



## Is It Faith or Works That Gets Us to Heaven? (Part II)

**Romans 5:1:** (NASB) *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

**James 2:24:** (NASB) *You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

In Part I of this two-part series, we discovered several very clear, scriptural statements and lines of reasoning that showed us we are justified by faith. Having established that, the most obvious next question is, “What about works?” How does the Bible define “works of faith”? Is it a “work” of faith to go to church or is that just a result of faith? Is financially contributing to your church considered a work of faith, or is it just a good thing to do? Are there certain works every Christian is required to do, or is it all based on who you are? To what degree is our pathway to heaven based on works? How do we know if we are doing enough?



There are three parts to our justification:



**Romans 8:33:** (NASB) *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;*



**Romans 5:1:** (NASB) *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*



**James 2:24:** (NASB) *You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

We put these three parts in this specific order because we understand the Scriptures teach that God is the source of **justification**, so God does justify. Our faith has to come into play when God is working with us, and then our works will follow.

**Habakkuk 2:4:** (KJV) *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the **just** <6662> shall live by his faith.*

**Just:** Strong's #6662 *tsaddiyq*; from #6663; just

We asked a basic question in Part I: Who are the just?

In the **Old Testament**, the just were those individuals who had deep faith and listened to and walked with God. They served Him with their might, no matter what the cost. Once God's Law (the Ten Commandments, plus many other rules) was given to the people, it was a “justifier,” but it gave only temporary



righteousness. Animal sacrifices were reminders of their inherent sinfulness and inability to be righteous on their own. As we mentioned in Part I, it was like having a one-year warranty on parts and labor. They were covered for their sins for the upcoming year.

In the **New Testament**, justification is a one-time event for each individual. It is the acquitting, the making right of an individual who was previously in the wrong. It is not earned; it is a gift.

**Justification:** Strong's #1347 *dikaiosis*; from #1344; acquittal (for Christ's sake)

There are similarities and differences between the Old and New Testament justification as we discussed in Part I. In the New Testament, for the followers of Jesus the word justification means a true acquittal. Sins are actually taken away and the charges released, versus that one-year warranty picture in the Old Testament, referred to as reckoned justification, or someone being counted as justified.

Romans 3:24-25: (KJV) <sup>24</sup>Being **justified** <1344> freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup>Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (satisfaction) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

The “just” in the New Testament are those to whom salvation has been applied. They have been called and chosen to follow Jesus.

The sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus provide actual acquittal for our sins.

**What happens to us in that state of being justified?**

2 Corinthians 5:17: (NASB) *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Becoming a *new creature* became possible in the New Testament.

recap  
recap



**First, God's salvation plan had to be in place:**

1 Peter 1:20: (NASB) *For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.*



**Second, Jesus had to do his part by being obedient and dying on the cross. He was resurrected as a divine being:**

Philippians 2:8-9: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,



**Third, God has to call out followers of Jesus:**

John 6:44: (NASB) *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*



**Fourth, the prospective followers must, by faith, answer that call:**

Luke 9:23-24: (NASB) <sup>23</sup>And he was saying to them all, *If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it.*



**Fifth, God must accept that answer - this is the event of justification, where God answers and gives His holy spirit, meaning His power and influence, to the individual:**

1 John 3:2: (KJV) *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

### Where do WORKS fit in?

James 2:20: (KJV) *<sup>20</sup>But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

Saying *faith without works is dead* is a strong statement. James must have had good reason to say this.

**If the “just” live by faith, how is it possible for them to live by works?  
Isn't that a contradiction?**

All of this comes down to being acceptable before God. While faith is our foundation, our works are part of its testing. Noah was tested, Job was tested, Abraham was tested, Moses was tested, and Daniel was tested. John the Baptist was tested, Jesus was tested, and the apostles were tested. Stephen and Timothy were both tested. What would ever make us think we will not be tested?

There is no one that was righteous before God who had not been tested. What did their tests do? They allowed them to prove their faith. For Christians, this is ALL built around one simple, yet powerful concept - self-denial!



