



[Romans 5:8-10](#)

(8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. (10) For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

New King James Version

Two points are noteworthy about Paul's comments. In verse 10, Paul states, "We shall be saved by His life." As wonderful a gift as God's merciful forgiveness is, merely being forgiven through Christ's blood is not sufficient for salvation. Justification must be seen for what it truly is: It is essential, but it is only the beginning of the salvation process. Throughout the process, we are saved by the continuous flow of grace upon grace from our High Priest.

The other important point is that perhaps nothing regarding God's spiritual creation demonstrates God's gracious and generous freeness—His total lack of obligation toward us—as does His justifying of *sinners* rather than morally meritorious saints.

The Christian doctrine of [God](#) justifying by [faith](#) rather than by works truly set the religious Jews of the apostle's day on an angry edge. To them, it made no logical sense. They perceived it as simply another invitation to sin because it seems so easy, or perhaps they also saw it as God ignoring their sincere efforts to please Him.

This charge is true—if one perceives justification carnally, isolating it so that it appears to occur completely apart from God's entire purpose for salvation rather than seeing it for what it truly is. Justification by grace through faith is a necessary *part* of the whole of being created in Christ's image.

Why is it necessary that our justification be by grace through faith? It *must* be this way because, if we earn justification through our works, it opens the door for human pride,

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not just to enter our relationship with God, but perhaps even to drive the relationship. If one is justified by works, a person could then honestly claim that God chose him, and his works, because he was good.

This is not good because pride is such a strong influence *against* God. Remember, Satan's pride rising in him initiated this entire earthly mess. Consider carefully what his pride did to his relationship with God. Justification given because of works alters the positions within the relationship, making God obligated to us as if we had earned a relationship with Him. Pride attempts to put a person on an equal footing with God or even in charge of the relationship, and this ultimately results in us creating ourselves.

It is dangerous to unleash pride in thinking more of ourselves than what is truly good for our character development. We are not the creator but the creation, subject to the designs and purposes of the Master Creator. For our good, then, justification *must* be received as a freely given, unearned gift.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Living By Faith and God's Grace \(Part Two\)](#)

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