

GALATIANS
“Justification by Faith”
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Galatians 2:15-21 (ESV)

**WHY I DO NOT HAVE TO PERFORM TO BE LOVED AND
SAVED BY GOD?**

Because of **justification by faith** (vv. 15-16).

UNDERSTANDING JUSTIFICATION

- 1. WHAT IT MEANS:** God declares me perfectly righteous, “**just-as-if-I’d**” never sinned (v. 21a).
 - Justification is more than forgiveness, more than a wiped-clean slate. God is giving the unrighteous a permanent “perfectly righteous” standing before Him, despite past, on-going, and future sins.
 - God justifies us as an act of grace, like an undeserved gift (v. 21a).
- 2. HOW IT HAPPENS:** When I receive Jesus by faith, an **exchange** takes place—my guilt for Christ’s innocence (vv. 15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
 - God attributes Christ’s perfect righteousness to me as if it were my own and, in exchange, God attributes my guilt to Christ as if he committed my sins.

- Not only does this mean that justification cannot come through my own actions or efforts, but also that it does not apply until I place my faith in Jesus.

3. THE RESULT: I go to **heaven** and Jesus goes to the **cross** (v. 21b).

- Because Christ’s righteousness makes me innocent of sin before God, I am free from condemnation. But, because my sin makes Jesus guilty before God, Christ must be punished in my place. Justification is possible only through Jesus’ death on the cross (v. 21b).

THE RESPONSES TO GOD’S GRACE OF JUSTIFICATION

- 1. TWISTED RESPONSE:** Perverting it into a **license to sin** (vv. 17-18; Jude 4).
- 2. PROPER RESPONSE:** Choosing to live a **godly life** (vv. 19-20; also see Titus 2:11).
 - The wrong question is, “What can I get away with?” The right question is, “What can I die to so that I can come alive to God?”

CENTRAL TRUTH

God loves and saves me because of justification by faith in Christ, not my performance.