "Cause and Effect"?

What we do has consequences

When do we experience it?

When does it bring joy to follow it?

When is it shameful to ignore it?

What is a "Gift"?

When do we experience it?

How might it be shameful to treat a gift as "cause and effect"?

Which is true for Christians?

Both!!

1



Free to Plant and Harvest

Galatians

bib.ly/Gal6.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts

2

The letter to the Galatian church

- A letter from the Apostle Paul to the Galatian church
- The diversity of the church led to a deep theological conflict
 - Religious practices (especially circumcision) that were deeply tied to culture were not shared by all people groups in the church
 - This raised the question of what place these religious practices played in Christianity
 - The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to clarify
- The diversity in the church led to an amazingly good theological gift to Christians ever since that day

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A Christian Worldview

- The world is an amazingly good place!
- Yet it has so much trouble!
- Because of what the Bible calls “sin” (contrary to God’s design)
 - Every single person sins, bringing harm to self and others
 - Results indirect harmful effects through groups
 - Results in separation from the love and goodness of God
- What can be done?
 - The obvious solution that doesn’t solve anything...
 - The life of a slave: forever forced to plant but never really harvesting
 - Doing moral and religious good deeds (**works of the law**)
 - that are never good enough to make us loved by God (**justified**),
 - yet we are forever trying to be good enough (until we give up)

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Galatians 2:16

We know that **a person is not justified**
loved by God
by the works of the law
moral & religious good deeds

because by **the works of the law** **no one will be justified.**
moral & religious good deeds **loved by God**

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Galatians 2:16

We know that **a person is not justified**
loved by God
by the works of the law
moral & religious good deeds
 but is **justified** only **by faith in Jesus Christ.**
loved by God

So we, too, have **put our faith in Christ Jesus** that we may be
justified by faith in Christ and not by **the works of the law**,
loved by God **moral & religious good deeds**

because by **the works of the law** **no one will be justified.**
moral & religious good deeds **loved by God**

6

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We have been set free to stay free!

Galatians 5:1

It is for **freedom** that Christ has set us **free.**

Stand firm, then, and **do not let yourselves**

be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

forever trying to be good enough to earn God's love
while never being secure in God's love

Error # 1

~~Being free in Christ, yet living like we are still slaves to good works~~

- ~~• Believing we will only be loved by God (**justified**)~~
- ~~• if/when we do enough moral & religious good deeds (**the works of the law**)~~

~~Sadly, so many Christians live under this impossible weight...~~

- ~~• Thinking that if we are good enough long enough, we **might** be loved...~~
- ~~• knowing that we keep falling so far short of the goodness of God~~

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We have been freed, not to be selfish, but to do good Galatians 5:13-14

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.

But **do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh**;
rather, **serve one another humbly in love**.

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command:

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Error # 2

~~Thinking that salvation by the grace of God means that
there are no real consequences for our behavior (good or bad)
since we are guaranteed salvation by the grace of Christ
and our best works are like filthy rags compared to Christ
So...be thankful for forgiveness and stop struggling so hard to be good!~~

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We are free to plant and harvest goodness Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked (**tricked or deceived**).

A man (**even a free person**) reaps what he sows.

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap
destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit (**which only a free
person can do**), from the Spirit will reap **eternal life**.

Let **us** not become **weary** in doing good, for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest if **we** do not give up.

**Therefore, as we have opportunity,
let us do good to all people,
especially to those who belong to the family of believers.**

