If you’re living in a way that honors God—perhaps you’re generous, prayerful, or obedient—that’s a good thing, and you should give thanks to God for enabling you to do so. But be careful not to become proud or self-righteous about it. The reality is that, even on our best days, we still fall short in ways we don’t even notice.

Theologians often speak of *total depravity*—the idea that sin affects every part of our lives: our thoughts, desires, and actions. That doesn’t mean we’re as bad as we could possibly be, but it does mean that nothing we do is free from the effects of sin. As Romans 3:23 says:

> *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

Even when we think we’ve done well, we’ve likely failed in ways we don’t see. You might feel confident in the 100 good deeds you’ve done today, but what about the 200 selfish thoughts, harsh words, or careless moments you weren’t aware of? God sees it all. If He were to keep a detailed account of every sin, none of us could stand.

Psalm 130:3–4 says:

> *“If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.”*

If we demanded fairness from God—if we insisted on receiving what we “deserve”—we would face judgment, not reward. That’s the danger of trusting in our own righteousness. As Isaiah 64:6 puts it:

> *“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”*

If you expect God to bless you for your Sunday offering, shouldn’t He also judge you for the anger, jealousy, or lust you carried in your heart the same day? Jesus taught in Matthew 5:22

>

> *“Everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.”*

So rather than demanding God’s blessings based on our flawed obedience, Jesus calls us to humility. In Luke 17:10 He says:

> *“So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”*

This is the posture of true Christian faith: not entitlement, but humble dependence. We don’t earn anything from God. We receive by grace—God’s unearned favor. This is at the heart of the Gospel and the Reformation teaching of *sola gratia* (grace alone).

Ephesians 2:8–9 makes it clear:

> *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is*

> *not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*
> *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Grace means God blesses us not because of who we are or what we’ve done, but because of who He is. His grace flows from His love, mercy, and kindness.

Even the Holy Spirit—the very presence and power of God in our lives—is received by grace, not earned by good behavior or rule-keeping.

Galatians 3:2 asks:

> *“Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?”*

Therefore, don’t trust in your good works. Don’t boast in your efforts. Instead, pray daily for the grace of God to sustain you. As 1 Peter 5:5 reminds us:

> *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

Your health, your life, your talents, your salvation—all of it is by grace. None of it is by your own merit. So ask for God’s grace, and live in gratitude and humility before Him.

Pray for grace. Depend on grace. Live by grace.

May the Lord cover you with His abundant grace.

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