

## INSIGHT

In *Ephesians 2:8* Paul said, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." This great truth, although widely accepted, is often misunderstood. In *Hebrews 11:6* we read, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Again in *Acts 16:31* Paul told the Philippian jailer to "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." These and numerous other scriptures clearly show the tremendous importance of faith. Without it there is no hope for a lost and dying world. Faith can either be acceptable to God or useless, depending upon the state or condition in which it exists.

The Bible describes two different conditions in which faith may exist. One type of faith can and will lead to salvation, while the other will only bring a curse. They are 'living faith' and 'dead faith'. The Bible draws a very clear contrast between a dead, useless faith which cannot save, and an active, working faith which is pleasing to God. There is not one single case in all of the Bible of a person ever being saved through dead faith. Paul made this fact doubly clear in *Galatians 5:6* when he said that the faith which pleases God is "...faith expressing itself through love." Every case of Bible conversion shows that people were saved only when their faith was coupled with the works of obedience to God's law. James said, "...show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do." James 2:18

We may believe in Christ and even claim to be a Christian, but unless we actively obey His teachings, our faith will be proven to be dead and shall be forever lost.

Yes, it is by *grace* we are saved; but this *grace*, this *gift* of God, comes through *faith*. A faith, that is living and active; not one that is dead and useless.

## *The Relationship With God* *Living Faith*

**Key Text:** **1 Peter 1:14-16**  
*As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

**Theme:**  
The road of salvation is not traveled by works. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to realize that to depend on our good deeds for salvation is foolish and worthless. It is only through Jesus' death on the cross that we are saved. It is equally sad, however, that one school of thought prides itself on having arrived at a true understanding of grace, only to encourage lukewarm commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. Clearly, we must strike the balance between faith, works *and* grace.

**Application:**  
Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10 that the grace given him was not without effect. Similarly, we ought to allow the grace of God to have its effect in our lives. Let faith show itself by what you do. Seek fellowship, pray often, read His Word and do the things that will lift up the cross of Christ. Remember what our great Lord and Savior Jesus said, "*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*" Mt. 5:16

**May the Lord richly bless you!**

SERMON OUTLINE	SMALL GROUP STUDY
<p><b>The Balance: Grace, Faith &amp; Works</b></p> <p><b>I. Saved by “chàris”</b></p> <p><b>A. Biblical definition of “grace”</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ephesians 2:8</i>--God’s saving gift</li> <li><i>Titus 3:4,5</i>--God’s kindness, love, mercy</li> </ol> <p><b>B. “Chàris” received through faith</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ephesians 2:8</i>--through faith (trust)</li> <li><i>Romans 5:2</i>--access through faith</li> <li><i>Roman 10:17</i>--faith comes though the Bible</li> </ol> <p><b>C. An effective “chàris”</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ephesians 2:10</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good works produced</li> </ol> </li> <li><i>Titus 2:11-12</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It teaches (trains, disciplines) us</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>II. Two Kinds of Faiths</b></p> <p><b>A. Living faith</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>James 2:18,22</i>--Working, active faith <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doers of the word (<i>James 1:22</i>)</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>B. Dead faith</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>James 2:17,20</i>--Dead, useless faith <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hearers of the word (<i>James 1:22</i>)</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>III. Conclusion</b></p> <p><i>Let grace be effective not defective</i></p>	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <p>Did you ever win a prize in a contest of some sort? What did you win? What did you do in order to win this prize?</p> <p><b>See To It</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Titus 3:3-7</b></span></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does verse three reveal about man’s present condition? How does this verse apply to us as Christians?</li> <li>Why is it important for us to be reminded of our past condition? How does this benefit us?</li> <li>What can we learn about the nature of God from verse four? In what does He delight?</li> <li>Paul says, “<i>not because of righteous things we have done...</i>” Does this mean that the Christian does not have to perform works of righteousness? Explain your answer.</li> <li>How did God save us? What does “<i>the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit</i>” mean? Explain your answer.</li> <li>How do you explain baptism in Acts 2:38 in light of the statement “<i>...not because of righteous things we have done</i>”?</li> </ol> <p><b>Seeing It Closer:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before being baptized into Christ, which of the following relate to you? Explain. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foolishness</li> <li>Disobedient</li> <li>Deceived</li> <li>Enslaved by passions and pleasures</li> <li>Full of malice and hatred</li> </ol> </li> <li>After becoming a Christian, has any of these worldly qualities changed in you? What caused the change and what were those changes?</li> </ol> <p><b>Getting To It:</b></p> <p>Let us always remember to let grace have its transforming effect on us, for Christ died for a people eager to do what is good (<i>Titus 2:14b</i>).</p>