Error # 3

~~Not hoping for a wonderful harvest that comes from planting good deeds~~

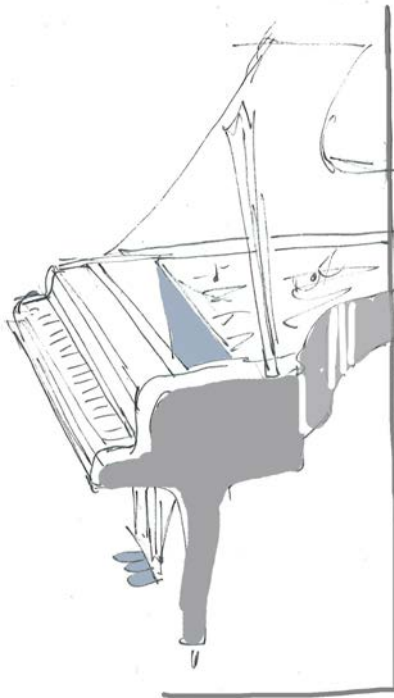
10

The Big Idea

**In Christ, we are freed from slavery to doing good
so that we will joyfully abound in doing good
having the hope of reaping a wonderful harvest in God**

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Practicing the Piano



How might we approach practicing the piano...

- if we know that we are guaranteed a passing score?

OR

- if we think we could never be good enough to pass?

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Practicing the Piano



Practicing until we collapse...

- If we think we might earn a pass **if** we do the best we possibly can!
- If we fear the consequences of not doing well enough yet we struggle to make enough progress
- So we wear ourselves out trying...

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Practicing the Piano




Practicing without really trying...

- If we think we are guaranteed to pass
- So we just put in time without actually intending or expecting to improve

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Practicing the Piano



- Practicing without joy...
- Because we are being made to do what we don't like to do
- and we think the struggle won't bring anything good
- and others are blocking our progress
- or we block our own progress
- or we are playing a faulty piano...
- or we don't hope in the harvest...

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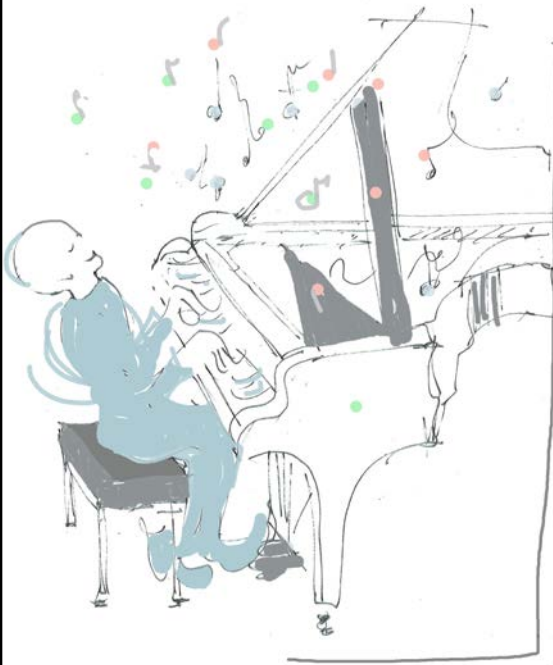
Practicing the Piano



- Not practicing if we are not being forced to do it
- Since we have been given a guaranteed "pass" for our performance
- And since God is so much better than we are anyway
- So why struggle?

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Practicing the Piano



Practicing for the love of music!

- Amazed at the goodness and kindness of our fantastic teacher
- Delighting when we can make music now
- Working so that we can make better music later as we learn
- Working so that we can earn the praise of our good and gracious teacher

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Doing good works



How might we approach doing good works...

- if we know that we are guaranteed love by God?

OR

- if we think we could never be good enough to be loved by God?

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Doing good works



Doing good until we collapse...

- If we think we might earn a pass **if** we do the best we possibly can!
- If we fear the consequences of not doing well enough yet struggle to make enough progress
- So we wear ourselves out trying...

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Doing good works




Doing good without really trying...

- If we think we are guaranteed God's love
- So we just put in time without actually intending or expecting to improve

20

Doing good works




Doing good without joy...

- Because we are being made to do what we don't like to do
- and we think the struggle won't bring anything good
- and others are blocking our progress
- or we block our own progress
- or we are forced to work with broken "instruments"
- or we don't hope in the harvest...

