

# Are We Saved by Living a Good Life - Or by God's Grace Alone?

Ephesians 2:8-10

Intro:

1. Roman Catholic background: Am I really good enough to be God's child forever? What if I willingly sin & fail to go to confession? Am I slam dunked? How can I really know from day to day if I'm acceptable?
2. Fundamentalist background: If you believe Jesus is the Son of God & asked Him to come into your heart, you're saved. Case closed! No questions asked! Done deal! Don't worry about it! The way you live really doesn't affect your saved state!
3. These are both extreme positions but so many people accept them as true.
4. **ILL: The background behind this controversy.**
5. Let me show you Bible passages for both positions & then what I think they are saying.

## I. We are Saved by Living a Good Life

A. Phil 2:12-13 - Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

B. Living a good life.

1. I Tim 6:18-19 - Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. in this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.
2. Jam 1:26-27 - if anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

B. Enduring until the end.

1. Matt 10:22 - All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.
2. II Tim 4:7-8 - I have fought the good fight I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to those who have longed for his appearing.
3. II Pet 1:10-11 - Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
4. 1 Cor 15:2 - By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

C. Witnessing. Rom 10:9-10 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your head that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

## II. We are Saved by God's Grace Alone

### A. Salvation is a free gift.

1. Eph 2:8-10 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.
2. Rom 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life . . .
3. Rom 11:6 - And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

### B. You obtain salvation by simply believing.

1. I Cor 1:21 - For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.
2. Jn 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
3. II Tim 3:15 - and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

## III. Both Positions are Right - They Just Don't Exclude One Another

### A. Salvation is spoken of in the Bible as a process, a future hope and as a state.

### B. "Works" meant working your way to salvation by obeying the rules in the Law of Moses. Baptism, considered by many to be a work, is not something you do but something that is done to you.

### C. A good life is lived as a result of being saved, not as a condition to get it.

1. Eph 2:10 - For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.
2. Tit 2:14 - Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

### D. The biblical definition of faith requires works as an expression. Jam 2:14-24 - What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? . . . Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder . . . You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Don't be one of the extremes. You don't have to continually worry if you are good enough to get to heaven. Lord Jesus made you worthy when He went to the cross! But don't believe that just because you said a little prayer years ago you are relieved of the responsibility to live, to grow & to serve.