



# Since We Are God's Workmanship

Brownsburg Church of Christ

by Edwin Crozier

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## Introduction:

When I consider the likes of Abraham, Moses, Mary Magdalene, Paul, Peter, and other saints in the Bible, I want to be God's workmanship (cf. **Ephesians 2:10**). I long for God's creative power to continue working in my own heart and life. But recognizing we are God's workmanship is more than just a propositional statement, more than a label. It actually has consequences for my walk with the Lord. Let me share some of these consequences.

## Discussion:

### I. Since I am God's workmanship, I need to act like it.

- A. Sadly, as is always the case, there is no good doctrine of Jesus Christ that Satan won't get his hands on to pervert and distort. Just so, Satan has perverted this idea of being God's workmanship. Some have the idea that since we are God's workmanship, we do nothing; we simply sit on our backsides and wait for God to take over. We excuse our sinfulness by saying God just hasn't fixed that yet, but that is what the sacrifice of Jesus is for. That is not what Paul teaches about God's workmanship.
- B. Notice Paul's conclusion to this statement in **Ephesians 2:10**. We are God's workmanship "created in Christ Jesus for good works...that we should walk in them." God is not working on us so we can live how we want. He is working on us so we might be free to walk in His good works. In **Titus 2:11-14**, we learn Jesus gave Himself so we might be "a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (ESV).
- C. Further, in **Ephesians 4:1**, Paul drives home the conclusion of being God's workmanship. Since we are God's workmanship and God can do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think by His power working in us (cf. **Ephesians 3:21**), we are to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. How ridiculous is it to claim to be the workmanship of the powerful God, but continue to walk headlong into our sinfulness as if sin doesn't matter. Certainly, Christianity is a growth process. We will all stumble as we grow in Christ, but don't allow the growth process to be an excuse to sell out to sin. We are God's workmanship, let's act like it.

### II. Since I am God's workmanship, I must not boast in myself.

- A. According to **Ephesians 2:9**, we need to understand that the important work going on in our salvation is God's work, not ours. That means we have no room to boast. When we walk in God's good works, we cannot come to God trying to impress Him with our working. Rather, we need to remember that the only reason we have been able to walk in these good works is because of the work of God.
- B. Consider the great example of Gideon in **Judges 7**. When Midian oppressed Israel, Gideon gathered an army of 32,000 men. But God said, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me'" (**Judges 7:2**, ESV—In the Septuagint, the translators used the exact same Greek word here for boasting as in **Ephesians 2:9**). God pruned their number to 300 (**Judges 7:8**). When the battle was done and won, God wanted the Israelites to know it was His work that won the victory, not theirs. In **Isaiah 10**, God rebuked Assyria because when they conquered Israel, they didn't recognize they were merely the tool of God, but rather thought they won that victory because of their own greatness. In **Isaiah 10:15**, God said, "Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?" (ESV). We are the axe and the saw. We are the tool. We cannot boast in ourselves. We are God's workmanship. When we win the battle against temptation and have acted like God's workmanship, we cannot boast. God gave the victory.

### III. Since I am God's workmanship, I must glorify God.

- A. We must not boast in ourselves. Instead, we must boast in the Lord as **II Corinthians 10:17** says. Paul drives this home throughout Ephesians. In **Ephesians 1:6**, we have been adopted to the praise of God's glorious grace. In **Ephesians 1:12**, we have been predestined to the praise of God's glory. In **Ephesians 1:14**, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance to the praise of God's glory. The purpose of our salvation is to praise the glory of God. In **Ephesians 3:21**, as Paul wraps up the theological half of this letter, he concludes by saying that the church is to bring glory to God whose power works in us.
- B. Consider David and the writing of **Psalms 8**. Some students and scholars date this psalm in connection with David's victory over Goliath. Whether or not that is the case, we see David's amazing glorification of God in

**Psalm 8:1-2.** The point is that we are babes and infants. When we have accomplished some victory, it is not because we are so awesome, but because God is awesome. God uses even us to still the enemy and the avenger. When we are victorious, we need to boast in Him and glorify Him. We can see this in a direct example from David in **I Chronicles 29:10-16**. As the people gathered their gifts together for the temple of the Lord, rather than boasting in them for their own sacrifice, David glorified God for His gracious gifts. He understood it was God's grace that empowered them to give.

