



Pillar Truths Study Series

Righteousness

I. Introduction:

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIRST THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD
RIGHTEOUSNESS?

- Some think of being right with God
- Some consider it a call to be like God
- Others may view righteousness as a measuring rod for God's judgment (...doing the right thing so that you can go to heaven)

Q: DOES YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BRING YOU A FEELING
OF INADEQUACY AND FEAR OR A SENSE OF GRATITUDE AND JOY?

A. II Peter 1:1-4 A letter written by the Apostle Peter

"¹Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: ²Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." (NIV)

- Peter, who in following Jesus had a determination and vision for what he thought was righteousness. He worked SO hard to prove himself worthy and to be the "greatest". (*Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." NIV*)
- Peter, who most often was the first to try, the quickest to speak up and the one with the most ambition to gain the approval of Jesus. (*Matthew 6:33, "but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness..." Matthew 5:20, "unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." NIV*)
- Peter finally learned that God was not so much commanding us to be righteous. But rather, providing for us a way to be right with him because of HIS righteousness. *"To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours." (NIV)*



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B. A Key Scripture for Understanding Righteousness:

Romans 3:20-24

²⁰Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. ²¹But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” (NIV)

Romans 4:3-5

³What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”^[b] ⁴Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.” (NIV)

II. What is Righteousness and How does it bring fulfillment in my life?

A. Righteousness Defined:

1. Greek; DIKAIOSÚNE -Righteousness is the character or quality of being right or just. In Old English, this word was translated as “right-wise-ness”. It is used to denote the attribute of God and is essentially the same as His faithfulness or truthfulness consistent with His nature and being.
2. In a broad sense; the state of one who is in a condition acceptable to God or conforms to the revealed will of God.
3. Righteousness for us is a matter of imitating God (Eph 5:1-2) a likeness of God’s nature of faithfulness, truth and justice. It is not a matter of DOING everything right

B. Righteousness Demonstrated:

1. God is the very nature of Righteousness, Faithfulness and Justice The Name of God, The LORD is our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:11)
2. Jesus Christ demonstrated righteousness in that he lived in total submission to God’s Word and God’s will. The sacrifice of Jesus was in the context of God’s just penalty for atonement of our sin.
3. Luke 10:25-37 v-29, but the man wanting to justify himself, [or be righteous] DIKAIOSAI, asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?”
 - a. Jesus described the religious men avoiding this man in need



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- b. Jesus described the Samaritan man as righteous:
 - He took pity on him
 - Bandaged his wounds
 - Put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn
 - Provided a “blank check” to the innkeeper for his continued care
Why did he do it? What was his motive?
4. In a practical sense: If we compare our spiritual lives to a physical body, grace would be the skeletal structure and righteous would be the flesh. Our righteousness from God is demonstrated through our personal lives and decisions.

C. The Benefits of God’s Righteousness

1. Isaiah 32:17
“The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.” (NIV)
2. Isaiah 61:10
“I delight greatly in the LORD ; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” (NIV)
3. Psalms 45:7
“You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy” (NIV)
4. Malachi 4:2
“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.” (NIV)
5. Psalms 23:3
“The LORD is my shepherd...he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” (NIV)

III. What Path are you on and where will it lead you?

A. The Path of Unrighteousness – Leading to an empty, unfulfilling Life

1. Ephesians 4:17-19 life of darkness, insensitivity, indulgence and addiction
2. Ephesians 5:3-7 deceived by empty words and promises (Cf. Col 2:8 “hollow and deceptive philosophy.”)



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3. Cf. 2 Peter 18-19 they appeal to the lustful desires of sinful human nature...promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity.

B. The Path of Self-Righteousness – Leading to false security and a deceived Life

1. Romans 10:1-4 zealous for God, but did not submit to God's righteousness
2. Luke 18:9-14

C. The Path of Legalistic Righteousness – Leading to frustration and an unhappy Life

1. Philippians 3:6-9
2. What did this legalistic righteousness produce in the Apostle Paul? In US?
3. *Philippians 3:9*
“...and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” (NIV)

D. The Path of Righteousness – Leading to a full, abundant and eternal Life

1. 2 Corinthians 5:21 “so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”
2. **Question:** Does our righteousness come from what God has done for us or from what we have done for God?
 - a. Titus 3:3-8, v-5, “he saved us not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” (NIV)
 - b. Heb 11:4, Abel offered a better sacrifice, Heb 11:7, Noah built an ark, James 2:25 Rahab offered shelter for the spies, James 2:21-24, Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered Isaac,

Answer: Our faith and action work together. A true understanding and appreciation of the righteousness that God has provided inspires a genuine response of action in the lives of believers.

GOD'S PROVISION – OUR CHOICE

Romans 6:13

“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.” (NIV)

3. Ephesians 5:8-10 fruits of righteousness: a commitment to the right heart and a devotion to doing what is right, just and godly. (Cf. Psalm 18:24, “The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.” NIV)



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4. Even God's discipline works for our good through building righteousness. Hebrews 12:11, *"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."* (NIV)

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Discussion Questions:

1. How is it a struggle to live a righteousness life?
2. What effect will a true understanding of righteousness have on our lives?
3. What are some specific ways you can demonstrate an appreciation for God's righteousness?

B. Pray together; thanking God for His example of righteousness and for the way he has made us righteous through Jesus Christ.

For Further Study:

Romans 5:21 ²¹so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (NIV)

Romans 8:10 ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness." (NIV)

2 Corinthians 9:10 ¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness." (NIV)

2 Timothy 2:22 ²²Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (NIV)