

The Works That Save Us

Many Christians are perplexed over the biblical teaching concerning the nature of our salvation. Are we saved by faith or by works? The issue has surfaced more intensely in the last few decades due to the skewed emphasis within the Church on the New Testament teaching on 'grace'. The great principle of the Protestant Reformation was that salvation was the **gift** of God. Salvation was the **gift of God's grace** received through **faith**, "**not because of works**, lest any man/woman should boast." (Ephesians 2:9).

When the Apostle Paul stated that salvation was "not because of works", he was referring to *human* 'good deeds/acts' done for the purpose of individuals 'meriting' or 'earning' their salvation. Salvation is not the result of human good deeds, however, it is the result of the 'good deeds' / 'obedience of the divine Son of God. It is the perfect 'obedience' of Jesus that is credited to the believers account through faith that is the means of his/her salvation. Such teaching, crucial and central to the gospel, can unfortunately lead to a relaxed or indifferent attitude towards obedience in the Christian life, ie., some who call themselves Christians adopt a very careless approach to keeping God's law and its N T interpretation. They sit very loosely to their responsibilities to the Church and neglect holiness in their life.

While our 'works' or 'good deeds' do not merit or earn salvation, they do reveal our love for the One whose 'works' do merit our salvation! Without our works of obedience to Christ, we cannot declare that we love Him, for true love serves the object of its love; it keeps His commandments! We must work for Christ in tireless obedience as if our salvation depended on our works. Why? Because it is the only genuine response that men and women can perform in light of God's 'grace' in Christ. Grace is not an excuse for laxity in obedience; it is the example of obedience we should emulate.

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