The concept for self-denial in Christianity has become lost. There are many preachers who talk about the idea that God wants us to pray, be faithful and have everything we want. Some preach about abundance. They might have a comforting attitude and get very excited and enthusiastic, but they are NOT teaching us that we have to deny ourselves. To follow in Jesus' footsteps is to do what Jesus did. THAT is what faith and works are all about.

### What role do works play:

James 2:18-19: (KJV) *<sup>18</sup>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.<sup>19</sup>Thou **believest** <4100> that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

**Believe:** Strong's #4100 *pisteuo*; from #4102; to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), i.e credit; by implication, to entrust (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ)

If the devils believe and tremble, obviously belief is not enough. New Testament justification is NOT a guaranteed ticket to heaven. Not only is work required, but there is also the challenge of keeping that justification untarnished.

*Believe* in this verse is the verb form of the New Testament word for *faith*. This is a powerful proof that “faith” and “belief” (while important) are not the complete story for Christians.



What about the phrase we all have heard: *once saved, always saved*? It should be - *once saved, now get to work!*

1 John 2:1: (NASB) *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;*

We will address verse 2 at the end of the podcast.

In this Christian age, being justified now gives us the privilege to have Jesus himself advocate for us. He supports us in our struggles to overcome our sinful feelings, thoughts and actions.

God ↔ Jesus = Advocate

*An advocate is someone who sits with you on your side and pleads your cause before a judge.*

Christian



2 Corinthians 5:17: (NASB) *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Why do we need Jesus as an advocate if we, as new creatures, are justified and can deal with God directly as a son, which we discussed a great deal in Part I?

The advocate is *the reason we are sons*. Jesus' robe of righteousness covers us. Even though we are justified, we are still human and sinful. We have to "stay under" that robe in order to have a relationship with God. This is why we pray "In Jesus' name, Amen."

**The WORKS of the justified Christian:** *The work of being the salt of the earth!*



Matthew 5:13-16: (NASB) *<sup>13</sup>You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.*

Salt is a preservative and adds flavor. *If the salt has become tasteless, it loses the ability to be a preservative. Just like salt, we can lose saltiness - the aspect of righteousness, integrity and godliness in the world around us.*

**The WORKS of the justified Christian:** *The work of being the light of the world.*



*<sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup>nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

We are supposed to be the light just as we are supposed to be the salt.





These are two “macro-level” works, the big picture of what our works should produce. The following are the supporting details of that big picture.

**Maintaining such a responsibility can be tested in subtle ways at first and then grow into trouble, if we are not paying attention:**

**Hebrews 12:11-17:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup>Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Here we have two externally visible challenges - being peacemakers and walking the right path. We need to make sure we maintain our physical health and well-being to continue the work to keep our paths straight. Sometimes we need to put up walls and barriers where we have weaknesses so we can stay on the right path. But it takes work!

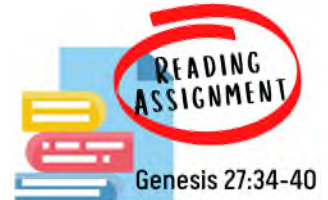
Next, we have the internal, invisible challenges. These are the most dangerous.



**The story of Jacob and Esau:**

<sup>15</sup>See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; <sup>16</sup>that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Esau's selling of his birthright is a strong lesson for us. His deeply flawed character caused him to sell his birthright as the firstborn son for physical nourishment. There was no going back on this. He acted in the passion of the moment.



*That no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble* - these are some of the internal challenges we have because we never see those roots until they break through the ground. Once bitterness overcomes us, it is too late. Remember, once something visibly breaks through the ground, it is no longer little. This is why the Apostle Paul talks about roots of bitterness that defile a man. Esau did not have a godly character and permanently sold his birthright.

Think about how the Bible refers to the true followers of Jesus as the church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23). Can we sell OUR birthright? This is an important picture. The consequences of rejecting our justification are even more serious!

Jesus' sacrifice is applied to each and every human life just once. For his footstep followers, that application is now before his kingdom is established. In the kingdom, Jesus' sacrifice will be applied to the rest of mankind.



