

## IS IT A GOOD IDEA, GOD IDEA OR DEAD WORK

Today I want to talk with you about is it a good idea, a God idea or a dead work. I have lived through all of them. In Hebrews 6:1, it talks about "repentance from dead works". I am not trying to take that Bible verse and stretch it out of proportion. I am just using it to let you know that God does talk about dead works. What is a dead work? It is something not energized by God. He did not think of it. Somebody else did. Does it have life to it?

What is a good work? What is a good idea versus a God idea? You only want to go with God ideas. You do not want to go with good ideas. Anybody can do a good idea. You want a God idea because God ideas pay big benefits. People who gamble and go to Las Vegas think they are going to make a lot of money. Let me just tell you, life is so much better than that. It is some much richer than that. You can have the most exciting, fun filled, delightful, challenging life with God when you go with His God idea for you.

What is a good idea? A good idea is something that is always been done that way. "Well, that is a good idea, let's do that," when you talk about how can we do something. Or it is, "We have always done it that way and it has always worked, so why change a good thing?" Another would be, "I know somebody that did this thing and it worked great for them, let's do it." But God did not tell you to do it. I saw this happen one time in a church. The pastor stood up and said, "A church that I read about decided to tell its members to witness to 25 people in one week and you will see a lot of people come into the kingdom." He said, "We are going to do that as a church." The only problem with that was most of the people in this church had never witnessed to one person in their life and they were supposed to do 25 in one week? It fell. It did not even get off the ground. It was a good idea and it was probably a God idea for another church, but it was just a good idea for our church and it did not work. Haven't you been in churches-- if you are a pastor, if you have been in the ministry-- haven't you seen those things that sounded so good and they never really went anywhere. That is a good idea.

A new idea can be a good idea. Everybody sits around and talks. I am all for brain storming. That is where you get in a room and you get people that are creative and everybody starts saying, "We could do this. Well, how about this?" And I will tell you the best way to get really good ideas is to say to people, "I do not care how far- fetched the idea is that you think of, say it anyway. Because it might get somebody else to thinking of something that we are really going to do." So, a good idea can be a room full of people brain storming and coming up with good ideas. It can be something that you read about in a book or in a magazine. Maybe you heard about it on TV. It is still just a good idea? It might not be God's idea for you.

Another way that you can tell it is a good idea is if everybody sits around and says, "Well, it ought to work." But it really does not. It works, but not great. It is just sort of good. If it sounds good, "Well, that sounds pretty good, let's try that one." No prayer, no seeking God, just trying it. I think one of the saddest things in church going on today is where you have a board of directors, a church board and they do not seek God. They come together and say, "This is what I think God is saying." It is men talking with men's ideas and you do not see God in on it. Do not be a part of that. No prayer. They did not even take time to pray. They just say this board came together; they had a big situation that needed to be solved. Maybe they had a big amount of money that needed to be brought in. They did not stop and pray, they just tried to come up with some good ideas. "Anybody got a good idea?" "Well, I've got a good idea." But it is not a God idea.

This is what people do about good ideas. Have you ever prayed this prayer? "I am going to do this, Lord, please bless it." You never once said, "Do you want me to do this, Lord? I will if you want me to. If you do not want me to, I will not." What is the difference in that prayer? How about these prayers: Lord, I really want marry this person, please bless it; Lord I really want to move to this town, please bless it; Lord, I really want this job. I am going to get this job, please bless it. And it sounds so good and then you get into a job and you are miserable or you have somebody you work with that makes your life miserable. Or

you are in it and people say, "How do you like your job?" And you say, "Well, it is okay. It is okay." It is just a good idea not a God idea.

What is a God idea? A God idea is one God thought of and He put it in your heart to do it. He wants it done and He wants you to do it. One time there was going to be a Billy Graham film in our town, so they asked a bunch of us to participate in it and be on different committees and they asked me. In my church they said, "Would you do this?" So I said, "Yes, I will do it." I went to the meeting of this film and I got there and they said, "We need somebody in this group to do this particular job." And I was just sitting there and I heard in my heart, "You. I want you." "Oh, okay." I do not know if that was the Lord or not. When you are learning how to hear the voice of the Lord, sometimes you hear one and it is God and sometimes you do not, and so I did the job and it was okay. But I am trying to teach you how to move in the Spirit, but still use great wisdom and common sense. You do not have to throw your common sense and wisdom out the window when you are trying to follow God. And you can make a mistake and it is okay. And God will forgive you and say, "Get up, let's go again. I will help you."

