

# *It Is Written*

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## What Is The Work Of An Evangelist?

By Joe R. Price

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5)

What is the work of an evangelist? Brethren are likely to have unrealistic expectations and place unscriptural demands on the preacher when they do not understand his work. And, when the evangelist does not know his work, he is tempted to please men instead of God (2 Tim. 4:3-4; Gal. 1:10).

It ought not to be so. There is work the evangelist must do for which he is accountable. An evangelist is a herald, a "bringer of good tidings" (Thayer, 257). He preaches the gospel. Paul explained, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word!" (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

The evangelist's work is not to entertain an audience with comedy and storytelling. It is to "Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2).

The evangelist's work is not rhetorical eloquence (1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1, 4, 13; 2 Cor. 10:10). Neither is his work to be the church's social coordinator. Preaching the gospel is about feeding souls the gospel, not feeding stomachs pizza (John 6:26-27).

To fulfill his work, the evangelist must devote himself to "reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13). He cannot preach what he does not know. Do not demand the preacher must have a D.D. or some other academic credential initialed behind his name to preach. We appreciate educational accomplishments, but they do not qualify the evangelist for his work or recommend him to others as a preacher of truth (1 Cor. 1:26-29; 2:1-2).

The evangelist must go into the pulpit and Bible class prepared to proclaim the word of God. A seasoned preacher used to tell young men wanting to preach, "Get brim full and running over with the word of God." That will equip you to preach (2 Tim. 2:15). The work of gospel preaching is not about filling time. It is about filling your time in the pulpit with the word of God. Planting God's seed (His word) into hearts is the work God gave evangelists (Luke 8:11-15; Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Tim. 4:6, 11).

Preachers and brethren must remember the work God gave evangelists to do (Eph. 4:11-12). So evangelist, fulfill your service without being deterred and distracted by false definitions and faulty expectations of your work (2 Tim. 4:5). And brethren, help the evangelist do his God-given work. Our charge is before God, who will judge us all (2 Tim. 4:1).

## Respect for the Name of God

By Gary Henry

"And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:12).

ONE EVIDENCE OF HOW LITTLE REGARD WE HAVE FOR GOD IS THE FLIPPANT WAY IN WHICH WE SOMETIMES USE HIS NAME. It is possible, no doubt, to be scrupulous in the use of God's name and still not have any reverence for Him in our hearts. But in today's meditation, we want

to focus on the inside-out problem: the problem of the person who has no inward respect for God and that lack of respect shows up in the person's outward speech. There are basically three ways we may disrespect God and His name.

**Swearing.** To swear is to invoke God as the guarantee that we're going to do as we say. For instance, the person who says, "This is what I'm going to do, by God" is swearing. But Jesus taught that our statements ought not to require any oath to back them up. "Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).

**Profanity.** Profane speech is that which makes common or crude use of words that should be held as sacred and used only with great reverence. It's not uncommon anymore to hear the words God and Jesus Christ thrown around so casually one wonders if the speakers even realize whose names they are using.

**Cursing.** When a person curses, he calls down God's wrath upon someone, verbally wishing them harm. "Damn you" is shorthand for "I hope God will damn your soul to hell." Even thinking this about someone is serious, but speaking it out loud — using God's name to vent our anger on others — is a monstrous evil. It is no light matter to wish the loss of someone's soul.

Why are these things so serious? Might we not consider them harmless foibles, less dangerous than sins that actually hurt other people? Well, the problem has to do with the heart. Crude words, and certainly irreverent ones, are almost always symptomatic of a heart that is turned away from God. So Jesus said, "By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). So the next time you feel like "cussing," check your heart. Where is your spiritual father, above or below? Does your speech show that you're a humble worshiper of God?

"To curse is to pray to the devil" (German Proverb).

## *"Ready For Every Good Deed"*

By Heath Rogers

The apostle Paul told Titus to "remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed" (Titus 3:1). There are several reasons why you and I need to be ready for every good deed.

**1. There is a shortage both of good works and of people who do them.** There are plenty of people doing bad things. This world has been characterized by sin and evil since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. There is always a need for good people who will do good deeds. If we do not perform the good works God has prepared for us to do (Eph. 2:10), who will?

**2. If we aren't ready, we won't see the opportunities to do good works.** How many times have opportunities passed us by because we weren't prepared? Some people excuse their lack of involvement by saying, "I don't know how," or, "I never have the opportunity." The opportunities exist, we just have to find them. Paul asked the Colossians to pray "for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned" (Col. 4:3).

**3. Readiness is a state of mind.** Christians are to live in a watchful, alert state. Jesus said, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matt. 24:42-44). We are to be on the alert always, not only for the Lord's return, but also for opportunities to do good.

Are you and I ready for every good deed?