

BIBLE STUDY SERIES:

TRUSTING THE FATHER

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT A BEHAVIOUR!

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RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT A BEHAVIOUR!

INTENTION:

We should never believe that who we are is what we do.

As a believer, regardless of what you do, it cannot take away your God-Gifted Title of Righteous.

If you are a non-believer, you don't have to change your behaviour ("get right") before believing.

I. TOPIC:

We want to look at Righteousness, as well as Holiness and Sanctification.

For me, I grew up believing righteousness was my responsibility... that I had a duty to perform to a standard of righteousness. Yet, every time I tried to live a life never sinning (i.e. breaking an old-testament Law), I failed. And this failure always led to extreme feelings of self-disappointment, guilt, and shame. What I tried to do I did in the confidence of my own ability... confidence in my own flesh's ability to achieve it.

But righteousness is not some moral compass or means to achieve something; righteousness must be viewed as what it really is: a state of existence. This existence can never be achieved through our own means-and-methods, it can only manifest itself upon you in believing in Christ Jesus. When you believe and are "Born-Again", you are:

- Sanctified ([G37](#) – to be Holy; to purify by {reparations}: free from the guilt of sin – from [G40](#): Most Holy).
- Justified ([G1344](#) – to render righteous, to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous).

This Righteousness is gifted upon you, not because you "earned" it, but because you deserve it as a child of God! This is how much He truly Loves you—that He crowns you with righteousness and defines you as Holy. You are given these titles that cannot change based on your behaviour; as it is not based on what you do or don't do, but it is based on whom Jesus Christ is. Our behaviour cannot change that Jesus Christ is Holy and Righteous... for "as He is in this world, so are we" ([1 John 4:17](#)).

This is how we can see Christians falter in their behaviours, yet still seem blessed and cared for by the Lord. For we can live the most sinful life as a Born-Again believer and still experience the complete presence of the Lord in our life. Sin can never undo the titles of Righteousness and Holiness. We covered much of this in previous lessons regarding our already-forgiven sins of the flesh at the Cross; and the forgiven Sin of Unbelief at being Born-Again. As well as the three types of Christians Jesus spoke of with the parable of the seeds and sower ([Mark 4:1-20](#)).

As a non-believer (non-Christian), we can never reach a level of "right living" that will elevate us into heaven or some "higher plain of existence" with the Lord; nor can it bring about our salvation. The first mistake we make in life takes away any righteousness, which can never be undone—except by belief in Christ Jesus, inheriting His Righteousness.

And as Christians, we must never see our personal self as anything short of (less than) Righteous and Holy. Let us stop trying to achieve those through actions or inactions (of the flesh) when we already have been made them.

This is what we will see in Paul's life as he shares in [Philippians 3](#) (following). As a "Pharisee of Pharisees", he attempted salvation by self-righteousness through his flesh. But came to realize that his self-attempt was but worthless (garbage / dung) to the achievement of inheriting Christ's Righteousness.

II. READING: [Philippians 3:1-11](#) (AMP) {PoG}

Finally, my fellow believers, continue to rejoice and delight in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble for me, and it is a safeguard for you.

2 Look out for the dogs [the Judaizers, the legalists], look out for the troublemakers, look out for the false circumcision [those who claim circumcision is necessary for salvation]; 3 for we [who are born-again have been reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, set apart for His purpose and] are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory and take pride and exult in Christ Jesus and place no confidence [in what we have or who we are] in the flesh— 4 though I myself might have [some grounds for] confidence in the flesh [if I were pursuing salvation by works]. If anyone else thinks that he has reason to be confident in the flesh [that is, in his own efforts to achieve salvation], I have far more: 5 circumcised when I was eight days old, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews [an exemplary Hebrew]; as to the [observance of the] Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to my zeal [for Jewish tradition], a persecutor of the church; and as to righteousness [supposed right living] which [my fellow Jews believe] is in the Law, I proved myself blameless.

