

# Joyfully Justified

Teacher's study guide in justification by faith

by

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Based on

**THE BIBLE:** English Standard Version

[Joyfully Justified](#) by Roger Smalling

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## To the teacher

The student's manual is identical to this one except that answers to questions and suggestions to the teacher have been removed. Underlined texts mean that in the student's manual, these are a blank line for the student to fill in. The texts in block are either long answers to the questions or suggestions to the teacher as to further comments. The teacher is at liberty to ignore the latter or use his own.

## Introduction

This study is a return to the biblical gospel, through which the student will learn how to preach with greater conviction, experience a new freedom from legalism and a fresh fellowship with God.

The church is flooded with false gospels today. Media has exposed Christians to every “*wind of doctrine*” (Ephesians 4:14).

Not since the reformation has there existed such a need for clear Biblical answers as to what Jesus came to save us from and how he applies that saving work.

## Lesson 1: Importance

This lesson corresponds to Chapter 1 in **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

To show there exists only one message of salvation, the problem it resolves and the importance of defining it correctly. Students will enjoy a fresh perspective of the richness of justification and its centrality in salvation. This will affect their entire world view, self-concept, manner of prayer, evangelism and relationship to other Christians.

Students will be prepared to defend biblical teaching on salvation and refute objections, as the Bible requires, ... *so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.* Titus 1:9

Note: Allow the students to read the following section and then you may comment on it.

Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

All Christians understand the importance of glorifying God. Yet many fail to enjoy fellowship with God the Father. They perceive him more as an entity to serve than a personality to enjoy. They have put a barrier between themselves and the Father. This study will help identify that barrier and how to remove it.

Effects of fellowship with God the Father:

- A new security of salvation
- Freedom from a guilty conscience
- Avoiding legalism
- A better understanding of how to grow in grace
- A greater confidence in evangelism
- An appreciation of one's identity and authority in Christ

### **Diagnostic: A few key questions**

At the very end of this study guide is an initial diagnostic test with ten questions to help the class understand justification better. The answers to all the questions are negative.

### **The importance of justification: Galatians 1:6-9**

Explain how Paul was tolerant regarding minor matters of conscience such as in Romans 14: Food, religious festivals, etc. When it came to any alteration in the definition of the gospel, he became a lion and absolutely intolerant. Paul's anger shows through in this passage.

Read the text here. Comment on how Paul used the word *gospel* but that the rest of the book deals with justification. Therefore, justification is the gospel. The words *justification* and *gospel* are synonymous in Paul's mind.

V.6- *so quickly deserting*

Human nature tends to deviate from the gospel message. The problem is based on the desire to add something. In the case of the Galatians, it was legalism. In others, it may be dependence on works.

V.7- 8 *not that there is another one*

Only one gospel. Anything different from Paul's teaching is a different gospel. Paul uses strong language like *distort* and *accursed*.

Note: the difference in Greek between *HETEROS* and *ALLO*:

*HETEROS* means something of a different kind.

*ALLO* means something of the same kind.

The teacher may use this difference to show that Paul refused to recognize any other definition of the gospel than his own. No such thing exists as two different perspectives of the gospel.

When it comes to the definition of the gospel, we have the right and duty to be uncompromising and dogmatic.

V.8-9 *Accursed* in Greek is *anathema* and means "cursed of God."

Here is where the teacher can deal with ecumenism. Explain that a profession of faith in Christ is not sufficient grounds for unity with other groups. For that, it is necessary to profess and teach the gospel as Paul proclaimed it. The judiaizers also called themselves Christians yet Paul did not consider them such. It was against these that Paul used the term *accursed*.

### **Romans 1— The problem to resolve**

Read Romans 1:18-20, 2:5, 5:9

1. According to these verses, from what is the gospel designed to save us? The wrath of God. Jesus came to save us from God!
2. What happens to those whose righteousness does not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, according to Matthew 5:20? They do not inherit the kingdom of God.

Here the teacher may mention that this emphasis on the wrath of God has been lost in evangelical circles today, thus giving room for false gospels such as the prosperity movement or self-esteem teachings.

### **The cause of the wrath of God**

3. What is the point of reference for the concept of righteousness?  
Deuteronomy 4:8; Romans 2:13 The law
4. What is the point of reference as to sin? 1 John 3:4 The law
5. What is the point of reference as to judgment? Romans 2:12 The law
6. Does the divine law apply to everyone or only to believers? Romans 3:19 To all.  
Nobody is exempt from the divine law.
7. Does God require that the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in believers?  
Romans 8:4. Yes X No

The question is *how* it is fulfilled.

### **Key principle**

The only point of reference as to moral injunctions is the law of God and he requires perfect obedience to that law.

