

# Can I Build My Salvation With My Own Good Works?

## Learning to Trust God's Floor Plan for Our Salvation

Maybe it's just my background as an architect and my years in design school, but I've always loved the building industry. When I first graduated as an architect, I really had no client to work with, so I became my best customer! I worked on my house constantly, and I can remember how satisfying it was. For those early years in my marriage, I can tell you that "home improvement" was indeed my God! I spent tons of money and tons of hours tinkering with my house. It was all I thought about.



### Good Buildings Require Good Plans

And if there is one thing I learned in architecture school, it was the importance of design. Those of you who have done additions or remodeling to your homes know what I mean. You can spend a lot of money and not be assured that you will have a beautiful finished product when you are done. We've all seen expensive additions that were well made but very ugly. You can also work very hard and produce an ugly building! Clearly it's not money or workmanship that determines the beauty of the finished product. Good design is the foundation of good buildings



### The Designer is Most Important

And if design is at the foundation of good building, then we've got to recognize the value of the source of the design! If design is the most important thing, then the designer is at the center of everything! Builders are certainly important, funding is important, and craftsmen are important, but the designer is at the foundation of the building's success. Without the original designer, all our labor will just produce an ugly building.

The noted English architect Sir Christopher Wren was supervising the construction of a magnificent cathedral in London. A journalist thought it would be interesting to interview some of the workers, so he chose three and asked them this question, 'What are you doing?' The first replied, 'I'm cutting stone for 10 shillings a day.' The next answered, 'I'm putting in 10 hours a day on this job.' But the third said, 'I'm helping Sir Christopher Wren construct one of London's greatest cathedrals.' See the final worker understood that while he had an important purpose in the building process, his success was ultimately tied to the original designer!



### God Warns Us Not to Think We Are At the Center

Scripture tells us not to get caught up in our own work and achievement. When we focus on ourselves, we begin to travel down a path of religiosity that will eventually erode our salvation.



### Colossians 2:16-17

*Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*



### Getting Ready to Build

Have you ever wondered about someone's spiritual condition? Do you have people you know in your life that are at a different point in their walk with God? I think it's

our nature to be curious about others and since we are caught here in this physical, material world, it's easy to try to figure people out by what we see. SO we look at the outward condition of the person sitting next to us and we JUDGE. We ESTIMATE. We try to figure out if that person has what it takes. We MEASURE! Just like if I am trying to figure out if a piece of wood can span a certain distance; at some point I am going to have to pull out the tape measurer and see for myself. But people are a little different than wood. Since we are often compelled to look for an objective standard to measure each other with, we often turn to the works that this person can credit to his or her account.

*People Measure Achievement  
We All Measure Each Other All the Time*

We often find ourselves in the position of measuring each other to see if we are as spiritual as the next guy. We are trying to determine who has the "right" shape, thereby qualifying themselves for heaven! Don't you find yourself doing that with others even at a social level? Men and women often use different standards to compare each other, but it seems to be in our nature to measure each other.

At a party men will greet and introduce themselves to each other and it won't be long before the question of occupation comes up! "Hi, what's your name?" "What did you say you do?" Men want to know what the other guy does for a living in an attempt to see where they stand within the group from the position of status and power! Women aren't much different; they just have a different tape measurer. When two women greet each other it isn't long before they ask each other if they are married and how many kids they have! While men measure status from the perspective of work and achievement, women measure it from the position of relationships!



**We Measure Each Other's Salvation Too**

Well, when the topic of spirituality comes up in a conversation, it isn't long until we begin the same measurement game. We want to be at least as spiritual as the person we are talking to, and it's important for us to be able to DEMONSTRATE our spirituality. After all, we buy fancy cars to DEMONSTRATE our material position in the world, and we often find ourselves in need of a spiritual billboard as well.



**We Establish a Set of Markers By Which We Measure Each Other**

If we're going to measure each other's spirituality, we are going to need some concrete ticks on the tape measurer that we can all point to and say, "See, I do measure up!" So, as humans we often find ourselves clinging to the trappings and 'doings' of religious behavior so we can have a way to measure others, and justify ourselves! You might notice something interesting in Colossians 2:16:



**Colossians 2:16**

*Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day*

Did you notice that Paul does not say that the Colossians should not let people judge them based on their observation of THE Sabbath day, but for their observation of A Sabbath day? See, while God had commanded that THE Sabbath be observed, the Jews, over the course of time, had added many more days that they felt needed to be treated like the Sabbath! Now

there wasn't ONE day to observe each week, but many more that had been added by men! The Jews usually treated the first and last days of religious festivals as if they were the Sabbath and there were several other days that were elevated to this status as well.

