

Augsburg Confession Article VI – The New Obedience

I. The Question: Why Do Good Works Matter?

- We are justified by faith in Jesus alone, not by works (Romans 3:28).
- If works don't save us, why do them at all?

II. Article VI of the Augsburg Confession

- Good works are the natural result of faith.
- Good works are also commanded by God—not to earn salvation, but because it is His will (Luke 17:10).

III. New Creation Leads to New Living

- By faith, the old self dies and a new self is raised (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Jesus' image of trees and fruit shows that faith naturally produces works (Matthew 7)

IV. Nourishing Faith to Bear Fruit

- Like a tree planted by water, faith is nourished by God's Word (Psalm 1).
- Good fruit comes from the Holy Spirit at work, not from trying harder.

V. Faith Changes Our Focus

- Without faith, we turn inward; with faith, we are freed to love others.
- God desires willing obedience, not reluctant compliance (Luke 17:7–10).

VI. Faith and Works Belong Together

- Works without faith are empty; faith without works is dead (James 2:17).
- Christians act out of love for Jesus, not obligation.

VII. Discernment and Witness in the World

- Fruit reveals what is in a person's heart (Luke 6:45; Galatians 5:22–23).
- We must be wise about who we follow and recognize when actions contradict faith.

VIII. Living Repentantly Before the World

- Christians are not perfect but are called to repentance and humility.
- Our actions either point people toward Christ—or become a stumbling block.
- Good fruit grows from deeper trust in Jesus, not from self-effort.

Reflection Questions

1. Why is it tempting to think that good works don't really matter if salvation is by faith alone?
2. Read Matthew 7:17-20. How does the image of a **tree and its fruit** help you understand the relationship between faith and works?
3. Read 2nd Corinthians 5:17. In what ways have you seen faith naturally change a person's priorities or behavior—either in your own life or in someone else's?
4. Read Psalm 1. When you are struggling to “produce fruit,” how does Psalm 1 redirect your focus away from effort and toward nourishment?
5. Read Luke 17:7-10. Why is it so important that we don't seek affirmation from God just for doing good works?
6. What's the difference between obeying God out of obligation versus out of love? How does that difference show up in daily life?
7. Why is repentance an important part of Christian witness, especially when we fail?
8. How can Christians practice discernment without becoming judgmental or self-righteous?
9. Where might God be inviting you to trust Him more deeply so that good fruit can grow naturally?