7 But whatever former things were gains to me [as I thought then], these things [once regarded as advancements in merit] I have come to consider as loss [absolutely worthless] for the sake of Christ [and the purpose which He has given my life]. 8 But more than that, I count everything as loss compared to the priceless privilege and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord [and of growing more deeply and thoroughly acquainted with Him—a joy unequalled]. For His sake I have lost everything, and I consider it all garbage, so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him [believing and relying on Him], not having any righteousness of my own derived from [my obedience to] the Law and its rituals, but [possessing] that [genuine righteousness] which comes through {the faith of Christ}, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 And this, so that I may know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely] and [in that same way experience] the power of His resurrection [which overflows and is active in believers], and [that I may share] the fellowship of His sufferings, by being continually conformed [inwardly into His likeness even] to His death [dying as He did]; 11 so that I may attain to the resurrection [that will raise me] from the dead.

III. RELATED VERSES AND QUESTIONS:

- A. Many of the opening lines in the letters of the New Testament contain the phrase “to the saints in”. This word saint does not refer to some individually-selected believers or higher-up Christians. This word saint is the word holy—the exact same word in the Greek: *hagios* ([G40](#)) – most holy. As a Born-Again believer, you have been Sanctified and are perpetually Most Holy!

[1 Corinthians 1:2](#) (AMPC) {PoG}

To the church (assembly) of God which is in Corinth, to those consecrated and purified and made holy {sanctified} in Christ Jesus, [who are] selected and called ~~{to be}~~ saints (God’s people), together with all those who in any place call upon and give honour to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

[Ephesians 1:1](#) (AMP)

Paul, an apostle (special messenger, personally chosen representative) of Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed), by the will of God [that is, by His purpose and choice], to the saints (God’s people) who are at Ephesus and are faithful and loyal and steadfast in Christ Jesus.

[Jude 1:1](#) (AMP) {PoG}

Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, [writes this letter],

To those who are {sanctified (~~God’s chosen ones, the elect~~)}, dearly loved by God the Father, and kept [secure and set apart] for Jesus Christ.

Question: Do you think and consider yourself as Holy (seeing yourself as a saint)?

Response:

- B. We personally cannot sanctify ourself (make ourself holy), it is only Christ Jesus that can (and did—by His Faith). No matter how much we do “good”, or how much we observe the Law (the doing or not doing of something), nothing we do or do not do can ever justify us. Even as we read in Philippians 3, Paul claims that his (our) self-attempt at achieving or maintaining righteousness is but garbage and dung (animal excrement).

[Galatians 2:16-21](#) (AMP) {PoG}

Yet we know that a man is not justified [and placed in right standing with God] by works of the Law, but [only] through {the faith of} [God's beloved Son,] Christ Jesus. And even we [as Jews] have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by {the faith of} Christ and not by works of the Law. By observing the Law no one will ever be justified [declared free of the guilt of sin and its penalty]. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified in Christ [by faith], we ourselves are found to be sinners, does that make Christ an advocate or promoter of our sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I [or anyone else should] rebuild [through word or by practice] what I once tore down [the belief that observing the Law is essential for salvation], I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the Law I died to the Law and its demands on me [because salvation is provided through the death and resurrection of Christ], so that I might [from now on] live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ [that is, in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the {flesh, I live by the faith of} the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21 I do not ignore or nullify the [gracious gift of the] grace of God [His amazing, unmerited favour], for if righteousness comes through [observing] the Law, then Christ died needlessly. [His suffering and death would have had no purpose whatsoever.]”

Question: If justification and righteousness are not through our actions / inactions (i.e., the Law), do you still find yourself trying to live a “righteous” life out of a fear that God is upset at you if you aren’t living a certain way?

Response:

- C. Our justification and righteousness are only through Christ Jesus in what He accomplished. The book of Hebrews shares that process done by Christ and how we as believers inherit this upon being Born-Again.

[Hebrews 2:9-11](#) (AMP)

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while [by taking on the limitations of humanity], crowned with glory and honour because of His suffering of death, so that by the grace of God [extended to sinners] He might experience death for [the sins of] everyone.

10 For it was fitting for God [that is, an act worthy of His divine nature] that He, for whose sake are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the author and founder of their salvation perfect through suffering [bringing to maturity the human experience necessary for Him to be perfectly equipped for His office as High Priest]. 11 Both Jesus who sanctifies and those who are sanctified [that is, spiritually transformed, made holy, and set apart for God's purpose] are all from one Father; for this reason He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

[Hebrews 10:10](#) (AMP)

And in accordance with this will [of God] we [who believe in the message of salvation] have been sanctified [that is, set apart as holy for God and His purposes] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed) once for all.

[Hebrews 10:14](#) (AMPC)

For by a single offering He has forever completely cleansed and perfected those who are consecrated and made holy.

