

Justification

God does not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy - Thomas Watson

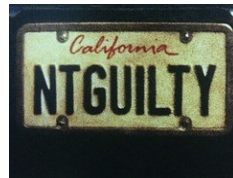
Defining Justification

Justification

Justification is the judicial act of God whereby He acquits (pronounces innocent) the gospel believer of the wrath and condemnation of God and declares him to be righteous, for God has made him so.



NOT GUILTY



Being justified, we are not guilty of any sin - past, present, or future.

PERFECTION

Being justified, we are seen as perfect before the Father. In practice, we are nowhere near perfect, but in position, we are seen as completely perfect in Jesus Christ.

RIGHTEOUS

Jesus has given us a perfect righteousness. Now, the Father looks at us and only sees the righteousness of Christ.



The Court-Room

Imagine yourself standing guilty in the court room of God's justice. Here, every thought, every word, and every deed are judged. You are guilty, convicted, and condemned for the millions and millions of sins which you have committed. Even the good things you have done are shown to be done from a wrong motivation, and therefore are crimes against the Lord.

As you stand guilty, with no hope and no defense. You begin to understand the magnitude of God's perfect justice. All His wrath is about to be poured out on you...and you deserve it. It is not wrong for God to punish you, it is right. He is good for doing so. Your situation is hopeless.



Just as all hope is lost and you realize that you are doomed, Jesus enters the court room. He walks to the judgment bar of God and gives Himself in your place. He will take the punishment for your sins, and He will give you

His perfect obedience. His perfection is now counted as yours.

The Sentence is pronounced. Despite all you have done and all that you will do in the future, the Judge gives you Jesus' righteousness, which covers all your sin.

As you walk out of the courtroom, you begin to realize what this means. No matter what happens now, no matter what you do or don't do...you are declared to be perfect in Jesus. The judgment has already been declared and it can never be overturned.

From this moment and throughout eternity, you are judged as perfect. You are declared righteous. God will never again see your sin, it has been purchased by Jesus Christ.

WHY DO WE NEED JUSTIFICATION?

We need to be justified before God for two very important reasons.

- 1. We all stand condemned before God.** (He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18). - *To be condemned is to be found guilty of a crime and sentenced to punishment. God has already found unsaved people guilty of sin and has passed sentence on them. In the case of those who hear the gospel, this condemnation is increased if they should refuse to receive the Savior (Matt. 11:20-24).*



- 2. We are all without acceptable righteousness** (As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. Rom. 3:10) - *Righteousness means the condition of being right in God's sight or the act of doing right. In their rebellion against God, unsaved people substitute their own ethical standard and conduct for what God requires of them. But this self-righteousness is not acceptable to God (Isa. 64:6). He declares that no one is righteous in His sight without His gift of righteousness.*

The Effect of Justification

When believers trust in Christ, we are completely justified in the sight of God the Father. This brings with it some amazing and wonderful effects.

- 1. We are forever acquitted of the sentence of condemnation (Rom. 8:1).** This is more than a pardon, which implies that we are still guilty of a crime although we are



exempted from its punishment. We shall NEVER again come under divine judicial wrath, for we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Having judicially forgiven us of all our sins - past, present, and future, He no longer sees us guilty of any sin (Col. 2:13).

- 2. We are declared righteous in God's sight (Rom. 3:22).** God's righteousness was credited to our account in the place of our sins. Therefore, God has made us righteous in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). This righteousness is not just a legal declaration but it is a true righteousness that is given to us by God Himself.

- 3. We are able to do righteousness (1 Pt. 2:24).** Being righteous (not sinless), we are now able to do what is right in God's sight, or His will, by the power of Christ



through the Holy Spirit (Phil. 1:11). This righteousness is expressed in our behavior as the Holy Spirit works in and through our new hearts.

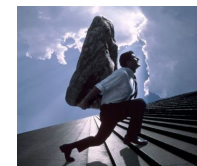
- 4. We are assured of future glorification and inheritance (Rom. 8:30).** Guaranteeing the permanence of our salvation (Rom.

8:31-34), justification assures us of the completion of our salvation experience with the deliverance of our bodies from mortality and inherent corruption (Rom. 8:23, 30), our participation in our Lord's glory (John 17:22), and our reception of our inheritance (Rom. 8:17). We shall share in that which the Father has given to the Lord Jesus (John 3:35).

Justified -

An easy way to remember the truth of justification is to think of the term "justified." We have been justified in Christ. Many people like to think of being justified as "just if I'd" never sinned. God declares that we are righteous in Christ and from that moment, He sees us as "just if I'd" never sinned. Think about that for a moment.

God looks at those who trust in Christ and all He sees in the perfection of Christ. It does not matter what horrible sins lie in the believer's past. Nor does it matter what future sin the believer will stumble into. God does



not hold any sin to the believer's account.

Past, present, and future sins are completely forgiven in Christ and Jesus' perfect righteousness is given in their place.

Justification means that God will never...ever...punish the believer for any sin. Punishment was dealt to Christ on the cross and Jesus paid the full price. If the full price is paid, then no further payment is owed.

There will never be a time when God will require more payment for the believer's sins.

Does James Contradict Paul regarding Justification?

Justified by Faith?