What are some of the ways that God gives you a God idea? One of the biggest is there is a need and nobody is meeting it. Not at all. It is like me and those pennies. Who is picking up pennies and feeding starving people? We can do it together. I cannot do it by myself, but if you and all your friends and everybody you tell about it does it, we can feed starving people with pennies on the ground. It is a God idea. I did not think of it. I know I did not think of it. How could I have thought of that? Who would think of that? I just started about two years ago picking up pennies when I would go walking with a friend and I said, "I am going to pick up these pennies and save them up and then I will just see what God tells me to do with them." I wanted to do something good with them. That was my idea. Pennies from Heaven-feeding the world with what America throws away-that was God. I never thought of any of that. It had to be God.

It can start with a need. God is in the business of meeting needs. If you work with God, you are going to be meeting needs of other people. In fact, the greatest satisfaction you will ever get in life is meeting the needs of other people. It is not about, "I want this and I want that. And I am going to get this, and I am going to get that, and I am going to be happy." No, you are not. You have to get busy doing things for other people. You need to do things without pay for it. You just do it because you love it. And then you get blessed. And out of that comes that God idea. So, it can start with a need. It can start in your heart, "Somebody ought to do something about this."

Every great thing that has ever been done at one time was just an idea or just a thought in somebody's head. It is amazing the power of the mind that we can do things like that. It can be an impression. Let's say you walk past a bunch of homeless people every day. Just walk past them and walk past them and look the other way. You are busy with your friends talking and thinking about your day. But you gradually walk by and you begin to notice, there are a lot of children and these women look like mothers that might have children. You begin to think, "I wonder what kind of playground equipment they have? What do they do to help those children have fun? What do they do to help those children learn to read? Are they missing school? What are they missing?" If you have ever read Guide Post magazine, it is full of people getting an impression of something to do and they do it and people are blessed. And it was a God idea.

Sometimes it can be something that speaks to you out of the Word of God. That is why I am telling you, "Get in His Word." This is God talking to you. This is God talking. This is not just people writing words down like you hear people say. If you really get into this thing and let it change your life, you have to realize it is the living Word of God, Almighty God, and it can change your life. And so sometimes, you are just reading the Bible and there it is-a God idea. It can also be somebody else's idea. But this time it hits you. This time you know it is not just for them, it is for me too. I can do it too. And you start doing it and it has great fruit, great fruit. In fact, a God idea has the kind of fruit that you cannot explain it. People can work hard. I like to work hard. Do you like to work hard? I like to work hard. It does not bother me. In fact, I like it but there is only so much a human can do. You only have 24 hours in a day. You have all your priorities that have to stay right. Your family, your walk with God, your work, your friends; you have to stay balanced. There is only so much you can do. But when God is on it and He breathes on it and it is a God idea. You work the same, maybe you do not even work as hard, and all of a sudden you think, "Look at this. God had to do this. Only God could do it." And it just has tremendous fruit.

You will also discover that a God idea takes great faith and great dependence on God. A good idea could sort of, but a God idea-it is all God. It is not you. I will tell you if it is a God idea you will find yourself saying, "Lord, I have believed you. Lord, if you do not help me, I am going down like the Titanic." And he helps you because it is His idea.

Usually a God idea will involve other people. God is so people-oriented. He loves people so much. He does not want one person to die and go to Hell. He does not want anybody to. He is not willing that any should. He wants all to come to repentance. And so, what is the deal? People just do not want to do it. There will not be one person that is severed from God for all of eternity that can say, "God did not give me a chance. I did not have a chance. I lived in a country that you could not talk about God, could not talk about Jesus." And God will say, "No, I gave you a chance. You did not want it." But with these God ideas, God will look around the whole world. You can even live in a different country and hook up with someone on the Internet and have it be a God idea and you work together.

