

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE

(Special English Edition)

Prepared by William S.H. Piper, D.D.

For Rogma International, Inc.

Copyright 1989 by Rogma International, Inc. All rights reserved.

LAW AND GRACE – FAITH AND WORKS

INTRODUCTION

Faith and works both have their place in the Christian life. God justifies a believer by grace through faith. God will reward him according to his works. This is a simple and plain truth. However, many churches do not teach that God saves individual people by grace and faith alone without works. Almost every religion and almost every liberal denomination demands something in addition to faith for salvation. They demand such things as baptism and/or obedience to certain rules and laws. Demanding works for salvation places the sinner under law again. The Bible says we are no longer “under law” but “under grace.” The solution of the different opinions is not as simple as some people might think. The apostle James seemed to teach that God justifies us by our works. Paul seemed to teach that God justifies us through faith alone. People think this is a contradiction and have misunderstood the teaching of the Bible on this subject. Even the great reformer, Martin Luther said that the book of James was “a letter of straw.”

Our most important purpose in this lesson is to make the biblical meaning of “law and grace” or “faith and works” very clear. This will help you to be able to recognize and understand the special place and purpose of these two doctrines.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

- Millions of Christians do not know for certain that God saves them forever. When someone asks them, “Did God save you?” they answer, “I’m doing the best I can.” This shows that to them their salvation depends on their good works. They never know if their good works satisfy a holy God. Therefore they are not completely sure that they will go to heaven. If you want to make sure that you will go to heaven, you must fully understand what faith and works are. You must understand their purposes too.
- There is the matter of law and grace. The Bible states that Moses gave the law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Does God save a believer by pure grace completely apart from the law? If this is true, why did God give the law? What place does the law have in the believer’s life? How must the believer act towards the law? If God turned from law to grace, what was wrong with the law? What is grace? What does it mean to “fall from grace”? Can law and grace ever mix? What is the connection between grace and salvation to the Christian life?
- This lesson is very important because it will help you to understand law and grace. You must understand the truth of these words in order to understand that you are eternally secure and know that you are complete in Christ. This will give you absolute assurance of your eternal salvation.

THE LESSON

I. IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN JAMES AND PAUL CONCERNING OUR JUSTIFICATION?

- A. Read and study James 2:14-26.
- B. Now read Romans 4:2-5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6; and Romans 8:1.
- C. This is what these verses *seem* to say when you read them without paying close attention and do not try to understand their meaning.
 - ◆ *James – Faith alone cannot save you.*
 - ◆ *Paul – Faith alone can and does save you.*
 - ◆ *James – God justifies a person by his works.*
 - ◆ *Paul – God does not justify a person by works because then that person will be proud.*

- ◆ **James** – *“Faith without works is dead.”*
- ◆ **Paul** – *Faith that depends on works defeats the grace of God.*

II. THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

Here are three key words to note and understand: **Faith, Works, and Justify.**

A. Faith

1. Paul wrote about faith in a very personal way. Paul talked about a real faith in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. He talked about a faith that changes your life (Acts 16:31). Paul preached and taught about a faith that involved repentance (Acts 17:30; 20:21). He preached about a faith that comes from the heart and includes a person declaring Christ as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10). Paul preached about a faith that provides salvation only through Christ’s death and resurrection. Read and study Romans 3:27-28; 4:5; 5:1-2; Galatians 2:16; 3:24; 2:20; Ephesians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; and 2 Timothy 1:5.
2. James talked about a weak, uncertain faith. James wrote about a faith that is only in the mind, and is not real and does not bear fruit. He wrote about a dead faith and asked the question, “Can that kind of faith save you?” Of course, the answer is NO!
 - ◆ *It will help you to understand the situation if you add “that kind of” in the verse every time James says “faith that is dead” or “faith that cannot justify.”*

B. Works

1. Paul recommended good works as the normal duty of a believer. Good works are not necessary for our salvation. A passage in the Bible that many people know is Ephesians 2:9-10. In verse 9 the Bible says that salvation is not by works, because then any person can boast. In verse 10 the Bible says that God made us new people in Christ Jesus to do good works. Paul destroyed the idea that God saves a sinner by his works or observing the law (Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5-6; Romans 4:5).

