

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

Common Faith that Justifies

Romans 4:9-17

Additional Passages: Galatians 2:11-21; Colossians 2:5-7; 1 Peter 1:3-9

Introduction: Paul continues in this passage in Romans 4 to emphasize that salvation comes by faith alone. The way someone is justified in God's sight is through faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor John also talked about how our tendency is to shift into an earning-based mindset even after we become Christians. It is easy to think that once we are saved, we must make up for our sin with redoubled efforts at good works in order to get back into God's favor. But this is not the case: God's love for us does not lessen when we sin because it is based fully on Christ's work on our behalf.

Questions

1. Which came first in Abraham's life, works or faith? How was Abraham saved?
2. How does Romans 4:11 say that we can be saved (Consider also Galatians 2:11-21)? What does this say about our identity in Christ, *how* God views us and treats us and *why* He views us and treats us that way?
3. Have you been baptized as a demonstration of your faith in Christ?
4. Do you engage in good works for the purpose of earning your way to God or as an expression of ongoing faith in Christ (Consider Colossians 2:5-7, 1 Peter 1:3-9)?
5. What happens when you base how you feel about yourself on the amount and quality of your good works instead of on Christ's already finished work?
6. How about when you base your good works on your already established identity as God's beloved son or daughter in Christ? How can you grow in having the second mindset?

"Grace becomes not only the means by which God once justified us, it is also the means by which we are continually encouraged and enabled to serve Him with undiminished delight. ... Whether our lives will be typified by joy or despondency depends largely on the perspective from which we view ourselves. Will earth's or heaven's perspective dominate our vision?"

~ Bryan Chapell, *Holiness by Grace: Delighting in the Joy That is our Strength*, p. 10.