

**What level of effort is required  
to be acceptable to God?**

**Define the question**

- The descriptions of God's goals for faith and behavior in the New Testament are general. Different passages can be interpreted in conflicting ways.
- All passages must work together.
- Success must include the power of God.
- Acceptance must work for eternity.

**Define the question**

- Transformation: When?
  - 2 Corinthians 3:18 Transformed into the same image
  - Romans 8:29 Conformed to the image of His Son
  - 2 Peter 1:4 Partakers of the divine nature

**Define the question**

- Growth: How fast?
  - Colossians 1:9 – 12
  - 1 Peter 2:2
  - 2 Peter 3:18
  - Ephesians 4:15 – 16

**Define the question**

- Faith: How much?
  - Romans 3:26 One who has the faith of Jesus
  - Romans 4:12
  - Revelation 14:12
- Wishful rather than certain hope?
- Ignorant of promises?

**Luke 9:23**

- Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Luke 14:27)

**Luke 9:62**

- And Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Revelation 3:16

- So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

Revelation 2:5

- Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.

Hebrews 6:4 - 6

- For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame.

Matthew 5:48

- Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Philippians 1:21

- For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain.

Galatians 2:20

- I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

**Why do people have so much trouble with this?**

- Guilt – not letting go of the past
- Ignorance – bad teaching
- Comfort – change is hard
- Fear – usually fear of failure
- Outside their experience – seeing neither miraculous love nor miraculous transformation.

**Instead of lowering the bar:**

- Describe the purpose of creation.
- Talk about the promises of faith, gifts, strength, understanding, and protection.
- Raise expectation of the work of the Spirit.
- Show the hopelessness of traditional churchianity.
- Demonstrate how to get over the bar.