Nevertheless:

 - a) Paul spoke highly of widows who had a good report because they did good works.
 - b) Paul told Timothy to advise believers to be “rich in good works” (1 Timothy 6:18).
 - c) Paul wrote to Titus about deceivers who said they knew God but their works showed that they never accepted Him (Titus 1:16).
2. James wrote about people who say they are believers, but their lives bear no fruit. Their lives are empty. James said that when there are no works there is no real faith. James said that faith without works is dead. In James 2:18 he said, “I will show you my faith by my works.” To James, works were the natural fruit of faith. Faith and works are two witnesses that show that God justified a person.
 - ◆ *Dr. Harry Ironside wrote, “God has not done a work of grace in the heart when there is no act of grace in the life.”*

C. Justified

1. Paul looked at salvation from the standpoint that God is ruler over everything. God puts the righteousness of Christ on the person who believes. God justifies the ungodly because of faith alone (Romans 3:21-22, 25-28; 4:5-6; 5:1).
2. James looked at a person’s responsibility to show his faith to others by his works. He saw salvation as man sees it (James 1:18-26).
3. Paul wrote about justification the way God sees it. James wrote about justification the way man sees it.
 - ◆ *Dr. A.T. Robertson wrote, “God justifies no man by faith unless faith caused that he live a just life (unless the man’s faith makes him to do the right thing).”*

III. WORKS - SALVATION

A. The place of works in connection with salvation:

1. Because a person believes, God credits righteousness to his account (Romans 4:5-6).
2. Your works did not save you because then you could boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

3. The works of the law do not justify a person (Galatians 2:16).
 4. If righteousness came by the law (works), then Christ died for nothing (Galatians 2:21).
 5. Since God saves us by grace then it is not by works (Romans 11:6).
 6. Our righteous works did not save us (Titus 3:5-6).
- ◆ *Even though we studied the way James looked at works, I want you to note how clearly these verses teach that works do not save us. Nevertheless, since God saved us, we must be "...rich in good works..." (1 Timothy 6:18). "...be careful to maintain good works..." (Titus 3:8).*
- B. The place of faith in connection with salvation:
- ◆ *Faith is the key to salvation*
 1. God saves you by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).
 2. God justified you by faith (Romans 5:1).
 3. Believe...and God will save you (Acts 16:31).
 4. The gospel is the power of God to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).
 5. Christ lives in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17).
 6. God justifies a person by faith (Romans 3:28).
 7. It is by faith that we receive the righteousness which comes from God (Philippians 3:9).
 - ◆ *In simple words, God saved you and me by grace through faith, plus nothing!*

IV. THE PLACE OF WORKS IN CONNECTION TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- A. Good works show that a person has real faith (James 2:14, 17, 20, 22).
- B. At the time Christ rewards every believer, a Christian will receive his reward according to the works that he did by using his body (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- C. Salvation is by grace through faith alone. In heaven God will give us rewards according to our works (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).
- D. Galatians 5:6 talks about "faith that works by love." We show our faith by doing acts of love.
- E. Revelation 14:13 talks about believers who have died. This verse says, "their works do follow them." You cannot take your possessions into heaven. You cannot take your wealth, your good name or your money into heaven. The only thing you can take to heaven is your works. What you do here on earth influences your rank in heaven!

V. THE PLACE OF FAITH IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- A. God saves us by faith, and God's power protects us through our faith (1 Peter 1:5).
- B. In Galatians 2:20 Paul says that he lives this present life through faith in the Son of God.
- C. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
- D. The Christian life is a life of faith. Faith is the key to everything that the believer does.
 1. Through faith in Christ we win over the world with its demands, attractions and temptations (1 John 5:4).
 2. Through faith we defeat Satan with all his power, fiery arrows and tricks (1 Peter 5:9; Ephesians 6:16).
 3. Through faith God gives us all the promises. We trust Him for these promises. By faith we accept these promises as our own (Hebrews 6:12).
 4. Furthermore:
 - a) Faith frees us from worry about the things we think we must have (Matthew 6:30-33).
 - b) Faith gives us the courage to face the storms of life (Matthew 8:26).
 - c) Faith makes us free from doubt (Matthew 14:31-32).

