

Grounded: Building on the Right Foundation: Following Faithfully! April 12, 2026

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A. Faith & Works: Saved by Grace, through FAITH, for WORKS

Ephesians 2:4–10 (ESV) ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Salvation is a “Grace of God” that we receive by placing our FAITH in JESUS (like hands grabbing a gift offered to us).

We are SAVED for GOOD WORKS → God has a purpose for every single one of us! Our main purpose? To BECOME LIKE JESUS. HE is the model. HE is the goal. He is our BEGINNING and our END.

Luke 6:43–45 (NIV) ⁴³ “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

TENSION: → We aren’t saved by works/fruit, but they are important! Bad vs. Good TREE

- You can’t put apples on a dead tree and say it’s a “GOOD TREE.”
- A “GOOD TREE” produces apples because it has a healthy ROOT. (the Spirit)

James 2:18–24 (ESV) ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

V. 18 & 23 KEY “I’ll show YOU” & “Abraham BELIEVED and was counted RIGHTEOUS.” James is not talking about the mode of salvation; rather, he is explaining that FAITH that saves WORKS. And it’s VISIBLE.

“Works do not save us, but saving faith works.”

Suppose someone says, “I am trusting in Jesus for salvation, but refuses to listen to anything He says. Is he truly trusting in Jesus?”

For example, if we were on a plane that was going to crash, and I asked you, "Do you trust me?" and you replied, "Yes, of course!" Then I offered you a parachute so you could be saved, but you refused to take it from me and put it on. Were you really trusting me? NO. Suppose you fearfully took it from me, slowly put it on, were filled with doubt and fear, and did it anyway. Were you trusting me? YES!!!

This is what James is getting at: "Genuine FAITH produces FAITHFULNESS to God."

Romans 4:2–5 (ESV) ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

"Your foundation is Jesus. He is the Cornerstone. He is your End."

B. Two-Steps to NEW LIFE: "First steps forward."

Acts 2:38: *"And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"*

1. Repent: Change of mind → change of direction → towards Christ!

Acts 26:20: *"...that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance."*

Why? NOT TO BE SAVED or to EARN LOVE – NO! Because we are saved & loved!

For example, my love for Lou and her commitment to me do not make me want to take her for granted! On the contrary, my FAVORITE thing to do is make her happy. (Literally)

Matthew 3:8: (ESV) "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance."

2 Corinthians 7:10:(ESV) "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."

Romans 2:4 (ESV): "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"

2. Baptized → GOAL: Become like Jesus! BAPTISM: We identify with Christ!

Romans 6:3–4: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.**"

The COMMAND: Great Commission

Matthew 28:19–20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Mark 16:16: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

The SYMBOLISM: Death & Resurrection

Colossians 2:12: "...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."

Romans 6:3–4 ... baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? just as Christ was raised from the dead..., we too might walk in newness of life.

The RESULT: Unity & Identity in CHRIST & His CHURCH

Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

1 Corinthians 12:13: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

C. Staying Grounded: Scripture, Prayer, Church, Community

We start with FAITH → produces FAITHFULNESS TO GOD

Four Pillars for Growth:

- 1. Bible Reading & Engagement**
- 2. Prayer & Communication with God**
- 3. Big Church (Body of Christ)**
- 4. Small Church (godly community & fellowship)**

1. **Bible Reading & Engagement:** These verses highlight the transformative power of the Word, aligning with the "**Power of 4**" findings that Scripture changes our internal "landscape."

- **Psalm 1:1–3** "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season..."
- **2 Timothy 3:16–17** "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2. **Prayer & Communication with God:** Prayer is the companion to Bible reading; if the Bible is God speaking to us, prayer is us responding to Him.

- **Philippians 4:6–7** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds..."
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18** "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

3. **Big Church (Body of Christ):** Scripture views the "Big Church" not just as a building, but as a diverse, global body where every part matters.

- **1 Corinthians 12:12** "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."
 - **Ephesians 4:11–13** "So Christ himself gave the apostles... to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith..."
4. **Small Church (godly community & fellowship):** These verses emphasize that faith is not a solo sport; we are designed for mutual support and accountability. E.g. confession, prayer, serving, encouraging, showing compassion and calling out sin.
- **Hebrews 10:24–25:** "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
 - **Acts 2:42:** "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

I sometimes hear, "I don't have time!" to do those things! RESPONSE: I don't think you can afford NOT TO! Studies are finding that what Scripture says is TRUE!

Our goal is to become like Christ! To be His representatives! To fulfill our Purpose! BUILDING on the RIGHT FOUNDATION matters! So we can stand in hardship! Become like Jesus! And fulfill our Purpose!