

Follow-up Studies: Faith, Works and Grace —————

The Balance

One of the greatest travesties in the church today is that new Christians are taught to depend on self, to struggle up the road of salvation by works. This attitude may be created before he/she comes to Christ, in the Bible study setting. But more often this is an acquired deficiency, learned through observation of "older" Christians. Such an orientation undoes the work of the cross. Equally sad, however, is the school of thought that prides itself on having arrived at a true understanding of grace, only to condone and even encourage lukewarm commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. Clearly we must strike the balance—hence this study.

Faith

- Hebrews 11:6—We need faith to please God, but what is faith?
- James 2:14-26—Faith is more than intellectual belief—it results in action. Compare verses 20-24 with Genesis 22. Note the interrelationship between faith and obedience.

Works

- Ephesians 2:8-10—The Bible clearly teaches that we are not saved by our own effort, but this doesn't mean that God doesn't expect anything from us. It is an unearned gift, but it is conditional on obedience (2 Kings 5:1-15).

Grace

- Titus 3:3-7—We're saved not because of our righteous deeds, but by his mercy.
- Grace is unmerited favor or mercy. But the fact that we do not earn or deserve it does not mean that we can do as we like (Jude 4).
- 1 Corinthians 15:10—Grace will have its effect.
- Titus 2:11-14—It is because of grace that we strive to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.