

The fact of the matter is that we become righteous at the point at which we are born again.¹⁸ As we put our faith in what Jesus has done for us, the righteousness Jesus obtained by His faith becomes ours.¹⁹ At new birth, our spirits are changed to be like God's Spirit and receive the righteousness of God Himself.²⁰ Our spirits are then sealed,²¹ they remain righteous, and they can't be contaminated by sin.²² God is a Spirit,²³ and He relates to us in our spirits. Once we have been born again, our spirits are always in right relationship with God.²⁴ Even when we do something wrong, we remain righteous because the sin never touches our spirits. That's not to say that the sins we commit don't have serious consequences in our souls or our bodies. They do. But just as Abraham's failures didn't affect his righteousness, our failures don't affect our righteousness. Conversely, the right relationship with God that faith in Jesus produces in our spirits and in our hearts results in changes in our way of life²⁵ and ultimately leads us into practical holy living.²⁶

Do you want to have a right relationship with God and be righteous?

God's Word promises *"if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*²⁷ *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*²⁸

- 18. Ephesians 4:24
- 19. Philippians 3:9, 1 Corinthians 1:30, and 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 20. 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Corinthians 1:30
- 21. Ephesians 1:13
- 22. 1 John 3:9
- 23. John 4:24
- 24. 1 Corinthians 6:17
- 25. Philippians 1:11
- 26. Romans 6:19

God has already done everything to bring us into a right relationship with Him. Our part is simply to believe and receive.

Pray Out Loud

"Jesus, I confess that You are my Lord and Savior. I believe in my heart that God raised You from the dead. By faith in Your Word, I receive salvation now. Thank You for saving me!"

The very moment you commit your life to Jesus Christ, the truth of His Word instantly comes to pass in your spirit. You are saved, righteous, and completely new in your spirit. This is the start of your new life!

What's Next?

Andrew has written a book called *The New You & The Holy Spirit* specifically for new Christians. This helps you to understand the choice you've made and discover what's next! He has also prepared the same teachings on audio CD in a teaching series called *The New You* and three messages on audio CD specifically about righteousness in the teaching *Whose Righteousness?* You may order them by calling the Helpline, by email, or by writing to Andrew Wommack Ministries.

- 27. Romans 10:9-10
- 28. Romans 10:13

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RIGHTEOUSNESS

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Righteousness

Righteousness is important! There are far more verses in the Bible about righteousness than about faith,¹ yet many people are very confused about what it is and how to obtain it. So, let's start with a brief definition.

Righteousness simply means right standing with God, and to be righteous is to be in right relationship with God.

In Old Testament times, the Israelites believed that the way to be in right relationship with God was to keep the Law God gave to Moses. They relied on such scriptures as Leviticus 18:5, which says, "*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them.*" And there were many other scriptures that promised abundant blessings if they kept the Law, but dire consequences if they did not.²

They were wrong! Righteousness could never be achieved by keeping the Law. God gave the Law not so they could become righteous by keeping it but to show them that however hard they tried, they couldn't keep it,³ and so could never become righteous by their own efforts.⁴ Fourteen or fifteen hundred years after God gave the Law to Moses and after many millions of people had tried to keep it, Paul confirmed⁵ what God had previously declared,⁶ "*There is none righteous, no, not one.*" Righteousness had not come by keeping the Law.⁷ The Israelites needed a Savior, and one of the purposes of the Law was to show them exactly that.⁸

There were, however, people living in Old Testament times who did discover the secret of righteousness.⁹ One of them was Abraham, and the way he became righteous serves as a pattern for us all.¹⁰ All he did was believe God, and because he did that, God declared him righteous.¹¹ With righteousness came many blessings. Even when Abraham got things terribly wrong, "sinned" in our terminology, like the times he persuaded Sarah to hide the fact that she was his wife, and as a result, she was taken into first Pharaoh's¹² and then Abimelech's¹³ harems—God stood by him and blessed him greatly. God declared Abraham to be righteous not on the basis of what he did but solely on the basis that he believed God. That's how we become righteous too.

Like the Israelites, we as Christians want to be in right relationship with God, but like the Israelites, most of us try to obtain righteousness by our own efforts. We need to realize that to become righteous, all we need to do is put our faith in what Jesus has done for us. If we attempt to become righteous by doing anything else—for instance, by trying to be good or by doing good things—we'll fail. Righteousness is a free gift,¹⁴ and if we try to earn it ourselves or try to add to what Jesus did on the cross, it's in effect saying, "What Jesus did wasn't enough. I have to do something more myself!"

The Galatians fell into this trap. They started well,¹⁵ but some Jewish preachers came to their church and told them that faith in Jesus wasn't enough. According to these people, to be righteous, men also had to be circumcised in accordance with the Jewish Law.

When Paul heard about this, he told the Galatians in no uncertain terms that the preachers were absolutely wrong. If they put their trust in circumcision in addition to Jesus, what Jesus had done on the cross would be completely ineffective as far as they were concerned. Faith in Jesus is all we need. Faith in Jesus + circumcision, or faith in Jesus + anything else, voids your salvation!¹⁶

Nowadays, we certainly would not believe that we need to be circumcised or keep the Jewish Law to be righteous, but similar doctrines have crept into the church. Some church leaders tell us we must be at all (or most) of the church services, or that we must tithe, pray, read our Bibles, etc. If we don't, we are made to feel guilty and condemned and to think that God is not pleased with us. This type of teaching is simply a subtle variation on what the Galatians were taught. Instead of Jesus and circumcision, it is Jesus and regular church attendance, Jesus and tithing, Jesus and prayer that apparently makes us righteous! It may sound shocking and quite radical, but the truth is, if we have put our faith in what Jesus did for us on the cross, God sees us as righteous whether we attend church or not, whether we tithe or not, and whether we pray or not! Of course, it's good to do these things—they benefit us immensely—but whether we do them or not does not affect our righteousness as far as God is concerned! Jesus made us righteous, and if we miss a Sunday church meeting, then although we will lose out on fellowship, not benefit from the sermon, and not have the joy of worshiping the Lord with others, we will nevertheless remain righteous! There is no condemnation from God,¹⁷ and any condemnation we do take on will come from ourselves, others, or the devil.

1. "Righteousness" and "righteous" are mentioned over 540 times, while "faith," "faithfulness," and "faithful" are mentioned 348 times.

2. Deuteronomy 28:1-68 and Leviticus 26:3-46

3. Romans 3:20

4. Galatians 2:16

5. Romans 3:10

6. Psalm 14:1-3

7. Galatians 2:21 and Romans 9:31

8. Galatians 3:24

9. Abel - Hebrews 11:4, Noah - Hebrews 11:7, and Lot - Peter 2:7-8

10. Romans 4:22-24

11. Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6; Romans 4:3, 9, and 21-22

12. Genesis 12:10-13:2

13. Genesis 20:2-16

14. Romans 5:17-18

15. Galatians 5:7

16. Galatians 5:4

17. Romans 8:1