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THE LOOKOUT

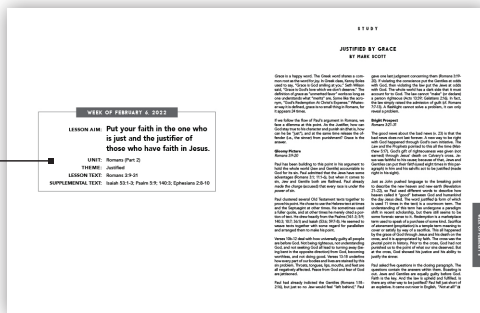
FEBRUARY 2022

Unit: ROMANS (Part 2)
Theme: JUSTIFIED

Overview: To justify something means you make it right—whether it is the margins of a term paper, aligning the front end of a car, or correcting the behavior of an individual. There is no greater book than Romans to discuss being made right with God (justification). Students will learn how they are justified by grace through faith for glory in eternity.

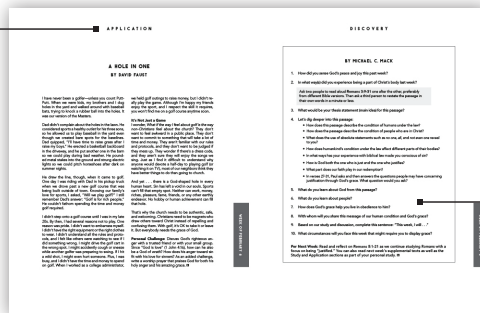
HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 13, 2022

LESSON AIM: **Rejoice in the hope that is yours through being justified by faith.**

UNIT: Romans (Part 2)

THEME: Justified

LESSON TEXT: Romans 5:1-21

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Romans 8:1; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-10

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

BY MARK SCOTT

When it comes to salvation, grace and faith are the dynamic duo. They create the “super bowl” of redemption. If grace is God’s love for us that we do not deserve, then faith is how that grace is appropriated in our lives. God is the one who justifies us (i.e., makes us righteous), but we do cast a vote in the drama of redemption. That is called faith. The Greek verb *pisteo* can be translated into the English words *faith*, *belief*, or *trust*.

In Romans 5, we near the end of the second great argument about the righteousness of God. Righteousness had been forfeited due to sin (chapters 1–3). But righteousness was regained through the “Christ event” (chapters 4–5). Whether one is Jew or Gentile, faith is the right response to God’s work. Before the new section on sanctification (chapters 6–8) Paul explained what we experience by faith and what we gain in life.

We Experience Peace, Love, and Reconciliation*Romans 5:1-11*

Peace with God is the first result of being justified by faith. *Peace* in this verse is almost a synonym of salvation. Ultimate salvation is being totally well in the presence of God. Of course, it comes *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Jesus gave us access to this grace. This causes us to boast—not of ourselves but *in the hope of the glory of God*.

Peace does not mean the absence of conflict, but instead, a quiet confidence that God is in control. To that end, Paul gave a list of qualities that grow out of boasting in the glory of God. Suffering, perseverance, character, and hope are things Christians boast about (a rather atypical list, is it not?). Paul strung these words and thoughts together to drive home his point about what we experience by faith. God’s love, which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, is one of the greatest things we experience.

We then experience love and reconciliation by virtue of Christ’s death on the cross. His death was perfectly timed (i.e., *right time*). His death was timely (i.e., *when we were still powerless—weak or sick*). And his death was effectual (i.e., *for the ungodly*). A plethora of war stories illustrates verse 7. People do die for friends and family (good persons). But God *demonstrates* (made to

stand with) *his own love* by Christ dying for (on behalf of) sinners and enemies. Our faith is in Jesus (and the efficacy of his *blood*). This allows us to escape God’s *wrath* and be *reconciled* (brought together again) to him.

We Jettison Sin and All of Its Deathly Effects*Romans 5:12-21*

Being justified by faith allows us to put sin behind us and experience life through the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). Paul located sin historically. It came *through one man* and brought death. But that death is perpetuated by people continuing to sin (not just because Adam sinned). Adam’s “original sin” brought death into this world, and therefore everyone’s natural inclination will be to sin, since the union with death is all around us.

But when is that sin recognized? Only when it is identified. The Law of Moses identified sin to be sin. But sin entered the world in Genesis 3—way before Exodus 20 (the giving of the Law). One needn’t know the speed limit to break it. Once the offense is known, however, the guilt is doubled. That is how Paul spoke about sin from the time of Adam to the time of Moses.

