Chapter 3: BEING SAVED MEANS WE ARE RIGHT WITH GOD (Homework)

Please take this lesson home and study it. Read the entire chapter and fill in the blanks.

Understanding Righteousness

One of the hindrances to our faith is a lack of understanding of righteousness, or right standing with God. A lack of knowledge about righteousness and the privileges it gives to the believer holds more Christians in bondage than anything else.

The Requirements for Righteousness

How does one become righteous?

_For with the heart man BELIEVETH UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation_ (Romans 10:10).

A man becomes righteous by believing unto righteousness, because he believes on Him who is our righteousness, Jesus Christ.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Do you feel you are righteous? If so, why? If not, why not?

Righteousness is a Gift

When we receive Jesus as Savior and are born again, we receive the gift of righteousness.

_For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ._ (Romans 5:17).

**Good Deeds Don’t Make You Righteous**
Many people think that, to be righteous, they must do good works, good deeds, and have right conduct. Of course, Scripture teaches us to do these things. However, all of our good works and deeds could never make us righteous or give us right standing with God.

**Righteousness Cannot Be Developed**

We cannot grow into some kind of high spiritual state in order to achieve righteousness. We can grow in the Lord. We can grow spiritually. We can grow and develop in the fruits of the Spirit. Yet, we will never be any more righteous than we are right now. We will never be any more righteous in heaven than we are right now.

**Righteousness is a Work of God Only**

When we are in Christ, we are made righteous. In and of ourselves, we are not righteous. In Christ, however, we are. He makes us right before God.

When a person stands before a judge in a court case, his/her attorney and their legal abilities makes him/her right before the judge. In the same way, Jesus makes us right before God.

**In Christ, We Are Made Righteous**

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

Just like Jesus never knew sin and God made Him to be sin, God is able to make us righteous, even though we do not feel or always act righteous. To be righteous is to have right standing before God.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** If I asked you, “Are you righteous?” before the start of this lesson, what would you have said? “I’m trying to be.” “One day I will be.” “I know I’m not there yet.” “No. I’ve done too many bad things.” “Well, if I can just live long enough to develop spiritually. God would never hear me because I am not righteous.”

**Understanding Righteousness Provides Power in Prayer**

Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN MAKES TREMENDOUS POWER AVAILABLE [dynamic in its working] (James 5:16 AMP).

Who has the power and/or ability to get prayers answered?
A righteous person in Christ, one who has been declared or made right or placed in the position of righteousness (relative to God’s perspective), has the right, privilege, benefit and ability to get his prayers answered. The reason God answers the prayer is because it is like Jesus is in us making the request, and God sees Christ.

**Elijah, a Righteous Man, Had Faults Like Us**

Elijah prayed and saw much power made available to him through his prayers. What does James 5:17 AMP say to let us know that Elijah was just like us?

*Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have [with feelings, affections, and a constitution like ours]; and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months* (James 5:17 AMP).

Yet, he prayed and got results. His prayers had shut up the heavens from raining for three and a half years (1 Kings 17:1). He had prayed down fire with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). He also prayed for rain to come down and outrun the king’s chariots (1 Kings 18:19-46). Then Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, set out to kill him, and he wanted to die because he was afraid.

1 AHAB TOLD Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had slain all the prophets [of Baal] with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.

Then he was afraid and arose and went for his life and came to Beersheba of Judah [over eighty miles, and out of Jezebel's realm] and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a lone broom or juniper tree and asked that he might die. He said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers (1 Kings 19:1-4).

Elijah was a man who was subject to the same passions or flaws as we have. Yet, he believed that he was in right standing with God to see his prayers answered. It means we are still righteous before God, even though we have flaws in our lives.

**Elijah Was Like Us**

We may not feel like it. Sometimes, like Elijah, we may not act like it. Elijah’s story helps us see that, even though we don’t always do or act right, we can still believe in the righteousness that Jesus gives me to get God to respond to me. **RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD IS A GIFT!** Read the first part of 2 Corinthians 5:21 again: “*For he hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin...*”

Do you believe this part of the verse is true? Let’s look at the second part of that same verse: “*...that we might be MADE the righteousness of God in him (Christ).*”
We have been MADE the righteousness of God in Christ. Do you believe that part of the verse is true?