### **The revelatory function of the law**

8. What does the law reveal about God? Romans 3:1-4 His righteousness
9. What does the law reveal about man? Romans 3:19,20 Man's unrighteousness
10. The cause for the wrath of God? Romans 1:18 The broken divine law

### **From this lesson we learn...**

- The problem to resolve in the gospel is that humanity is under the wrath of God.
- The doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone is the gospel.
- There exists one sole single version of the biblical message of salvation. Those who deviate from it are cursed of God.
- The benefits of understanding justification are ample and profound.

### **Quiz**

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The main problem to solve in the gospel is human poverty, ill health and lack of self-esteem.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ An important consequence of understanding justification is freedom from legalism.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The apostle Paul recognized different legitimate perspectives of the gospel.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The problem to solve in the gospel is how to obtain the righteousness necessary to escape the wrath of God.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ One purpose of the gospel is to make it possible to enjoy fellowship with God.

Answers

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T



## Lesson 2: Definitions and background

Corresponds to Chapters 2 and 3 of **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Define the term *justify* and show the reason for its necessity through the covenant of works and the law.

### **Definition**

Justification is a legal declaration by God that a person is righteous compared with his law. The grounds is the perfect righteousness of Christ, imputed by faith alone, in Christ alone.

- It is a legal declaration from God.
- It is involved with God's law.
- Its basis is the righteousness of Christ.
- That righteousness is credited to the believer.
- The means by which it is credited is faith alone

Does *justification* mean “made righteous” or “declared righteous”? Luke 7:29; 16:15; 1 Timothy 3:16

- Justification means declared righteous.
- Justification does not mean made righteous.

Therefore, justification is not a process. It is a divine declaration from God, the moment a person puts faith in Christ.

Here, the teacher can use an illustration in which he describes that it is logically impossible for a judge to make a partial decree of “not guilty” of a suspect. The decree is either “guilty” or “not guilty.”

### **Biblical Anthropology: Genesis 1:26,27**

1. What is the status of mankind before God? Image of God
2. Did humanity lose its status as the image of God after Adam fell? James 3:9  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

Explain here that many things can happen to a statue which represents a noteworthy person: it can be stolen, broken and get dirty. But it still remains a representation of that person. Therein lies its value, despite its condition.

### **Covenant of works: Westminster Confession, Chapter 19, Article 1**

God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

#### **What is a covenant?**

A covenant is a contract between two parties. The Bible uses the term *covenant* because of the particular nature of the relationship between God and man.

#### **Two possible kinds of covenant**

*SUNTHEKE*: An agreement between equals.

*DIATHEKE*: An agreement between a benefactor and beneficiary, such as the adoption of a child.

#### **What elements are necessary for a contract to be valid?**

- Identity of the participants
- Benefits
- Conditions each party must fulfill
- Termination: How long does the contract last?
- Validation: How to confirm that the contract is legitimate. In today's society, signatures validate a contract. In ancient times, it was by vows or by witnesses.

### **The question of obedience**

1. What degree of obedience does God require? Matthew 5:18, 48; James 2:8-10;  
1 Peter 1:15 Absolute perfect obedience
2. What is promised for obedience? Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 8:1; Proverbs 7:2;  
Matthew 19:7 Life

### **The disconnect between free will and responsibility: Romans 3:9-19**

3. Does God still require obedience despite human inability to comply?  
Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion question:** If the above is so, how can it be just?

Explain to the students that mankind remains the image of God despite the fall of Adam. His identity as image of God did not change. Therefore, his responsibility to God did not

change either. Furthermore, the sinfulness of man does not remove from God the right to command what is just. The sinfulness of humanity is a chosen slavery. Therefore, God has the right to require obedience from man, despite human inability to comply.

### **Of Good Works: Confession of Faith, Chapter 16, Article 1**

Good works are only such as God has commanded in His holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intention.

#### **From this lesson we learn...**

- Mankind is still the image of God, although fallen.
- The covenant of works is still in force and applies to everyone, everywhere.
- God requires perfect obedience as the condition for life.
- Partial obedience is disobedience.
- The moral law of God in the Old Testament is the only point of reference that God recognizes for moral terminology.

#### **Quiz**

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ God requires that the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in Christians.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification is a process.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Sanctification is a process.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ God requires obedience from mankind despite man's inability to comply.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ God accepts partial obedience.

#### **Answers**

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T

5. F

## Lesson 3: The covenant of grace

Corresponds to Chapters 2 and 3 of **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Explain the covenant of grace as the foundation principle of justification.

### **Covenant with Abraham: Genesis 17; Galatians 3**

In both these chapters, we find the elements of a contract as discussed in the previous lesson.

