

Answering Common Objections to Free Grace, Part 1

Since the gospel was first preached, people have objected to the Free Grace teaching that people are saved by the unconditional grace of God through faith alone in Jesus Christ. Often, objections come from misunderstanding the nature of God's grace and what Free Grace teaches. Sometimes objections are merely parroted from others without much thought. Here's how to answer six common objections to Free Grace teaching about salvation.

Objection #1: Free Grace is easy believism.

- No one purposely teaches that believing is easy. The truth is, it isn't always easy to believe. Easy means without difficulty. For many, it is difficult, not easy, to believe. For example, it is not easy to believe
 - ... that my sinfulness deserves eternal separation from God.
 - ... that God loves me in spite of my sin.
 - ... that God would send His Son to die in my place.
 - ... that Jesus Christ paid for all of my sins over 2000 years ago.
 - ... that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and now lives.
 - ... that Jesus Christ would offer me eternal life as a free gift.
- It may not be easy to believe, but it is simple to believe. Simple means singular, as in there is only one condition for salvation: believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.
- How difficult is John 3:16, Acts 16:31, and many other verses that say we must only believe to be saved? We must not add to the Scriptures more than they say.
- Why would God make it difficult? The "God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10) wants all people to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). He does not make salvation a test of commitment, obedience, or endurance. Christ died for the world (John 3:16) and paid for all sins (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). If God gave up His Son for us, why wouldn't He give us everything else we need for our salvation, beginning with a simple condition: believe (Rom. 8:32)?

Objection #2: Free Grace believes a person can reject Jesus as Lord but still be saved.

- No one teaches that a person can reject Jesus as Master but believe in Him for salvation. This is an unfair criticism based on inference. It would be contrary to logic to believe in Jesus as Savior but reject Him as Lord and Master. Free Grace simply teaches that believing in Jesus as Savior is a separate issue from committing to Him as Lord and Master.
- Jesus must be the Lord God to be Savior. Free Grace affirms the deity of Jesus Christ and His position as Lord of all. Only as Lord can Jesus offer an eternal sacrifice, eternal life, and an eternal priesthood.
- There is a difference between Christ's objective Lordship and our subjective response. Jesus is Lord whether one submits to Him or not, just as the President of the United States is president of all citizens, even those who do not support and submit to him.
- Mastery is not the issue in salvation; salvation from the penalty of sin is. Anyone who comes to Jesus as Savior from sin is eternally saved. That begins a lifetime process of learning to submit to Him as Master.

Objection #3: Free Grace does not teach that an unbeliever must turn from sins (repent) to be saved.

- This charge is true if repent is defined as turning from sins, because that would add human effort.
- Many or most Free Grace people believe that repentance means a change of heart or mind. Believing in Jesus Christ as Savior implies a change of heart or mind about something (e.g., one's need, who Christ is, what Christ did, what Christ promised).
- If one must turn from all sins, how would anyone know when that is fully achieved? We all have ongoing sinful desires, we all continue to sin occasionally, and we are not conscious of all our sins.

Objection #4: Free Grace believes a saved person does not have to show evidence of good works, which is contrary to James 2:14-26.

- No one says this. Rather, Free Grace teaches that good works can be evidence but not proof of salvation. Probably all Free Grace teachers agree that all believers have good works. However, these works cannot always be seen so it is impossible to use them as final proof of salvation.
- This criticism has no validity unless good works is first defined. Non-Christians do good works in the sense of good deeds, but a good work in God's sight is obedience to God that glorifies Him by doing His will in His power. Only God can know this about one's works.
- If works can prove salvation, then we must ask how many works, how often, and how long? There is no objective standard that answers these questions; it is up to the subjective opinion and partial knowledge of another's conduct and motives by the one passing judgment. No one can judge these things except God. Believing in the objective reality of the Lord Jesus Christ as one's Savior can be known by the believer.
- James 2:14-26 is not discussing salvation from hell. In the context, James is telling his saved readers how to be delivered (saved) from the uselessness of faith that does not work. Faith that does not help others is useless to those in need and useless in the assessment of the believer's life at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (See GraceNotes no. 2 on "Faith and Works in James 2:14-26)."

Objection #5: Free Grace leads to false assurance of salvation.

- Only salvation by grace through faith (a conviction or persuasion that something is true) allows one to have full assurance, because it is based on objective realities—Christ's death as payment for sin, His resurrection for life, and the veracity of His promise to save those who believe.
- Salvation that depends on good works or commitment cannot give full assurance because one's conduct and commitment are never perfect. Only 100% perfection could allow one to have full assurance.
- Full assurance comes from believing objective truth that never changes, whereas subjective human performance and feelings always change.

Objection #6: Free Grace leads to license.

- This is a misleading charge based on conjecture more than reality. Rarely can the critic give an example of someone who uses grace as an excuse to live licentiously. The objector should be asked to cite examples.
- Believers normally respond to grace by obeying and serving God, not sinning against Him. When a believer appreciates what God's love and grace have done for him, the natural response is gratitude reflected in godly behavior. While examples of those who see grace as an excuse to live licentiously are rare, examples of those who see grace as a reason to obey and serve God are overwhelmingly abundant.
- This objection is answered conclusively in Romans chapters 6-8 which explain that God's grace gives believers a new life, a new position, and a new power to live righteously.
- Grace trains us to live righteously (Titus 2:11-13); we do not earn grace by living righteously (Titus 3:5). Training to live a godly life is a lifetime process for every believer.
- Believers are held accountable for how they live. Those who teach Free Grace also teach responsibility and accountability. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, all believers will have to give an account of how they lived. They will be rewarded in this life and in eternity or suffer the loss of rewards (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Conclusion

When we preach the gospel of God's free grace we will encounter objections. We have discussed some common ones, but there are more. Why do people object to free grace anyway? It's because man has a natural aversion to grace because of his pride (see GraceNotes no. 44, "Man's Aversion to Grace"). This leads one to misunderstand the nature of God's amazing grace and to insert human performance and merit. The free and unconditional grace of God seems too good to be true. But the gospel of free grace is the only message that gives believers full assurance of their eternal salvation.