

New Covenant Principles: Lesson 2 - Made Righteous

One of the most important truths of the Gospel is that everyone who receives Jesus forgiveness is made righteous by God. The job of the Holy Spirit for the Christian is to continually remind that person that he/she has been made righteous (John 16:10). Changing our thinking to see ourselves as righteous is the most important step towards living delivered from sin, addiction, temptation, guilt and condemnation.

The Greek word for righteous is 'dikaious' which Strong's concordance defines as "equitable in character and action"; which means holy, just and innocent. This is the definition of the character and nature of God – God is righteous. Accordingly, for someone to have a relationship with God that person must also be righteous (equal to God in character and action), because the perfection of God's righteousness requires the elimination of unrighteousness. Because of Adam's disobedience, man became unrighteous; sin and death entered the human race. But God loves the beings He created in His image and that unfathomable love ensured He had a way to deliver man from unrighteousness. The gospel is the good news that by means of the blood covenant cut between God (representing deity) and Jesus (representing humanity) man's sin was punished and his unrighteousness was annihilated.

In Hebrews 8:12 God makes this strong statement: "*I (God) will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more*". This is the foundation of the New Covenant; the covenant that allowed God to translate us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear son. This translation happens the instant a person accepts the free gift of forgiveness of sins. This person becomes a new creation, re-made in the image and righteousness of God and given everything that Jesus purchased by His death and resurrection. Write out the following scriptures that confirm this:

Colossians 1:13-14 _____

Acts 26:18 _____

Ephesians 1:7 _____

2 Corinthians 5:17 _____

Acts 28:18 _____

2 Peter 1:3 _____

These scriptures underscore the reality that you are a changed being. When God fixes something, He does it perfectly. Because your sin is forgiven and you now live in the kingdom of God, it is time to change your thinking

to line up with what God has now made you. Satan and your old nature do not want you living in the freedom God has given you, but their only weapon against you is to make you think you are less than God has made you. Let's look at the scriptures that state what your new state as a Christian is:

2 Corinthians 5:21 _____

Explain in your own words what this verse says about the new state that God has made you: _____

According to **Romans 3:22**, how does the righteousness of God come upon you? _____

Note that **Romans 3:23** is a verse that qualifies every person to receive God's free gift; it is not a verse for putting condemnation on people. Everybody needs the free gift because everybody has sinned.

Write out **Romans 3:24** _____

Now for further insight into who you are, let's look at the definitions of the key words in this verse:

Justified – render just or innocent; make righteous; “just as if I'd never sinned”.

Freely – gratuitously, without a cause, for nothing

Grace – Unmerited favor, acceptable, benefit, joy, liberality, pleasure

Redemption – ransom (pay) in full, reverse by loosing, buy back, deliverance

Based on these definitions, write your own version (paraphrase) of this verse: _____

Romans 3:25 explains how God, by His forbearance (mercy) gave Jesus (the atoning victim) as the one God used as the blood payment for sin; using Jesus righteousness to eradicate sin. Accordingly, everyone who puts faith (believes) in what Jesus blood did receives the impartation of Jesus righteousness.

Write our **Romans 3:26** _____

Notice how verse 26 summarizes Paul's discussion in the previous verses by concluding that Jesus has been declared righteous (by his resurrection) and all who believe on him are also declared righteous,

Now going to **Romans 4:5** we see that there are two conditions that enable God to make a man righteous – firstly, it cannot be by our own efforts (i.e. *him that worketh not*) and secondly, it is for those that believe (i.e. *this faith is counted for righteousness*). All the pressure for us to perform to please God (“you got to obey God....or else”) is removed by accepting that we have nothing to do with being made righteous, but to simply

believe that God has justified you (made you righteous) in Jesus. The key to living the victorious Christian life is simply receiving your righteousness from God and changing your thinking to see yourself as righteous. The Christian life is not about changing your behavior to become “more” righteous or endeavoring by your own performance to be righteous. No, righteousness is a free gift and seeing yourself as righteous is what will cause your behavior to reflect that righteousness. **Proverbs 23:7** states that “*as a man thinks in his heart so is he*”. It is vital to start thinking of (seeing) yourself as righteous, exactly the way God has made you and sees you.

