



Reverse the Curse Week 2 | Justified

| KEY THOUGHTS

- Insecurity can overwhelm us with doubts, cause us to make decisions that are out of character, put us in defense mode, make us feel like we're not good enough, make us try to prove ourselves to others.
- The reality is that my worth is not based on my accomplishments, but is already set by God; my value is established in His Son.
- **Forgetting the gospel leads to hypocrisy.**
 - Peter (Cephas) was afraid of what others might think of him, and that insecurity led him to betray his convictions.
- **We all need regular reminders of the gospel**, i.e., that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 - “Justified” is a legal term meaning the defendant is declared “Not Guilty” on all charges.
 - Spiritual justification means that God, the Righteous Judge, frees us from the guilt and penalty of all of our sin through Jesus Christ, *just-as-if-I* had never sinned.
- The faith that justifies is belief in Jesus’s perfect life, perfect death, and perfect resurrection.
 - This belief is more than a mental assent to certain facts, but a reliance on these facts as the truth.
 - It’s not a feeling, but a decision to accept what God says, to trust Him enough to do what He says, even—and especially—when it goes against what I want to do.
- **Nothing other than faith in Jesus Christ can save you.**
 - Relying on your own efforts rather than relying on Christ’s work on the cross is, in effect, trying to please God by my sins, because independence from God is the essence of sin.
 - Jesus said the only work God wants us to do is to believe in Him.
- I can’t believe my way into salvation; but, **once I’m accepted by God in Christ, living out the character of Christ is the natural outflow of being in Him.**
- Faith in Christ will change your life—we’re saved *from* our sin, not saved so we can continue to live *in* our sin.

| SCRIPTURE

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Galatians 2:11-21 (ESV)

I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message...

Galatians 2:14 (NLT)

Jesus answered, "This is the work of God: that you believe [adhere to, trust in, rely on, and have faith] in the One whom He has sent."

John 6:29 (AMP)

| PRACTICAL

- When insecurity and hypocrisy appear, go back to the gospel:
 - Believe you're accepted by God through faith in Christ; then...
 - Remember you're accepted by God through faith in Christ; then...
 - Believe you're accepted by God through faith in Christ; repeat again and again.
- When we're in Christ, God reshapes us into His image; but that doesn't happen in an instant.
 - We must learn a new way to live—by faith—and that takes time;
 - God exerts a constant, kind pressure on us in a continual realignment process.
- For instance, the Holy Spirit will press us to:
 - Forgive when someone wrongs us, even when that person doesn't ask for forgiveness;
 - Resist the temptation to sin, day after day;
 - Trust God when we'd rather rely on ourselves.
- When we do this again and again over time, the warp caused by sin will straighten out, and straight will feel normal.

| REFLECT

- You cannot find your true value anywhere other than in Jesus. But when you realize your value in Him, you're set free from your insecurities and your life is transformed.
- It's impossible for anyone to obey all the Old Testament law—but no one needs to, because all the Law points to Christ, who alone can save us.
- Why must we continually remind ourselves of the gospel?
 - Because we instinctively want to show God we're worthy of what He's done for us; but
 - God already decided we're worth the sacrifice of His Son; so
 - We have nothing to prove to anyone; therefore,
 - We can freely keep reminding ourselves of the truth of the gospel until we're overwhelmed with joy.
- To trust Jesus for our salvation is to step into real life, the life we were created to live. If there's anything standing in the way of you doing that, it's you.

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