

- b. How were Peter and others being hypocritical?
5. In verse 14 Paul accuses Peter of not acting in line with "the truth of the gospel..." What is the gospel in a nutshell? (Acts 10:43 or Acts 13:38-39 may be helpful.)
6. Re-read Galatians 2:15-16. What two phrases are repeated three times each in these verses?

Martin Luther said these phrases were repeated so as "...to beat it into our heads." Before spending some time studying these key verses, let's make sure we understand the word *justification*.

Justification is an act of God whereby the believer in Jesus Christ is declared absolutely righteous and acceptable before God through the shed blood of Jesus.

7. a. Read the definition of justification several more times. What stands out to you?
Example: Justification is an act not a process.

Note: *The law*, as used in these verses, probably refers to the sum total of God's commandments as well as to each miniscule detail of the ceremonial law, which had evolved through the centuries. *Faith in Jesus Christ* simply refers to repenting of our own self-righteousness and putting our whole trust and confidence in Jesus Christ to save us. *Gentile sinner* (verse 15, NIV) is a reference to a non-Jewish person. The phrase was used not only for those who broke the moral law (Ten Commandments, etc.) but also those who did not keep the ceremonial law.

- b. In verse 16, note the word "know" or "knowing." Do you *know* that any man or woman "...is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ?" In other words, do you know that a person is justified before God by faith in Jesus Christ plus nothing? _____
- c. Heart Check: Is yours a head knowledge or a heart knowledge? What is the difference?

d. Why is it impossible for anyone to be justified by "the works of the law?"

Begin committing Galatians 2:15-16 to memory by writing the verses in the space that follows.

Re-read verse 17. Remember, in this letter Paul is on the defensive. A number of charges have been leveled not only against him but also against the gospel (Good News) he preaches. Whatever is meant by the charge that the gospel makes "Christ a minister of sin" (NASB) or "Christ promotes sin" (NIV), Paul soundly denies and refutes it. This verse has been interpreted differently by Bible scholars and commentators. Two possible interpretations follow:

- Jesus taught that man is saved by faith (Luke 7:50). If the Jews, while seeking to be justified by faith in Christ, do things (like entering a Gentile's home and partaking of a meal) which cause them to break the ceremonial law thus becoming sinners like the Gentiles, has Jesus then caused them to sin?
 - Wherever justification by faith alone is taught, the charge is made that this is a dangerous doctrine because it encourages the continuance of sin. The argument goes that if one can be accepted by God through trusting Christ alone then why obey the Law at all? If one accepts this faulty premise then one might go on to accuse Jesus Christ of encouraging sin.
8. Re-read verses 18-19 a couple of times. Why is it that the minute we put ourselves back under the law we are condemned?
9. Something very profound takes place at the moment we put our whole trust and confidence in Jesus Christ to save us. If I am "in the Son of God" and He "in me" I am more than justified! Something more than just my legal standing before God has changed. Why, according to verse 20, are Christians no longer free to sin?
10. In verse 20 what do we learn about Jesus?

11. According to verse 21, why did Jesus die? Compare this answer with your answer to question 2.

Grace is radical. It is diametrically opposed to the world system in which we live. Think about it. At school, at play, at work, perhaps even in our own home, we have to perform to be accepted. We have to justify our own existence and do something to earn our keep. It is little wonder that every religious and moral system in the world except New Testament Christianity is based on performance. "The heart of man is ever prone to add something of human device to the Divine provision."

Review Galatians 2:11-21 and your completed lesson.

12. How can anyone, Jew or Gentile, male or female, rich or poor, young or old, be put right with God?

13. From this passage what did you learn about:
Peter

Paul

Yourself

14. What do you think are some of the amazing practical implications of the freedom we enjoy in Christ?

Perhaps the most fundamental religious question I can ask myself today is: Do I really believe the Good News of Jesus Christ? Do I hear His word spoken to my heart: "Shalom, be at peace. I understand your fears, your failures, your brokenness. I don't expect you to be perfect. All is well. You have my love. You don't have to pay for it, and you can't deserve it. You only have to open up and receive it. You only have to say yes to my love--a love beyond anything you can intellectualize or imagine." (Brennan Manning)

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