It seems that we so desire to measure each other and to measure our religious intensity that we are not even satisfied with the ticks on the tape measurer that are given to us by God. We want to add additional increments! God may give us the foot markers, but it's our nature to add the inch markers, and all the quarter to sixteenth inch markers as well! As a result, the Jews added an entire body of additional requirements to the law, and these requirements became their tradition! This sort of thing is known as "religiosity" and it is offensive to God:



### **Matthew 15:3-9**

*Jesus replied, 'And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:*

*"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."*

Now let's take another look at Colossians 2:17 for a minute:



### **Colossians 2:17**

*These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*

Shadows are a distortion. In scripture the word for shadow (skia) is often used to express anything imperfect or unsubstantial, while the term used for body (sooma) was used in the opposite sense to express anything substantial, solid and firm.



### **Distorted Shadows Are the Result of Our Own Obstruction**

When we start to celebrate all the stuff that we do toward our own spirituality, when we start to celebrate our own traditions and deeds, we are distorting the truth of God. We now have something imperfect and unsubstantial. We are, in effect, standing in the way of God's true plan for salvation, and when we do that, we create a distortion of the plan. A shadow is caused when we stand in the way of the Son! The result is something that is colder, darker, and deceptive because it distorts the original image! And when we stand in front of God like this, we begin to focus on ourselves! That shadow is not revealing anything about God; it's revealing something about us!



### **Colossians 2:18-19**

*Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.*



## When We Get In the Way of the Designer, We Focus on Ourselves

Unfortunately, shadows don't point back to the light, but to the object which is standing in the way of the light. And that's what Paul is trying to tell us here in this passage. It's easy to focus on the object of God's creation and lose sight of God himself. More than that, when we start focusing on ourselves and what we do to be 'religious' we automatically take the focus off others as well!



## Focus on Religious Performance Alienates God and His Family

Anything that turns the focus on us turns our attention away from everything and everyone else. Builders have to do a lot of things. They've got to measure and plan, and sometimes they even have to demo out old areas of construction to get ready to create something new. But as Christians we need to recognize that religiosity has a powerful destructive force of its own:

### *Religiosity Demolishes Relationships*

Take a look at Colossians 2:18 and see what happens when we focus on religious THINGS rather than on the God who is the source of all religion:



### **Colossians 2:18-19**

*Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.*

What does Paul mean here when he talks about the worship of Angels? Historically there have been a couple of ways that Christians have interpreted Paul's words. The first is to see angels as an object of our devotion. You know, it would mean that we would find ourselves worshipping angels instead of God.

Many of us do that already when we celebrate and venerate our own religious traditions more than we devote ourselves to the God who is the source of these traditions. I have a Catholic friend, for example, who is more concerned about the taking of communion than anything else that he might do related to God. He seldom opens up the scriptures but NEVER misses a mass.



## Worshipping Objects

Let me illustrate how silly this is. My grandfather died last year and he was the world's consummate builder. I can't imagine anyone being a more accomplished and gifted carpenter. Over the years he gave me several important trinkets and personal items that I keep at home. They have meaning to me. But while he was alive and even now that he is dead, spending time with these items never compared to spending time with him! In fact, the only reason why these items were important to me at all is because they reminded me of him. But given the chance, I would never choose to spend time with the items if I could instead spend time with the man! When we develop a religiosity that focuses on God's creation (including his commands and created beings) it is similar to worshipping all my grandfather's stuff but never really wanting to know my grandfather! This kind of religiosity turns us away from God! Circle "He has lost connection with the Head" in the verse above!