We previously read Habakkuk 2:4 where we first see the phrase, *the just shall live by faith*. The Apostle Paul quotes this three times. In Hebrews 10:38 he adds, *but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*. Drawing back means we begin to live according to the world's ways and principles. It comes on gradually and might start with being discontent, then complaining, and feeling like we are missing out on being able to act and think like those around us. Here the apostle warns that we must be careful to maintain our faith, otherwise the possibility we could fall away is very real.



"Once in grace, always in grace" is not scriptural. We have to form our beliefs based on the Scriptures, not on tradition.

**For those of us (the called-out ones) who receive this gift now, we must develop it faithfully:**

Matthew 12:31-32: (NASB) <sup>31</sup>Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the spirit shall not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup>Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Sin has consequences!

For example, when the scribes and Pharisees come back to life in the kingdom, they are going to have to answer for the things they did to Jesus. Repentance will start them on the right path.

Hebrews 6:4-6: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the holy spirit, <sup>5</sup>and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come (those who have been enlightened, received the holy spirit and have become a new creature), <sup>6</sup>and then have fallen away (to fall in, into or away, to fail), it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the son of God and put him to open shame.



If someone walks away from the acquittal (justification) they received due to Jesus' ransom - after God gave them His spirit - there will be no resurrection from death for them.

In Part I of this series, we mentioned that there are four basic questions whose answers separate the Christian denominations on this faith versus works topic:



1. Is justification an event or a process? We said it was an event.
2. Is justification put into effect by divine action alone, by divine and human action together or by human action alone? By divine action. It is God's acceptance of our willingness to walk in Jesus' footsteps.

Listen to Part I for more on the first two questions.

3. Can justification be lost?

We receive a lot of questions about what constitutes blasphemy against the holy spirit and what it means to fall away. Is going to church as a child but not as an adult "falling away"? Is that person doomed?



The answer is definitely NO, because the begetting of the holy spirit is a very precise action on the part of God. Remember, we are **called by God** through Jesus. Our faith has to **respond to that call** by God through Jesus. It is only when **God accepts** our willingness to follow Jesus that God gives us His spirit. Only those who have received the holy spirit are liable to the second death. But we cannot accidentally fall away. This would take a very deliberate action on the part of the spirit-begotten individual.

Romans 6:23: (KJV) *for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

As Satan himself failed God, so it can happen to those who have experienced the begetting of God's spirit. It is never an accident when an enlightened one fails Him; it is always a clear, conscious and defined intention.



Revelation 2:10: (KJV) *...be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.*

There would be no reason to make that caveat of *unto death* if there was no risk of losing justification. God is not accepting those who were once faithful. He desires to have those who were once faithful, who are later faithful and who are always faithful.

We are establishing the need for true Christian works.

**The WORKS**  
of the justified Christian:

*The work of being sober in the realization that this life is MY opportunity for eternal life.*

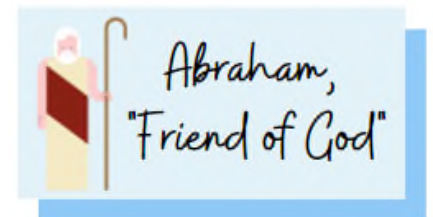
We need to do something with this opportunity.

Up to this point we have gloried in the gift of justification. Let us now see it as a sober responsibility as well.

**So far, we have seen big picture works to strengthen our faith.  
What about getting more specific?**

The details of our works are where this battle is won or lost. We cannot stress enough that faith is the vital foundation upon which our works are to be built. As we will see in the next verses of James 2, the kind of works that God desires are specific to His purposes, not our own.

James 2:18-22: (KJV) *<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. <sup>20</sup>But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? <sup>22</sup>Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*



We know Abraham was counted as righteous because of his faith, but look at what he did as a result. He acted; his faith was alive.



**James 2:23-24:** (KJV) <sup>23</sup>And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. <sup>24</sup>Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

*And not by faith only - not works **instead of** faith; it is works **because of** faith.*

Speaking of Abraham, in Part I we said no one who lived prior to Jesus is in heaven. So, where are they? Abraham and the others are in the grave, sleeping in death, awaiting their resurrection. They will be raised on earth, not in heaven, as the way of heaven was not opened until Jesus was resurrected first. They were gloriously faithful and will be in positions of honor. (See Hebrews 11 for more.)