Question: What does it mean to you that you have been sanctified once-and-for-all-time [that is, spiritually transformed, made holy, and set apart for God's purpose]? Can you lose it by your own actions / inactions; or is it completely dependent on what Christ has already done (and can't undo)?

Response:

- D. When we look at the word Holy, we must accept and acknowledge in our hearts that there is only one kind of Holy. This is not only what is and is defined by the Lord, but is the same Holy applied to us as Born-Again believers. As such, there are not varying types or levels of "holiness", there is only one Holy. So, when we are made Holy, it is the exact same Holiness that exists for God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We all (whether male/female, young/old, Jew/Gentile) share that same Holiness! We have the Spirit of God indwelling us (as His Holy Temple)—He could not do so if we did not have His Holiness; nor if it could not be maintained.

[Ephesians 1:3-4](#) (AMP)

Blessed and worthy of praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ, 4 just as [in His love] He chose us in Christ [actually selected us for Himself as His own] before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy [that is, consecrated, set apart for Him, purpose-driven] and blameless in His sight. In love.

[Colossians 1:19-23](#) (AMPC)

For it has pleased [the Father] that all the divine fullness (the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes) should dwell in Him permanently.

20 And God purposed that through (by the service, the intervention of) Him [the Son] all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, [the Father] made peace by means of the blood of His cross.

21 And although you at one time were estranged and alienated from Him and were of hostile attitude of mind in your wicked activities,

22 Yet now has [Christ, the Messiah] reconciled [you to God] in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you holy and faultless and irreproachable in His [the Father's] presence.

23 [And this He will do] provided that you continue to stay with and in the faith [in Christ], well-grounded and settled and steadfast, not shifting or moving away from the hope [which rests on and is inspired by] the glad tidings (the Gospel), which you heard and which has been preached [as being designed for and offered without restrictions] to every person under heaven, and of which [Gospel] I, Paul, became a minister.

[1 Corinthians 3:16-17](#) (AMP) {PoG}

Do you not know and understand that you [the church] are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells [permanently] in you [collectively and individually]? 17 If anyone destroys the temple of God [corrupting it with false doctrine], God will destroy the destroyer *{the defilement}*; for the temple of God is holy (sacred), and that is what you are.

Question: How is it that I am still Holy, even when I sin? And if your sin can't change your Holiness, what is (what defines / makes) your Holiness?

Response:

- E. Just as we are made Holy when we believe and are Born-Again, the same is true for Righteousness. This understanding that our own means-and-methods to try and obtain self-righteousness cannot in any way compare to the righteousness we receive from Christ Jesus. This is a free gift from Him—gifted out to anyone who wants it, but only manifest upon the people who chose to believe in Him.

[Romans 3:20-24](#) (AMPC) {PoG}

For no person will be justified (made righteous, acquitted, and judged acceptable) in His sight by observing the works prescribed by the Law. For [the real function of] the Law is to make men recognize and be conscious of sin [not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character].

21 But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets,

22 Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). {It is given out for everyone, and gets placed upon} all who believe. For there is no distinction,

23 Since all have sinned and are falling short of the honour and glory which God bestows and receives.

24 [All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favour and mercy), through the redemption which is [provided] in Christ Jesus.

Question: If a person is made righteous by believing in Christ Jesus, then why do we think it has to do with our behaviour?

Response:

- F. Since our right-standing with the Lord (as well as our holiness) are independent from our behaviours, it simplifies our life as believers (taking the religious worry out of sin). But, moreso than for believers, that Christ Jesus did the Righteousness and Holiness on our behalf (gifting it to us), it truly simplifies the process to actually believe on Him to be Born-Again. There is no requirement to “get your life right” before coming to Him; all the work is done for us—you just have to believe. It really is that simple: both to believe, and as living as a believer.

[John 3:16-18](#) (AMPC)

For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.

17 For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him.

18 He who believes in Him [who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him] is not judged [he who trusts in Him never comes up for judgment; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation—he incurs no damnation]; but he who does not believe (cleave to, rely on, trust in Him) is judged already [he has already been convicted and has already received his sentence] because he has not believed in and trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name.]

[Matthew 25:46](#) (AMP)

Then these [unbelieving people] will go away into eternal (unending) punishment, but those who are righteous and in right standing with God [will go, by His remarkable grace] into eternal (unending) life.”