VI. THE PERSON WHO BELIEVES THAT HIS WORKS SAVED HIM, PUTS HIMSELF UNDER LAW AGAIN AND HE "FALLS FROM GRACE"

- A. Read Galatians 5:1-6. In verse 1, Paul advised us to stand strong because now we have freedom. Christ has made us free. This means that God set us free from slavery to the Law of Moses through Christ. In verses 2-4, Paul talked about the matter of circumcision. Circumcision is the mark that shows that Jews are separate from the rest of the world under the law. Some false teachers were insisting that

under grace, Gentiles and Jewish Christians had to submit to circumcision. Paul made three arguments. He said that if you insist on this legal custom the following things will result:

1. Christ is no profit to you in anything (verse 2).
 2. You make yourself a debtor to the whole law (verse 3; James 2:10; Galatians 3:10).
 3. You have departed from grace (verse 4).
- ♦ *Many people misinterpret the phrase “fallen from grace” more than any other verse of Scripture. People often use the verse to teach that you can lose your salvation. By this phrase, Paul meant that if you place yourself back under the law by submitting to circumcision, you reject grace as a means of salvation.*

B. This introduces us to the matter of LAW versus GRACE in salvation and the Christian life.

VII. TWO TEXTS TO THINK ABOUT CAREFULLY

- A. John 1:17 – Moses gave the law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ brought with Him a whole new system and way of life. In Christ, the Law of Moses, as a system of government, came to an end.
- B. Romans 10:4 – This verse teaches us that Christ is the final purpose of the law, which leads to righteousness for everyone who believes. The LAW reveals the righteous will of God but it cannot cause that anyone become righteous (Romans 8:3). The righteousness available to all believers now is righteousness “apart from the law” (Romans 3:21). It is the very righteousness of God that is put upon the believer in and through Christ (Romans 3:22; Philippians 3:9).

VIII. A BRIEF STUDY OF THE LAW

- A. What is the Law?
 1. It is a period of time (dispensation) from the giving of the Law of Moses until the death of Christ. Note Galatians 3:24, “...The law was our schoolmaster...unto (until) Christ.”
 2. During this period of Law, God worked with man in three ways. God gave the Law to Moses in three parts:
 - a) the commandments (Exodus 20:1-26).
 - b) the judgments or social laws (Exodus 21:1-24:11).
 - c) the religious laws (Exodus 24:12-31:18).The commandments showed God’s holy will. The judgments, the social laws, told the Israelites how to live together. The ordinances told Israel how to live the spiritual life.
 3. When Christ or Paul talked about the law, they usually meant the Ten Commandments (Matthew 5:17; 19:17; 22:37-40; Galatians 3:10-24).
- B. What was the purpose of the law? Read Galatians 3:19-24.
 1. God added the law because of sin (Galatians 3:19). God gave the law to show that sin is doing wrong against a righteous God (Romans 7:7). Paul said that he would not have known sin except that the law showed him what sin was (1 John 3:4; 1 Timothy 1:9-10).
 2. The law showed the entire world that it was guilty (Romans 3:19). The law showed that everybody is a sinner and therefore must die (Galatians 3:22; Romans 3:9-20).
 3. The law was like a schoolmaster until Christ came to this earth (Galatians 3:24). In Greek and Roman households a child was placed under the care of a “child leader.” This person would take care of the child until the father decided the child would inherit all his belongings (Galatians 3:25; 4:1-7). Until Christ came every one was under the law (the teacher). Through Christ we are made children of God and we receive everything our Father has. We are no longer under the law (Galatians 3:25; Romans 6:14).
 4. The law came that we would see that our self-righteousness couldn’t save us (Romans 10:2-4; Philippians 3:9).
- C. What are the weaknesses of the law?
 1. It cannot make anyone right with God (Galatians 2:16; Acts 13:39).
 2. It cannot set anyone apart for God (Galatians 3:2-3).
 3. It can never produce righteousness in the believer (Galatians 3:21; 2:21).

