

## Grace Alone

Having established the principle of Sola Scriptura, the reformers needed to reexamine other areas of doctrine and theology that the Roman Catholic Church had been teaching. One of the most important is our standing and desire for God. The whole sacerdotal system of the Catholic Church, kept people from birth to grave completing works, hoping to please God, without ever asking the question of why, where was the motivation to do the things that pleased God?

The disposition of mankind in their natural state was seen as someone sick or dying, needing to partake, of their own free will, the prescribed spiritual medicine offered by the Church. Most believers were compelled, not by a sense of a love for God, but a fear of God, along with the whole weight of the church's power and authority, into complying with their prescribed way of pleasing God. While acts that could be seen as good from an earthly, human perspective were accomplished, the motivation was all wrong, because there was a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of man.

Man is not sick, needing to motivate themselves into service to God. Man is dead in his sins, neither capable nor desiring to seek God. Without God's grace, the quickening, making alive of the soul of man, individuals will wander, seeking the desires of their own heart and way.

Even the children of Israel were guilty of the same problem. Christ said in Matthew 15:7-9, *"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

The Reformers helped to correct our view of man and God, that the infinite, perfect, Holy God of the Universe is the only one that can take the dead, cold heart of man and bring it to life, and make them desire to please God. The quickening ray of God's grace is not something that we can force or control, but only pray and plead that He would bestow it upon us and our fellow man.

Using Sola Scriptura as the final authority, we can see that it is God alone that gives anyone the desire to say they have been saved by Grace alone, Sola Gratia.

**Ephesians 2:1-10** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.