

# Women's Doctrinal Series

## First Baptist Church, Paso Robles

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### 24 July 2019: Lesson 7--Justification

*It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:26*

What is doctrine and why do we care?

- Doctrine is the whole teaching of the Bible on a given subject. It matters because right \_\_\_\_\_ (*mind*) leads to right \_\_\_\_\_ (*heart/soul*) which lead to right \_\_\_\_\_ (*strength*).
- 2 Peter 3:17-18

#### Assumptions:

- The Bible is:
  - \_\_\_\_\_: *The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God. (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, pg. 73)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_: *The inerrancy of Scripture means that the Bible always tells the truth, and...it always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about. This definition does not mean that the Bible tells us every fact there is to know about any one subject, but it affirms that what it does say about any subject is true. (Grudem 91)*

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- \_\_\_\_\_: *The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture...contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly. (Grudem 127)*

## ***Ordo Salutis: Order of Salvation***

The *logical* and *chronological* relationships between the various stages of the application of redemption. *\*Keep in mind that there may not be a gap in time between some stages, but that while some of these stages may be temporally simultaneous, meaning that they occur at the exact same moment, they are logically distinct.*

Foreknowledge (God's choice unto salvation)

Regeneration (the new birth)

Conversion (repentance and faith)


Justification (declaration of a right legal standing)

Adoption (placed into the family of God)

Sanctification (progressive growth in holiness)

Perseverance (remaining in Christ)

Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)



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# Justification

## (Right Legal Standing Before God)

### What is Justification?

- Definition:

*Justification is an instantaneous act of God in which he:*

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (

Grudem 723)

- Westminster Shorter Catechism\*, Question 33: *What is Justification?*

*Justification is an act of God's \_\_\_\_\_,*

*wherein he pardoneth all our \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(1)</sup>,*

*and accepteth us as \_\_\_\_\_ in his sight<sup>(2)</sup>,*

*only for the righteousness of Christ \_\_\_\_\_ to us<sup>(3)</sup>,*

*and received by \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(4)</sup>.*

- (1) Romans 3:24-25, 4:6-8
- (2) 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21
- (3) Romans 5:17-19
- (4) Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9

*\*Note: The Westminster Shorter Catechism is a catechism, or summary of doctrine used to teach the tenants of the Christian faith to children and adults, written in 1646 and 1647 by the Westminster Assembly, a church council of English and Scottish theologians and laymen intended to bring the Church of England into greater conformity with the Church of Scotland.*

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- “In justification, God legally declares that we are **no longer deemed guilty** under the divine law but are **forgiven** and **counted righteous** in **God’s sight**. In justification, God provides the answer to mankind’s most basic theological and religious question: How can sinners come to be in a right relationship with the holy God of the universe?...We may define justification as that instantaneous act of God whereby, as a gift of his grace, he imputes to a believing sinner the full and perfect righteousness of Christ through faith alone and legally declares him perfectly righteous in his sight, forgiving the sinner of all unrighteousness and thus delivering him from all condemnation.”

*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*, p. 609, 612  
John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, General Editors

### The Nature of Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

- “Justification is a legal, or forensic, declaration of righteousness, not an actual impartation or infusion of righteousness. It describes what God *declares* about the believer, not what he *does to change* the believer...It is an instantaneous change of one’s status before God, not a gradual transformation that takes place within the one who is justified.”

(MacArthur & Mayhue, 612)

- Examples of legal declarations in everyday life:
  - \_\_\_\_\_: A legal declaration of marriage instantaneously changes the legal status of the two people involved. It does not cause a change of character in the two individuals.
  - \_\_\_\_\_: A legal declaration of “not guilty” affects the legal standing of the defendant, changing him or her from “the accused” to “the acquitted.”