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### **Group exercise**



#### **Genesis 17**

1. Who are the participants? V.1 God, Abraham and his descendants
2. What is the condition to fulfill? V.1 Perfection
3. What are the benefits? V.7 The Lord will be his God.
4. How long does the covenant last? V.7 Perpetually

It is essential that the teacher explain that the covenant with Abraham is in fact a continuation of the covenant with Adam. The participants are the same, God and man, perfect obedience is required, and the benefits are divine blessings.

#### **Galatians 3**

1. Find in this chapter the same elements in the covenant with Abraham.
2. According to verses 1 and 7, who are the participants? God, Abraham and his descendants.
3. What is the condition that God requires of Abraham? Perfection
4. According to verse 9, what is the condition for entering the covenant? Faith in Christ

Point out that faith in Christ does not negate the requirement of perfection in Genesis 17:1. Faith makes it possible for sinful man to fulfill the condition. Students need to understand the difference between *replacing* the condition and *fulfilling* the condition.

5. What does Paul call the covenant with Abraham in verse 8? The gospel (good news).
6. According to verse 13, from what are we redeemed? The curse of the law
7. Who validates the covenant? V.23,24 Christ

Based on comparison between Genesis 17 and Galatians 3, can we say that the covenant with Abraham is the Christian covenant of grace? Yes  X  No \_\_\_\_\_

Explain that what makes the covenant with Abraham the covenant of grace is that God himself, in Christ, fulfilled the condition of perfect obedience as our substitute and attributes to our account the benefits by faith. The requirement of perfect obedience is fulfilled, not annulled.

The teacher may take the liberty to undermine the error of dispensationalism. Show that Paul tried to clarify in his writings that the gospel is not something new and does not replace any Old Testament covenant. Such covenants are fulfilled in Christ, who accomplished all the conditions of the covenant of works on our behalf.

### **End of group exercise**

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### **From this lesson we learn...**

- The covenant with Abraham is the Christian covenant and is called the covenant of grace.
- Christ fulfilled the covenant condition of perfect obedience as our substitute, which is why the Abrahamic covenant is called the covenant of grace.
- We enter the covenant by faith, just as Abraham did and are therefore counted as Abraham's descendants.
- The covenant was confirmed by the sacrifice of Christ.

### **Quiz**

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification is inseparable from the covenant with Abraham.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Galatians 3 confirms that the covenant with Abraham is the covenant of grace.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Christ confirmed the covenant with Abraham by his sacrifice on the cross.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ According to Paul in Galatians, the children of Abraham are the Jews today.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ God required perfection from Abraham as the condition of the covenant.

Answers

1. T

2. T

3. T

4. F

5. F

## Lesson 4: Imputation

Corresponds to Chapter 4 in **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Show imputation as the central aspect of justification.

### **Definition of imputation**

Attributing to the account of a person that which pertains to another. This is the central concept in justification and the key to understanding reconciliation of sinners with God.

### **Reconciliation by imputation: 2 Corinthians 5:19-21**

1. According to this text, what was *counted* to Christ? Our sins
2. What, in turn was counted to us? Righteousness

The theological term for mutual imputation is called commutation.

Explain that our sins were accounted to Christ so that his righteousness could be accounted to us. When there is a mutual accounting, as in this case, it is called in theology *commutation*.

In verse 19, the phrase, *not counting their trespasses against them* translates the Greek word *LOGIZOMAI*. This is the word Paul uses in Romans 4 to explain the concept of imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer's account. For a clear understanding of justification, a grasp of this word is essential.

### **Imputation in Romans 3:22**

3. From where does righteousness originate? From God
4. By means of what does righteousness come? By faith
5. To whom does righteousness come? To those who believe

### **Romans 4, the key chapter on imputation**

In this chapter, Paul elaborates on what he said in Chapter 3. He explains why the means of righteousness is faith and not works.

### **Uses of *LOGIZOMAI* in Romans 4**

This Greek word translates as *count* in the ESV, as *credit* in the NIV and *impute* in the KJV. Uses of the word can be found in verses 3, 11, 22, 23, 24.

*...just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: Verse 6*

*... blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. Verse 8*



6. Although the word *LOGIZOMAI* is not used in Philippians 3:9, how is the concept expressed? Righteousness...through faith in Christ

### **Other uses of *LOGIZOMAI* in the LXX**

Genesis 15:6; Leviticus 7:18; 27:23

### **The Catholic concept: Infusion**

The Catholic Church rejects the concept of imputation in favor of *infusion*. This means a partial righteousness is infused into the soul of the person at baptism so that the person will be able to start earning merits by character development.