There has been much controversy about Paul and James' view of justification. Paul says, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"* (Rom. 5:1). Here, Paul clearly states that justification is by faith alone. However, James, when discussing Abraham's justification says, *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."* (James 2:24). How can we reconcile such a blatant contradiction?

The solution is actually quite simple. In Romans chapter 5, Paul is speaking about our justification before God. By grace, we are declared righteous before God through faith. There is no other requirement necessary to be justified before the Father. This is how Paul can

Justified by Works?



say, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

James, on the other hand, is not speaking about justification before God. He is talking about being justified before men. James' whole presentation is summed up in the phrase, "show me." James 2:17-18 says, *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."*

James is seeking to show that true saving faith (which justifies us before God) can only be proven by the works that it produces.

James begins this section by saying, *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"* (James 2:14) In Greek,

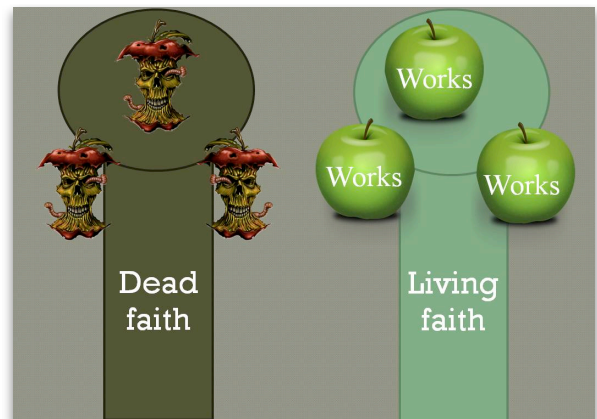
Justified by a faith that Works?



the literal rendering of the last clause is, "can *this kind* of faith save him?" James and Paul perfectly agree that man is saved by faith, however, James is seeking to show that the kind of faith that saves man before God is always accompanied by works.

True, saving faith causes the believer to become a new creature, which brings forth works of righteousness to God. This is the evidence that faith is genuine. A faith that doesn't produce works is not a true saving faith.

It has been well said that, "Faith alone saves, but the kind of faith that saves is never alone"





The Rest of Justification

The peace of the true Christian is not a vague, dreamy feeling, without reason and without foundation. They have peace with God because they are justified.

— J.C. Ryle

The biblical truth of justification is absolutely scandalous. God has declared believers perfectly righteous in His sight. This means that there is nothing Christians can do to destroy the work that Christ has done for them. Think about that for a moment.

No matter what you think you are, God sees you as perfect in Christ. No matter what you have done, or what you will do, God sees you perfect in Christ.

The unsaved religious person hears that wonderful statement and thinks, "that is great. I can sin all I want now." However, the person who has been born again and has the Spirit of the living God in them hears this and

thinks, "Because God has done this for me, I must live to please Him."

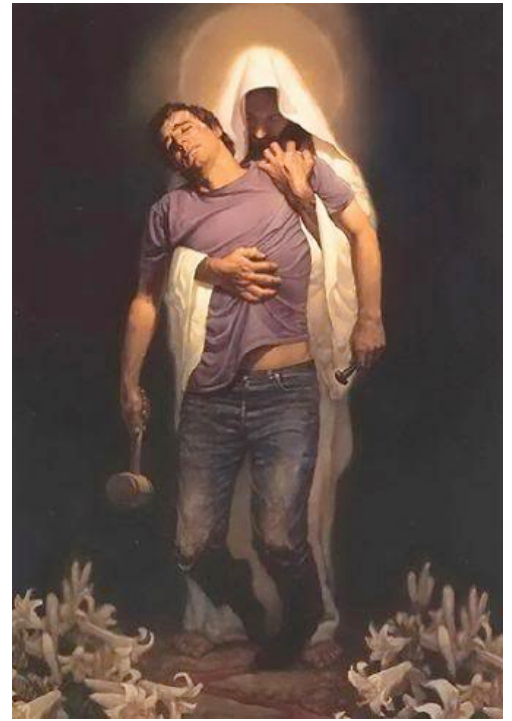
Believers do sin, but when they sin the Spirit of God disciplines them and brings them back to the path of righteousness (Heb. 12:7-8). Christians can sin, but they cannot continue in sin without experiencing the discipline of God.

This is the evidence of justification. When a man has truly been justified by Christ, the Holy Spirit works in him to grow and mature him in Christ. This doesn't mean that believers are perfect people, but it means that believers are no longer alone to live as they please. Their hearts have been changed to desire

the things that God desires and to hurt when they don't live up to them.

If this Spirit given desire is present, the believer has absolutely nothing to fear regarding eternity. We may fall and fail, but no sin is greater than the grace of God. No sin can undo what Christ did for us. We are not perfect people, but because of Christ, the Father looks at us as perfect people...And nothing can ever change that.





1. Are you confident that God has declared you “not guilty” forever in His sight? Why or why not?

2. What would God have to do to prove to you that you have been forever declared “not guilty?”

3. Have you ever wondered if God is still continuing to punish you from time to time for sins you have done in the past, even long ago?

4. If you are not sure that God has justified you fully and for all time, is there something you need to do before that will happen?

5. How would a proper understanding of justification effect the way you live and relate to God?

6. Is it hard to “feel” forgiven and righteous sometimes? Why or why not?