Acts of godly works are acts of godly faith. We have to do what godly faith drives us towards. If we are a son, we should act like one and take over our Father's business!

**1 John 3:2:** (KJV) *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

**For us, sonship is already in place, but there is more to come. This implies work:**

**Ephesians 1:14:** (WEY) *that spirit being a pledge and foretaste of our inheritance, in anticipation of its full redemption - the inheritance which he has purchased to be specially his for the extolling of His glory.*

*This full redemption implies the faith by which we have received justification is not complete on its own - we have to do something to develop it.*

The fourth and final main question that separates Christian denominations on the faith versus works issue is:



4. What is the relationship between justification and sanctification, the process whereby sinners become righteous and are enabled by the holy spirit to then live lives pleasing to God?

We do not believe a thoroughly faithful Christian can separate the two. We cannot have one without the other. They are like two sides of the same coin.

Two aspects of:

*"The just shall live by faith"*



1. In the context of "justification by faith," justification at the time we make that commitment to follow Jesus and receive the gift of the holy spirit, and
2. On a daily basis, our sanctification (being set apart) that requires works.





Our holy purpose is to obey the word and will of God. We must have a character transformation, become godly and raise ourselves to a higher level.

The whole idea of works is the *application* of sanctification. We are not set apart for a holy purpose simply by faith in and redemption by the ransom.

We are continually  
**SET APART**   
 by what we DO with our redemption.

Without the godly actions of a sanctified life, our faith in our redemption becomes meaningless.

The following are several examples of the work that contributes to our justified state:

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*



**The WORKS of the justified Christian:**  The work of presenting my life as my sacrifice. I must present it in an acceptable and holy way. 

<sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.





Katie wrote on our Facebook page: My faith and belief in Christ makes me want to be more like him, thus encouraging me to do Christlike works. I think when I see the blessings that come from my obedience and works, my faith in Christ and God is strengthened.

She wants to work hard at being like Jesus, which blesses her and drives her to work harder.

**The WORKS of the justified Christian:**  The work of renewing my mind daily. I must labor to have God's influence override any earthborn influence in all my thinking and decisions. 

James 1:12: (NASB) *Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

**The WORKS of the justified Christian:**  The work of perseverance while under duress. I must resolve to stay the course whatever may come my way, for God's providence is guiding me. 



I have an ongoing experience working with a person in Christ who is undergoing some really hard trials. This individual has been through a lot already in life. If I were the one prescribing the trials, I would have said this is too difficult. God didn't see it that way and put a whole lot on their plate. In talking with them every day for many days, there has been a sense of foreboding and difficulty. In God's providence, just literally today in our conversation, I saw a total transformation in their ability to grab ahold of the trial and say, "I'm getting this now and can see through the difficulty to the blessing." It is incredible! It is perseverance while under duress. This individual is executing one of those important works of faith.

**1 Corinthians 10:13:** (NASB) *No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

**2 Timothy 2:14-15:** (NASB) *<sup>14</sup>Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. <sup>15</sup>Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

### The **WORKS** of the justified Christian:

The work of being diligent in understanding and applying God's Word. I must not only seek to understand the Scriptures as well as I can, but I must also use what I learn in a God-honoring way.

As we are able, we need to be our best self in our sanctified service. Just like God said to Moses in Exodus 4:2 - *What is that in thy hand?* We need to do what we can do and not compare ourselves to others.

Our best self is not very good, but it is the best we have to offer. God, through Jesus, takes that messy offering and makes it valuable to Him. I am not valuable to Him on my own, but I am through Jesus, through the sanctification that comes from justification. We have to apply ourselves.

**1 Corinthians 12:14-19:** (NASB) *<sup>14</sup>For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot says, because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear says, because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. <sup>19</sup>If they were all one member, where would the body be?*

This is a great lesson on playing our part that God has given us to fulfill, no matter what.

### The **WORKS** of the justified Christian:

The work of accepting and embracing the body of Christ and my part in it. Whether I am out front or unseen, I am privileged to play a small role in a big picture.



Whatever God has called us to do, we should embrace it and say thank you for whatever part He has given us.



