



The 39 Articles

The faith we confess



Spring 2026

Bible Reading

Romans 8:1-2 & 5-8

This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

“Can non-Christians
do anything
to please God?”

Article X: Of Free Will

The condition of man since the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself

- by his own natural strength and good works –
for faith and for calling upon the name of the Lord.

Hence we have no power to do good works

- which are pleasing and acceptable to God -,

unless the grace of God through Christ

goes before us so that we may have a good will,

and continues to work with us after we are given that good will.

Article X: Of Free Will or **Our Need For Grace**

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Romans 8:1-2 & 5-8

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death....

⁵ Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Romans 8:8

NIV

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

NLT

That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

ESV

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

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Article 10: We need grace!

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2. *We need God's grace to set us free*
3. *We need God's grace to keep us free*

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“Free”

Sense 1: a genuine voluntary choice, doing what you really want

Sense 2: not constrained or bound by anything

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Jeremiah 17:9-10

*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?*

*¹⁰ “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind,
to reward a man according to his conduct,
according to what his deeds deserve.”*

Ephesians 2:1-2

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

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2 Corinthians 4:4

*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers,
so that they cannot see
the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,
who is the image of God.*

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John 6:44

*No-one can come to me
unless the Father who sent me draws him,
and I will raise him up at the last day.*

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2. We need God's grace to set us free

Hence we have no power to do good works - which are pleasing and acceptable to God - unless the grace of God through Christ goes before us so that we may have a good will,

1 Corinthians 2:14

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 3:3-6

Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

⁴ “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

⁵ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26

*I will give you a new heart
and put a new spirit in you;
I will remove from you your heart of stone
and give you a heart of flesh.*

Ephesians 2:4-5 & 8

⁴ But because of his great love for us,
God, who is rich in mercy,

⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in
transgressions

—it is by grace you have been saved.

...

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—
and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

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Implications

- Moralism is no good!

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- Moralism is no good!
- Praying for non-believers is vital

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3. We need God's grace to keep us free

and continues to work with us after we are given that good will.

Philippians 1:6

*being confident of this,
that he who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion
until the day of Christ Jesus.*

John 15:4-5

⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you.

No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

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Means of grace...

- Scripture
- Prayer
- Lord's Supper
- Corporate worship
- Fellowship
- Suffering
- Gifts

Philippians 2:12-13

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—
not only in my presence, but now much more in my
absence—

continue to work out your salvation with fear and
trembling,

¹³ for it is God who works in you
to will and to act according to his good purpose.

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Closing Prayer (together)

Lord God, you are the strength of all who put their trust in you.

We confess that because of the weakness of our human nature we cannot do anything pleasing to you without your help.

Please grant us your ongoing grace so that we may live for your continuing pleasure, in the power of your Holy Spirit and through the Lord Jesus – our only hope.

Amen.