

GOD WHO WORKS*

God does amazing works. He executes His purposes in the created world. We are His workmanship.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
Psalm 8 Psalm 40:5 Psalm 77 Psalm 86:8 Psalm 92:1–5 (5) Psalm 111 Psalm 104 / Psalm 104:24 Psalm 107 / 107:21–31 or 23–31 Psalm 128:1-2 Psalm 136 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 1 Corinthians 15:58 Ephesians 2:1–10	By Faith God Leads Us Along God of the Deep (Forrest) SATB Grace (Hayes) SATB Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah How Great Thou Art How Majestic Is Thy Name (Psalm 8) How Marvelous Are the Works...(Angerman) SATB I Sing the Mighty Power of God Now I Send You Forth (Forrest) SATB O God Beyond All Praising O God, Our Help in Ages Past (Psalm 90) O Worship the King Praise to the Lord, the Almighty Sing Praise to God The King of Love My Shepherd Is (Psalm 23) You Are Always Good



* Theme corresponds to the observance of **Labor Day** each fall.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

ALL IS HIS WORK

Psalm 107 | *The way God works is often different than what we expect. When that happens, there can be disappointment or we might wonder if God is even working at all. We might fall into the trap of thinking that God does the good things in our lives, but the bad things “just happen.” It is all His work. God raises the stormy wind and calms it. He brings the health difficulties. He is actively directing all of the things that “happen” in our lives.*

It's 1 am. You have been driving for 13 hours. You are 100 miles from the nearest town when smoke begins to funnel out of the engine bay of your vehicle. As a guy, you tell your wife that you must step out of the vehicle to pop the hood even if you have no idea what you are doing. Obviously, you need help. You try to call for a tow, but no cell signal. Also, your bladder begins to remind you that drinking that 52 oz QT was a mistake. So, there you are on the side of the road: tired, stranded, bloated, and a beginning to feel a bit bitter. Without thinking much about it, you begin to silently scream at God this sentence: (And I want you, the congregation, to fill in the blank for this sentence. When I point to the congregation, all of you say what word goes in the blank. I will say the rest of the sentence.) God what are your doing _____ me. Right, God what are you doing to me. But is He doing it “to” you? Or is He doing it “for” you?

What do you picture when you imagine God working? Is God sitting behind some cosmic switch board, manipulating world events to your benefit or detriment. Often, we are suspicious of God's motives when He works in our lives. Especially when that work causes discomfort. Many times, God works on us through the trials and tests He allows. While a trial is an effective way to grow people, it is one of the most uncomfortable methods of refining a person. And when God is working, we often think He is doing something “to” me instead of thinking He is doing something “for”. When trials come, we ask, how can we get through this as fast as possible? Instead, we should be asking, what can I get out of this?

When I think of God working, I picture a potter. He has to find the clay and purchase it. He then prepares the clay for the wheel. Once prepared, the potter begins to form and shape what is a lump into a vessel. He uses the power in His hands to apply pressure in a precise manner. It's the only way to ensure the clay becomes what the potter intends it to be. It is the only way to ensure that the clay becomes useful.

Romans 8:28 says, God works all things together for good, for those that love God, for those that are called according to His purpose. But what is His purpose? The next verse answers that. It says, For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

God's purpose is to mold you into the image of Christ. He is working with all His greatness for your good to glorify Himself by making you more like Christ. Though at times His working

makes us uncomfortable, it is always what is best for us. He is working for you. The question is, what are you going to get out of His work in your life? Or are you going to waste it? (George Binoka)

Promotional Post: Have you ever wondered if God is working at all? Is it hard to imagine that He is the One behind something unpleasant in your life? Join us Sunday to re-align our hearts to submit to the God Who Works all things after His will, for our good.

These passages of Scripture can help your household prepare for Sunday worship: [Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

NOT OUR ASSISTANT

God “does stuff” – “stuff” even bigger than what we can comprehend. He is active and on the move, and He doesn’t need us. Normally, we plan what we want to do and then ask God to help us do our “stuff.” But when we look at God’s works, we should recognize that we are in no position to ask such a powerful, amazing God to be our “assistant” in accomplishing our own agendas. Rather, we simply hope that He will work through us. The magnitude of God’s works puts us in our place!

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

WORKING IN VAIN

Our work is in vain unless God is working. 1 Corinthians 3:5-17 discusses our labors in Christ’s church. It contains three often-misunderstood smaller passages. They are often thought of as individual; but their corporate, “local-church” meaning becomes clearer when you see them in context.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

Our work is in vain unless God is working. 1 Corinthians 3:5-17 discusses our labors in Christ's church. It contains three often-misunderstood smaller passages. Often they are thought of as individual things; but their local-church meaning becomes clearer when you see them in context.

1. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. He is discussing the church as a



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whole, not an individual person.

And yes, it applies to the journey of an unbeliever to Christ, but in context discusses our ministry labors to bring the church to spiritual maturity. We will “receive a reward” according to our labors, not according to the outward fruit.

2. Let every man take heed how he builds on this foundation (“wood, hay, stubble... gold, silver, precious stones”). This is discussing not just the independent works an individual does for the Lord generically, but what labors he invests in the church. It is Christ who is the "foundation" Paul is speaking of in 3:11. Labor with your best efforts for the good of the church.

3. Know ye that ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you (3:16)? These are plural pronouns! This local church is the temple of God; God's Spirit dwells in their collective midst. They should take care that they labor well and do not frustrate the good labors of other for the church - or they will have God Himself to deal with.

The building project is over. Now let's get to work! (Caleb French)