

How does Paul describe his efforts to become all Jesus saved him for? How is this different than what he did before he was saved? (3:12-14)

What does a life of grace-driven effort look like today?

How does Paul's statement in 3:15 reflect a spirit of grace rather than legalism?

REFLECT

"You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat." (Romans 14:10) How does the awareness that we will all be judged by God put an end to judging ourselves and others?

RESPOND

In the next week or two, note how often you think or use the words "ought" and "should" about yourself and others. Pay attention to your attitudes toward work, household tasks, going to church, and time with family and friends. Do you see what you do as duty or delight? Do your attitudes reflect the grace of God to you?

¹ It helps to read this text in the New Living Translation. Go to www.biblegateway.com to see and print off this passage in the NLT.



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There is a subtle path away from grace that's based on performance that leads to legalism, which leads to judgmentalism.

Luke 18:9-14 (page 718)

Philip Yancey
The gospel is not at all what we would have come up with on our own. I, for one, would expect to honor the virtuous over the profligate. I would have to clean up my act before applying for an audience with a Holy God...Throughout the Bible, in fact, God shows a marked preference for "real" people over "good" people.

We turn righteous disciplines into religious duties. (Performance leads to legalism.)

Galatians 1:6-9

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all...As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let that person be under God's curse!

It comes down to our answer to the question, "How exactly am I made acceptable to God?"

Galatians 2:21-3:3 and 5:4

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” ...Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort? ... You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Let me put it simply: We are called to do great works, tremendous world-changing works, and to live righteous lives of integrity, but this does not save us or persuade God to love us.

We replace following Jesus with following rules. (Legalism leads to judgmentalism.)

See Luke 11:38-40

Jesus majored on the majors, legalism majors on the minors and ends up missing the point. And some points we can't afford to miss.

Romans 14:4-19

Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master they stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand... You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... So then, we will all give an account of ourselves to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another... Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Bryan Chapell
Almost every generation has to rediscover grace because humanity has no natural capacity to receive (or perceive of) the notion that we can do nothing to gain God's acceptance.

How Grace Produces Good Works (and not the other way around)

LIFE GROUP STUDY

RELATE

Who is the most free, joyful person you know?

When you see someone using food stamps in the check-out at the grocery, or the guy with the sign as you exit the freeway, what is your first thought?

What principle, insight, or quote from the sermon was most meaningful to you?

READ

Philippians 3:1-15 ¹

Rob said that legalism isn't so much about right and wrong, but about who's in and who's out. In what ways was Paul "in" before he was assaulted by grace?

Do Christians today set up standards of who's in and who's out? In what ways?

Paul no longer counted on intense religious activity, a faultless reputation, or his ability to obey God. What did he come to trust and desire? How did this affect the way he saw himself? (3:9-12)

How have you learned to let go of your efforts at self-justification to pursue all that Jesus saved you to be?