**Discussion:** Why is the concept of infusion, instead of imputation, erroneous?

- God always requires perfect righteousness. Partial righteousness does not exist.
- The Greek term *LOGIZOMAI* does not carry the meaning of infusion.
- The term *infusion* does not involve a legal attribution, and therefore, does not reflect biblical justification.

### **Imputation and the representative principle in the covenant of works: The Adam-Christ parallel. Romans 5:12-21**

The concept of imputation implies that one person may be represented by another. How does this apply in the covenant of works with Adam? See the group exercise below.

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### **Group exercise**

In Romans 5:12-20, we find four things that are counted to us from the fall of Adam. What are they, and in which verses are they found?

- Sin, V.12
- Death, V.12
- Judgment, V.16
- Condemnation, V.18

### **End of exercise**

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**Discussion:** Read Romans 5:17. Does this appear just?

Explain that Adam was the federal head of the human race and its representative. We were part of Adam like cells in his body. If we object to this, then logically we ought to object to Christ as our *second* Adam, our representative. We were not personally present in the garden of Eden when Adam fell. Neither were we present at Calvary when Christ obtained salvation for us.

Grace is not *fair* in the sense of giving the same to everyone equally. It is, however, *just*. Grace is so far superior to fairness that the term *fair* does not deserve to be mentioned in the same sentence as the word *grace*.

**Discussion:** In Romans 5:20, what is meant by *where sin increased, grace abounded all the more...?*

The sin of Adam brought sin and judgment. But the free gift of God's grace surpasses it. The value of grace is greater than the guilt of our sins. We gain more than Adam had before the fall.

7. Adam was innocent before the fall. What do believers inherit from Christ?  
V.19 Righteousness

8. How does this relate to 2 Corinthians 5:21? Righteousness imputed to us

**The Arminian error:** Justification consists only in the forgiveness of sins.

- Absence of sin is not righteousness. It is innocence.
- Righteousness consists in something to do, not merely in something to avoid.
- Christ is our righteousness. This is not simply freedom from sin. 1 Corinthians 1:30

**From this lesson we learn...**

- Imputation is fundamental in the concept of justification.
- Imputation means attributing to a person what belongs to another.
  - The fall of Adam and all its consequences were credited to the account of all his descendants.
  - The grace of Christ is counted to his descendants, believers.
  - In the domain of theology, the word *commutation* refers to the imputation of the guilt of our sins to Christ and the imputation of his righteousness to us.

## Quiz

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Imputation is fundamental in the concept of justification.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The word *imputation* means "attributing to one person what belongs to another."
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The term *commutation* means "mutual imputation."

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Two aspects of justification are the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Reconciliation with God is the objective of imputation.

Answers

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | T |
| 2. | T |
| 3. | T |
| 4. | T |
| 5. | T |

## Lesson 5: The righteousness and mediation of Christ

Corresponds to Chapter 4 of **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Explain the substitution of Christ and the nature of the righteousness imputed to us.

### **In what does the righteousness of Christ consist?**

1. Is it human righteousness, divine righteousness or both? Romans 5:18,19  
A human righteousness, divinely acquired and applied.

### **Passive and active obedience**

Compare Philippians 2:8 with Hebrews 5:5-8.

Some teach that the obedience of Christ in going to the cross is the only obedience that is credited to us. Others teach that the obedience of Christ in his life under the law is also credited to us.

2. Which is the biblical teaching? See Hebrews 5:1-5 and Galatians 4:1-5.

His obedience under the law is also credited to our account.

Explain this essential point: The law requires not only that we avoid bad things, but we must actively do good things. For example, Jesus said to John the Baptist, "*it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:15), which refers to doing what the law required. The notion "I do not harm anyone" does not fulfill a positive command to love our neighbor and feed our enemies.

Therefore, the obedience of Christ consists in two phases: Passive and active. The active is his life under the law, which fulfilled its demands. His passive obedience is submission to the cross for the punishment deserved by those who transgressed the law.

In reformed thinking, both the active and passive obedience of Christ are credited to the believer.

### **The mediation of Christ**

3. In 1 Timothy 2:5, what does Paul emphasize in the mediation of Christ? The man, Christ Jesus. This indicates the mediation is viewed from the human side.
4. According to Hebrews 9:13-15, what did Christ earn for himself by his sacrifice?  
To be mediator as high priest

### **From this lesson we learn...**

- The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is a human righteousness, divinely acquired and applied.

- The active obedience of Christ refers to his life under the law. His passive obedience refers to his death on the cross. Both are credited to the believer.