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Doing good works

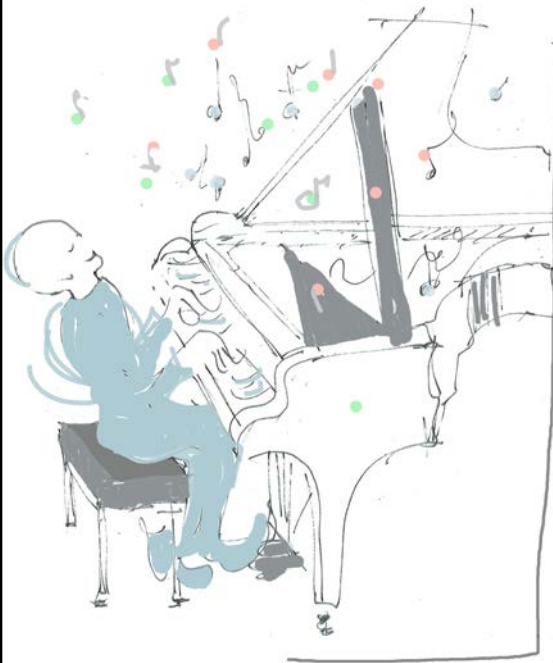


Not doing good if we are not being forced to do it

- Since we have been given a guaranteed God's love
- And since God is so much better than we are anyway
- So why struggle?

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Doing good works



Doing good for the love of goodness and the love of God!

- Amazed at the goodness and kindness of our fantastic teacher
- Delighting when we can do good things like God
- Working so that we can do more good as we learn
- Working so that we can earn the praise of our good and gracious teacher

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The Big Idea

In Christ, we are freed from slavery to do good so that we will joyfully abound in doing good having the hope of reaping a good harvest in God

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Application

Delight in the freedom of being loved by God through faith alone in Christ alone

- What we could never earn (God's love)...
- has been given as a free gift...
- by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- received by faith (trust) in Jesus Christ alone

What an amazing gift!

Yet it is so easy to return to the fear or pride of thinking that we must earn salvation, without even knowing it!

- Revealed by...
 - Joyless obedience
 - Pride over others
 - Guilt and shame for not being or doing better

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Application

Joyfully abound in good works in Christ

- Be like God
 - "Common grace": generous goodness **HORIZONTALLY**
 - justice & mercy in head, heart, and hands
 - like rain and harvest given to all
 - "Salvific (salvation) grace": generous goodness **VERTICALLY**
 - helping people discover new life in Christ
 - helping people grow in their life in Christ
- To all people
- Especially among believers
- Not growing weary or giving up (as tempting as that can be...)
 - How??

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Application

Look forward to the joyful harvest FOR US in God

- Following the model we have in Jesus:
 - “And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. **For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame,** and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
Hebrews 12:1–2

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What is this joyful harvest?

- Good “seeds” (attitudes, words, actions) **result in good fruit**
- Being more like God brings **the joy of God**
- Those who do good works in Christ **will be rewarded by God!!**
 - “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’” *Luke 19:17*
 - “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” *Matthew 6:19–20*
- By the work of God in us, **there is real good in our works** as we follow Christ

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We are no longer slaves to good works

- To a master (the Law) who required endless works from us
- Without giving us the promised reward of the harvest
- No longer having to earn God's love

Rather, we are children who are loved by God and who will reap a wonderful harvest from the good deeds we plant in Christ

- By grace, we are now like the owner of our own land: the work planting good seeds brings a joyful harvest to us!
 - "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." *Galatians 6:9*
- We are free to plant the good deeds of being like God and to harvest the delight of God in Christ

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Application

Delight in the freedom of being forever loved by God through faith alone in Christ alone

Then joyfully abound in good works in Christ

by looking forward to the joyful harvest FOR US in God

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The Big Idea

**In Christ, we are freed from slavery to do good
so that we will joyfully abound in doing good
having the hope of reaping a good harvest in God**

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“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” *Philippians 3:12–14*

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