

GRACE AND WORKS

There are different schools of thought in Christianity concerning grace and works and how each impacts our eternal salvation:

- Many Evangelical and Charismatic denominations believe that grace only saves us, and our works have no importance in determining our eternal salvation. While these denominations may teach and practice good works, they do not believe that these works will have any impact whatsoever on our salvation. There is only one aspect of salvation that is free and it is simply a result of God's grace. There is nothing for the believer to do other than believe and accept.
- A few churches believe that both works and grace are part of the plan salvation. These groups believe that without grace, salvation would be impossible. This is the first aspect of salvation. They also recognize the importance of works in the life of the believer and are aware of scriptures related to works and teach these things. This is a second aspect of salvation that requires effort on our part.

Quotes:

Grace Church (<https://www.gracechurch.org/about/distinctives/what-we-teach>) – “We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works”

Grace Community Church (<https://gccsatx.com/our-beliefs/statement-of-faith/>) – “It is most certainly taught in the Scriptures that none who God truly saves will ever totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end. The Lord makes certain that none shall ever depart from Him by putting a fear of Himself in the heart of His people.”

Grace International (<https://gracechurches.tv/learn-more/statement-of-faith/>) – “Salvation is by faith alone through grace alone. Both justification and sanctification are the works of the Holy Spirit in those who trust in Jesus.”

Capitol Hill Baptist Church (<https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/about-us/what-we-believe/statement-of-faith/>) – “We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God;”

God's Grace is unmerited by Joseph Prince

(<https://www.josephprince.org/blog/daily-grace-inspirations/gods-grace-is-unmerited/>):

What is the grace of God? Simply put, the grace of God is God blessing, healing and delivering you because of Jesus. The grace of God is His unearned, unmerited and undeserved favor toward you simply because of Jesus' finished work at the cross.

Because God's grace is based on Jesus' work and not yours, the only way you fall from this grace is by believing that you can earn, merit and deserve it through your obedience and good works.

For example, you fall from grace when you say, “God has to answer my prayer because I have prayed long enough.” You also fall from grace when you think that because you are serving in church or you have kicked a bad habit, God is pleased with you and He has to bless you.

When you think that it is by your efforts and obedience that you receive God's blessings, you become like the Pharisees. They believed that their law-keeping justified them and ensured that God would bless them. But the truth is that when you believe like them, "you have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." This means that you are cut off from Christ, who is your salvation, Redeemer, healer and provider. Christ has become of no effect to you!

My friend, surely you would want Christ to be of effect to you. People to whom Christ is of effect receive from Him the miracle they need. When He is of effect to them, He is their healer and they get healed. He is their wisdom and they are wise before man. He is their good success and they experience good success in all that they do.

Beloved, for Christ to always be of effect to you and to never nullify the grace of God operating in your life, just remember and believe that it is because of Christ and His finished work—His blood, His stripes, His death, His obedience—that you are justified, healed and blessed!

What do you think about the previous article quote?

IMPORTANCE OF GRACE

Is God's plan of salvation and His death on the cross earned because of something you did?

Without God's grace and mercy we cannot come to God and do not have the opportunity to follow the principles of the gospel (faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands for gift of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection, and eternal judgment).

At our conversion do we receive a remission of our sins by a specific quantity of works of righteousness or because we followed the Law of Moses perfectly?

We are cleansed from sin by the power of God, through, faith, repentance, baptism, and reception of the Holy Ghost.

John 3:14-16 – "14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2 Nephi 1:73 – "Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is **no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the holy Messiah**"

Romans 3:21-24 – "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**"

Titus 3:5-8 – "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that

they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

What does the previous passage tell us?

Ephesians 2:8-10 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

What does the previous passage tell us?

There is an aspect of salvation that is said to be ‘general’ in nature and an aspect of salvation that is more specific to how we live our lives after we first participate in God’s plan of salvation.

Which passage in scripture tells us the specific quantity of good works needed in order to achieve eternal life?

There are verses about using our gifts and producing fruit and how we will be judged and rewarded according to our deeds.

Are there specific verses in scripture that state what type of works can keep one out of heaven?

After being born again, we MUST endure to the end. Otherwise, it would never be possible to fall away from the gospel we had received (which we will see is possible according to scripture). The works that we do and the fruit that we produce after being born again (whether good or bad) are applicable to our final judgment (the last principle of the gospel). We are indeed saved through the grace of God, but we must endure to the end and stay on the straight and narrow path that we first walked beginning at our baptism. Application of God’s grace requires effort on our part.

WHAT IS THE TRUE DEFINITION OF GRACE?