“The jury’s verdict does not make the man not guilty...neither does it declare his life free from any and all evil. The (jury) foreman’s announcement simply declares the defendant’s status before the law. In a similar way, the justification spoken of in Scripture is God’s divine verdict of “not guilty--fully righteous” pronounced on the sinner. In the case of justification, it is not that the accused is innocent but that another has paid in full the penalty for his crimes.” (MacArthur &

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Mayhue, 612)

- Biblical uses of the word “justify”:
  - New Testament Greek: *dikaioō*, \_\_\_\_\_
    - Three examples:
      - Luke 7:29, “When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors *justified* God, having been baptised with the baptism of John.”
        - The people and the tax collectors did not *make* God to be righteous--that would be impossible for anyone to do. Rather they *declared* God to be righteous.  
(Grudem 723)
      - Romans 4:5, “And to one who does not work but trusts him who *justifies the ungodly*, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.”
        - Here Paul cannot mean that God “makes the ungodly to be righteous” (by changing them internally and making them morally perfect”, for then they would have merit or works of their own to depend on. Rather, he means that God declares the ungodly to be righteous in his sight, not on the basis of their good works, but in response to their faith.  
(Grudem 723)
      - Romans 8:33-34, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who *justifies*; who is to condemn?”
        - To “condemn” someone is to declare that person guilty. The opposite of condemnation is justification, which, in this context, must mean “to declare someone not guilty.”...Paul’s answer to the possibility of someone bringing an accusation or “charge” against God’s people: such a declaration of guilt cannot stand in the face of God’s declaration of righteousness.

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- Old Testament: *tsādak, tsadeq*, \_\_\_\_\_
    - Example:
      - Deuteronomy 25:1, “If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they *justify* the righteous and condemn the wicked...”
        - “Now in this case, ‘justify’ must mean ‘declare to be righteous or not guilty,’ just as ‘condemn’ means ‘declare to be guilty.’ It would make no sense to say that ‘justify’ here means ‘to make someone to be good internally,’ for judges simply do not and cannot make people to be good on the inside. Nor does a judge’s act of condemning the wicked make that person to be evil on the inside; it simply declares that the person is guilty (or not guilty) with respect to the particular crime that has been brought before the court (cf. Ex. 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; 2 Chron. 6:23)” (Grudem 723-724)

### The Ground of Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

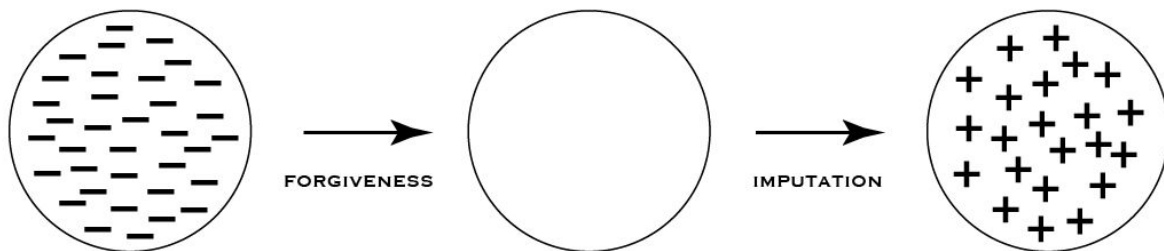
- *Imputation*: to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_
- Imputation is a two-fold act:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_: The Imputation of Our Sin to Christ
    - “For our sake he [the Father] made him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21)
      - “In what sense did the Father “make” the Son “sin” on our behalf? In only one sense: the Father counted Jesus to have committed all the sins of all those who would ever repent and believe in him...Since

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justification is a legal declaration, the Father judicially reckoned Christ to have committed the sins of those for whom he was giving himself as a substitute...Though innumerable sinners will escape divine punishment, no sin will ever go unpunished, for every sin of the elect has been reckoned to Christ and punished in him on the cross. In this way divine justice is satisfied." (MacArthur & Mayhue, 615)