Question: Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Do you feel you have to change your behaviour to be accepted first? Have you ever been told (or led to believe) that you need to change to avoid God's wrath or to go to heaven?

Response:

IV. FURTHER THOUGHT:

- A. When you study-out all the verses pertaining to righteousness (including sanctification and holiness), it may seem like it is talking about an action (often interpreted this way), instead of as an identity. Some of this can be seen in a few passages in [1 John](#)—of which we will tackle some definitions and *clarifications*.

Of note: when I mention the phrases “*that is to continue in belief*” and “*abides as righteous*”, I am referring to the state of remaining and continuing to be Born-Again (which happened upon believing in Christ Jesus). This is how John defines abiding:

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he {*abides*} in God” ([1 John 4:15](#)).

- Refer also: <https://cbadenhorst.blogspot.com/2019/06/forgiveness.html>

Bible Study Lesson 018 – Believing in Christ Jesus & Forgiveness of Sins

Bible Study Lesson 019 – Taking the Worry Out of Sin (Religiously)

Bible Study Lesson 040 – Final Judgement (WEB)

[1 John 2:1-2](#) (AMPC) {PoG}

My little children {*whom John discipled*}, I write you these things so that you may not violate God's law and sin {*miss the mark of Love*}. But if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate (One Who will intercede for us) with the Father {*someone who is a comforting reminder to us and the Father that Christ bore all our sins of the flesh*}—[it is] Jesus Christ [the all] righteous [upright, just, Who conforms to the Father's will in every purpose, thought, and action] {*that as believers, we have also obtained that same righteous title as Jesus Christ* ([1 John 4:17](#))}.

2 And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world {*believers and non-believers*}.

[1 John 2:26-29](#) (AMPC) {PoG}

I write this to you with reference to those who would deceive you [seduce and lead you astray].

27 But as for you, the anointing (the sacred appointment, the unction) *{the Holy Spirit}* which you received from Him abides [permanently] in you; [so] then you have no need that anyone should instruct you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning everything and is true and is no falsehood, so you must abide *{G3306: remain in a state or condition}* in (live in, never depart from) Him [being rooted in Him, knit to Him], just as [His anointing] has taught you [to do].

28 And now, little children, abide *{G3306: remain in a state or condition—that is to continue in belief}* (live, remain permanently) in Him, so that when He is made visible, we may have and enjoy perfect confidence (boldness, assurance) and not be ashamed and shrink from Him at His coming.

29 If you know (perceive and are sure) that He [Christ] is [absolutely] righteous [conforming to the Father's will in purpose, thought, and action], you may also know (be sure) that everyone who ~~*{does righteously (practices righteousness)}*~~ has been made and abides as righteous—*that is having been Born-Again—* [is therefore in like manner conformed to the divine will] is born (begotten) of Him [God].

1 John 3:4-9 {PoG}

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 Whoever abides [remains in a state or condition—*that is to continue in belief*] in Him does not sin [*that being the sin of not believing in Him*]. Whoever sins [*that being the sin of not believing in Him*] has neither seen Him nor known Him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who ~~*[practices righteousness]*~~ has been made and abides as righteous] is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 He who sins [*that is the sin of not believing in Him*] is of the devil, for the devil has sinned [*not believed God*] from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin [*that is the sin of not believing in Him*], for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin [*that is the sin of not believing in Him*], because he has been born of God [*Born Again*].

1 John 4:12-17 (AMP)

No one has seen God at any time. But if we love one another [with unselfish concern], God abides in us, and His love [the love that is His essence abides in us and] is completed and perfected in us. 13 By this we know [with confident assurance] that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given to us His [Holy] Spirit. 14 We [who were with Him in person] have seen and testify [as eye-witnesses] that the Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whoever confesses and acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know [by personal observation and experience], and have believed [with deep, consistent faith] the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides continually in him. 17 In this [union and fellowship with Him], love is completed and perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him]; because as He is, so are we in this world.

Thoughts: When we understand that righteousness is not something achieved or lost through action / inaction, we can acknowledge it as a state of existence. Our IDENTITY is righteous, and as a believer, we always (perpetually) abide in Him as righteous (exist as righteous). This same identity-title also applies to us regarding being Holy and Justified where none of our behaviours can change this reality.

Bible Study: Lesson 022



V. CONCLUDING REMARKS / NOTES:

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