Two primary words in the Bible:

Strong’s Hebrew 2580

- From Hebrew word chen (khān, ‘k’ is silent)
- Definition: Favor

Strong’s Greek 5485

- From Greek word charis (khä'-rēs, ‘k’ is silent)
- Definition: (a) grace, as a gift or blessing brought to man by Jesus Christ, (b) favor, (c) gratitude, thanks, (d) a favor, kindness

Luke 1:30 – “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found **favour** with God.”

Luke 2:40 – “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the **grace** of God was upon him.” (same Greek word translated as “grace”)

Luke 2:52 – “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in **favour** with God and man.”

Exodus 33:12-19 – “12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13 Now therefore, I pray thee, **if I have found grace in thy sight**, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, **that I may find grace in thy sight**: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 16 For wherein shall it be known here **that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight**? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: **for thou hast found grace in my sight**, and I know thee by name. 18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. 19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; **and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.**”

Also reference: Genesis 30:27, Genesis 39:21, Exodus 3:21, Exodus 11:3, Exodus 12:36, Numbers 11:11, Numbers 11:15, Acts 2:47, Acts 7:10, 46

Favor (online definition)

noun

approval, support, or liking for someone or something.

"the legislation is viewed with favor"

synonyms: approval, approbation, commendation, esteem, goodwill, kindness, benevolence, friendliness

"she looked on him with favor"

an act of kindness beyond what is due or usual.

"I've come to ask you a favor"

synonyms: good turn, service, kind act, good deed, act of kindness, kindness, courtesy, indulgence; More

verb

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feel or show approval or preference for.

"slashing public spending is a policy that few politicians favor"

synonyms: advocate, recommend, advise, subscribe to, approve of, look on with favor, be in favor of, support, back, champion; More

(often used in polite requests) give someone (something that they want).

"please favor me with an answer"

synonyms: oblige, accommodate, gratify, satisfy, humor, indulge, pander to, put oneself out for; honor

"he favored Lucy with a smile"

CONDITIONAL ASPECTS OF GRACE

Genesis 6:5-9 – “5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”

Why do you think Noah found grace based on the previous passage?

Proverbs 3:34 – “Surely he scorneth the scorners: **but he giveth grace unto the lowly.**”

James 4:3-6 – “3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. 4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, **but giveth grace unto the humble.**”

1 Peter 5:5 – “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: **for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.**”

2 Nephi 11:44 – “44 For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all that we can do.”

What do you think about the previous verse (opponents of the Book of Mormon use this verse to talk against it)?

Psalms 84:11 – “For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

James 2:17-26 – “17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

Is this unfair of God to require work on our part for application of His grace?



Is this an example of God's grace?

GOD'S GRACE IS APPLIED THROUGH OUR FAITH

Romans 5:1-2 – “1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

What does this word faith mean?

Strong's Concordance

Definition: faith, faithfulness

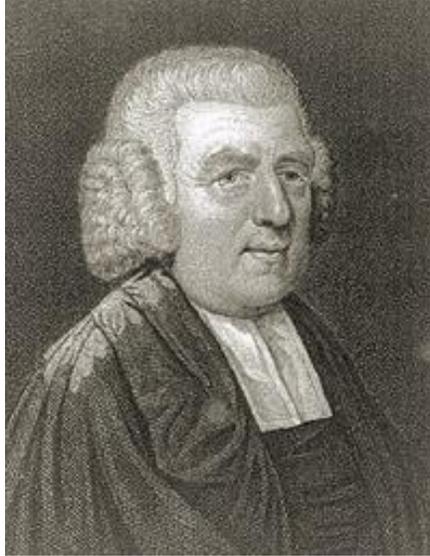
Usage: faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, faithfulness.

What does it mean to believe in someone?

Helaman 4:70-71 – “70 Therefore blessed are they who will repent and hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; for these are they that shall be saved. 71 And may God grant, in his great fullness, that men might be brought unto repentance and good works, that they might be restored unto grace, for grace according to their works.”

JOHN NEWTON

Who is John Newton?



Per the Library of Congress:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200149085/default.html>

Newton's religious beliefs initially lacked conviction. Raised far afield of the prevailing Anglican traditions, Newton's youth was marked by religious confusion and, as he later confirmed, a lack of moral self-control and discipline. His father was educated as a Catholic by Jesuits in Spain and his mother was a so-called Nonconformist Christian who rejected the liturgy-based worship of the Church of England.

Nevertheless, Newton's life, rife with the "dangers, toils and snares" at which his text hints, repeatedly brought him face-to-face with the notion that he had been miraculously spared. On one occasion, he was thrown from a horse, narrowly missing impalement on a row of sharp stakes. Another time, he arrived too late to board a tender that was carrying his companions to tour a warship; as he watched from the shore, the vessel overturned, drowning all its passengers. Years later, on a hunting expedition in Africa on a moonless night, he and his companions got lost in a swamp. Just when they had resigned themselves to death, the moon appeared and they were able to return to safety. Such near-death were commonplace in Newton's life.

