

## Grace: “Where’s the Assurance?”

Based on *Set Free* by Jack Cottrell

1. What are your chances of getting into heaven?
  - a. 50%? 80%? 100%?
  - b. Surveys show that although people want eternal life, they are afraid of death and final judgment.
  - c. Many wonder whether God will forgive them and grant them eternal life.
  - d. This uncertainty stems from how we view salvation. Are we trying to work our way to heaven (good deeds vs. bad deeds)?
  - e. Biblically speaking, there are two ways of relating to God when it comes to salvation.

### 2. Ways to God

- a. The two systems of relating to God can be expressed in many ways:

EGOCENTRIC	VS.	THEOCENTRIC
RELIGION	VS.	CHRISTIANITY
LAW	VS.	GRACE
WAGES	VS.	GIFT
GOD’S HOLINESS	VS.	GOD’S LOVE
GOD’S WRATH	VS.	GOD’S GRACE
DO	VS.	DONE

- b. Many in the world have a view of salvation that mainly comes from the left column. Although we *can* relate to God by either column, only one will work for sinners. Can you guess which one?

### 3. EGOCENTRIC VS. THEOCENTRIC

- a. An egocentric approach “sees salvation as something that is to be pursued mainly for our own sakes, and something that is dependent mainly upon what we are able to accomplish” (Cottrell, 25).
- b. A theocentric approach “sees even our salvation as something we pursue primarily for the glory of God, and something that is dependent upon what God himself has done for us” (Cottrell, 25).
- c. What is your main goal in life? Many say gaining eternal life. But this shows an egocentric approach. Jesus said our goal in life should be to seek His kingdom and righteousness (Mt. 6:33). We should seek to honor God as Savior and King.
- d. If you were to die right now (or Christ should come), would you be saved or lost? This is not just a yes or no answer, but what first came to your mind? That you’re

not good enough? When did you sin last? This, again, is egocentric. Or, did you think about God's grace and Jesus' cross? Did you proclaim thanks to God in his mercy and promises through Christ?

4. RELIGION VS. CHRISTIANITY

- a. In his book *How to Be a Christian without Being Religious*, Fritz Ridenour makes this distinction,
  - i. “Christianity is more than a religion, because every religion has one basic characteristic. Its followers are trying to reach God, find God, please God through their own efforts. Religions reach up toward God. Christianity is God reaching down to man. Christianity claims that men have not found God, but *that God has found them*. To some this is a crushing blow. They prefer religious effort—dealing with God on their own terms. This puts them in control. They feel good about ‘being religious.’ Christianity, however, is not religious striving. To practice Christianity is to *respond* to what God has done for you.”
5. Those with a religion-based mindset should ask themselves one question: How good is good enough? At what point do my works get me into heaven? When have I finally reached the point of comfort and assurance?