

adult



Lesson 10 / May 5, 2019

# Freely Justified

By Doug Schmidt

for use as  
**STEP 1**



## Lesson 10 Focus:

Disciples are justified by faith in Jesus, not their works.

## Lesson 10 Bible Basis:

Romans 3:21-31

## Lesson 10 Memory Verses:

And all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.  
—Romans 3:24-25

**Students will discuss how to understand the connection between faith and good works.**

### **OPENING ACTIVITY:** *Your Performance Review*

Ask your students to pretend they will be experiencing a “performance review” in regard to their Christian faith. What questions would they like to be asked? What would the questions reveal about their faith, their works, and which is most important in their lives?

**OPENING STORY:** [Make copies of the story for your students or read it aloud]

### **GROWING UP IN HOUSEHOLDS OF FAITH**

When it comes to the Christian faith, there are so many things that can have an impact on our spiritual formation, especially when we first come to Christ. Some of the most significant influences are those who live in our homes while we are growing up.

The Barna organization recently released the results of a survey that asked this question: “Would you say you are a Christian as a result of a person you grew up with in your household?” Of the 1,116 practicing Christian adults who responded to that question, 59 percent said that “someone passed their faith down to me.”

Meanwhile, 23 percent said they are a Christian “despite the sort of Christianity I saw in my household growing up,” and 15 percent said they are Christians as an adult, not because of a person in their childhood household.

“This is a cool study because you might think about who influenced you in terms of your spiritual development, in terms of your faith,” said Barna President David Kinnaman.

People who grew up in homes that modeled the Christian faith poorly, or who didn't have their faith influenced by family members in their home, were more likely to have "strong theological convictions" than those who say their faith was "passed down" to them.

When a child in a Christian home is young, it's normal and healthy for the child to say, "I believe in Jesus because Mom (or Dad) does." As the child approaches adolescence, the opportunity to cross over from this type of "faith rental" to "faith ownership" comes to the forefront as the soon-to-be young adult begins to form an identity separate from his or her parents.

For kids in homes where the Christian faith is modeled poorly, or is non-existent, it makes sense that if they do become followers of Christ, their theological convictions will become quite strong because there is no one from whom to be separate and unique—at least when it comes to matters of faith.

One of those strong convictions is that there is only one Gospel with a singular message—you experience saving faith when you believe Jesus can save you, repent of your sins, and accept Him as your Lord and Savior. When saving faith occurs, it's a one-time event, typically known as "justification." Today's lesson focus reminds us that Jesus' disciples are *justified* by faith in Him, not their works.

While the message of salvation is singular, there are as many types of conversions as there are personalities: some are emotional; some are a little more intellectual; some come to Christ after hearing the Gospel for the first time; some take longer to commit their lives to Jesus. Some conversions border on the miraculous, while others seem as natural as exhaling after taking in a deep breath. No matter how a person becomes a Christian, it is always a matter of faith—and not because of any sort of good works.

Ask your students to form small groups to discuss their answers to the following questions.

- **If you've experienced saving faith, talk about what your conversion experience was like.**
- **In what ways was that experience a unique expression of your personality?**
- **Which people had the biggest positive influences on your spiritual formation? Describe the impact these people have had on you.**
- **Without naming anyone, did some people have a negative spiritual influence on you? What can you share about that?**

Let's take a look at what the apostle Paul said about the nature of conversion from a passage in the Book of Romans, and how he makes it clear that becoming a Christian is a matter of faith—not of works.

(When you are finished with the questions, go on to Step 2 in your *Adult Teacher's Guide*.)

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**News Source:**

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-who-dont-have-passed-down-faith-have-stronger-theological-convictions-barna.html>

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Lesson 10 / May 5, 2019

# Freely Justified

for use as  
**STEP 4** 

## Lesson 10 Focus:

Disciples are justified by faith in Jesus, not their works.

## Lesson 10 Bible Basis:

Romans 3:21-31

## Lesson 10 Memory Verse:

And all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

—Romans 3:24-25

## JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

When it comes to spiritual formation, there can be many people in our lives who influence us. If we are exposed at an early age to the popular belief that people get into heaven by being good, then it may be difficult to challenge that belief when hearing the message of salvation by faith alone. In the end, however, it's not the people who influence us that count. God will hold us accountable for the decisions we actually make in regard to being reconciled to Him through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Have your students return to the groups they had in Step 1 to discuss these questions.

- **If you could do anything differently when it comes to your spiritual formation, what would it be?**
- **What old ideas may you have to release in order to truly believe that followers of Christ are justified by faith in Him and not their works?**

Close the class in prayer, thanking God for making salvation available to us through faith (and for not requiring a checklist of good works in order to be reconciled with Him). Pray for those who may be struggling with sensing God's approval of them—and so are tempted to do good works in order to gain God's favor. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help them grasp the indescribable grace of God that is available to us completely apart from good works.

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**THE BIBLE IN THE NEWS**

A clay seal and impression found in Jerusalem may be related to the era of the biblical King Josiah:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-tiny-first-temple-inscriptions-vastly-enlarge-picture-of-ancient-jerusalem/>