4. It is weak because our sinful nature is weak (Romans 8:3).
 5. It can only condemn us (Romans 3:19).
 6. It makes nothing perfect (Hebrews 7:18-19).
- D. What does the law do?
1. The law produces a religion that does not see the truth (Galatians 1:13-14).
 2. The law places everyone under its curse (Galatians 3:10).
 3. The law declares that every man is guilty of sin (Romans 3:19; James 2:10).
 4. The law prepares us for Christ by showing us that we are guilty and need a Savior (Galatians 3:24-25).
 5. The law cancels out the death of Christ for all believers (Galatians 2:21; 3:21-22; 5:3-4).
 6. The law is proud of the sinful nature and of what the sinful nature did (Galatians 6:12).
- E. What must the believer know about the law?
1. The believer must know that the law does not save, nevertheless, the law was holy in the past and it is now “holy, just and good” (Romans 7:12).
 2. The believer must know that the law is not an evil thing. Christ did not come to destroy the law. Christ came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17). He completely observed the law (John 8:46; 1 Peter 2:21). We too, should respect the law as being “perfect, sure, right, and pure” (Psalm 19:7-8).
 3. As believers we are no longer under law. The law does not condemn us any more. God does not deal with us according to the law (Romans 6:14; 10:4). We believers must know that the law still shows us the righteous judgment of God concerning sin in our lives (Romans 7:7).
 4. Christ is the “end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes” (Romans 10:4). As believers our whole desire now is to do what pleases Christ (Philippians 3:9).

IX. A BRIEF STUDY OF GRACE

- A. What is grace?
1. God is love (1 John 4:8,16). Grace is like a river of love that never stops flowing. It comes down to man from the unending source of God’s love. Grace is God’s free favor toward man. Man does not deserve this favor. This grace comes through Christ. Salvation supplies everything man must have in order to live the Christian life.
 2. Grace is the kindness and love of God toward man (Titus 3:4-5).
 3. While the law came by Moses, grace came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).
 4. The time (dispensation) of grace began when Christ rose from among the dead at Pentecost. The time of grace will continue until Christ returns on the clouds to take all believers to Himself (Ephesians 3:2-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- B. What is the connection between grace and salvation?
1. Grace brought salvation down to man (Titus 2:11).
 2. God saves us by grace entirely apart from works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:4-5).
 3. It is by God’s grace that He justifies us (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:24), and sets us apart for Himself (Galatians 2:21).
- C. What is the connection between grace and the Christian life?
1. Grace provides freedom in Christ and the position of a son in the family of God (Galatians 4:5, 31).
 2. Grace makes the promise of the Spirit available by faith in Christ (Galatians 3:22).
 3. Grace provides a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:5, 22). This kind of life defeats the flesh (Galatians 5:16).
 4. Grace is sufficient for every need (2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:16; 2 Corinthians 9:8).

- D. Can we ever mix law and grace or faith and works?
1. Concerning salvation or how to live the Christian life, the two are as impossible to mix. They are like oil and water or darkness and light. We cannot mix oil and water.
 2. Two clear passages should be enough to prove this point:
 - a) There are a few people that God chose by His grace. And if God chose His people by grace, then their works did not make them God's people. If God made them His people by their works, then God's gift of grace would not really be a gift (Romans 11:5-6).
 - b) If you say that the law can make you right with God, then your life with Christ ends. You have left God's grace (Galatians 5:4).

X. SOME CONTRASTS OF LAW AND GRACE

A list of such contrasts could be quite long. Let me encourage you to make your own list. The following is a partial list on which you can build:

<u>UNDER LAW</u>	<u>UNDER GRACE</u>
The sheep died for the shepherd	The Shepherd died for the sheep
The Israelite said, "If you desire it"	The believer says, "I will"
The law demanded perfect obedience	Grace gives us power to obey
The law demanded righteousness	God puts His righteousness on the believer
Under the law even the best man dies	Under grace the worst sinner lives
The law brings a curse	Grace removes the curse
The law never justifies or sanctifies	Grace justifies and sets a person apart
The law brings a person to ruin	Grace forgives
The law causes that a person becomes a slave.	Grace sets a person free
Moses brought the law and expects works	Christ brought grace and expects faith
The law makes nothing perfect	Grace makes every person perfect in Christ
The law made no one righteous	Grace put God's righteousness on the believer
The law says, "You must not do"	Grace says, "Whosoever will"

XI. CONCLUSION

We say with Paul that God justifies a person by faith, not through the things he has done to follow the law (Romans 3:28). One day God brought love and grace to this world in the person of Christ. Through Christ the believer kept the law and put it away. A whole new age of grace came into the world. Remember that Christ bore the curse of the law on your behalf. Christ paid your debt in full. Rest your faith in a work that Christ finished. Rejoice in a redemption that is complete.

**GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE EXAM
LESSON 27**

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Register No _____

Name _____

Address _____

Choose and Round the correct answer in the following: -

1. In this lesson we learn that the two elements extremely important in the Christian life are: (Value 2 points)
 - a. godliness and cleanliness.
 - b. faith and works.
 - b. happiness and satisfaction.

2. The three key words which must be understood to resolve the seeming difference between James and Paul are: (**Mark three**) (Value 9 points)
 - a. Adopted
 - b. justified
 - c. chosen
 - d. works
 - e. sanctified
 - f. hope
 - g. faith

3. The relationship of works to the Christian life is that : (Value 2 points)
 - a. good works are an evidence of faith.
 - b. good works are necessary for salvation.
 - c. good works have nothing to do with the Christian life.

4. In Galatians 5, Paul says, “You are fallen from grace.” He means: (Value 2 points)
 - a. you have lost your salvation.
 - b. you will never experience grace again.
 - c. if you place yourself back under law you refuse to accept grace as a means of salvation.

5. A reason for the law was: (Value 2 points)
 - a. to punish people.
 - b. to be used like a school teacher until Christ would come.
 - c. to make the Israelites live right.

6. What did Christ come to do to the law? (Value 2 points)
 - a. destroy it
 - b. fulfill it
 - c. perfect it

7. The relationship of the believer to the law is: (Value 2 points)
 - a. he has to keep it.
 - b. he is under it as a ministry of condemnation.
 - c. it reveals the righteous judgment and will of God regarding sin.

8. In relation to salvation: (Value 3 points)
 - a. grace brought salvation down to man.
 - b. grace showed God’s good will to man.
 - c. grace reconciled man to God.

Matching:

Place the letter in front of the reference on the line before the phrase.

9. What do the following verses say about faith? (Value 15 points)
- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| _____ we walk by faith not by sight | a. 1 John 5:4 |
| _____ we overcome the world by faith. | b. 1 Peter 5:9 |
| _____ we defeat Satan by faith. | c. Hebrews 6:12 |
| _____ we claim the promises of God by faith. | d. Matthew 14:31-32 |
| _____ we are able to live above worry and doubts. | e. 2 Corinthians 5:7 |
10. Some of the weaknesses of the law were: (Value 12 points)
- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| _____ it could not justify. | a. Romans 3:19 |
| _____ it could not produce righteousness. | b. Galatians 2:16 |
| _____ it only condemned. | c. Hebrews 7:18-19 |
| _____ it made nothing perfect. | d. Galatians 3:21 |

Fill in the blank spaces

11. In James 2:14-26 we see James seems to teach that: _____.
(Value 6 points)
12. In Romans 4:2-5 Paul seems to say that _____. (Value 6 points)
13. Of which person, Paul or James, is the following statement true? (Value 3 points)
“He advocated good works as a normal activity of the believer and these good works were not necessary to salvation.” _____
14. Of which person, Paul or James, is the following statement true? (Value 3 points)
“Works are the natural fruit of faith, and the two witness together of a man’s justification.”

15. Fill in the blank spaces of the following statement: (Value 9 points)
“We are saved by _____.”
16. Fill in the three parts to the Jewish law. (Value 9 points)
- The commands that _____.
- The judgments which governed Israel’s _____.
- The ordinances which governed Israel’s _____.
17. Fill in two purposes for the law. (Value 8 points)
- Galatians 3:19 _____
- Romans 3:19 _____
18. The grace of God helps the believer in the time of _____, Hebrews 4:16.
(Value 2 points)
19. We (can or cannot) – **choose one--** mix grace and works in relation to salvation. (Value 3 points)