



Grace, Gratitude and Confident Cowgirls

Focus The heart of the gospel is that we are saved by grace, not works. God wants us to live in this truth with gratitude and confidence before Him, so that we may bring Him fame on the earth.

Open What is your idea of a “fruitful” day?

Read Ephesians 2:8–10 describes the heart of the gospel—that we are “saved by grace through faith, not by works” and that we are uniquely created by God to do good works on the earth. Salvation is the free gift from God. Our works don’t save us, nor are we required to somehow “repay” God for our salvation. Our behavior—although important—doesn’t determine our eternal destination.

When we become impressed with our own performance, we become ungrateful for the free gift of salvation and are unable to celebrate our own growth in Christ or the growth of others. We are to worship God and bring Him glory on the earth through our good works that are born out of grateful hearts. We can only do this by accepting the free gift of grace and embracing who He has made us to be.

Talk

1. Do you feel compelled to reciprocate when you receive a nice gift or service from someone? Why or why not?

2. Read Ephesians 2:8–10 in a few different translations, if available. Why do you think Paul stresses the fact that our salvation is not from ourselves, but is the gift of God? Why do you think it can be so difficult for people to embrace salvation as a *gift*?
3. Few people will out-and-out *boast* about their spiritual pedigree or accomplishments, but what kinds of attitudes or behaviors indicate some sort of boasting in our works?
4. Ephesians 2:10 says that we are uniquely designed by God, “created in Christ Jesus to do good works.” If works are not the means to our salvation, what is the purpose of good works?

Live

How you answer the following questions can be indicators of whether or not you are living a grace-based life.

- a. Can you receive a gift with gratitude, or do you feel guilty and/or compelled to reciprocate?
- b. Can you celebrate others’ steps towards being Christlike, or do you tend to look down on those who are at a “lower level” in their maturity?
- c. Are you comfortable and confident in who God has made you to be, or do you compare yourself to others and/or feel inferior to others’ gifts?

Based on your answers to these questions, do you believe you are living a grace-based life? If not, take a few minutes to pray with a partner and invite the Lord to change your heart and help you receive His free gift and approval.

Pray

Thank Jesus for His work on the cross that purchased your freedom and salvation. Thank Him for His gift. If you have been relying on your own works or performance for your salvation or for the approval of God or others, repent and ask the Lord to set you free. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth. Pray that your life would be one of gratitude that brings glory to Him.