The more time you spend with God, the more God ideas you will have. You get to where you think like He thinks. And He knows you do. And He knows he can trust you. Sometimes it can look like a Christian idea. I really want you to get this. And it does not fly. And it is a great Christian idea. Why does it not fly? It should have. I know about one that flies in other countries and does not fly here. Why? It was made for other countries. It was not made for here. It is bearing incredible fruit, unbelievable fruit in other countries, and just so-so here. God's idea was for other countries.

Sometimes you can do something like have a women's conference. The next year you think, "Oh, it was so good we are going to do it again." And you do not ask God. You do not say, "Do You want us to do this again?" I was in a conference like that recently. They asked me to be one of the speakers. The first year it was so hot with God, it was wonderful; the praise, the worship, dancing, singing, joy, wonderful. The second year they did not pray about it. They did not pray about the person to put in charge. They did not pray about who would be in charge of worship. Somebody came along and said, "I am supposed to do the worship." And they said, "Oh, okay." She wasn't. And when they tried to have that conference, it went flat. It was not a God idea. It did not fly at all.

It is vital that you hear God for His ideas for your church or for your ministry or for your family. Let's say that you say, "My family is not close. We ought to be closer and we are not close. I do not know why we are not, but we are not and it makes me sad." And then you can say, "God would you give me a God idea for our family so that we can have a closeness. Give me a God idea."

I have to tell you about a friend I have. Her name is Tanya. She was watching the 700 Club one day and they were talking about inventions and how just ordinary people can get ideas for inventions. She said, "God gave me an idea for an invention." She is just a little woman, never went to college. God gave her this idea that was simple, very simple, but it really helped people. And God can do that.

Another thing that you need to think about is; if it is not God, it is going to have death associated with it. And when you get in it, it will feel like death. I will give you an example. One time we were involved in a church split and it was painful, just very painful. We went one way and the church went the other way. At first, it really felt like we had done the right thing. We were not mad at anybody. We just thought, "This is how we feel, so we will go this way." The longer we were in that split-off part, the deader and deader it got. I began to notice things. One thing I noticed: I love to pray with people at the prayer rail about their problems. I began to notice it was the same people coming every week. The same people came up there. Their lives never changed and they came up there the next week and the next week and the next week. And I began to die. I began to get cold, I mean spiritually. And I thought, what is happening. And then I realized this is not God. We have made a mistake. And my husband did that at the same time. He said, "We need to leave. We need to go back. We have done the wrong thing." We went back. We humbled ourselves. How hard is that? It is hard. But you have to be able to humble yourselves. God cannot use you if you cannot say, "I was wrong. I made a mistake." We went back. They had to wait a little bit before they could put us back in service for the Lord, then they did. And it worked out great and we were back in God's idea. So, if you are not in God's idea and you can tell, "I'm in a dead work," then you can change now. All you have to do, all you have to do is repent from the dead work.

So a dead work produces death and a live work produces life. Simple isn't it? You know, a dead work, no matter what you do, keeps going wrong. You try to fix one thing and something else breaks. You fix

that and something else breaks. Let me tell you a funny story. We decided that we wanted to buy a boat. We really did not pray about it. I mean this is the dead work stuff that I am taking about. We read in the paper, "Boat ready to go. Will pull two skiers. One thousand dollars." We thought, "Oh, we can do that. We can pay a thousand dollars." So, we went over to where the guy had the boat in his backyard and it had been freshly painted-blue and white. Oh, and it just looked so nice with a new paint job. We do not try it out. We do not do anything. We just thought, "All we can pay is a thousand dollars. This cost a thousand dollars. We are buying this boat." So we got the boat and we got out in the water. The first thing we noticed is it will not pull two skiers. It will barely get one up out of the water. We think, "Well, we will just have to accept we have got one skier only." Then the steering wheel breaks. We haul it into town and get the steering wheel fixed. Go back out and something else breaks. We take it into town and get it fixed, take it back and something else goes wrong, then something else goes wrong. As fast as we fixed it, it kept going wrong.

