

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 8: JUSTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

This Study Guide is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled *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 discussing these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This module is ideal to use when discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these concepts.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 8: JUSTIFICATION

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to gain a better understanding of the term justification. Justification has to do with our standing before God. God offers us justification, in other words He frees us from our guilt. We can receive this gift and be confident that we are no longer condemned by God.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Justification is a legal term. In the spiritual realm it allows us to be free of 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. Your worldview will affect how you see this concept. Picture a list of crimes you have committed and someone offering to wipe that list clean so you do not have to face a judge or the prison sentence you deserve. Or envision a large monetary debt that you owe which someone wants to pay on your behalf. 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!

GETTING STARTED

1. 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?

2. Have feelings of guilt ever kept you from drawing near to God in prayer, or fellowship with other believers?



STUDY

- ❖ **WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION:** Imagine that you owed a great debt to someone you could not pay. You were called to a meeting 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 facing the consequences, you are told that 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 doesn't come through anything we have done, 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	

We do not receive justification because we deserve it or because we have earned it, but 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.

- ❖ **WHY IS JUSTIFICATION POSSIBLE?** We are not innocent – the Bible makes that clear. Each of us has committed sins against God, others, and God's creation. So how can we have our sins simply erased? Is there anything we can do to buy freedom from our sins?
 - Look up the following verses and find out why we can be justified, and what we need to do or not do to be justified:

Galatians 2:16-17	
Romans 3:28	



Romans 5:1-21	
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- Jesus was the perfect sacrifice and took the penalty of sin for us. God now looks upon believers as though they had never sinned. When we receive salvation, we receive a clean slate and a debt-free standing before God. Isn't that incredibly good news? Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about how God views the justified person.

Hebrews 10:17	
Psalms 103:8-11	
1 John 1:9	

❖ **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 since we are human we will sometimes sin again. When we do, we should repent and confess our sins to God, as we saw above in 1 John 1:9. God's Spirit in us frees us from the power sin has over us, so we are now able to resist sin and choose to do good instead (Romans 6:1-2).

Our justification through faith 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 isn't a recurring event. It is irrevocable, which means that Christ's sacrifice enables us to seek His forgiveness for past, present, and future sins. What does the Bible tell us in [Romans 8:29-30](#)?

- Read [James 2:14-26](#). Why does a person who is justified do good works? Of what value are these good works without faith?

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. Someone can do good works without having faith, but it is important to understand that without faith, works mean nothing and cannot please God! Through justification we are made righteous (in right standing, without guilt) before God and can enjoy a healed relationship and peace with God.

IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Through the divine act of justification, God announces that those who have faith in Christ Jesus are made righteous before Him.
- ❖ Justification is necessary because God is perfectly just and requires a payment or sacrifice to be made for sin.
- ❖ Jesus Christ is the perfect substitute for our sins, and His death is payment for those who have faith in Him.
- ❖ Since we as Christians have been justified for our sins before God, it is not licence to keep on sinning. God's power frees us from the bondage of sin, and we are now able to resist sin and choose to do good.
- ❖ Through justification we are made righteous before God and can enjoy a healed relationship with Him.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. 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.

2. 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?