

The Foundation of Grace

Two systems prevalent in the mind of people today

The Foundation of Grace

The Foundation of Grace begins with the understanding that God did for you what you could never do for yourself. God's free gift of forgiveness is extended to everyone who puts their faith in him. Significance is rooted in God's love for us as adopted and holy children of God – this is our new identity in Christ. Sustenance for the believer is finding total contentment, joy, and confidence in your everyday experiences with Him. The greatest achievement for those established on the foundation of grace is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as Christ loved us.

Results of a Foundation of Grace:

- Walking according to the Spirit
- A life marked by spiritual growth, maturity, and peace
- Abandoning outcomes to God
- Recipient and extender of God's Grace
- The fruit of the spirit – Christ-likeness
- Live to please God

The Cycle of Works

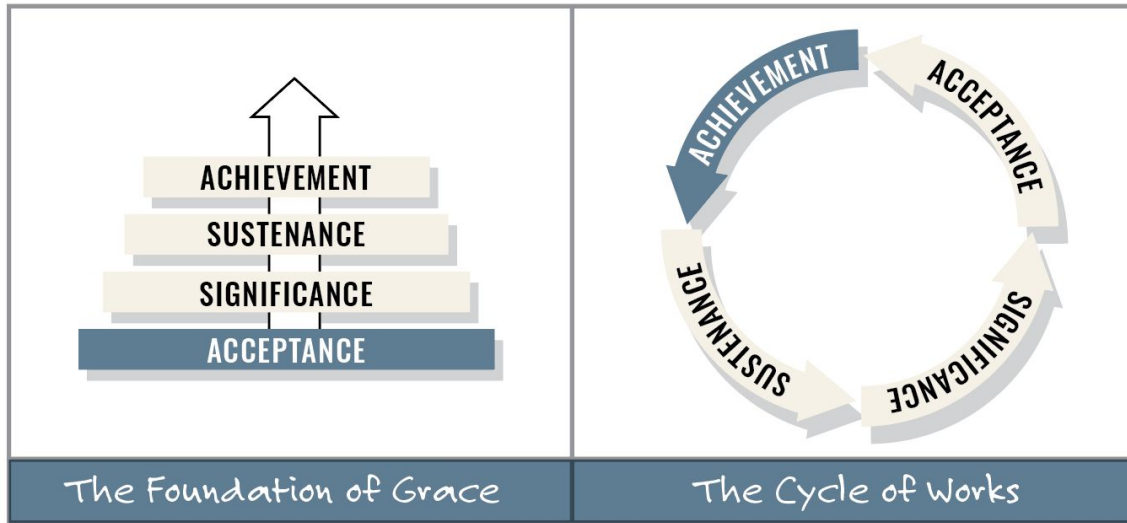
For those caught in the endless cycle of a works-based system, achievement is the beginning of defining your self-worth and identity. Sustenance is rooted in fear of not being good enough and comparing yourself to others. Significance is based on performance-based goals while neglecting the everyday character and intimacy that Christ requires of followers. Acceptance for the individual is recognition from others but is limited to your "last performance." Unfortunately, the cycle of works too often resembles those inside the church who do not understand their true identity in Christ – a people stuck in works-based salvation, which is not salvation at all, but the world's way of making you feel like you've accomplished something that Christ has already done for you. God is not opposed to effort, but he is opposed to earning.

Results of a Cycle of Works:

- Walking according to the Flesh
- Making projects more important than people
- Controlling behaviors
- Critical and judgemental of self and others
- The fruit of the flesh – Anger, frustration, jealousy, strife, etc
- Live to please man

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<p>Acceptance: The Gospel - unconditional love and grace. Love is not earned, it is freely given - God loves us. Grace is total forgiveness, unmerited favor, and the power to do what you can't do for yourself — The power to be transformed into the image of Christ (sanctification). (John 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:4-9)</p>	<p>Achievement: Every religious and man-made system in the world is rooted in works-based acceptance. Climbing the proverbial mountain to gain approval. The endless cycle of works is rooted in comparison with others and, in this life, will never lead to a place of rest (arrival).</p>
<p>Significance: We are beloved, adopted children of God. That is the most important aspect of our lives. Our significance is rooted in God's love for us. (Romans 8:15, Ephesians 1:3-10, John 15:15,)</p>	<p>Sustenance: Motivation is rooted in fear and/or comparison of not doing enough to earn right standing with God and/or others. There is no peace in this process, only striving.</p>
<p>Sustenance: God is with us. Our awareness of His presence and our intimacy with Him is developed through prayer (talking to God). Praying without ceasing thought the day — finding total contentment, joy, and confidence in your everyday experience with Him. (Colossians 3:17, Philippians 4:6, Deuteronomy 31:6).</p>	<p>Significance: Significance is basing your identity on "good" works completed, performance, and accomplishments (money, fame, status, position, beauty). Doing well based on your own standards while looking down on others, and missing the essentials of loving God and loving others. Failure to finish a 'good' work is self-condemnation — not feeling good enough.</p>
<p>Achievement: Our greatest achievement is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbors as Christ loves us. (Mark 12:30-31, Deuteronomy 6:5).</p>	<p>Acceptance: This is temporary public recognition, awards, and acceptance. Your 'self-worth' is only as good as your last performance and has nothing to do with your character, inner motivation, and relationship with Christ (the real you).</p>

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Key Verses

Fruit of the Spirit — Galatians 5:16-24

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the **works of the flesh** are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Put on the new self — Ephesians 4: 17-24

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to **put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be **renewed in the spirit of your minds**, and to **put on the new self**, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Love never fails — 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. **Love is** patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Partakers of the divine nature — 2 Peter 1:3-11

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.