We started this podcast by asking what constitutes a work of faith. Is going to church or contributing financially to our church a work of faith? Yes, but these are basic works of faith. (We do not believe the New Testament teaches tithing, but that the individual should contribute as they see fit.) More important is to play the role we have been given, being active, being submissive to the will of God, persevering under the duress of our experiences, applying God's word and so on. Going to services and contributing financially to the good works done by the congregation are good things, but not something to rest in as the only works that are important. We need to apply ourselves much more because the gift we are given is massive compared to what and who we are.

Living a life of faith is actually living a life of hard and focused work! It is NOT easy street, but it is a privileged life.

**What does a Christian life look like when spiritual works are in place?  
What is the end result?**

With spiritual works in place that are thoroughly motivated by faith in our justification, this Christian life looks like sacrifice, work and trials. It embodies effort and perseverance. But we cannot forget it is also the most blessed and privileged life any human being could ever dream of!

#### **A few more examples of the works of a true Christian:**

**1 Peter 3:13-17:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>*Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; <sup>16</sup>and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

*Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness - our blessing is not always in the here and now. Many of the blessings we will realize will be eternal, and we will only see them in the future. Our blessings will be bigger than we can ever imagine. But we are also blessed now beyond measure, in the peace and joy and grounded certainty we have in knowing our Savior and God's plan for the future.*

**The WORKS  
of the justified Christian:**

**The work of maintaining a spiritually-based conscience and reverently standing for godly principles when I am called upon.**

**Even if it means suffering, representing Jesus in my daily experiences is the most important thing.**



*Faith without works is dead.* Being able to stand for righteousness - not worldly righteousness or political righteousness but godly righteousness - is what our lives are about. Our efforts should be toward being reverent and humble, as this is how Jesus lived his life.





### A parable about working with what we are given:

**Matthew 25:14-18:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>*For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup>Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup>But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

God matches our opportunities to our talents if we are looking. This parable is about producing something out of whatever God gives us. It is not about money; it is about magnifying the opportunities opened to us. We are bound to do this! As God gives us these blessings and opportunities, we *must* do something with them.

**The WORKS of the justified Christian:**

The work of being diligent in using what Jesus has given me. The human tendency is to minimize the importance of what I am given when it is comparatively small.



**However, what I am given is exactly what I am supposed to be diligent with!**

We can find comfort in God matching our opportunities with our talents. This takes watching and praying. As we use those talents, God can develop even greater ones within us. There is a powerful life lesson in being stretched beyond our comfort zone in the service of God. If we allow Him to stretch us, He will teach us how to do more than we ever thought possible. But we have to be willing to do the work.



After 22 years of broadcasting Christian Questions, I can safely say that we have been stretched many, many times. I tell you; I am the most blessed person I know. One of the reasons is because there have been many times when I have looked at the work and it was completely overwhelming, and yet God saw us through again and again. Once you get through the tunnel and look back, you realize it was providence. This gives you stronger faith. It doesn't necessarily make it any easier, but it grants greater blessings as you go on.



**Now, what are the results? What does this bring us? Let's put some of these pieces together:**

**Revelation 17:14:** (NASB) *These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with him are the called and chosen and faithful.*

Throughout these two podcasts, we have been saying that God has to call the Christian. The individual then needs to answer that call. At that point, God chooses to accept the individual - this is where justification comes in. The Christian then needs to do the works of faith that show he is faithful to what he has been given.





The expression “having a living faith” means our faith will show through our

actions and should drive our works. Just works are meaningless if what is behind them is empty. Remember in Matthew 23:27 when Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites and said they were like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead bones? We *do not* want to be like that!

Once faithful, what do I do with the results of being justified by faith and developed through works? I will do what I was called to do.

What does this mean? **We commit ourselves to the true gospel message.**

**This truth comes out in a simple way:**

1 Timothy 2:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.*

God wants all men to be saved, and God does not have baseless wishes. He put His plan in place with Jesus as the *mediator* between God and men who will be resurrected in the earthly kingdom yet to come. (This differs from Jesus as the *advocate* for the called-out ones in this age.)

