

Small Group Guide: Labor for Love

Based on Ephesians 2:8-10

Overview

This guide is designed to help your group dig deeper into the sermon's central message: that we are saved by grace for good works, and that our labor for the Lord flows from gratitude, humility, and a God-given purpose. Use the questions and applications below to spark honest conversation and encourage one another toward meaningful action.

Key Verse

Ephesians 2:8-10 — Paul teaches that salvation comes entirely through God's grace received by faith, not through human effort or achievement. Because of this, believers are described as God's workmanship, created to walk in good works that He prepared in advance.

Key Takeaways

1. **Grace is the foundation.** Our labor for the Lord only becomes meaningful after we have received the free gift of salvation. Works done outside of grace are done in vain, because they are done for ourselves rather than for God.
 2. **Humility is not optional.** Because salvation is entirely God's doing, there is no room for boasting. Humility unifies the body of Christ and keeps our focus on His glory rather than our own recognition.
 3. **We work for His glory, not our own.** The purpose of good works is that others would see Christ in us. Whether in a hospital, a classroom, a neighborhood park, or a church ministry, our labor is meant to point people to Jesus.
 4. **God is sovereign over our good works.** He has already prepared the works He intends for each of us. Our role is not to figure out the entire blueprint, but to be sharp, ready, and willing to walk in what He has planned.
 5. **Your gifting plus your burden equals your ministry.** God has placed specific abilities and specific burdens in each person. Identifying both is a practical path toward fulfilling your God-given purpose.
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Discussion Questions

Opening

- Think about a job or task you have done purely for someone else's benefit, with no expectation of recognition. How did that feel compared to work you did for personal gain?

Grace (Point 1)

- The sermon describes grace as an undeserved favor extended from a superior to an inferior. Why do you think it is so difficult for people, especially in American culture, to simply receive a gift without feeling the need to earn it or give something back?
- Before coming to faith, what were you laboring for? How did that change after you were saved?

Humility (Point 2)

- The sermon describes pride as something that stops the work of the body of Christ and turns cooperation into competition. Can you think of a time when pride, either your own or someone else's, brought a good effort to a halt?
- Romans 12:3 cautions believers not to think of themselves more highly than they ought. What are some practical habits that help you stay grounded in humility when you are doing good work?

His Glory (Point 3)

- The sermon says that nurses, teachers, students, and workers of all kinds can use their everyday roles to make Christ visible to those around them. What does that look like in your specific role or season of life right now?
- Is there a difference between doing good work and doing good work for God's glory? What changes when the motivation shifts?

His Sovereignty (Point 4)

- The sermon points out that God has already ordained the works He has prepared for each of us. Does that truth bring you comfort, challenge, or both? Why?
- Jesus knew the works the Father had prepared for Him, including suffering and the cross, and He walked in them. What does that teach us about how we should respond when our God-given purpose leads us somewhere difficult?

Fulfilling Your Purpose (Point 5)

- The sermon offers this formula: your gifting plus your burden equals your ministry. Take a moment as a group and have each person share one gifting and one burden they are aware of in their own life.
 - What is one thing that has kept you from walking fully in your God-given purpose? What would it look like to take one step toward it this week?
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Practical Applications

This Week, individually:

- Spend time in prayer asking God two specific questions: What have you gifted me with? Who have you burdened my heart for? Write down what comes to mind and bring it back to the group next week.
- Identify one moment in your daily routine, at work, at school, at home, where you can intentionally labor for the Lord's glory rather than your own comfort or recognition.
- If you have never received the gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ, consider what is holding you back. Talk to your group leader or pastor this week.

As a Group:

- Pray together for each member to gain clarity about his or her God-given purpose.
 - Consider identifying one ministry or service opportunity you can pursue together as a group, putting the principle of unified, humble labor into practice.
 - Hold each other accountable over the next month. Check in regularly with this question: How are you walking in the good works God has prepared for you?
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Closing Reflection

The sermon reminds us that God does not need us to accomplish His purposes. He is fully capable on His own. But in His love, He chooses to use us as His instruments. That is not a burden. That is a privilege. The question the sermon leaves us with is a simple and direct one:

You have been saved by grace. You have been given gifts. God has prepared the works. Will you walk in them?

Close your time together in prayer, asking God to sharpen each member of your group and make them ready to be used for His kingdom and His glory.