2. \_\_\_\_\_: The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to Us

- "Therefore, as through the one man's [Adam's] trespass there resulted condemnation to all men, so also through the one man's [Christ's] righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be constituted righteous." (Romans 5:18-19, MacArthur's translation)
  - "If God merely declared us to be *forgiven from our sins*, that would not solve our problems entirely, for it would only make us morally neutral before God. We would be in the state that Adam was in before he had done anything right or wrong in God's sight--he was not guilty before God, but neither had he earned a record of righteousness before God...God must declare us not to be merely *neutral* in his sight but actually to be *righteous* in his sight." (Grudem 725)
  - "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:21)



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## The Means of Justification:

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, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be *received by faith*. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and *the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is *justified by faith apart from works of the law*.

[Romans 3:21-28 (ESV), *emphasis added*]

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but *through faith* in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be *justified by faith in Christ* and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

[Galatians 2:16 (ESV), *emphasis added*]

For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise *by faith in Jesus Christ* might be given *to those who believe*. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be *justified by faith*. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, *through faith*.

[Galatians 3:21-26 (ESV), *emphasis added*]

- Why faith?

We may ask why God chose *faith* to be the attitude of heart by which we would obtain justification. Why could God not have decided to give justification to all those who sincerely show love? Or who show joy? Or contentment? Or humility? Or wisdom? Why did God choose *faith* as the means by which we receive justification?

It is apparently because *faith* is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in *faith* we essentially say, "I give up! I will not depend on myself



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or my own good works any longer. I know that I can never make myself righteous before God. Therefore, Jesus, I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God.”

(Grudem 730)

- A concerning challenge to the view of faith alone as the means of justification:
  - The “Roman Catholic view of justification is that people cannot be sure if they are in a ‘state of grace’ where they experience God’s complete acceptance and favor. The Council of Trent declared,

*“If one considers his own weakness and his disposition, he may well be fearful and anxious as to the state of grace, as nobody knows with the certainty of faith, which permits of no error, that he has achieved the grace of God.”*

To this statement [Dr. Ludwig] Ott (author of *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*) adds the comment,

*“The reason for the uncertainty of the state of grace lies in this, that without a special revelation nobody can with certainty of faith know whether or not he has fulfilled all the conditions which are necessary for the achieving of justification...For the justified eternal life is both a gift of grace promised by God and a reward for his own good works and merits...Salutary works are, at the same time, gifts of God and meritorious acts of man.”* (Ott 261-262, 264)

(Grudem 728-729)

- Grudem’s Biblical response to the challenge:
  - After Paul explains in Romans 1:18-3:20 that no one will ever be able to make himself righteous before God (“For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law,” Rom. 3:20), then Paul goes on to explain that “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified *by his grace as a gift*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:23-24). God’s “grace” means his “unmerited favor.” Because we are completely unable to earn favor with God, the only way we could be declared

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righteous is if God freely provides salvation for us by grace, totally apart from our work. Paul explains, "For *by grace* you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God--not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9; cf. Titus 3:7)

(Grudem 729)

- What are some ways that *we* are tempted to disbelieve God in this area? In other words, do you see any other "religions" around you that try to compete with faith in Jesus as the sole means for justification? What other ideas try to persuade you that you need to add merit to your faith in order to be justified before God?

| <b><u>Biblical Doctrine of Justification:</u></b>  | <b><u>Non-Biblical Doctrines of Justification:</u></b>                   |
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| Jesus + <u>Nothing</u> = Everything<br><br>(Right standing with God comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.) | Jesus+ _____<br><br>Jesus+ _____<br><br>Jesus+ _____<br><br>Jesus+ _____ |

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### The Results of Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