Now read **Romans 4:6-13** and notice how God’s plan is for righteousness to be imputed because of believing and not by behavior. (Note: The Jews understand the term ‘circumcision’ to be their part of keeping the old covenant – i.e. man’s effort. So Paul tells them Abraham’s righteousness was imputed before circumcision was instituted; i.e. he was made righteous because he believed and it had nothing to do with his efforts). The result of being made righteous is being blessed by God. In these verses Paul explains that because Abraham believed God he was made righteous and that new state resulted in him obeying God by being circumcised. This underlines the reality that having a righteous mindset will result in you acting righteously, not the other way around. This is a divine principle.

Now read **Romans 5:17-21** and answer the following questions:

(v17) What two things are needed for you to reign in life: _____

(v18) If the offence of one brought condemnation, what brought your justification: _____

(v19) What did the obedience of Jesus do for many: _____

(v20) Why did God give the law (10 commandments): _____

(v21) What did sin produce (reign unto): _____

(v21) What reigns unto eternal life for the Christian: _____

Paul spends a lot of time in Romans showing the futility of attempting to be righteous by our own efforts. He uses the phrase “the righteousness of the law” to describe the efforts of people to be righteous before God, by their attempts to keep the 10 commandments (the law). The Jewish religious leaders epitomized this thinking – they had evolved ‘the law’ into a set of religious rules they felt able to keep, thereby seeing themselves as righteous. Jesus rebuked them strongly because of this; he even called them “white-washed graves”. Self righteousness cannot meet the standard of God’s righteousness and actually works contrary to God’s purposes. Today, God cannot abundantly bless most Christians because their performance (self-effort at righteousness) prevents Him from working on their behalf – because if He did, they would think their self righteous acts were what caused God to move, when actually God only moves in response to total reliance on Him (faith).

What does **Romans 10:4** say regarding self-righteousness (*law for righteousness*) in relationship to a Christian (*everyone that believes*): _____

In **Romans 10:5-6**, what type of righteousness is implied as the preference of God: _____

In **Romans 10:6-8**, what is the main characteristic of the righteousness of faith: _____

In **Romans 10:9**, what are the two things a man must do to be saved? _____

In **Romans 10:10**, how were you made righteous? _____

Unfortunately, many Christians have been taught that once you are born again, there are things you need to do to grow in righteousness - to become more righteous. Nothing could be further from the truth. The day you were born again you were made totally righteous and will be so forever. You cannot grow or diminish your righteousness; it is a gift from God and it never changes.

Now read **Galatians 2:16-21**. Notice how it categorically separates the righteousness of the law (self-righteousness) and the righteousness of faith. The purpose of changing your thinking to see yourself as righteous is to get you out of guilt and condemnation into the forgiveness and grace of God. This is the truth that will set you free from the bondages of sin, failure, addiction, lack and despair.

Now write out the following scriptures:

Ephesians 4:23 _____

The verb '*And **be renewed***' in the Greek is in the present tense and passive voice. This means it is an ongoing activity (present tense) where the subject (the Christian) is being acted upon (passive voice), not the one doing the action (active voice). A better translation is "*You are being renewed by God in the spirit of your mind:*" (i.e. the way you think). This is God fulfilling the first clause of the New Covenant where God says "*I will put my way of thinking into their mind*" (Heb 8:10)

Ephesians 4:24 _____

The verb "*And that ye **put on** the new man*" in the Greek is in the Aorist tense. This tense means it happened at a single point in time. So you **put on** the "*new man*" the day you received Jesus and were born again.

Philippians 3:9 _____

Therefore, having been born again you are now a "*new man*" and you are "*found in him*". So according to the above scriptures, what is your status now and forevermore regarding righteousness:
