
you can live in the way that pleases Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17)! Therefore, you must continue studying the Scriptures so that you can grow and mature in your faith (2 Peter 3:18). Then, if you continue to live according to the ways God says are the right ways, you can have confidence before Him (1 John 2:28-29; 3:7-10). And, whenever you sin again, you can be declared righteous again through Jesus when you repent and confess your sin to Him (1 John 1:9)!

Being righteous is simply living in a condition that is right with God. So, it is not just being a morally good person. Rather, it is only true about those who have demonstrated true faith in Jesus Christ through their obedience to what He has said. Upon their faith-filled obedience, His blood washes their sin away so they are declared righteous. Then, they must continue to live in the righteous ways of God each day, as revealed in the pages of Scripture!

Bible Question & Answer Series

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Bible Question & Answer

What Does It Mean To Be "Righteous"?



What Does It Mean To Be “Righteous”?

We often read about being “righteous” in the pages of Scripture. But, what is it that makes one person righteous and another person unrighteous? Is righteousness merely determined by whether that individual is considered to be a good person by others? The short answer (according to the Bible) is that being righteous refers to being right with God (in a right relationship with God). However, this should challenge us to go deeper to appreciate what is truly involved in living in a right relationship with God.

1) Sin causes one to be unrighteous. Everything that is contrary to God’s standard of what is right is identified as being “sin” in the Bible (1 John 3:4; 5:17). This sin separates the sinner from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23). Then, this sin will cause one to spend eternity in the fires of Hell and be eternally separated from God (James 1:14-15). The only sin that does not lead to this eternal death (1 John 5:16-17) is sin that an individual finds forgiveness for

so that he/she can once again be right with God.

2) Righteousness is only possible through Jesus. No one can get back into a right relationship with God through his/her own works of righteousness – because no one can undo the sin he/she has already committed (Isaiah 64:6). Rather, it is only by God’s grace and mercy that we can be saved from our sins and declared righteous before God (Titus 3:4-8)! By Jesus’s sacrifice, the sins that we committed can be forgiven and no longer held against us! Therefore, this should lead us to two conclusions. First, I cannot possibly reject Jesus and be righteous (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), no matter how sincere I may be in practicing a different religion or how moral I try to live without Jesus. Second, I cannot work my way back into a right relationship with God after I have sinned (Ephesians 2:8-9), no matter how many good things I may do.

3) Faith is required to be declared righteous. Although Jesus has died for everyone to give everyone the opportunity to be declared righteous and have eternal life (John 3:16), many will still be eternally lost in sin (Matthew 7:13-

14). So, there is something God requires of us in order to be declared righteous. This *something* is faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:23-26; Romans 5:1-2, note that to be “justified” means to be declared righteous). However, “faith” must be understood properly. A person is not justified by faith *alone* (i.e. through just being mentally convinced, James 2:24). Rather, true faith in Jesus involves works of faith wherein one is obedient to Jesus (James 2:14-26; Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). The Scriptures demonstrate that God requires hearing God’s word (Romans 10:17), believing in Jesus (John 8:24), repenting of sin (Acts 2:38), confessing Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and being immersed (baptized) in water (1 Peter 3:20-21) to be declared righteous. It is after one trusts God enough to do these things that he/she accesses the grace of God and is declared righteous, having demonstrated true faith in God (Acts 16:30-34)!

4) Live by God’s standard of righteousness. God expects you to continue to live in His righteousness (Revelation 2:10). Thankfully, the Scriptures are profitable for training you in the ways of God’s righteousness so