About this time, a man came to our church and taught us about this principle: is it a God idea, good idea or a dead work. Well, boy, did we ever know what we had done wrong. What do you do when you have a dead work? According to Hebrews 6:1, it says repent from a dead work. So, we said, "Lord, we made a big decision without you. We got excited. We got emotional about it and we jumped. Lord, we are so sorry. Please help us, we want a boat." Guess what God did for us? And this is what I am talking about. He does not say, "You should have listened to me." He is not like that. He is like, "Okay, I will help you." We went in to the boat store to buy a boat and I said to my husband, "What are we going to do, we cannot trade this boat in when it is a defective boat. We cannot do that. That is cheating." So we went in and we talked to the man. We were just very upfront. We said we want a boat. We have figured out how we can pay for it. It will take us a while to pay for it, but we have a boat to trade in. And we need to tell you that this boat is in bad condition, it is just not a good boat. There is a lot wrong.

I forgot to mention that the boat also had a hole in the bottom of it. And the man had covered it up. We kept having leaks. We finally pried this thing off the floor. There was a hole that had been patched and it was leaking. So, my husband gets his sander. He and his friend start sanding it and the sander burns up. I am telling you it was a dead work. Death produces death. Life produces life. So, here we are in this boat store. We tell him the whole story. We tell him about the leak in the boat. We tell him about the sander. And all the time I am thinking, "He is not going to take this boat." But God was on our side. And the man said, "It is okay, I will take your boat anyway." I thought, "Lord, you are so wonderful." God gave us a boat. He picked the boat out. Best boat we ever had. We never had any trouble with it. It was wonderful. Our children had fun with it. Took their friends skiing for years and then we sold it to somebody and they got blessed with it. That was a good idea and it was a God idea. It was even better than a good idea. It went from a dead work to a God idea, a really great one.

What do you do when you think, "I am in a dead work, what do I do?" What you do is ask yourself of this dead work, "What is it in my life that is not working." It is dead. What do I need to do? First, you need to repent. You need to ask God, "What should I do, Lord?" And He will tell you what to do. Ask yourself. Is this just a good idea? Did I pray? Did God lead me the way God usually leads me? Did He lead me this way? And you will know really quick. Nope, I missed it.

Another thing you could ask yourself is, "What kind of fruit am I seeing from this project." Is it is just a little bit of fruit? I will tell you something about a dead work or even a good idea. There is just enough fruit to keep you going and make you wonder. Just enough. But with God, there is no question. There is a lot of fruit. Here is another question to ask yourself, "Have I been doing this depending on myself or have I been depending on God?" If you are depending on yourself, it is not a God idea. Maybe you are a very strong-willed person. Maybe you think, "Oh, my life has been so hard, nobody has ever helped me do anything and I do not need God to help me." But you are going to be sorry because God wants to help you and He wants to bless it and He wants to make it big in your life. Ask yourself, "Did I spend the proper amount of time in prayer about this before I moved?"

Sometimes I make the mistake of doing something because I am so excited and all caught up in it. I am on the way doing it and I really want to know what God wants me to do. I am driving in my car and I am saying, "Now Lord, I really do want to do what you want, so tell me no." Many times He says, "No." I just have to stop. Then you have to call those people up and say, "I am so sorry I told you I would do that. I am so sorry I am not going to be able to do it." Another thing to ask yourself is, "Can you ask God to bless this in a way that you know it has His stamp of approval on it?"

Type A people tend to get ahead of God. Do you know what a type A person is? They are that "hard charging, go get 'em, everybody get out of my way, problems-who cares, I am going to get this done" kind of people. And sometimes I can be like that and then I crash and burn in the wall. I have done it too many times. Sometimes I feel like my husband and God are back there going, "Betty, come back, you have missed me." Crash. And then I have this sweet godly husband who helps me so much and says, "Here is what we are going to do." Anything that has been done with the wrong motive or wrong method or wrong origin is not God. Think about it.

#### Quiet Time Questions

1. Who has good ideas?
2. Who has God ideas?
3. What is a good idea?
4. What is a God idea?
5. How do you know when it's a God idea vs. a good idea?
6. What questions should you ask to determine if it's a God idea?
7. What is the true test that it is a God idea?
8. How do we get God ideas?
9. How do God ideas changes to good ideas?
10. How do you identify dead works?
11. What should you do if you're involved in a dead work?

To watch the video IS IT A GOOD IDEA, A GOD IDEA OR A DEAD WORK, go to 13BD\_12 at [www.bettyswann.com](http://www.bettyswann.com).

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