

FOUNDATIONS
The Grace of God the Father

Salvation (identity of being children) begins with the initiating love of the Father.

Hesed חֶסֶד - loving kindness, loyal love, faithfulness¹

Exodus 34:6

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

χάρις chárís - grace, unmerited favor

Ephesians 2:8-9

*8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Covenant - promise, commitment - binding legal and life commitment

John 1:17

17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Law Came through Moses (Old Covenant)

Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ (New Covenant)

The Law of God

1. The Law is good.

Psalm 19:7-9

*The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;*

2. But the Law is insufficient to bring righteousness. It was never meant to save us.

Hebrews 10: 3-4

3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

3. The Law reveals sin. It helps us know how we are not righteous.

Romans 3:20

20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

4. The Law provokes sin. (It's the off limits things that catch our attention.)

Romans 7:7-8

7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law,

¹ See The Bible Project Video, "God Loves You, But What Does That Mean?"

would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.

5. The Law is not an end in itself. The Law was a guardian. A guide and teacher. The law was leading God's people to Something Greater. (Galatians 3:23-24)

6. The Law is fulfilled in Jesus.

Matthew 5

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Grace isn't opposed to effort, it's opposed earning.

- Dallas Willard

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON (Two Sons) Luke 15:12-32

The Father killing the fatted calf and celebrating was about **restoring identity** -- his son's identity as a son. Then he could live in obedience out of a response to that identity.

**"I'm not a slave driven by the lashes of my master,
I am a son driven by the love of my father."**

This parable - Two ditches - two ways people try to save themselves:²

1. Salvation through self discovery

"Salvation is from our side a choice, from the divine side it is seizing upon, an apprehending, a conquest by the Most High God. Our 'accepting' and 'willing' are reactions rather than actions. The right of determination must always remain with God."

- A.W. Tozer

2. Salvation through moral conformity -

Legalism - an attempt to achieve righteousness with God through personal obedience.

- Legalism causes you to God through **earning**
- Legalism causes you to relate to others through **excluding**

James 4:6

..."God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

² The terms "self discovery" and "moral conformity" as well as much of the framework of this teaching of this parable are taken from the work of Tim Keller, including the book "The Prodigal God." If you search online, you will easily find many other sermons and shorter teaching videos expounding on these concepts.