The other traditional interpretation of the worship of angels is to see this worship as a type of worship that is similar to the worship PERFORMED by angels! In other words, Paul is warning us not to pretend to be like the angels in the way that we worship God. This is like re-writing the passage to say:

*“Let no man spoil you of the prize adjudged to you, who delights in mortifying his body, and walking with the apparent modesty of an angel, affecting superior sanctity in order to gain disciples...”*

See, this type of false devotion turns us away from each other. It is divisive. We find ourselves trying to outdo the next guy in our apparent devotion to God! We get all puffed up about our own behavior and compare ourselves to others, dividing the family of God. And just in case you were not aware, God hates divisiveness:



#### **Romans 15:7-8**

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*



#### **Galatians 5:19-21**

*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*



### **The Destructive Power of Religiosity**

See, when we focus on our own efforts to worship, rather than the object of worship, we are no longer aligned with other believers toward a common goal. We are no longer part of a church family that is pointed toward God. Instead we have allowed religiosity to demolish our unity and our relationships by creating a number of individuals who are self focused on their own religious behavior, comparing it to others.

God has a desire to do some demo work within the church, but his demo work has less to do with the body of Christ, than it does with the heart of man. God wants to demolish your old way of thinking about him. God wants to demolish your religiosity so that you can focus on HIM!



#### **2 Corinthians 5:16-17**

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*



### **God Wants Your Heart**

God doesn't care about all your apparent religious behavior. God wants you to change your heart first! Then the behavior will eventually follow. But as humans we can't measure the condition of the heart. After all, we can't even see the condition of our hearts. And our human nature is to focus on what we CAN see. We focus on what is outside. At the police department we have to hire dozens of new recruits each year, and as a part of this process, we interview each and every candidate. You discover that many of these new hires apply simply because they want to wear the uniform. They want the appearance of

power. They want people to see them differently. If these people do get hired, they tend to be pretty black and white and very judgmental. They are, after all, focused on the appearance of power and the new authority that this appearance gives them. Guys and gals like this tend to be petty self-important. They rely on their own authority and ability. That's why we need to be careful in the hiring process to examine the true intentions and heart of each candidate.

If we are not careful as Christians, we too can focus on our outward appearance and ignore the nature of our hearts. And we can easily start to think that our outward appearance and performance has something to do with our salvation. Take a look at the last part of the passage in Colossians:



### **Colossians 2:20-23**

*Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!?' These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.*



### **Good Works Cannot Compensate for Sin**

In the New American Standard translation we are told that this kind of outwardly good, “religious” behaviors “are of no value against fleshly indulgence.” That doesn't seem to make sense! Paul is telling us that good behavior is of NO value in overcoming bad behavior! Heck, if we are behaving well, aren't we ELIMINATING bad behavior? It would seem that good behavior would be the CURE for bad behavior! But Paul is clear here; nothing we DO can overcome our sin problem.

Sin separates us from God. In his holy perfection, He is very different from us. He has the perfect power to do whatever He pleases and we do not have power of this nature. For this reason, we cannot build a bridge to Him; as the master builder, He must build the bridge to us...



### **Only God Builds a Bridge**

In Fact, There is Friction Between the Call for Perfection and the Great Commission. I think there is a practical reality to our inability to be as perfect as God. If you've lived more than 10 years or so, you realize that you cannot control all the sin in your life. You might try and even desire to eliminate bad behavior, but it is impossible. Even Paul struggled with the impossibility of perfection:



### **Romans 7:14-15**

*We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*

Why do you think Paul struggled with this? I think it was because he was such a “Great Commission” kind of guy! In fact, I think that the more you surround yourself with unbelievers, the more likely you are to struggle with sin. The more you move out into a lost world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the more you are going to be tempted by that lost world! The apostles were the most aggressive of God's missionaries, and as a result, many of them came to understand their own sinful nature! Look at what the apostle John said:



### **1 John 1:8-10**

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*



### **God Wants You to Live It so You Can Spread It**

So how should we deal with our continuing exposure to non-believers and our continuing temptation to sin? God is calling us not to rely on our own power to build, but on HIS power to build. God is calling us not to rely on our ability to obey the Ten Commandments He gave Moses, but to rely on the free gift he gave us in Jesus Christ:



### **Hebrews 3:1-6**

*Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

And what is that hope? It is the FAITH we have in the free gift that we have been offered by God. As Christians, we, of all people, should understand that we have nothing to boast about, and no ability to be perfect on our own. We, of all people, should live a life in which we rely on the Grace of God, and are forgiving of others when they demonstrate a similar need.



### **Answering the Critics**

Now you all know people who would deny that there is a God, but argue that if God does exist in Heaven, then their own good behavior will somehow qualify them. They will argue that they have been “good enough”! People like this tend to believe that every good behavior is motivated by something. They have a hard time believing that anyone would do something good if there was nothing in it for them.