## Quiz

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The righteousness we receive in justification is a human righteousness, divinely acquired and applied.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ When we are justified, God infuses a partial righteousness in our souls.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ According to reformed theology, the passive obedience of Christ in his sacrifice on the cross, as well as his active obedience under the law, are attributed to the believer.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The sacrifice of Jesus earned for him his office of mediator.

### Answers

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T

## Lesson 6: The faith that justifies

Corresponds to Chapters 5 and 6 in **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Define and discuss the biblical definition of saving faith versus popular notions along with Arminian, Catholic and neo-Charismatic errors.

1. What is the biblical definition of faith according to Romans 4:21? Trusting God to keep his promises
2. What is the origin of biblical saving faith? John 6:44,65; Acts 13:48; 18:27; 1 Timothy 1:14; Hebrews 12:2; Philippians 1:29. The grace of God

### **Components of justifying faith**

Romans 4:16-21- The example of Abraham

Three elements of biblical faith:

Note: The Catholic Church, along with protestants, agree at this point. The difference is that in Catholicism, personal trust in Jesus is not necessary for salvation—a contradiction of everything in the epistles about salvation. According to the Catholic Church, agreement with the dogmas of the church is all that is necessary.

- Information: *Notitia*
- Logic: *Assensus*
- Trust: *Fiducia*

### **The cause of justification: Agent versus instrument**

Romans 3:22 and Philippians 3:9

Explain that we are saved by Christ, not by our own merits. A good example is that of the sculptor using a chisel to form his work. The sculptor is the agent doing the work and the chisel is the instrument. Christ is the agent in communicating grace and faith by whatever means he chooses.

### **Are we saved *because of* faith?**

Greek: *DIA PISTEOS* versus *DIA PISTIN*—*by faith* versus *because of faith*. The latter is not found in the New Testament.

Justification is always *by means of faith* and never *because of faith*. The original Greek distinguishes between faith as an agent and faith as an instrument. Faith is never meritorious, an important point. Explain here that the phrase *because of faith* is not found in the New Testament. If it were, it would imply that faith, by itself, is the agent doing the work and therefore a merit.

## Is faith itself our righteousness?

The Old Testament verse most commonly cited by the apostles is Genesis 15:6: *And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

Does this mean that faith itself is the righteousness imputed? See the Arminian error below:

### Arminian error

A common Arminian teaching, coming from John Wesley, is that our faith itself is credited for righteousness. This is false for several reasons:

- Christ is our righteousness, 1 Corinthians 1:30. We cannot be justified by two different sources of righteousness.
- This would amount to self-righteousness, treating Christ as a mere supplement to our own.
- Our faith is imperfect.
- The Greek text does not support this interpretation. See below.

*EIS DIKAIOSUNE*= toward righteousness, i.e., with a view to obtaining righteousness; not *ANTI DIKAIOSUNE*= instead of righteousness.

### The neo-Charismatic error

This movement insists that faith is a mystic force a believer can manipulate to obtain what he desires. It is not mere trust in God, according to this view. In fact, this thinking is ancient Gnosticism disguised as Christianity. An example of this false teaching is...

Charles Capps:

Faith is the substance, the raw material... that God used to create the universe, and he transported that Faith with His words.... Faith is the substance of things, but you cannot see faith. Faith is a spiritual force.<sup>1</sup>

According to such thinking, faith as a mystical force is so important that even God is dependent on it.

### James 2

V.14- *Can that faith save him?*

Explain that the Greek grammar insinuates <i>this faith</i> is a kind of faith that has no intention of manifesting itself by good works. Such is not a <i>saving</i> faith. The contrast is between faith that saves versus the kind that does not.
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V.19- *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

James again describes the kind of faith that does not save. Demons have information and logic, but no trust or commitment. This alone is a sufficient refutation of the Roman Catholic doctrine regarding faith. A faith without personal trust in Jesus Christ is no better than that of demons.

V.20- *Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?*

Faith without works is dead. A good illustration is the wake of a ship. If there is a wake behind the ship, this proves it is in motion. Living things move. Even trees and plants move with sunlight and grow, though slowly.

V.21- *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?*

Was Abraham already justified by faith before the incident with Isaac? Yes! Genesis 15:6. Therefore, James 2:21 cannot refer to personal justification for salvation. It means Abraham's work of obedience in offering up Isaac validated the sincerity of the faith he already had, proving it was more than mere knowledge.

V.22- *You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his work...*

How do we make our faith grow? Answer: Get to work for God!

### **From this lesson we learn...**

- Faith means trusting God to keep his promises.
- The grace of God is the source of saving and faith and is given to the elect.
- Christ is the only agent of salvation, and faith is the instrument. False teachers normally confuse the difference between agent and instrument.
- Faith is not a good work or virtue in and of itself. It must be linked to Christ to be the instrument for communicating grace.
- The Bible teaches that justified people will be obedient to God.

