

## What About Works?

Ephesians 2:8-10

*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. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

- 1) Reflect on how you've thought about the role of your efforts in your Christian in the past. How would you describe your perspective?**

In Ephesians 2:1-7, Paul presented the death, slavery, and wrath under sin and the life, freedom, and life found in Christ. Now he shifts his focus from *what* we need to *how* we come to receive it. The stakes are here, so Paul tells what will work and what won't to make it clear – this grace is received through faith and not through works. We see this also in Romans 4:4-5 <sup>4</sup> “Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. <sup>5</sup> And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,”

- 2) First off, let's talk about faith and works. What are they? What are some key characteristics of each?**
- 3) Paul drives home the faith-not-works contrast here pretty hard because we are prone to getting it wrong and the stakes are high. Why is it so tempting to bring works into faith and make them a part of how we are right with God? What is at stake when we do?**

Our efforts don't do anything to give us access to the grace of God in Jesus, they are part the grace we receive from God when we are joined to Christ. In Christ, God recreates us so that we can do good rather than being wholly enslaved to toxic passions. Not only that, but he does so for the purpose of working specific good things in and through our lives that he planned before time.

- 4) If we have a merit-oriented view of our good works, how does that play out in our lives? What kind of relationships does that promote with God and each other?**
- 5) On the other hand, if we see our good works as gifts of God's grace, how does that change things? How does that shape the way we relate to God and each other?**
- 6) How can we help each other keep the biblical perspective on the good things we see coming through our lives?**

### **Some things you can be praying about:**

- Praise God for choosing to do good in and through us.
- What can we praise God for?
- What sin do you need to confess?
- What cares or burdens we can help carry?