I recently got an email from someone who visited our website at PleaseConvinceMe.com and could not believe that we would want to reach the world if there was nothing in it for us! The email was titled, “Money Money Money” and contained this message:

*Hey Pastor Jim,*

*You don't need to be ashamed. I know why you do what you do, money. It is simple - the new life for ministries these days is to rake in money from the congregation. Deny it and I will show you tax data from the IRS, not to mention you conceal actual earnings from them to make more money. Come to my camp Pastor Jim and tell the kids how much money you make. Yes, ministries are an excellent way of making money all under the pretense that you 'love' God. Good luck on all that you do for money...or I mean God. Don't bother denying it. I am sure you deserve the income right? After all you went to*

*college just like the Apostles did and you studied just like Jesus Christ did...or did they? Anyways, I am sure you deserve the money you put in a lot of long ours on Sundays and vacation on the weekday, except for that one day you hold bible study, you wouldn't want to loose numbers in your congregation that would mean a loss in profits right? Just funny how you make money when none of the Apostles did and funny how if you gave your congregation responsibility you could have a real job and stop living off their incomes. Go ponder that since you have all that free time to 'study'. Adios hijo de satanas.*

Of course, he doesn't realize that I have to work as a police officer so that I can fund all the ministry that we do as a family! See, it's our human nature to see a connection between work and reward. If we don't believe in God at all, then we are suspicious as to why anyone would actually do anything that is sacrificial. We want to know what's in it for them!

But if we DO believe in God, we still need to be careful not to slip into a works based way of thinking. We have to be careful to remember that there is a difference between REWARD and SALVATION. While the Bible is clear that our own good works will earn us a reward in heaven, the Bible is also clear that this reward has nothing to do with salvation at all! God wants us to know that good works here on planet earth have a value for us as humans, but He does not want us to think they have a value in our salvation:



### **Titus 3:1-9**

*Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.*

This passage is one several passages that clearly describe the relationship between works and faith. Good deeds are clearly good and profitable for who? They are good and profitable for MEN!!! They are of NO value to God in the sense that they can save us: "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy"



### **You Can't Climb the Ladder**

This is a difficult notion because as humans we are inclined to continue to associate good works with reward. So it shouldn't surprise us that every other world religion requires you to work your way to heaven. When we work with Mormons, they describe the Salvation plan to bridge the gap between God and man in a way that turns what should be "good news" into yet another bit of "bad news".

In their way of thinking, Jesus, through his death and resurrection, simply makes it possible for us to be resurrected. His death on the cross is not the gift of forgiveness; his resurrection

afterward is simply the hope of a new life. In essence, it is as if Jesus is offering us a doorway to heaven, but that doorway lies at the top of a tall ladder that we must climb with our own power. But the problem is that good works are required to ascend the ladder, and each time we make a mistake, especially when we repeat mistakes that we have already repented of in the past, we slip down a rung.

You don't have to have lived very long to realize that this is a hopeless pursuit. It is impossible to be perfect enough to qualify for heaven. Paul knew that and warned the Galatians not to try to attain perfection on their own:



### **Galatians 3:3**

*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*



### **Galatians 3:10-11**

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith.*



## **Your Works Could Never Be Enough**

God clearly wants us to understand that there is nothing we can do on our own to bridge that gap that separates us from Him. Imagine that God is standing on the other side of a twenty foot wide ravine and you are trying to devise a way to get to him. You've thought about jumping the gap but it is clear that you would never make it. You would fall down the deep ravine to your death. Well if you think your own good works can get you across, you are mistaking the nature of the distance and depth of the ravine and the nature of your own good works. In the eyes of a holy and perfect God, your good works are not the rope that is required to get across the gap. Your good work are more like dental floss, and you and I know that we can't trust dental floss to get across the ravine.

So God offers us a big, thick rope and says, "I will get you across the gap". But can you imagine standing there and insisting that you use your dental floss? "No, God, I insist! I simply MUST use this dental floss to get across the ravine!" But, of course, as you think about it, you realize that the floss will not be strong enough. But when God throws you the rope, you, in your stubbornness, tell him, "No, God I insist that I have a role in my Salvation! Let me use half of my dental floss and tie it to your rope!" Now as you finish tying the floss to the rope and carefully edge the combination out over the ravine, you stand back and realize that even though half of the line is God's sturdy rope, the floss side will fail and cause you to fall to your death.