But, even before the Law of Moses, God was at work to undo the deathly effects of sin through the second Adam, Jesus Christ. In fact, the work of salvation in Christ is the polar opposite of the work of Adam (the first Son of God, of sorts—Luke 3:38). People died due to Adam’s work. People live because of Christ’s work. People were condemned due to Adam’s work. People are justified because of Christ’s gift. The *gift of God* is Jesus and salvation. The formula looks like this: Adam—trespass—condemnation; Jesus—justification—life. Paul made good use of the *how much more* argument in comparing the two.

The law became God’s highlighter. It underlined what sin really is. But a highlighter also sets off the other words in a sentence too. If the “sin words” are highlighted, then the non-highlighted words underline grace. Grace especially shows up where sin exists. While Paul will have to correct a misunderstanding about this in the next chapter (Romans 6), this justification by grace through faith is “super” news. ■

APPOINTMENTS WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

BY DAVID FAUST

Has life disappointed you? You planned an outdoor wedding, but it rained. The job interview went poorly. The restaurant wasn't as good as your friends said it would be. The promising business venture didn't work out. Your long-awaited vacation fell short of expectations. Your team lost a game it should have won.

Have others disappointed you? A trusted friend let you down. A coworker quit and left you with extra work. A marketer lied to make a sale. You were generous with a needy neighbor, but the recipient of your kindness was rude and ungrateful.

Has the church disappointed you? Have you seen lofty visions derailed by petty squabbles and clashing egos? Have you seen vulnerable young believers neglected and faithful older saints pushed aside by careless shepherds? Have you been hurt by respected leaders who fell into immorality or left the faith?

Maybe you have been disappointed with yourself. For every accomplishment to savor, there's a goal you didn't achieve. You wanted to lose 10 pounds, but instead you gained 5. You forgot someone's name after knowing them for years. In moments of introspection, you still find pockets of selfishness and immaturity lurking in your heart.

Has God ever disappointed you? You prayed and he said no. Or worse, it appeared he didn't answer at all.

Over the years I have appreciated the writing of Philip Yancey. His book *Where Is God When It Hurts?* helped me wrestle with the problem of evil and gave me a useful tool for helping sufferers. Yancey wrote another book called *Disappointment with God*, which I eagerly purchased and read. Ironically, though, the book disappointed me because it didn't offer any easy answers.

It Doesn't Last Forever

If you are no stranger to disappointment, you will appreciate Romans 5:5. The *New International Version*

translates this verse by saying, "hope does not put us to shame." Other translations render it, "hope does not disappoint us." The *New American Standard Bible* reads, "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Here's how *The Message* paraphrases Romans 5:5: "In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!"

That's an uplifting thought. In Christ we won't be shortchanged! Life may disappoint us . . . others may let us down . . . we may feel frustrated with ourselves or bewildered by God himself. But in the big picture, because of Christ these three remain: faith, hope, and love.

In a Bible college classroom, a student pressed his professor to answer a challenging question: "If God gives different rewards to the faithful, might some of us feel slighted?" The professor replied, "No one will be disappointed in Heaven."

I like how Philip Yancey sums it up: "The Bible never belittles human disappointment . . . but it does add one key word: temporary. What we feel now, we will not always feel. Our disappointment is itself a sign, an aching, a hunger for something better. And faith is, in the end, a kind of homesickness—for a home we have never visited but have never once stopped longing for."

Personal Challenge: On a piece of paper or in your personal journal, write a list of things that have disappointed you. What have you learned through these experiences? What has God taught you by allowing you to face disappointment? How does your faith in Christ help you deal with disappointing situations? ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. What circumstances did you face last week that required you to display grace?
2. Over the past week, with whom did you share the message of the human condition and God's grace?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 5:1-21** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to briefly restate the passage in their own words.

3. What verse stands out most to you?
4. Let's dig deeper into the passage:
 - Search the entire passage for the word *through*. While this may initially seem like a trivial word, look for what we receive (or don't receive) and who or what provides those things. What truths do you perceive?
 - What are the results of justification by our faith?
 - How have you experienced suffering and what it produces? What have you learned from that?
 - What do you learn about God's purposes, plans, and timing from this passage?
 - How do the comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Christ help provide context to the main principles of this passage?
 - What do you learn from this passage about how a Christ follower should view sin?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. What do you learn from Jesus about obedience in this passage?
8. To whom will you boast about God's grace through your faith this week?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What suffering do you anticipate facing this week? (*What "glory" do you look forward to because of your suffering?*)

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Romans 8:28-39**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. 📖