### **Quiz**

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith, by itself, is such an important virtue that God rewards it with grace.



2. \_\_\_\_\_ James taught that faith plus works equals salvation.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Bible teaches the doctrine of the inevitability of the obedience of those who are justified.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith itself is our righteousness.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Saving faith is given to the elect and to those alone.

Answers

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. T

## Lesson 7: Benefits and practical results

Corresponds to Chapters 7, 9 and 10 in **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Describe the benefits of justification, legal and experiential.

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### **Group exercise**

**According to Romans 5:1-19, what are the experiential benefits of justification?**

V.1 Peace with God

V.2 Access to grace

V.9 Salvation from the wrath of God

V.17 Abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness

### **End of exercise**

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### **Adoption**

After our sins have been forgiven and the righteousness of Christ has been credited to us, the legal benefit that follows is adoption as children of God.

#### **Galatians 4:4-7**

1. What did God do that made our adoption as children possible? He sent his son.
2. What hindered our adoption as children of God? We were under law, not grace.

<p>Explain that a relationship based on law and a relationship based on grace are mutually exclusive. If we try to relate to God on the basis of our obedience to moral law, then we are viewing God as our judge and not as our father. Obedience to a judge establishes a different type of relationship than obedience to a father, even if moral law is involved. The first is based on fear, the second on grace. The teacher may ask the class to discuss this point.</p>
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3. What did God grant us when he adopted us as his children? He gave us the spirit of his son, the Holy Spirit. See also Galatians 3:14.

**Discussion:** According to verse 7, what kind of relationship with God the Father is normal for adopted children? How does this differ from a type of legal relationship? A love relationship of trust

Explain that the word *ABBA* is like “daddy” in English. It is a relational term, not a legal one.

## Security of salvation

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### Group exercise

Answer the following questions based on the book of 1 John.

4. What is the natural motivation of those who are saved? 1 John 3:3 They desire purity.
5. Of what are those born of God incapable? 1 John 3:9 Incapable of living a life of sin.
6. Who or what hinders Christians from practicing a life of sin? 1 John 5:18 Christ himself hinders them.
7. In the final analysis, what is the cause of our obedience according to Philippians 2:11-12? God himself works in us to produce that obedience.

Answer the following based on Romans 6:15-18:

8. Are sinners capable of not sinning? No. They are slaves to sin.
9. What do Christians naturally seek? Righteousness
10. How do justified people, not under condemnation, behave? They are obedient to God.  
*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.  
Romans 8:1*

### End of exercise

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### The golden chain of salvation: Romans 8:30

11. How many of those whom God predestines does he also call? All
12. How many of those he calls are also justified? All
13. How many of those he justifies does he glorify? All

In Chapter 7 of **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**, there is a list of reasons why we do not lose our justification. The teacher may use two or three examples of these as a supplement to this exercise, if he desires. Another way to proceed is to examine the rest of Romans 8 to show all the things that cannot separate us from the love of God.

### **Freedom from legalism: Galatians 5**

14. What kind of slavery is Paul referring to in verse 1? Acceptance with God based on law.

Note: Students sometimes say “freedom from sin.” Although that is true, it is not the correct answer in this context. The following verses (verses 2-4), show that Paul has freedom from the law in mind.

15. According to verse 5, on what do we base our hope of righteousness? On faith alone, not on the law.
16. What is the warning Paul gives in verse 13? Do not use our freedom as a pretext for carnality.

Here, the teacher should discuss the tension between freedom from law versus libertarianism. Although we ought to obey the moral law of God, our obedience is always imperfect. Therefore, the obedience of Christ is the only basis for acceptance with God as his children. Taking advantage of the concept of grace as an excuse for sin is profoundly sinful. Refer again to Jude 4.

Here is also a good time to show why one may feel a lack of fellowship with God. The believer may be putting a rule or law as a condition to be approved by God, instead of depending on grace. Such a rule could be something very good such as church attendance, Bible reading or evangelism. We might do such supposing that God loves us more for doing them. This devalues the sufficiency of the cross and the grace of God. Show the difference between being sons and being servants.

**Discussion:** What are the experiential benefits of justification?

### **From this lesson we learn...**

- Experiential benefits of justification are peace with God, access to grace, the love of God among others.
- Legal benefits of justification are adoption as sons, security of salvation and freedom from legalism.

### **Quiz**

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ We are justified by faith but sanctified by obedience to the law.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Our continued acceptance with God is based on our continued obedience to the moral law.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ All those justified will be glorified.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Since we are not under the law as the means of justification, the law has absolutely no use for the Christian.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from the law, by means of justification, is freedom to sin.

