

Systematic Theology: Appendix E

Free Grace Theology

Some of the quotations and most of the ideas in this appendix are taken from Charles Stanley's book Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure.

- I. Free Grace Theology emphasizes that people are saved purely by an act of divine grace by faith independent of their works, and that nothing the person does can affect his salvation. (Some of the more prominent advocates of Free Grace Theology are Charles Stanley, Norman Geisler, and Bill Bright.)

- Faith is an intellectual acknowledgement that Jesus did what He said He did.

"Intellectual assent or agreement is a good definition of what faith is. Do you believe that Abraham Lincoln helped change the slave policy in the United States? There is nothing you do as a result of believing this. You either believe or you do not. Do you believe people are going to stop at a red light? If so, you know what faith is from a Free Grace perspective. There is no commitment, no decision of the will, no turning from sins, and no works that are part of faith in Christ in the promise of eternal life. It is passive. It is simply taking Him at His Word." (Pastor Arch Rutherford)

2. Free Grace Theology views the person's character and life after receiving the gift of salvation as independent from the gift itself.

"It is possible to be a child of God and never a disciple of Christ. We can live the Christian life with the assurance of heaven as our ultimate destiny but miss the process of maturing as a disciple." (Charles Stanley)

3. Free Grace Theology distinguishes between the call to believe in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and the call to follow Him and become His disciples.

"Look at John 3:18 and answer this question: According to Jesus, what must a person do to keep from being judged for sin? Must he stop doing something? Must he promise to stop doing something? Must he have never done something? The answer is so simple that many stumble all over it without ever seeing it. All Jesus requires is that the individual believe in Him." (Charles Stanley)

4. Justification does not necessarily result in sanctification.

5. Free Grace Theology allows for the concept of a "carnal Christian" or even an "unbelieving Christian."

"Even if a believer for all practical purposes becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy... believers who lose or abandon their faith will retain their salvation. The Bible clearly teaches that God's love for His people is of such magnitude that even those who walk away from the faith have not the slightest chance of slipping from His hand." (Charles Stanley)