

## Can I Earn Heaven?

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by Wayne Goff

The simple answer to the question: “**Can I earn heaven?**” is a resounding “**NO!**” If any man could earn heaven by his good works, then God would not have allowed His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross. But let’s observe a few biblical truths on this subject.

### All Have Sinned & Fallen Short

“*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*” (Romans 3:23). If everyone who has lived has sinned, then everyone has failed to secure their eternal soul’s well-being. Since man cannot save his own soul, then he needs help from God.

### Salvation Is Conditional

Much is said in the world of so-called Christianity about “grace.” It is thought by many to be an *unconditional* “card” of salvation handed out by Jesus Christ to anyone who asks for it. The proof text offered for this position is Ephesians 2:8-9: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*”

Of course this passage is true and beautiful, but it needs to be properly understood. We have already shown that salvation is “*not of yourselves.*” It is “*not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” That is simply another way of saying that no man can of himself earn his salvation. He cannot do enough good to offset the sins he has committed.

Therefore, salvation is “*the gift of God.*” That is, it is an undeserved, unearned blessing given by God. But do not think because it is a “*gift*” that it is **unconditional!** That is the fatal mistake of many in the religious world about us. A gift can sometimes be a *conditional* gift, but it is still a gift. For example, suppose I offer to give you \$100 for coming by my office tomorrow. You show up at the office (a condition), and I give you \$100. A pretty nice gift, huh? Yes, it’s still a gift, even though you had to meet a simple condition to get it. But you did not **earn** \$100 just because you came by to see me!

### The Conditions

“*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*” (Titus 2:11–12). If you are familiar with the word “*grace*” then you know that it means “unmerited favor.” God’s grace is unmerited. It is a gift. But it **is** conditional. Titus 2:11-12 points that out. The apostle Paul said that the grace of God **teaches** us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts while living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Therefore, having been properly taught, we know what those **conditions** are, don’t we?

In order to *become* a child of God, one must follow a few simple steps. One must **believe** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37). Believing this, one must **repent** of his/her sins (Titus 2:11-12). **Confessing** Jesus Christ as the Son of God is also essential (Matthew 10:32-33), for it amounts to letting the world know whose side you are on. And finally, being **baptized** in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38) completes the process. Once you rise up from the waters of baptism, you begin a new life (Romans 6:3-4). You live for Jesus, according to His teaching, doing exactly what Titus 2:11-12 said — **denying** ungodliness and worldly lusts, you **live** soberly, righteously and godly until death.

This does not **earn** you heaven, but it does meet the *conditions* of salvation. Eternal life is still a gift from God (Romans 6:23).

“*As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the **knowledge** of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*” (2 Peter 1:3). Knowledge is power, and once you know what to do to obtain eternal life and godly living, then the power to be saved is yours!

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