

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 8: JUSTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective and includes time for discussion of these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This set of lessons is ideal for use with discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these ideas.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians or those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christian salvation. Those who are preparing for evangelism and discipleship may benefit from discussion of these ideas. These lessons assume the participant has made a decision to follow Jesus and wants to explore Christianity further.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help the leader prepare for the lessons and can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 8: JUSTIFICATION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to gain a better understanding of the term justification so that participants can see themselves as holy and righteous before God.

LEADER'S NOTE

Justification is a legal term. It allows us to be made without guilt in the eyes of God -only God, who is our judge, can pronounce us justified. We cannot justify ourselves before Him, we cannot make it happen on our own. The worldview of your participants and the legal, social, and political environment they live in will affect how they see this concept. You may wish to focus on a debt being paid on their behalf or use a different picture to describe this process. Be sensitive to the understanding and experiences of participants. Justification is an exciting process. While regeneration makes us new and saves us from the power of sin, justification saves us from the consequence of sin – the punishment of God!

INTRODUCTION

(Select two or three of the following questions)

- ❖ When you were a child, did you ever feel guilty about something you did?
- ❖ When you know you have wronged someone, what steps do you take to make the relationship right? Can you free yourself of regret once the relationship has been restored?
- ❖ Have feelings of guilt ever kept you from drawing near to God in prayer, or fellowship with other believers?
- ❖ Have you ever needed someone's help to accomplish something you could not do on your own? What were the circumstances, and what are your feelings towards that person now?



STUDY

TEACH

- ❖ **What Is Justification?** Start off the lesson with a story. Elaborate on this or make it personal to your community.
 - *Imagine that you owed a great debt to someone you could not pay. You were called to a meeting and knew that meeting would be about what you owed. When you get to the meeting you immediately ask to be forgiven of the debt and confess your inability to pay. Instead of being told of the consequences, you are told your debt is forgiven because someone had already come to pay it on your behalf. This is an illustration of justification. Justification is an acquittal of charges. Through the divine act of justification, God announces that those who have faith in Christ Jesus are made right or righteous before Him. This righteousness comes not through our acts, but rather through His grace.*

- ❖ **Why Is Justification Necessary?**
 - Justification is necessary because God is perfectly just. A judge cannot call himself a good judge if he lets all those who commit crimes go free. Neither can God be called righteous if there has been no sacrifice or payment for sin.
 - As imperfect people it is impossible to make ourselves perfect before God. But God came up with the perfect sacrifice, or payment for our sins, not because we deserve it but because God is loving and merciful. *Read and explain how the following verses illustrate justification:*
 - [Romans 3:21-26](#)
 - [1 John 1:7-10](#)
 - [Ephesians 1:7](#)

- ❖ **God's View of the Justified Person:** We do not receive justification because we deserve it or because we have earned it, we receive it as a gift through faith. It is God's way of bringing us back into relationship with Him because of His love for us.

TASK

As one group, or in smaller groups, ask participants to:

- Read the following verses and describe how God views the justified person:
 - [Romans 4:4-5](#)
 - [Psalm 145:8](#)
 - [Psalm 103:8-11](#)
 - [1 John 1:9](#)
 - [Acts 3:19](#)
 - [Hebrews 10:17](#)
- How does this compare to how God views the sinner? What has changed in us when we are justified?



TEACH

❖ What About Future Sin?

- Since we have been justified for all of our sins before God, are we to keep on sinning? The answer to that question is no, but we are human so we will sin again. However, God's Spirit in us frees us from the power sin has over us. We are now able to resist sin and choose to do good instead (Romans 6:1-2).
- The faith that we possess, which allows us to be justified, will spur us on to good works. One who has been born again and justified before God will not want to continue in their sinful ways. Although we are not saved by our good works (rather by faith and God's grace), our good works are a natural result of the faith we possess and our desire to become more like Christ. We will be quick to ask forgiveness of sins that we commit as a Christian because sin will not be the desire of our heart.
- Justification doesn't need to be repeated. We are justified one time, when we are saved, and that declares us righteous forever in His eyes. (Romans 8:29-30).
- Read James 2:14-26 and consider the following:
 - Someone who has faith will know what God wants them to do and will do it.
 - Through our works, our faith is evident to others.
 - We do good works because we believe in God and understand His commands.
 - Without faith, works mean nothing.
 - Someone can do good works without having faith, but it is our faith that leads us to become born again in Christ Jesus and justified through His blood.
- Through justification we are made righteous (in right standing, without guilt) before God and can enjoy a healed relationship and peace with God (Romans 5:1).

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Read Romans 5:1. What is our basis for peace with God? How is it possible for sinners to have peace with God? *Use your understanding of regeneration and justification to explain.*
- ❖ How does a person receive justification?
- ❖ Do you have a hard time seeing yourself as sinless and justified before God? What can you do to remind yourself of the freedom you've received from your sins? Is there a verse from today's lesson you can memorize?
- ❖ How can you explain the concept of justification to those of another worldview?



PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Thank God that we have received justification because of our faith in Christ. Thank God for his grace towards us by the blood of Jesus. Ask God that participants would remember their forgiven state and no longer dwell on guilt or shame, but rather live in the freedom Jesus paid for on their behalf.