

# POIEMA – GREEK WORD STUDY

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**GOD'S POIEMA:** Beloved, if you are **IN CHRIST** by grace through faith (**Eph 2:8,9**), do you know what God says about you in **Ephesians 2:10**? You are God's "**WORKMANSHIP**, created IN CHRIST JESUS for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." The Greek word for "**WORKMANSHIP**" is **POIEMA** which gives us our English words POEM and POETRY. **Poiema** means "something made" and in context is something made by God Himself. As a new creation skillfully and artfully created IN CHRIST JESUS (**2 Cor 5:17**), have you ever thought of your new (supernatural) life as a work of "divine poetry?" Beloved, as believers "each of our lives is the papyrus on which the Master is producing a work of art that will fill the everlasting ages with His praise." (S Gordon) **You** are God's masterpiece. **You** are His poem. **You** are His work of art. When we look at ourselves this way, we begin to understand our incredible value in Christ. Indeed, as C S Lewis said "We are a divine work of art." "If Rembrandt's artistic masterpieces have great, undisputed value, would not God's one-of-a-kind human masterpieces convey even greater value?" (D Robertson)

**Timothy Keller** asks "Do you know what it means that you are **God's workmanship**? What is art? Art is beautiful, art is valuable, and art is an expression of the inner being of the maker, of the artist. Imagine what that means. You're beautiful, you're valuable, and you're an expression of the very inner being of the Artist, the divine Artist, God Himself. You see, when Jesus gave Himself on the Cross, He didn't say, "I'm going to die just so you know I love you." He said, "I'm going to die, I'm going to bleed, for your splendor. I'm going to re-create you into something beautiful. I will turn you into something splendid, magnificent. I'm the Artist; you're the art. I'm the Painter; you're the canvas. I'm the Sculptor; you're the marble. You don't look like much there in the quarry, but I can see. Oh, I can see! Jesus is an Artist!" And you beloved are His crowning achievement, His masterpiece!

The idea of **poiema** is that our new life in Christ is like a poem which expresses "form and pattern along with beauty. Like the underside of grandmother's cross-stitch, the everyday of our lives may look to be knotted and hopelessly tangled. But when we turn the fabric over, we see design and beauty that was there all along but that we never foresaw." (Gage) Perhaps you don't feel much like a work of divine poetry, but regardless of how you feel, the truth about you as God's workmanship, is that you are His "**MASTERPIECE**" (NLT), His "**HANDIWORK**" (NAB), His

“**WORK OF ART**” (NJB), in fact, a work of art that is one of a kind! You are “custom designed”, “tailor-made,” by the Master’s hand. “Each of our lives is the canvas on which the Master is producing a work of art that will fill the everlasting ages with His praise.” (John Phillips)

**J C Philpot** – Consider what is here declared of those who are saved by grace through faith—that they are God’s “**workmanship**”—the fruit and product of His creative hand. All, then, that we are and all that we have that is spiritual, and as such acceptable to God, we owe to the special operation of His power. There is not a thought of our heart, word of our lips, or work of our hands, which is truly holy and heavenly, simple and sincere, glorifying to God or profitable to man, of which He is not by His Spirit and grace the divine and immediate Author!

**C H Spurgeon** says it this way – “You have seen a painter with his palette on his finger and he has ugly little daubs of paint on the palette. What can he do with those spots? Go in and see the picture. What splendid painting! In an even wiser way does Jesus act toward us. He takes us, poor smudges of paint, and He makes the blessed pictures of His grace out of us. It is neither the brush nor the paint He uses, but it is the skill of His own hand which does it all.” (Praise the Lord!)

Indeed, the redeemed should sing out like David “I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.” ([Ps 139:14](#))

As **Spurgeon** says “If we are marvelously wrought upon even before we are born, what shall we say of the Lord’s dealings with us after we quit His secret workshop, and He directs our pathway through the pilgrimage of life? What shall we not say of that new birth which is even more mysterious than the first, and exhibits even more the love and wisdom of the Lord.”

