

Called to Do Good  
Ephesians 2:8-10  
September 1, 2019

Michael Murdock is a retired American contemporary Christian singer, televangelist and a pastor. He once said, “You will only be remembered for two things: the problems you solve and the ones you create.”<sup>1</sup> I don’t know about you, but I think people are more likely to be remembered for the problems they create rather than the ones they solve.

Everyone wants to be remembered. We want to be at least recognized by the people around us, by the people we love. We want them to remember the great things we did. We want them to remember the biggest and even the smallest sacrifices we made for them. We want to be remembered. That’s just the way we are.

However, if we do good to others and to society, we never know whether the good will be noticed by others. Even if it is noticed, it may not be remembered for long. People tend to forget, but this should not stop us from doing good.

Paul reminds us that we are “God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”<sup>2</sup> We are made to do good works.

You remember the story of Moses and the mighty works he did in leading the Israelites out of Egypt. With dramatic help from God, Moses led the Israelites out of slavery. Ten plagues and dividing the Red Sea were incredible miracles. The Bible says, “when the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.”<sup>3</sup> They praised God and exalted him.

But soon, they forgot all of these. They didn’t even appreciate the freedom they have.

One month after they came out of Egypt, they ran out of food. They grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt!” It would have been better to die in Egypt! “There we sat around the pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/mike\\_murdock\\_127416?src=t\\_remembered](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/mike_murdock_127416?src=t_remembered)

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 2:10.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 14:31.

this desert to starve us...to death.”<sup>4</sup> So, God provided them Manna and quail to satisfy their hunger.

When they were out of water, God provided water. God led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God was with them every step of their way. Every time God delivered them from their misery, the Israelites were grateful for God’s intervention, but then they forgot. The good the Lord did each step of their way was forgotten soon after. Nevertheless, God did not stop being good to them.

The same thing happened to Jesus. He taught, healed the sick, restored the sight of the blind, raised the dead, and fed the hungry. People followed him everywhere. On a Palm Sunday as Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowd went before him, spreading their garments and palm branches in his path, shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” But soon, very soon, all the good he had done were forgotten. Just a few days later, the crowd shouted to crucify him.

If people can easily forget the good God does for them, then we should not be surprised if they forget the good we do. We are called to do good, regardless of whether people remember it or not.

John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, wrote that “you have not lived today until you have done something (helpful) for someone who can never repay you.” Did you know that while the recipients of your kindness may not pay you back, you still get repaid? Not just in the future, but in the present. Not necessarily through reciprocation, but as a psychological benefit.

There is a recent study done in Spain. Employees at a company were asked to either perform acts of kindness for colleagues, or to record the number of kindness they received from coworkers. It turned out that the people who received the acts of kindness became happier for the obvious reasons.

The interesting thing, however, is that those who did the kind acts for others not only increased their own happiness, but also had an increase in life and job satisfaction and a decrease in depression. The giver benefited even more than the receiver. Altruism seems to be contagious. The beneficiaries of kind acts end up

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 16:3.

doing extra nice things to other colleagues.<sup>5</sup> When we act kindly to one, we spread kindness to many.

Perhaps being remembered is not as important as being good.

Harvard University professor Arthur C. Brooks did a study on altruism a few years ago and said, “When you look at the data, it turns out conservatives (political, moral and economical) give about 30 percent more, and incidentally, conservative-headed families make slightly less money (than liberals).” They earn less; but they give more.

Brooks says that the biggest predictor of whether someone will be charitable is their religious participation. Religious people are more likely to give to charity and when they give, they give four times more than the non-religious people. Brooks says that religious peoples’ giving is not limited to their own religion. They are more likely to give to every kind of cause and charity, including explicitly non-religious charities. Even for donating blood, religious people give more blood than non-religious people.<sup>6</sup>

We are called to do good works whether we are remembered or not. John Wesley said:

“Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as you ever can!”

“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/dont-forget-the-basil/201806/being-kind-others-benefits-you>

<sup>6</sup> From John Stossel’ column in Los Angeles Times, date is unknown.

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 2:10.