

Talmid Shorts

Dr. Eddie Idefonso, Pastor

Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

“Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.” [1 John 2:6](#) (NIV)

Mathētēs μαθητής a Greek word for disciple.

“How can salvation be not of works when faith is required? Isn’t believing a work?”

Our salvation depends solely upon Jesus Christ. He is our substitute, taking sin’s penalty ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)); He is our Savior from sin ([John 1:29](#)); He is the author and finisher of our faith ([Hebrews 12:2](#)). The work necessary to provide salvation was fully accomplished by Jesus Himself, who lived a perfect life, took God’s judgment for sin, and rose again from the dead ([Hebrews 10:12](#)).

The Bible is quite clear that our own works do not help merit salvation. We are saved **“not because of righteous things we had done”** ([Titus 3:5](#)). **“Not by works”** ([Ephesians 2:9](#)). **“There is no one righteous, not even one”** ([Romans 3:10](#)). This means that offering sacrifices, keeping the commandments, going to church, being baptized, and other good deeds are incapable of saving anyone. No matter how **“good”** we are, we can never measure up to God’s standard of holiness ([Romans 3:23](#); [Matthew 19:17](#); [Isaiah 64:6](#)).

The Bible is just as clear that salvation is conditional; God does not save everyone. The one condition for salvation is faith in Jesus Christ. Nearly 200 times in the New Testament, faith (or belief) is declared to be the sole condition for salvation ([John 1:12](#); [Acts 16:31](#)).

One day, some people asked Jesus what they could do to please God: **“What must we do to do the works God requires?”** Jesus immediately points them to faith: **“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent”** ([John 6:28-29](#)). So, the question is about God’s requirements (plural), and Jesus’ answer is that God’s requirement (singular) is that you believe in Him.

Grace is God’s giving us something we cannot earn or deserve. According to [Romans 11:6](#), **“works”** of any kind destroys grace—the idea is that a worker earns payment, while the recipient of grace simply receives it, unearned. Since salvation is all of grace, it cannot be earned. Faith, therefore, is a non-work. Faith cannot truly be considered a **“work,”** or else it would destroy grace.

Suppose someone anonymously sent you a check for \$1,000,000. The money is yours if you want it, but you still must endorse the check. In no way, can signing your name be considered earning the million dollars—the endorsement is a non-work. You can never boast about becoming a millionaire through sheer effort or your own business savvy. No, the million dollars was simply a gift, and signing your name was the only way to receive it. Similarly, exercising faith is the only way to receive the generous gift of God, and faith cannot be considered a work worthy of the gift.

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True faith cannot be considered a work because true faith involves a cessation of our works in the flesh. True faith has as its object Jesus and His work on our behalf ([Matthew 11:28-29](#); [Hebrews 4:10](#)).

To take this a step further, true faith cannot be considered a work because even faith is a gift from God, not something we produce on our own. **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”** ([Ephesians 2:8](#)). **“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him”** ([John 6:44](#)). Praise the Lord for His power to save and for His grace to make salvation a reality!