"Uh, God, can I maybe use a little less of my Floss?" you ask. So, you reel in your floss a bit until only a yard or so is used to span the gap. But looking at that, you still realize that the floss will fail and you will plummet to your death if you try to span the distance on the floss/rope combo! So you reel in more of your floss until only a foot is used. But you see that the same problem exists. So you reel it in to and inch. Same problem. A quarter inch. Same problem. Hey, if the floss is used for just a 64th of an inch, you will certainly fall to your death!

At some point, you come to the realization that you've got to use God's rope to span the gap.

Why? Because your floss, as nice as it may be, is simply insufficient. God is the reason why there is a gap in the first place. It is His holy perfection that causes us to be separated from him. So it shouldn't surprise us that God would be the only one to remedy the problem:



### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.*



### **Romans 3:27-28**

*Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

Don't get caught up in the mistake that sees no difference between reward and Salvation! God alone is the master carpenter. He tells us that He alone is the one who will save us if we simply put our faith in Him. Yet at the same time, he promises to reward our good deeds when we do get to heaven:



### **1 Corinthians 3:10-15**

*By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*

“He himself will be saved...” Clearly Paul tells us that good deeds are of value to us, but they are NOT what determines your Salvation. If there is no foundation of Grace, no surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, then good works do nothing to provide you with either eternal life or heavenly reward (after all, you've got to be IN Heaven in order to receive REWARD in Heaven!)



### **Good Works Mark a Turning Point**

People often struggle to understand the relationship between works and faith. Perhaps it is because a surrendered life in Christ, one in which we trust HIM for our salvation, does actually result in a life of Good Works! We simply have to be careful to remember the order of the mathematical equation. Let's take a look again at Ephesians:



### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Notice that if you divide this verse right down the middle you will see that faith and salvation are on one side of the verse, while works is on the other. In essence, we need to remember that a life of saving faith does produce good works, but works alone can never provide a saved life. The equation is:

*Salvation + Faith = Works not Faith + Works = Salvation*

When a person comes to a saving and surrendered faith in Jesus, the natural outcome will be a life and personal behaviors that begin to look more like those of Jesus! If a person has truly surrendered their life to the Lord Jesus Christ, you would expect to see a change in behavior. When we don't see a change in behavior, we might begin to wonder if there ever really was a point of surrender.



### **It Shows Up on a Calendar**

While Good works DO NOT save us, they certainly do mark a point in time in which our lives were turned over to God. When I first surrendered myself to Jesus, the people I worked with began to notice something was different about me. I was still afraid to tell them that I had a life changing experience, but it was quickly obvious to them. I wasn't talking the same way anymore. I wasn't full of the same sarcasm and anger. I wasn't as vulgar. I wasn't as cynical. If each of them had been given a calendar, they could have easily estimated the day of my conversion by the obvious change in my behavior. In this sense, good works served their appropriate function.

They were not the MEANS by which I was saved, but simply the EVIDENCE that I was saved.



### **You Cannot Be the Master Designer**

You may be able to build, (and you may, in fact be a very good designer and architect) but the master designer is the source of all beauty and the source of our Salvation.



#### **Psalm 127:1**

*Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.*



### **You Reason It Out**

Think about this for a second. If there is a God, He is powerful enough to create everything in our world. If He is powerful enough to create everything we see, then He is also powerful enough to be perfect (He is powerful enough to eliminate sin) If God is Perfect, then He is not impressed with our imperfection (in fact, he is offended by it!) And if He is not impressed with our imperfection, then our best efforts really don't impress Him. If we can impress Him with our own Good Works, we are going to have to rely on God's efforts to save us. And if we are going to have to rely on God's efforts alone, we'll have to turn to a faith system that is founded on the notion of Grace. And if we are going to have to rely on God's Grace, then we've got to turn to Christianity for the solution, because Christianity is the only faith system on the planet that describes God's Salvation as the free gift of a Holy God who knows you could never earn your way to perfection. It is the only faith system that offers GRACE!

I CANNOT get to Heaven on the basis of anything that I have done. I need to come to God with an open heart and confess that it is not because of who I am, but because of what He's done; not because of what I've done, but because of who He is. God Alone. Faith Alone. Anything else would be an insult to the Giver of Life.