

Biblical Action Words

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There are many things that we receive from God, wonderful gifts and blessings that He gives to us: salvation, grace, hope, peace, and the list goes on. James 1:21 says that we should "...lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." We are to receive God's word, which is able to save us. Being children of God does not mean that we are always in a receiving role, though. Following Christ requires us to be active, as the following verse states: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

When we learn the parts of speech in school, we are usually taught that verbs are "action words." The word of God is full of action words for us! Let's think about a few of the actions that God wants us to do.

1. Adorn—With what are we to adorn ourselves? 1 Timothy 2:9-10 teaches that we should adorn ourselves with modest apparel and with good works! Yes, God cares about how we dress and He cares about how we act. He also cares about what we emphasize in our lives, and He wants our focus to be on service to others. In fact, God created us "for good works" according to Ephesians 2:10. Another phrase that is similar to "adorn" is "put on" or "clothe." In Ephesians 6:11 we are told to "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." We are also told to "put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering..." (Colossians 3:12). The armor of God and the qualities that God wants us to have are things we have to put on for ourselves, just like we have to dress ourselves each morning. We have to work at developing the characteristics of Christ, not just say that we are Christians or expect God to miraculously make us the way we ought to be. When people see us, they should see good works and godly characteristics, not the latest fashions.

2. Teach—As we study the scriptures and work at becoming more like Christ, we are told to teach others. We should share the gospel message with anyone we can. Our children should learn the truth from us as Timothy learned it from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5). In Titus 2:3, Titus is instructed to tell the older women to be "teachers of good things," and verses 4 and 5 describe the things that need to be taught to the younger women—to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, and obedient to their husbands. That is a lot of teaching to be done! Of course, teaching by one person implies

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learning by another, so we also need to be learning as much as we can from others.

3. Submit—We don't really like to talk about this one, do we? Look at 1 Peter 5:5: "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" Everyone is expected to submit to God, and followers of God are expected to submit to each other. We are to "esteem others better" than ourselves, with Christ as our example of humility (Philippians 2:3-11). Wives are also told to submit to their husbands in Ephesians 5:22-24. Submitting is a voluntary action—I must choose to submit myself to God, to my brethren, and to my husband. If I think of my own needs as the most important, then I will not be willing to submit to anyone.

4. Rejoice—Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" Does your demeanor show that you find joy in your Lord? If we are often complaining, critical, negative people, then we are probably not doing enough rejoicing in the Lord! Our rejoicing should not just be for ourselves or based on our own situations, but we are also taught to rejoice with others: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). The ability to put our own feelings aside and rejoice or weep with others is a sign of humility. There are people who are suffering devastating problems in their own lives, yet they still express happiness for others when they share good news. We are even told to "count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2-3). Sometimes it is hard to be joyful! But Jesus is our example. Even in His darkest hours, He thought of others first, did what was best for us, and remained sinless. When the trial was over, He was able to go back to His home in Heaven, and we can look forward to joining Him there. We have that reason to rejoice no matter what else is happening in our lives.

There are so many actions described in the Bible for us to be doing. As we study, let's look for those verbs! We have plenty of work given to us, so we need to be busy doing it.