

From the beginning, humanity has sought salvation through self-effort—good deeds, moral living, or religious rituals—but all fall short. No one can perfectly obey God's law Romans 3:23

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”.

Even when people overcome one sin, others remain to accuse them (Romans 7:18-20).

Because God's holiness requires absolute purity, no sinner can enter heaven on their own merit (Hebrews 12:14)

“Without holiness no one will see the Lord”.

Scripture confirms that no one naturally seeks God (Romans 3:11-12)

“No one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned

aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”).

This shows the doctrine of Total Depravity—the idea that sin has affected every part of human nature, making people incapable of saving themselves (based on Romans 3 and 7).

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Salvation by Grace through Faith

God's grace is unearned favor, freely given through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”).

When we believe, we are declared righteous—justified—not by our works but by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works,

so that no one can boast.”.

This means that upon faith in Jesus, we are made holy in God’s eyes (1 Corinthians 1:30)

“Christ Jesus... has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption”.

Though we are not yet perfect, God credits us as righteous (justification). This is the heart of imputed righteousness.

Justification by faith alone (sola fide) declares believers righteous despite ongoing imperfection, differing from sanctification which is the process of becoming actually holy.

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The Danger of Misunderstanding Grace

Grace is not a license to sin Romans 6:1-2

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!”).

Misunderstanding grace can lead to moral laxity (antinomianism).

If people believe grace means freedom to continue sinful lifestyles without repentance or transformation, they misuse grace (Jude 1:4)

“They pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality.”).

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#### Responsibilities After Receiving Grace

Receiving grace means being transformed into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”).

True faith produces fruit (James 2:17)

“faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead”.

Believers must avoid taking grace for granted (2 Corinthians 6:1,: “we urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain”). Those who refuse to change or bear fruit risk falling away (Hebrews 6:4-6). Like Esau who despised his birthright, some may lose the blessings of grace (Hebrews 12:15-17).

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Grace and Sanctification

Sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:12-13)

“work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you”.

Grace enables, motivates, and empowers holiness. It does not

excuse sin but calls believers to live godly lives (Titus 2:11-12)

“Grace teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.”).

God's grace is a precious, free gift, but it must be received with understanding and responsibility. Grace covers our sins and declares us holy, yet calls us to live holy lives.

Like receiving a free car, grace requires us to “fuel” it by cooperating with God's Spirit. Valuing grace leads to protection, transformation, and assurance of eternal life (John 10:28: *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish”*).

Shalom.

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