O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee,  
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;  
stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

-Thomas Chisholm

The only other NT use of the Greek word **poiema** is in [Romans 1:20-note](#) where Paul writes “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through **WHAT HAS BEEN MADE** (All one Greek Word – POIEMA) so that they are without excuse.”

As creationist **Henry Morris** says “God has written two poetic masterpieces, as it were, one in the physical creation, one in the lives of men and women redeemed and saved by His grace (Eph 2:8). Both give eloquent testimony to the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator-Redeemer.” Two great “divine poems” – the **created** world and **re-created, redeemed** men and women in that world. Even as the “heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands” ([Ps 19:1-note](#)), we too as God’s **MASTER CREATIONS** should never be ashamed to let others see His **WORKMANSHIP** in us by our Spirit enabled obedience to Jesus’ command to “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they see your GOOD WORKS, and glorify (give a proper opinion of) your Father Who is in heaven.” ([Mt 5:16-note](#)) As new creatures in Christ, we need to remember that we were created for God’s glory, and created for good deeds, because it is by our good deeds that our Father gets all the glory (cf [Ps 115:1-note](#)). Indeed, the chief end of each of our lives is “**To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.**” ([Westminster Shorter Catechism](#)) In summary, Eph 2:8-10 teaches that we are saved not **BY** good works but **FOR** good (supernatural) works and in the mystery of His amazing grace He even rewards us for those Spirit enabled works (cf [2Cor 5:10-note](#), [Rev 22:12-note](#))!

[Dr W H Houghton](#), pastored the Calvary Baptist Church in NYC and later served as president of Moody Bible Institute. When Dr. Houghton became pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, a man in that city hired a private detective to follow Dr. Houghton and report on his conduct. After a few weeks, the detective was able to report to

the man that Dr. Houghton's life matched his preaching. As a result of Houghton's faithful life as God's "**POIEMA**", that man became a Christian.

In **Ps 143:5** David prays "I remember the days of old. I meditate on all Your doings. I muse (meditate) on the WORK (**LXX** = **POIEMA**) of Your hands." Have you meditated on the truth that now IN CHRIST, you are "the WORK (poiema) of" His hands? It is good to **meditate** on what God has made and rest in the confidence that "**He Who began a good work in you** will complete it in the day of Christ Jesus." (**Php 1:6-note**).

Regarding the works we as God's workmanship are to work out, **E W Moore** writes that "The works are ready, waiting for us, all we have to do is to be willing to be led into them. How many disappointments we should have been spared in life if we had always acted on this conviction. God knows what we are fitted for far better than we know ourselves. He who made us knows whereof we are made. He won't put "square pegs into round holes. If we would be useful in Christ's service our wisdom is "to have no plan except to enter into His plan for us and imitate Paul who said "Lord, what do you want me to do? (to which Jesus replied) "Arise and go to Damascus and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do." (Acts 9:6NKJV, Acts 22:10) **Lowell** adds that "No man is born into the world whose work is not born with him; there is always work, and tools to work withal, for those who will."

Great Master, teach us with Your skillful hand;  
Let not the music that is in us die!  
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let  
Hidden and lost, Your form within us lie!  
—Horatius Bonar

**ILLUSTRATION – Kent Hughes** – "In Christ we are of untold worth. This great truth may be hard to actually take hold of as we exist in frail human bodies carried along in the rush of modern-day busyness. Some of us have had things happen which make us doubt our worth. But we are His "workmanship" — His work of art. Moreover, we are in process (**Phil 1:6**). Michelangelo was once asked what he was doing as he chipped away at a shapeless rock. He replied, "I'm liberating an angel from this stone." That's what God is doing with us. We are in the hands of the Great Maker, the ultimate Sculptor Who created the universe out of nothing, and He has never yet thrown away a rock on which He has begun a masterwork. His tools are Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, His Word, and the preaching of the Word." And often God's Spirit uses difficult circumstances or difficult people to sculpt our character into His "masterpieces" conformed to the image of His Son (**Ro 8:29**). "In Christ" we are of untold worth. This great truth may be hard to actually take hold of as we exist in frail human bodies carried along in the rush of modern-day busyness. Some of us have had things happen which make us doubt our worth. But we are his "workmanship" — his work of art. Moreover, we are in process.