Answers

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. F

## Lesson 8: Errors

Corresponds to Chapter 8 in **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED**.

### **Objective**

Show how certain groups teach false gospels by changing the definitions of words related to justification. A mature believer must be aware of this satanic method.

### **The characteristic of all false gospels**

Every false gospel follows the pattern expressed in Romans 10:1-3. What is that pattern? Trying to establish one's own righteousness instead of submitting to the free grace of the righteousness of Christ in the gospel.

### **Catholicism**

At the Council of Trent in 1545, the Catholic Church declared anathemas on whoever teaches justification by faith alone. <sup>2</sup>

Catholicism says: Faith yes, but not faith *alone*.

This is why there can be no unity between evangelical Christians and Catholics. A Catholic-Protestant ecumenism is apostasy.

### **Catholic definitions**

**Faith:** Intellectual acknowledgement that the doctrines of the Catholic Church are correct. Personal trust in Christ is unnecessary. Faith is a meritorious virtue, deserving grace.

**Grace:** An initial divine impetus to help a person start the process of earning salvation by merits.

**Justification:** A process of attaining righteousness in two phases:

Phase one: Forgiveness of the sin of Adam through baptism.

Phase two: Infusion of a partial righteousness to earn eternal life by merits.

**Instrumental cause:** Baptism, not faith

**Infusion versus imputation:** A partial righteousness is infused into the soul of the person to start him on the road for developing a meritorious character.

### **Arminianism**

**Justification:** Forgiveness only. Justification can be lost through returning to a life of sin. The Arminian fears that permanent justification grants a license to sin. They misinterpret Romans 8:1 as conditional. <sup>3</sup>

**Obedience:** A perfect obedience is unnecessary; it distinguishes between mortal sins and venial, as Catholicism does. Mortal sins can lose justification.

**Imputation:** Faith itself is our righteousness; it misinterprets Romans 4, ignoring Romans 3:22 and Philippians 3:9.

**Grace:** The divine disposition to forgive us. Grace is not sovereign in Arminianism.

### **Neo-Charismatics and Pentecostals**

**Justification:** Same as Arminians

**Faith:** A mystical force that one can manipulate to obtain whatever he or she may desire. Faith is not a mere trust in God, but a force to apply. This view is really nothing more than ancient Gnosticism disguised as Christianity.

A complete study of this theme is found in Smalling's book, **THE PROSPERITY MOVEMENT.**

### **From this lesson we learn...**

- All false gospels teach that a person may be saved in part by their own righteousness instead of submitting to the righteousness of God in Christ, who earned it for us on the cross.
- Catholicism distorts the words corresponding to justification by giving them other definitions than those indicated by the Bible, such as:
  - Grace is a divine impetus to help a person on the road to merit eternal life.
  - Faith is mental assent to the dogmas of the church, not a personal faith in Jesus Christ.
  - Justification is a process that begins at baptism and through which God infuses a partial righteousness.
- Arminianism holds that justification is involved only with forgiveness of sins, not a permanent imputation of the perfect righteousness of Christ.
- Charismatics and some Pentecostals confuse the difference between agent and instrument by attributing to faith itself a saving or healing power.

### **Quiz**

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ In the gospel, faith is the saving agent and Christ is the instrument.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification is involved only with the forgiveness of sins.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith, in itself, is a powerful force.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ When we are justified, God infuses a partial righteousness in our souls.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic-Protestant ecumenism is a good idea from a biblical perspective.

Answers

1. F

2. F

3. F

4. F

5. F



## Lesson 9: Review and conclusions

### **Objective**

Review of the essential principles of justification.

### **Covenant of works**

- The promise of life under the condition of perfect obedience.
- Adam broke the covenant of works, which resulted in the condemnation of the entire human race.
- The covenant of works is expressed in the moral law of the Old Testament.
- The duration of the covenant of works depends on perfect obedience as the condition.
- The righteous wrath of God is the problem to solve in the question of salvation.

### **The covenant of grace**

- The covenant with Abraham is the Christian covenant.
- This covenant incorporates perfection as the condition, as in the covenant of works.
- Christ fulfilled all the conditions for the covenant and of the moral law as the second Adam, both in his life and in his substitutionary death.

### **Imputation**

The basis for acceptance with God is not only the forgiveness of sins but also the imputed righteousness of Christ. Adam no longer represents the believer; Christ does.

### **Agent and instrument**

Christ is the agent who brings to fruition the work of salvation through faith alone. Faith, in and of itself, has no saving power.

