



[Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

(8) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

New King James Version

These verses confront us with a list of spiritual-sounding words: *grace*, *saved*, [faith](#), *gift*, *works*. Even those who have been in God's church for many years and who may clearly understand each of these words individually are slowed down in comprehension when faced with such terms presented one after the other.

So, let us take a very brief Greek lesson. Here are the key terms contained in this scripture in English and Greek, the *Strong's Concordance* reference number, and, to make the meanings clearer, other English terms translated in the New Testament from the same Greek words:

- **Grace** (#5485): *charis* (*khar'-ece*). Also translated as *favor*, *thanks*, *thank*, *pleasure*.
- **Saved** (#4982): *sozo* (*sode'-zo*). Also translated as *make whole*, *heal*, *be whole*.
- **Faith** (#4102): *pistis*. Also translated as *assurance*, *believe*, *belief*, *those who believe*, *fidelity*.
- **Gift** (#1435): *doron*. Also translated as *present*, *offering*.
- **Works** (#2041): *ergon*. Also translated as *deed*, *doing*, *labor*.

Ergon is the original Greek for the English word "works." It does not appear to be a very difficult, ambiguous, or confusing term. But what do the many people and churches who claim that works are not required perceive "works" to be?

Opinions vary. One group perceives *works* to mean the whole law in general. A second group perceives *works* as specific portions of God's law, which they look upon as being "Jewish" or "Old Covenant," or that they are just not willing to keep and teach. A third group, amazingly enough in their rejection of it, perceives this term as meaning works of charity in general!

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Individuals or groups who choose to substitute the word "law" for the word "works" in [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), and who thus say that New Testament Christians do not have to keep God's law, do not appear to mean it totally and literally. Instead, most of them reserve the right to choose which parts of the law they wish to keep ("You shall not kill," "You shall not steal," etc.) and those that they do not wish to keep ("Remember the [Sabbath](#)," holy days, tithing, [clean and unclean meats](#), etc.). [God](#) has nowhere given authority to His people to be selective in these matters, thus this stance toward the law is inconsistent and even hypocritical.

The church of God has always agreed one hundred percent with those who say that salvation is a gift, and that a Christian cannot earn salvation by charitable works or by obedience to God's law. However, obedience is a condition we must meet before God will give us His free gift of salvation. New Testament evidence is overwhelming on the matter. Here are just a few verses:

- » And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the [Holy Spirit](#), which God has given to those who **obey** him. ([Acts 5:32](#))

- » He who says, "I know him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ([I John 2:4](#))

- » So He said to [the rich young ruler], "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, **keep the commandments**." ([Matthew 19:17](#))

- » If you love Me, **keep My commandments**. ([John 14:15](#))

The apostle Paul, in [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), does not say that works are not required at all. The purpose of his statement is to show that works do not save us, but that grace and faith do! In fact, the very next verse, verse 10, shows that God calls members of His church for the very purpose of performing good works: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" ([Ephesians 2:10](#)).

The apostle's language is very clear. God desires us to walk in good works, and He has prepared our spiritual educational process so that we will learn to do them. Doing good works in the name of [Jesus Christ](#) is a major part of the purpose for the life of each true Christian. We cannot truly be Christians without them!

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— Staff

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