**We need to gratefully work through our own issues right now**, realizing that the unbelieving world will also have their opportunity to work through their sins and issues in the future.

**As called-out ones, we need to work on ours now, and the world will work on theirs later:**

1 John 2:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he himself is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

**We must focus on the lessons we have been given about reconciliation**, knowing we will play a part of reconciling the world to God in the future Day of Judgment. Jesus is our advocate and the propitiation (satisfaction), not only for the sins of the justified Christian, but for the sins of everybody else! The world has the opportunity to also be justified later. It is important to note there is a difference between how salvation works for these called-out ones we have been discussing - these footstep followers of Jesus - and the “everybody else,” the rest of the Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, other religions, and even the atheists.

The results of a justified Christian life:  
**CALLED CHOSEN FAITHFUL**

A **living** faith has to be cared for and nourished by doing godly works in His way and in His time.





**We are being tested now so that we can play a part, have a ministry, in the reconciliation of the billions in the Day of Judgment:**

**2 Corinthians 5:17-19:** (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup>Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Do we understand the power of this? We have been reconciled, AND we have been given *the ministry of reconciliation*. We are told of the reconciliation work - this is the GOOD NEWS TO ALL PEOPLE that was told when Jesus was born. This is it and we get to be a part of it!

*The results of a justified Christian life:*  
**My present gift of reconciliation - and my faithfulness to it -**  
**opens the grace of a heavenly home with Jesus.**  
**It also affords me the unique privilege of**  
**participating in the reconciliation opportunity for all unbelievers**  
**to have eternal earthy life!**

Think of this ministry as a chance to rehabilitate the world. If faithful unto death, we will help rehabilitate the sick world out from under the influence of Satan. This is a wonderful motivation!

This is the biggest work in all of human history. We get to be a part of the massive workforce with Jesus to help restore mankind and bring all things back into harmony with God. A perfect earth - what an overwhelming honor to be part of this work.

God wants us to not only just be faithful in the here and now, but He wants us to be trustworthy so later He can rely on us to do the incredible work of rehabilitation/reconciliation to return the world back to order.

**When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he spoke of this:**

**Matthew 6:10:** (NASB) *Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

God justifies us, faith justifies us, works justify us, and now we see how they all work together. We cannot have one without the other two. The result is that everyone, either now or later, will have Jesus' ransom given as a personal gift for their lives. It is up to each one as to what we do with it. For us here and now, is it faith or works which get us to heaven? Yes, it is! All of this happens by God's grace and by Jesus' ransom sacrifice. How privileged we are - now GET TO WORK!

***So, is it faith or works that gets us to heaven?***  
***For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie) and Christian Questions...***  
***Think about it...!***



Join us next week for our podcast on December 21, 2020  
Ep. 1157: How Do We keep Jesus at the Center of Christmas?

Christian Questions Weekly  
Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and  
Study Questions

Text  
**CQREWIND**  
to **22828** to get started.



### Bonus Material and Study Questions

***Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle.***  
— *Napoleon Hill*

**Let's briefly look at the "just" of the Old Testament - notice the works:**

**Hebrews 11:32-38:** (NASB) <sup>32</sup>And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup>who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup>Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; <sup>36</sup>and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated <sup>38</sup>(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

**One other example of the work of the faithful:**

**Luke 19:11-13:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. <sup>12</sup>So he said, a nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. <sup>13</sup>And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, Do business with this until I come back.

**Another look at the Old Testament verse that opens the door of understanding:**

**Habakkuk 2:2-4:** (KJV) <sup>2</sup>And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. <sup>3</sup>For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. <sup>4</sup>Behold, his soul which is lifted up (referring to the Chaldeans of that time and represents unbelievers in general) is not upright in him: but the **just <6662>** shall live by his faith.

Verse 4 is referenced **three times** in the New Testament:

**Whether you live in the age of Jewish favor or the age of the gospel, the common denominator is the just living by faith:**

**Romans 1:16-17:** (KJV) <sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.





In Romans 1:16-32, the apostle makes the argument that the Gentiles are under the condemnation of God. He argues that even though they had a knowledge of God in their conscience, they did not keep it and instead followed their own imagination. In Romans 1:17, *the just shall live by faith*, as if to counter any attempt to justify ourselves through our conscience. In other words, just thinking we are a good person does not justify us before God.

