

Who We Are

Christians

Not some brand of Christians.

Not Christians plus something else.

We've no denominational affiliation, no governing association. We wear only the name of Jesus Christ, glorify Him alone in our name, acknowledge Him alone as our governing head.

Colossians 3:17 ; Galatians 6:14 ; 1 Peter 4:14-16

What We Believe

The Bible

Not part of the Bible—all of it.

And the Bible alone.

We've no creed, no catechism. We preach, we teach, we read, we recommend, we seek to know and live just the words God gave—all of them.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ; 2 John 9 ; Revelation 22:18-19

What We Offer

Spirituality

Preaching that convicts, exhorts, instructs and encourages.

Bible classes that are practical, informative and stimulating for all ages.

An atmosphere for building better character and nurturing better homes.

Worship that is spirited, reverent, God-centered.

A spiritual family committed to God, to each other, to evangelism, to a heavenly hope.

2 Timothy 4:2 ; 1 Peter 4:11 ; Romans 12:9-13

Not of Works

Vestavia Church of Christ
2325 Old Columbiana Rd
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216
vestaviachurchofchrist.com

Hours of services:
Sunday Bible Study: 9AM, Worship: 10AM & 5PM
Wednesday Bible Study: 7PM

VESTAVIA
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Not of Works

By Doy Moyer

There have long been debates over the relationship of grace and works. The issue is sometimes put out as a "grace or works" or "grace vs. works." The fact is that we are saved by God's grace, not through meritorious works. At the same time, we cannot minimize the importance of obedience to God. We need to remember that obedience does not equate to meritorious works. We often deal with the issue from the perspective of trying to show that obedience is needed. But let's think about it from the other angle. What of the position that essentially makes works meritorious?

First, the view that meritorious works are what saves attributes too much to man's ability to fix the problem of sin. However, from the time sin first entered this world, mankind has only shown an inability to fix the problem. The first eleven chapters of Genesis clearly show this (e.g., the tower of Babel and the attempt to unify). The downward spiral of mankind testifies to the need for God to do something about sin. Meritorious works cannot do the job. If we trust our works, we will fail terribly.

Second, such a view puts too much trust in ourselves. We become the ones who pronounce that our works are good enough to save us. We may even devise our own works of righteousness, then demand others follow what we have come up with. We end up trusting our own works and our own pronouncements about what constitutes "good enough." We, however,

are in no position to define our own good works. All we can do is follow God's lead on what He requires. Our only decision then is whether or not we will submit ourselves to God's will.

Third, the Bible is clear on the fact that salvation comes "by grace through faith" (Eph 2:8-10). What role do works play then? If they are not meritorious, then what are they? The same passage in Ephesians tells us that God creates us as His workmanship "for good works." These are works defined by God, prepared by Him, for us to follow. Doing them does not earn anything, but demonstrates a faith and trust in what He has told us to do. In other words, when we do the works given by God, we are not relying on ourselves, but upon Him, if for nothing else, simply because He told us to do them. We are not the ones defining the "good" in this case. If we approach the works given by God with a proper spirit, then we will never think that we are somehow earning anything, but, rather, will recognize the same truth taught by Jesus: "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done'" (Luke 17:10). With this view, even a subject like baptism can be better understood. Submitting to God in baptism is not a meritorious work; it earns us nothing, but is instead a demonstration of "faith in the working of God" (Col 2:12). In other words, even though it is something to which we submit, baptism

is ultimately not our work, but God's work. Doing it means that we put our trust in His operation (as the context of Col 2 uses this analogy). When we have done it, "we have done only that which we ought to have done." We haven't merited a thing. To take this a step further, think about the "grace of obedience." God didn't have to tell us what to do. He didn't have to tell us anything. The fact that He gives commands is very much part of His grace, not something to be separated from His grace. In fact, grace teaches us to live a certain way (Titus 2:11-14), so living that way means we are trusting in God's grace. Let's be thankful for the commands of God, even though we have failed miserably. The fact that He told us what to do means that He cares because He wants us to be in fellowship with Him. His grace is what provides that way into His fellowship through the blood of Jesus Christ. Doing what God says means that we believe in God's grace. Thank God for all that He has done for us, given to us, and even expects from us! We deserve none of it.

"So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"

Luke 17:10