



# Our Spiritual Character

PART 009 - JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

THE FOUNDATION FOR EVERYTHING

## INTRODUCTION

As believers, our relationship with God is the focal point of our lives. Nothing matters more than how we relate to God and how He relates to us. But in this relationship we have many questions:

- How can we know God intimately?
- Does God truly accept us?
- Where does our acceptance before God come from?
- How can we live a life that is pleasing to Him?
- What happens when we sin?

To answer questions like these, we go back to the very beginning—to the Gospel, the foundation of our relationship with God. It's here where we end the answer to all the question on how God thinks about us and how He accepts us.

The New Testament describes salvation as a matter of “justification by faith.”

### I. *JUSTIFICATION IS NOT...*

#### A. **Justification is not by works**

Table 1 - The Gospel and Religion

Gospel	Religion
(God's Supernatural attempt to reach man)	(Man's natural attempt to reach God)
Grace	Works
Faith	Obedience
Unconditional Love	Judgementalism
Transforming Holy Spirit	Personal Effort
Grace leads to Obedience	Obedience leads to grace

#### **GAL 1:6-7**

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

#### **GAL 5:4**

Christ is become of no effect to you, whoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace.

An easy way to think of this is:

**JESUS + ANYTHING = NOTHING.**

**QUESTION:**

1. **WHY DO THINK THE FOCUS ON GOOD WORKS IS SUCH AN EASY TRAP FOR CHRISTIANS?**
2. **CAN YOU THINK OF ANY EXAMPLES OF WAYS PEOPLE TODAY TRY AND ADD TO THE WORK OF THE CROSS?**

**B. Justification is not a pardon**

**II. JUSTIFICATION IS ...**

**A. The Righteousness of God: Romans 3:21-24**

**ROM 3:21-24**

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

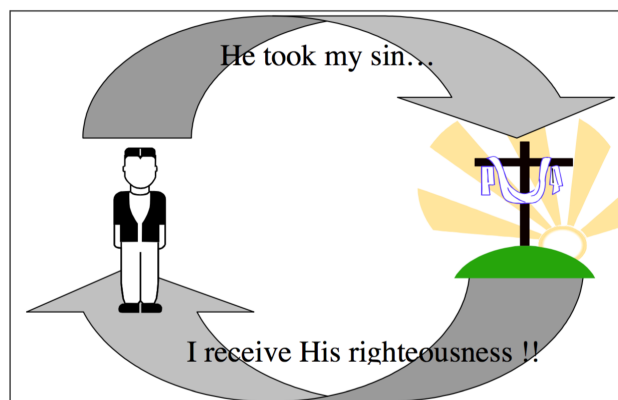
1. **“APART FROM LAW”**
2. **“A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD ... HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN”**
3. **“TO WHICH THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS TESTIFY”**
4. **“THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD COMES THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST TO ALL WHO BELIEVE”**
5. **“FOR THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE; FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD”**
6. **“BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE”**
7. **“THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT CAME BY CHRIST JESUS”**

**B. The Great Exchange**

In summary, justification **is the gracious act of God in which He causes a great exchange to take place**. As a sinner approaches God in repentance and faith, God removes the guilt of his or her sin and gives it to Christ.

**HEBREWS 4:15**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.



### ***III. THE CRUCIAL ISSUES OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH***

#### **A. We Cannot Justify Ourselves**

Explaining the true nature of justification, Martin Luther has rightly described it as "*passive righteousness*", because we have nothing to do with producing it.

#### **B. We Cannot Take Credit for What God has Done**

##### **EXAMPLE:**

Consider a man who has done a terrible crime, and is awaiting the penalty of death. As he is waiting, one of his friends goes to the judge and asks for his pardon.

The judge replies, "I will let him go, if you give me your son to die in his place." The friend says, "This is ridiculous. How could I ever do this?" But the judge says, "This is the only way that I will let him go free."

After much agony, the father decides he will sacrifice his son for the friend...knowing it is the only way.

In obedience, the son goes to the judge and agrees to die in the place of his father's friend. The next day the judge executes the son and sets the man free.

Soon after this, the father happens to overhear a conversation between the released prisoner and a friend.

When asked, "How were you set free from your penalty of death?" the released man replies, "Well, while I was in prison I kept myself clean, behaved well, and did what the guards asked. Then they let me go because of my good behaviour."

#### **C. We Must Trust God Completely**

##### **QUESTIONS**

- 1. CAN YOU SIMPLY, YET CLEARLY, DEFINE JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH?**
- 2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN WE DESCRIBE JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AS A "PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS"?**
- 3. IN OUR DAILY WALK WITH THE LORD, WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR WE WHO BEGAN IN GRACE TO CONTINUE IN GRACE, TRUSTING IN THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS?**
- 4. HOW DOES JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AFFECT THE WAY YOU RELATE TO GOD AND THE WAY YOU THINK HE RELATES TO YOU?**