### **The Law and its accompanying works could not bring any imperfect man justification:**

2

Galatians 3:10-11: (KJV) <sup>10</sup>*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* <sup>11</sup>*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith.*

The apostle makes a slightly different argument. In the first half of this chapter, he reproves the Galatians by attempting to live by the Jewish Law. He shows them that no member of the fallen race could ever keep God's Law perfectly. Therefore, no member of the fallen race could ever be justified by the Law. In Galatians 3:11, he compares this inability of fallen man to be justified by the Law with the offer of justification by faith.



Check out our CQ Kids video:  
**WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW?**  
[christianquestions.com/youtube](http://christianquestions.com/youtube)

3

### **The age of the gospel is the age of an unmerited gift - we are not to draw back from this gift but are to embrace it instead:**

Hebrews 10:38-39: (KJV) <sup>38</sup>*Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* <sup>39</sup>*But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

What does it mean to draw back? How can we tell if that is the direction we are going? Once again, we must examine our faith. To *draw back* means to return to the world's point of view. We begin to live according to the world's ways and principles. We depend less on our spiritual eyesight and more on our physical eyesight. As we do, we stop seeing those invisible things that faith once made so clear.

This is not a sudden thing; it comes on gradually. It might begin with discontentment. Discontentment finds its expression in complaint. Complaint develops into opposition, and who knows where that will end? This is not the course we desire. It is a caution and part of the good fight of faith.

Here the Apostle warns us we must be careful to maintain our faith, otherwise the possibility we will fall away is very real. Habakkuk 2:4 points out that pride is the primary cause for that falling away. Pride and faith are opposites and cannot co-exist. We will have the one or the other. Therefore, in Hebrews 10:22, the apostle bids us to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Once we have begun to live by faith, and received the justification, let us continue to live by faith and continue to live our sanctification.



# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1156: Is It Faith or Works That Gets Us to Heaven? Part II

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1156-works/>

See:  CQ Rewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. How does New Testament justification work? What does the New Testament justified individual become? (see Romans 3:24-25, 2 Corinthians 5:17).
2. What are the five steps for someone to become a new creature? (1 Peter 1:20, Philippians 2:8-9, John 6:44, Luke 9:23-24, 1 John 3:2)
3. What part does *faith* play in our dedication to following Christ? What part do *works* play? Why is faith not enough? (James 2:18-20)
4. What is an *advocate*? Why do we need an advocate if our sins are wiped out by Jesus' sacrifice and we are justified as sons before the Father? To whom do we pray? Why? (1 John 2:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17)
5. What are the "big picture" works that should be present in our lives? Describe how these manifest themselves in our behavior and the way people see us. (Matthew 5:13-16)
6. What are the serious admonitions given in Hebrews 10:11-17? What are the preventative measures we can take to keep our paths straight with the Lord? (Hebrews 10:11-17, Genesis 27:34-40)
7. How can we lose our justification with God? What are the consequences of turning our backs on this unmerited gift? (Hebrews 10:38, Matthew 12:31-32, Hebrews 6:4-6, Revelation 2:10)
8. Are the "just" of the Old Testament in heaven with God right now? (Hebrews 11:39-40)
9. What are the examples given of the godly actions of a sanctified life? This is a LONG answer! There is one point for each Scripture listed: (Romans 12:1-2, James 1:12, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Timothy 2:14-15, 1 Corinthians 12:14-19, 1 Peter 3:13-17, Mathew 25:14-18)
10. What should motivate our works? What is a "living faith"? Why is this important? What are the results? (Revelation 17:14)
11. Who does God *want to be saved*? Why is this such a powerful statement? (1 Timothy 2:3-6)
12. If we feel we are called-out ones, when do we need to work out our "issues," our salvation? When is it time for the testing and proving of our faith? When will the rest of the world be tested and work through their issues? Why is it important to understand this timetable? (1 John 2:1-2)
13. If proven faithful, what does our future look like? What is our part to play? Are you ready for this incredible promise and expectation? (2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Matthew 6:10)