**Joni Eareckson Tada** who became quadriplegic after a tragic accident, describes herself as God's "**poiema**" in her book **A Place of Healing** writing "(God) has a plan and purpose for my time on earth. He is the Master Artist or Sculptor, and He is the One Who chooses the tools He will use to perfect His **workmanship**. What of suffering, then? What of illness? What of disability? Am I to tell Him which tools He can use and which tools He can't use in the lifelong task of perfecting me and molding me into the beautiful image of Jesus? Do I really know better than Him, so that I can state without equivocation that it's always His will to heal me of every physical affliction? If I am His **poem**, do I have the right to say, "No, Lord. You need to trim line number two and brighten up lines three and five. They're just a little bit dark." Do I, the **poem**, the thing being written, know more than the poet?"

**THE CRAFTSMAN'S TOUCH – Dennis Fisher** writes "I recently saw a documentary about the making of a Steinway piano. It traced the meticulous care that goes into crafting this fine instrument. From the cutting of trees until the piano appears on a showroom floor, it goes through countless delicate adjustments by skilled craftsmen. When the year-long process is complete, accomplished musicians play the piano and often comment on how the same rich sounds could never be produced by a computerized assembly line. The secret to the final product is the craftsman's

touch. When the tabernacle was built, we see that God also valued the craftsman's touch. He chose the craftsman Bezalel and said of him: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood" (Ex. 31:3-5). Today God's Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers (who are His temple – [1Cor 6:19](#)). Yet the call to craftsmanship has not ended. Now each individual believer is God's "workmanship" ([Ephesians 2:10-note](#)). The Master Craftsman is the Holy Spirit, who chips away at flaws in our character to make each of us like Jesus ([Ro 8:28, 29](#)). And as we yield to His workmanship, we will find that the secret to the final product is the Craftsman's touch." ([The Craftsman's Touch – Our Daily Bread](#))

The Spirit is the Craftsman Who makes us like the Son;  
He'll mold and shape our being Until His work is done.  
The Father gave us the Spirit  
to make us like His Son. —Sper

**Jon Courson** reminds us that "God is saying, 'You are My **poetry**. You're special to Me. I'm not giving up on you.' He is making you something not only useful but beautiful, something that is poetic." Indeed, every believer is God's poem in a world of prose, God's beauty in a world of gloom, God's fine art in a world of moral degradation. And God's most marvelous creation is making spiritually dead men alive in Christ! Created in God's image (Ge 2:7), yet born in sin, we are redeemed and re-created in the image of His Son. Dear saint, don't ever forget that you are the subject of Christ the Creator's ([Jn 1:3](#)) two creations, and as the result of His second creation, you are His ultimate workmanship, His most lyrical poem, His crowning achievement, His greatest masterpiece and you will be "on display" to show the universe the full extent of His creative genius throughout eternity! [Hallelujah!](#)

## "POEM OF YOUR LIFE"

By Michael Card

[\(click here to play song\)](#)

Life is a song we must sing with our days  
A poem with meaning more than words can say  
A painting with colors no rainbow can tell  
A lyric that rhymes either heaven or hell!  
We are living letters that doubt desecrates  
We're the notes of the song of the chorus of faith  
God shapes every second of our little lives  
And minds every minute as the universe waits by

CHORUS:

The pain and the longing  
The joy and the moments of light  
Are the rhythm and rhyme  
The free verse of the poem of life

So look in the mirror and pray for the grace  
To tear off the mask, see the art of your face  
Open your ear lids to hear the sweet song  
Of each moment that passes and pray to prolong  
Your time in the ball of the dance of your days  
Your canvas of colors of moments ablaze  
With all that is holy  
With the joy and the strife  
With the rhythm and rhyme of the poem of your life  
With the rhythm and rhyme of the poem of your life