- The conundrum: Does James contradict the Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone?
  - Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.  
(James 2:21-24)
- The clarification: The Greek word *dikaioō* can also mean "vindication," or "the demonstration of righteousness," or "to show to be righteous." This is the meaning that James is using in James chapter 2.
  - "When James says, 'Was not Abraham our father *justified by works*, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?' he is referring to something later in Abraham's life, the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, which occurred in Genesis 22. This is long after the time recorded in Genesis 15:6 where Abraham believed God 'and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.' Yet this earlier incident at the beginning of Abraham's covenantal relationship with God is the one that Paul quotes and repeatedly refers to in Romans 4. Paul is talking about the time God justified Abraham once for all, reckoning righteousness to him as a result of his faith in God. But James is talking about something far later, after Abraham had waited many years for the birth of Isaac, and then after Isaac had grown old enough to carry wood up the mountain for a sacrifice. At that point Abraham was '*shown to be righteous*' (justified) by his works." (Grudem 731)
  - "It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone." John Calvin

### The Response to Justification:

- \_\_\_\_\_: *There will be days when we simply don't feel justified.*

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- We will have off days, down days, shaky days, sinful days, days on which the question haunts our minds, “Am I even a Christian?” The doctrine of justification by faith alone proclaims loudly, through the fog of doubt, that we have been born again and are “in Christ” (Gal. 2:20)...The doctrine of justification gives us the assurance to know that “[He is] just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (3:26). When we have those down days, or we feel insecure, we can refresh our hearts by drinking at the everlasting fountain of justification by faith alone and can hear God saying, “You are in Christ and shall remain in Christ forever.”
  - \_\_\_\_\_: *There will be days when we are under spiritual attack.*
    - At the end of Romans 8, Paul argues: “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?” (vv. 33–34a). By God’s grace, justification protects and defends the believer against any accusation of the enemy. When Satan attacks and accuses us, when he tries to knock out the foundation upon which we are firmly planted, when he tries to convince us that our sins are too great, or when he says, “God has surely not said you are actually saved,” let us remind ourselves, with the authority of Scripture: “God has declared me righteous. I have nothing to offer or give to God, for there is nothing righteous inherently within me, but God is the One who justifies; who can condemn?”
  - \_\_\_\_\_: *There will be days when we are tempted by spiritual pride.*
    - In Ephesians 2:8–9, Paul declares that it is “by grace [we] have been saved through faith. And this is not [our] own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” When we properly grasp what God has done for us, there is no room for pride. In fact, our response should be quite the opposite. Knowing that God has removed our sins, placed our sins on His own Son, imputed His Son’s righteousness to our accounts, and declared us righteous through the merit of His Son should humble our hearts like no other truth on this earth.
  - \_\_\_\_\_: *This is God’s will for us everyday.*
    - Knowing that justification by faith is apart from works, that justification is a gift of God, and that we are pardoned, declared righteous, and adopted into the family of God should generate within us a heart of eternal thankfulness. This thankfulness then translates into a life of consistent worship of the God, who, in His infinite wisdom, devised a way that depraved sinners might be accepted in the Beloved.
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\*For full descriptions of these responses to our understanding of the Doctrine of Justification, go to [tabletalkmagazine.com](http://tabletalkmagazine.com), *Practical Applications of the Doctrine of Justification*, January 18, 2019, by Nate Pickowicz. Nate Pickowicz is pastor of Harvest Bible Church in Gilmanton Iron Works, N.H. He is the author of *Why We're Protestant: An Introduction to the Five Solas of the Reformation* and *Reviving New England: The Key to Revitalizing Post-Christian America*.

## Looking ahead: Adoption

You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator.

In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one's holy Father.

If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father.

If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all.

For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. 'Father' is the Christian name for God.

Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption...The truth of adoption gives us the deepest insights that the New Testament affords into the greatness of God's love.

— J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pp 201-202

"To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater...God takes us into his family and fellowship—he establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are the heart of the relationship." (J.I. Packer) So let me ask you, do the words closeness, affection, and generosity describe your perception of God and your experience with God? If not, I recommend you restrict your spiritual diet for a season to the doctrine of adoption so that you might know the closeness of God, experience the affection of God, and marvel at the generosity of God.

C.J. Mahaney