### **Benefits**

Freedom from the wrath of God, fear, law-based acceptance and legalism. A new identity as adopted children of God.

### **Evangelism**

Through a better understanding of the gospel, one can have a clearer understanding of how to evangelize.

### **Diagnostic**

If the teacher desires, he may use the final diagnostic below. Contrary to the diagnostic at the beginning of the course, all the answers of this one **are true**.

## **The promise**

At the beginning of this study, the teacher promised to reveal the barrier that hinders us from enjoying God the Father fully.

We put rules between God and us as conditions for him to accept us more than he already has. By doing that, we base our acceptance with God on the quality of our own obedience, instead of the obedience of Christ. The only thing between ourselves and God the Father is the cross, and that is not a barrier. It is an invitation.

God is no longer our judge but our Father. His wrath is satisfied, and he will never be angry with us. We are no longer criminals before a court. We are children with hurts.

## Diagnostics

### **Initial diagnostic: Justification by faith**

To be presented at the beginning of the first class so that students may understand their need of the subject.

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification means to *be made righteous*.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith is the efficient cause of our justification.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification is a process through which God makes us righteous.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ With the coming of Christ, it is no longer necessary that the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in us.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Saving faith is a virtue that deserves reward.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The essential aspect of justification is involved with this: The forgiveness of sins.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Being righteous means being innocent.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification can be lost through mortal sin.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ We are righteous before God simply because we are forgiven.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ When we put our faith in Christ, God infuses righteousness in our souls.

### Final diagnostic: Justification by faith

This diagnostic can be given at the end of the course to verify that the students understood the material.

True or false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Justification is a legal declaration by which God declares a person not guilty before his holy law.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ According to the apostle Paul, the word *justify* is virtually synonymous with *salvation*.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Sanctification is a process.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The word *justify* means “declare righteous.”
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Two aspects of justification are the forgiveness and imputation of the righteousness of Christ.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The central aspect in justification is the concept of imputation.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Believers are as justified on earth as the saints in heaven.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Romans 4 is the key chapter in the New Testament on imputed righteousness of Christ.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The meeting point between God and man is the imputed righteousness of Christ.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Grace comes by faith alone, precisely because faith is not inherently meritorious.

## Syllabus for Students of Miami International Seminary

This course is a study in the doctrine of justification by faith, Sola Fide, and counts as Soteriology 102 for students of MINTS.

### **Objective and benefits**

This study will give the students a new sense of security in their relationship with God, a positive identity as a Christian and freedom from legalism and self-condemnation.

The study will also grant a clearer perspective of what is the gospel and help the student to preach, teach and live the message of salvation with greater conviction and confidence.

### **Materials**

The book **JOYFULLY JUSTIFIED** by Smalling is the textbook for the course.

A student's study guide will be given out at the beginning of the course.

The Bible used will be the English Standard Version (ESV.) Chapters to be studied are Genesis 17; Galatians 1,3,4; Romans 3,4,5.

The textbook exists only in electronic form and may be obtained in the following ways:

- Downloadable free in Word or PDF from Smalling's website: [www.smallings.com](http://www.smallings.com)
- Kindle version: Cost \$2.99, Amazon Kindle, search "Roger Smalling."

### **Evaluations**

To be determined by the teacher.

### **Essay requirements**

MINTS requires essays and/or book reports from all students for this course.

- Certificate level: A book report of three pages on a book with no less than 300 pages.
- Bachelor level: Essay with a total reading of 300 pages and length of essay no less than 10 pages.
- Master level: Essay of no less than 15 pages, having read no less than 600 pages.

Bibliographic references must follow the exact form as the example below, with accurate punctuation, italics where required and number of pages read of the works cited.

Doe, John. *Sola Fide among Extraterrestrials*. Wacko Publications: Area 51, Nevada, 2013. (299 pages)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Quote borrowed from <http://www.bible-reading.com/crisis.html#4b>. This quote in turn is from *Christianity in Crisis*, by Hank Hanegraaf.

Another similar quote by Capps is:

He framed the world with His words. You cannot build without substance. He took words--faith-filled words were God's substance. Here, essentially, is what God did. God filled His words with faith. He used His words as containers to hold His faith and contain that spiritual force and transport it out there into the vast darkness by saying 'Light be!' That's the way God transported His faith causing creation and transformation.

*Dynamics of Faith & Confession*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1987, 28-29, emphasis in original.

<sup>2</sup> See Catholic Encyclopedia on this point. Quoted in the textbook.

<sup>3</sup> As pointed out in the textbook, there are no conditional clauses in Romans 8:1. The clause "who walk according to the Spirit" is descriptive of those who are not condemned, i.e., justified.