

The Fruit Of Justification

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In Romans 5:6, the apostle Paul declares that “Christ died for the ungodly.” The Greek word for “ungodly” is *asebes*, meaning “those without any reverence toward God.” The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, showed little reverence toward God. They were heedless when He warned them of the deadly outcome of their disobedience (Genesis 2:17; 3:3).

Since then, all humans have followed their example, falling from God’s favor because of unbelief, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Essentially, man is unwilling or unable to recognize God’s sovereignty and holiness, which causes him to fall short of being what God intends him to be.

The countermeasure for man’s sinfulness is the perfect, sacrificial life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, culminating in our opportunity for *justification* (Romans 4:25). The objective of justification is not merely to render a guilt-free verdict for the repentant sinner, nor does it provide a special certificate of eternal life to its recipient. Instead, it is a spiritual act—part of a spiritual process—with spiritual effects that open the way to salvation and eternal life.

1. Does justification cleanse us of all our past sins? I John 2:2, 12; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 1:3; Zechariah 13:1.

C o m m e n t: Although it can be difficult to fathom and easy to forget, the repentant sinner is cleared of all past sin upon receiving justification by faith through the blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:1). The Old Testament speaks frequently of God’s promises to cleanse His people of their transgressions (Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 36:25; Jeremiah 33:8), while in the New Testament, the apostles Peter, John, and Paul frequently refer to God’s cleansing forgiveness (II Peter 1:9; I John 1:7, 9; Titus 2:14).

2. Does justification enable greater access to God? Romans 5:1-2.

C o m m e n t: Without a doubt, our sins separate us from God (Genesis 3:24; Isaiah 59:2; Galatians 5:19-21). Graciously, our heavenly Father desires a closer relationship with us, His elect (John 17:3, 20-21). In Leviticus 26:12, our Creator promises, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.” In John 14:6, that same divine Being—in the form of Jesus Christ—testifies that He provides our ultimate path to God the Father. In Romans 5:1-2, the apostle Paul flatly asserts that justification brings us access to His grace, the undeserved favor that He grants to His faithful, humble children through Jesus Christ (James 4:6). In Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12, Paul mentions this same access, strongly implying that such access is exclusive to our calling and not available to the world.

3. Does justification bring us peace? Romans 5:1.

C o m m e n t: Paul provides the answer in Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, *we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ” (emphasis ours). By

declaring the repentant sinner not guilty, justification helps to remove, not only the disturbing guilt from his conscience, but also the fear of being called before God and condemned (Isaiah 57:20-21; Romans 5:9), replacing the guilt and fear with hope (Romans 5:2; Titus 3:7). Such peace enables the justified to draw even closer to God with a more confident assurance of His mercy (Hebrews 4:16; 7:19; 10:19).

4. Does the fruit of justification provide a pathway for our salvation? Titus 3:4-7; Romans 6:22.

Comment: The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that before justification, our sins only led to death (Romans 6:20-21). “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life” (Romans 6:22). In Titus 3:7, Paul declares “that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Peter also expresses that the fruit of our faith is “the salvation of your souls” (I Peter 1:9).

The repentant Christian, cleansed of his sins through the divine act of justification, has ample reason to hope, not only for a special intimacy with God the Father and His Son, but also for the unique, spiritual peace he receives along the path that leads to eternal life (John 16:33; 17:2-3, 20-26).