Yet no matter how many times he was rescued, Newton relapsed into his old habits, continuing to defy his religious destiny and attempting to dissuade others from their beliefs. Of all of the sins to which he later confessed, his habit of chipping away at the faith of others remained heaviest on his heart.

In 1744 Newton was press-ganged--taken by force into service in the Royal Navy. He was disgraced, relieved of his post, and traded for another man from a passing merchant ship, a slave vessel.

Newton was aboard ship one night when a violent storm broke out. Moments after he left the deck, the crewman who had taken his place was swept overboard. Although he manned the vessel for the remainder of the tempest, he later commented that, throughout the tumult, he realized his helplessness and concluded that only the grace of God could save him. Prodded by what he had read in Kempis, Newton took the first--albeit small--step toward accepting religion. In the words of his hymn, this incident marked "the hour I first believed."

Newton wed Mary Cartlett in 1750. A changed man, he accepted the helm of a ship bound for Africa. This time, he encouraged the sailors under his charge to prayer rather than taunt them for their beliefs. He

also began to ensure that every member of his crew treated their human cargo with gentleness and concern. However, it would be another 40 years until Newton openly challenged the trafficking of slaves.

Some three years after his marriage, Newton suffered a stroke that prevented him from returning to sea; in time, he interpreted this as another step in his spiritual voyage. He assumed a post in the Customs Office in the port of Liverpool and began to explore Christianity more fully. As Newton attempted to experience all the various expressions of Christianity, it became clear that he was being called to the ministry.

Since Newton lacked a university degree, he could not be ordained through normal channels. However, the landlord of the parish at Olney was so impressed with the letters Newton had written about his conversion that he offered the church to Newton; he was ordained in June 1764.

In Olney, the new curate met the poet William Cowper, also a newly-born Christian. Their friendship led to a spiritual collaboration that completed the inspiration for "Amazing Grace," the poem Newton most likely penned around Christmas of 1772. Some 60 years later in America, the text was set to the hymn tune, "New Britain," to which it has been sung ever since.

Through Newton's repentance, new found faith in God, and realization of his hopelessness without God, God's grace became personal.

Like John Newton, do we have joy in our lives because of God's grace? Would our joy be enough to write a poem regarding God's grace? Just because we have a responsibility to follow Christ's teaching does not mean we cannot at the same time have joy.

2 Nephi 8:7-11 – "7 Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ: 8 For, for this end hath the law of Moses been given: 9 And all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him. 10 And also, my soul delighteth in the covenants of the Lord which he hath made to our fathers; 11 Yea, my soul delighteth in his grace, and his justice, and power, and mercy, in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death."

DOES GOD'S GRACE GIVE US A LICENSE TO SIN?

Romans 6:1-15 – "1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

Jude 1:3-4 – “3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

How were these men “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”?

Mormon 1:31-40 – “31 And now the Lamanites had a king, and his name was Aaron; and he came against us with an army of forty and four thousand. 32 And behold, I withstood him with forty and two thousand. And it came to pass that I beat him with my army, that he fled before me. 33 And behold, all this was done and three hundred and thirty years had passed away. 34 And it came to pass that the Nephites began to repent of their iniquity, and began to cry even as had been prophesied by Samuel the prophet; for behold no man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land. 35 Thus there began to be a mourning and a lamentation in all the land, because of these things; and more especially among the people of Nephi. 36 And it came to pass that when I, Mormon, saw their lamentations, and their mourning, and their sorrowing before the Lord, my heart did begin to rejoice within me, knowing the mercies and the long suffering of the Lord, therefore supposing that he would be merciful unto them, that they would again become a righteous people. 37 But behold this my joy was vain, for their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God, but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin. 38 And they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die. 39 Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives. 40 And it came to pass that my sorrow did return unto me again, and I saw that the day of grace was past with them, both temporally and spiritually, for I saw thousands of them hewn down in open rebellion against their God, and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land.”

Who will not always strive with man according to scripture?

WITHOUT GRACE, THERE IS NO HOPE

2 Nephi 7:40-44 – “40 Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves; to choose the way of everlasting death, or the way of eternal life. 41 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; 42 And remember that after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved. 43 Wherefore, may God raise you from death, by the power of the resurrection, and also from everlasting death, by the power of the atonement, 44 That ye may be received into the eternal kingdom of God, that ye may praise him through grace divine. Amen.”

Is God’s grace only applicable up to our initial conversion and after that it is no longer needed?