IV. Since I am God's workmanship, I must be gentle and courteous with others.

- A. Since I understand that I am God's workmanship and am unable to boast in me, but rather must boast in and glorify God, it changes my perspective on other people. Sadly, Christians can look down on unbelievers. We can puff ourselves up as if we are great and they are pathetic. We can mistreat them, badmouth them, talk down to them. But if I have nothing to boast about in myself, I can't treat others this way.
- B. **Titus 3:1-7** explains we need to treat others with gentleness and courtesy, despite the fact that the Cretans he was talking about had a reputation of wickedness (**Titus 1:12**). Why? Because we were just like them. We were slaves to passions at one time. We were haters at one time as well. We were disobedient and foolish at one time as well. But we are different now, we say. Yet, Paul explains the difference is not our awesomeness and our works of righteousness. The difference is the regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit poured out on us in Jesus Christ. It is the grace of God that has justified us, just as Paul explained in **Ephesians 2:8-10**. Therefore, we must not act as arrogant betters over our unbelieving and ungodly neighbors. We must remember that the difference between us and those around us is the grace of God. When we do, we will help them turn to the grace of God. We have no right to mistreat, look down on, belittle, berate the unbelievers around us. We must simply praise and glorify God and take His message to them.

V. Since I am God's workmanship, I must unite with God's workmanship.

- A. Paul does a very interesting thing in **Ephesians 2**. In **Ephesians 2:1-10**, he talks about the Gentiles as individual Christians. Though we were sinners, God has saved us each by His grace, making each one of us individually His workmanship. However, in **Ephesians 2:11-22**, he talks about the Gentiles as part of the "household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (ESV). In other words, we are individually God's workmanship, but He is crafting us to be part of a larger workmanship, His church.
- B. In **Ephesians 2:11-22**, Paul specifically spoke about the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ. The Jews and Gentiles were to unite with one another around Jesus Christ. Together, they were God's workmanship. They needed to act like it together. We may not deal with the struggles between Jews and Gentiles in our modern times, but we need to recognize our brethren as God's workmanship. Just as God is working on us while we continue to struggle, so do our brethren. We must learn to reconcile with one another and walk in unity with each other. That is what **Ephesians 4:25-32** is all about.

VI. Since I am God's workmanship, I must imitate God.

- A. In **Ephesians 5:1-2**, Paul explains that we need to be imitators of God, walking in love, sacrificing ourselves for Him and His children. The point we must grasp is that as God's workmanship, we represent Him. We need to represent Him well. Sadly, too often today, the greatest argument against Christianity is Christians.
- B. In **Ephesians 5:3**, Paul wrote about removing immorality and covetousness. Sadly, according to most studies, the Christian divorce rate is as high as the world's. What are the top causes of divorce—money fights and infidelity. Too many Christians are entertained by the same filthiness, foolish talking, and crude joking as the world (**Ephesians 5:4**). The world today rebels against the godly structure of the family and the roles God has placed within them as seen in **Ephesians 5:22-6:4**. The greatest argument in favor of this system would be Christians if leading husbands refused to be tyrants and instead were sacrificial, loving servants and if wives refused to be antagonistic, dripping faucets and instead were respectful help-meets.
- C. We are God's workmanship, we represent Him. We declare His glory or detract from it in all that we do. We need to open ourselves to His grace and let Him powerfully work in us by simply doing what He asks and imitating Him. What a grand message that would be to the world of the glory of God.

Conclusion:

I want to be God's workmanship. But that doesn't mean sitting on my backside and just waiting for God to do all the work. It means stepping up and leaning into the work He is doing in my life. It means glorifying and magnifying Him in my words and in my deeds. Certainly, He is still working on me. I am still growing. So are you. We still mess up. But that is no excuse to sell out to sin. Rather, let's lean on the Lord and let Him work on us to His glory.