Week Five – October 4, 2026

The Lies We Believe

*A Biblical Examination of False Gospels, Spiritual Deception, and the Truth That Confronts!*

# Week 5 Free Grace Theology
# Fruit or No Fruit

## What is the Essence of "Free Grace Theology"?

"The Free Grace position claims that we are justified by faith alone...But Free Grace proponents have gone beyond the claim that God asks of us nothing more than faith when he justifies us. They have made an additional claim: that faith occurs by itself when a person is justified, in the sense that no other human actions necessarily accompany faith (such as repentance from sin or doing good works after we are justified)." Wayne Grudem*

"...the whole gist of the no-lordship message: you can have Jesus as Savior and Friend here and now and decide later whether you really want to submit to His authority or not." John MacArthur**

*Wayne Grudem, *"Free Grace" Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), pp.19-20,

** John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Is Authentic Faith?*, rev. and expanded 20th anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), page 30.

## What is the Essence of "Lordship Theology"?

- "First, Scripture teaches that the gospel calls sinners to faith joined in oneness with repentance (Acts 2:38; 17:30; 20:21; 2 Pet. 3:9)...
- Third, Scripture teaches that the object of faith is Christ Himself, not a creed or a promise (John 3:16). Faith therefore involves personal commitment to Christ (2 Cor. 5:15)...
- Fourth, Scripture teaches that real faith inevitably produces a changed life (2 Cor. 5:17)... Those with genuine faith follow Christ (John 10:27)...do good works (Eph. 2:10)...
- Sixth, Scripture teaches that Jesus is Lord of all, and the faith He demands involves unconditional surrender [to Jesus as Lord] (Rom. 6:17-18; 10:9-10)...
- Eighth, Scripture teaches that behavior is an important test of faith. Obedience is evidence that one's faith is real (1 John 2:3)...
- Ninth, Scripture teaches that genuine believers may stumble and fall, but they will persevere in the faith (1 Cor. 1:8)..."

Source: Grace Community Church, "Lordship Salvation," Grace to You, 2001, adapted from John MacArthur writings cited at https://www.gty.org/articles/DD07/lordship-salvation.

## Is There Agreement on Certain Essentials by Both Camps?

"There are many articles of faith that are fundamental to all [orthodox] evangelical teaching. For example, there is agreement among all believers on the following truths:

(1) Christ's death purchased eternal salvation;

(2) the saved are justified by grace through faith in Christ alone;

(3) sinners cannot earn divine favor;

(4) God requires no preparatory works or pre-salvation reformation;

(5) eternal life is a gift of God;

(6) believers are saved before their faith ever produces any righteous works; and

(7) Christians can and do sin, sometimes horribly."

Source: Grace Community Church, "Lordship Salvation," Grace to You, 2001, adapted from John MacArthur writings cited at https://www.gty.org/articles/DD07/lordship-salvation.

## How Does Free Grace Theology Differ From Lordship Salvation?

- Faith is alone with no other requirement.
- There is no requirement for repentance for genuine salvation.
- No requirement for sanctification and obedience for genuine salvation.
- A person can have assurance of salvation by faith alone.
- A person can walk away from the faith and be saved.
- Works/fruit are not necessary to indicate genuine salvation.
- A "carnal Christian" can be saved.
- The primary role of evangelism is faith alone.

## What Critics See as the Dangers of "Free Grace Theology".

- The explanation and offer of the Gospel to people are incomplete.
- People are told that all they need to be saved is to merely agree to the facts of Christ, i.e., "mental assent".
- People are assured of salvation when they are not saved.
- Believing that sanctification and obedience to Christ are not necessary.
- Fosters immorality since obedience is not required for salvation.

## What Critics See as the dangers of "Lordship Salvation".

- That people will fear they have not done enough to be saved.
- That people will think that it is impossible for them to be saved because it requires too much.
- That they need to do something before they can be saved (works-based salvation).
- That some will reject it thinking that it is works-oriented salvation.

## The Role of Works in Justification

- "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

## James 2:14-26

"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body,

> what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?...You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone...For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."
>
> If a person's professed faith never produces good works, that profession gives no evidence of saving faith.

### John 15:8-11

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full."

You are proving something that is already true and genuine.

### Philippians 2:12-13

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure" (NASB1995).

"Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him" (New Living Translation).

A genuine salvation will result in obedience and recognition that God is at work in you. God gives us the desire and power to produce fruit. If someone has not been genuinely saved, they will not have the power to produce good works that will glorify God.

### Faith Alone?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life" (John 6:47).

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

### Faith Alone Without Repentance?

"and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:15).

"From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 4:17).

"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3,5).

"I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

"and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

"Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter *said* to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:37-38).

"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;" (Acts 3:19).

"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:10)

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

## Jesus as Lord?

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9).

"They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house" (Acts 16:31-32)

Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36).

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants or Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

"Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

(cf. Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; John 3:36; Romans 10:9-13; Romans 14:7-9)

## A Free Grace Theologian's Criticism of Lordship Salvation

- Dr. Robert N. "Bob" Wilkin
- Master of Theology in **1982** and his doctorate in **1985**, both from **Dallas Theological Seminary**
- **Author of** *A Gospel of Doubt: The Legacy of John MacArthur's The Gospel According to Jesus*.
- He founded Grace Evangelical Society in **1986** to promote his understanding of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.

Michael Grant, "Easy Believism? Free Grace vs Lordship Salvation - John MacArthur vs Bob Wilkin," YouTube video, October 4, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs0iMPaWV0Q.

### Straw Man Logic Fallacy

- A "Straw Man Fallacy" is where someone misrepresents the opposition's position through exaggeration, misrepresentation, or an outright lie and then attacks that position.
- Example:
    - Person 1: "Faithful Christians may experience serious illness, poverty, and suffering."
    - Person 2: "So, you don't believe God can heal people or answer prayer."

### Red Herring Logic Fallacy

- A "Red Herring Fallacy" is where someone inserts something irrelevant into an argument. Usually, this is done to give the appearance that they are refuting a person's position.
- Example:
    - **Person 1:** "Is this belief consistent with what Scripture teaches?"
    - **Person 2:** "The people who believe it sincerely love God."

### Now for Some Work!

Look for the Straw Man Fallacy

and

The Red Herring Fallacy

Salvation is not the mere agreement (assent) to the facts about Christ. Rather, salvation is the result of Christ's effectual call by God's grace received through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord. True salvation will produce a changed life, growing obedience (sanctification), and perseverance. These are the results and evidences of genuine salvation.

### Resources

**Books:**

Wayne Grudem, *"Free Grace" Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Is Authentic Faith?*, rev. and expanded 20th anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

**YouTube Video:**

John MacArthur on Lordship Salvation in His Own Words
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CMVPua0y4M
Grace to You YouTube Video (audio only)
Transcript at https://www.gty.org/sermons/90-20/the-lordship-of-christ-introduction