He had to make or declare us righteous because in and of ourselves, we are not. Look again who God calls and qualifies to be righteous.

_Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction... (Romans 3:22)._ 

God accepts as righteous anyone who has true faith in Christ. God receives us based upon Christ. Your inward man (your spirit) has now been made perfect, recreated, born again, a new creature, because the Holy Spirit is now inside your spirit man.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Do you ever feel that God won’t hear you because of your flaws and inadequacies?

**Illustrations of Righteousness**

**HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?**

If I asked, “Are you a man and/or woman?” what would you say? I am a man and/or woman. My next question is, “How did you get that way?” You would probably answer, “I was born that way.” This is the same way we get to be righteous. We are born righteous. When we are born again, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ at that moment, in its fullness.

**THE BOY, THE BASEBALL, AND THE FATHER**

A young boy named Johnny was out on the streets with his friends, hitting balls with his bat. One ball accidentally broke the window pane of a nearby home. The man in the home came out the front door and asked who broke his window. All the boys took off running.

He saw Johnny with the bat in his hand, identified him as the one who messed up his window, and asked him to come to him right away. Instead, Johnny dropped the bat and took off running.

The next day, the man’s son Billy came home from school with a friend. Billy went in and talked to his father while his friend remained outside. Billy told his father how his friend outside had nowhere to live. His mother was taken to the hospital, and there was no one to keep him. The father told Billy, “Let me meet him first.”
They went outside on the porch and there stood Johnny, the boy with the bat who broke the window pane. The father said, “You are the one who broke my window.”

The father grabbed him, intending to punish him. All of a sudden, his son Billy stopped him and said, “Dad, he’s my friend and he needs help.”

The father stopped, thought about it, and then released Johnny’s collar. He told Johnny, “Johnny, since you are with my son Billy and know him, you can stay with us until your mom returns home from the hospital. My food is your food. My bed is your bed, and my home is your home, all because you know my son. I should punish you for what you did, but knowing my son gives you right standing with me because I trust him and how he feels about you. You don’t have to be afraid to come and ask me for whatever you need.”

Although Johnny deserved punishment, he received right standing with the father and all his benefits because he knew his son Billy. Everything that belonged to Billy now belonged to Johnny. That is righteousness.

One day, Jesus told His Heavenly Father, “Even though they deserve punishment and none of your benefits, they are My friends and are in good standing with Me.” As a result, we are now able to approach the Father for whatever we need without any condemnation. We are now worthy to come before Him with confidence.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16).

**The Benefits of Righteousness (or Being Right With God)**

**WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE BELIEVER**

- God desires to bless us and meet our needs.
- We are now children of God who can relate to Him as a father.
- We can approach God with no guilt or shame about our past.
- We don’t feel condemned when we come to Him.
- We believe God will hear us when we pray.
- We can pray and expect our prayers to be answered.
- We are now worthy to stand in His presence.
- We can believe God for any promise He makes to us in His Word.
- We have authority over Satan.
- All our sins have been forgiven.
 Assignment: Tell the priority person you have chosen to witness to what it means to be right with God. Be prepared to share your experience next week in the beginning of the discipling session.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Knowing these benefits, what does it mean to you now?

Confession of Righteousness

Now that you know you are right before God, let’s stand, make this confession, and apply it daily in our prayer time. As we keep repeating it each day, the image we have of ourselves on the inside will begin to change. Discipler should pray in unison with the new convert.

I know who I am in Christ. I am a new creation. Old things have passed away. All things have become new.

I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. There is therefore now no condemnation to me because I am in Christ Jesus.

I am the faith seed of Abraham. All of the promised blessings of Abraham are mine.

God has not given me the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. The works that Jesus did, I can do also. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Surely Jesus bore my sickness, diseases, and pains, that I don’t have to bear them anymore! By the stripes of Jesus, I have been healed! None of these diseases shall come on me! It is God’s will above all things that I will prosper and be in health.

My God shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory. It is God who has given me the power to get wealth.
I have given to God, and He shall multiply His financial prosperity back to me in full and overflowing measure. Whatsoever I have sown, that shall I also reap.

I am blessed when I come in and blessed when I go out! Whatsoever I set my hand to do will be blessed by God. I will not be defeated. I am a new creation in Jesus Christ!”

WE ARE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST!