

21. Being Right with God

In using the expression “right with God”, this chapter has in view being made righteous in God’s eyes, which involves the forgiveness of one’s sins. The following teaching looks at the key issue of getting right with God – and at things to do in association with this.

Getting Right with God

Turn from sin to God and believe in Jesus Christ

[PAUL:] I gave solemn warning that *they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus*. ACTS 20:21B GNT

We need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God – the Christ (or Messiah) who the OT speaks about. We also need to believe that he is the means of forgiveness of sins, with what he accomplished by his death. As such, we are to trust in him for God’s forgiveness of our own sins. In doing so we are forgiven and thus considered righteous by God. In conjunction with this we are granted eternal life.

Believing in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness of sins

In addition, all the prophets testify that *people who believe in the one named Jesus receive forgiveness for their sins through him*. ACTS 10:43 GW

Believing in Jesus Christ brings eternal life

[JESUS:] For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that *everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life*. JOHN 3:16 NET

We can be sure of God’s forgiveness

But *if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away*. 1 JOHN 1:9 CEV

Do What Is Right

Obey God, along with believing

And by the command of the eternal God it [the message about Christ] is made known to all nations *that they might believe and obey*.

ROMANS 16:26B NCV™

Obedience is vital for acting in a way that is consistent with both our belief and being considered righteous by God.

Do good deeds, which are an essential part of true faith

*His [Abraham’s] faith and his actions worked together; his faith was made perfect through his actions. ...*²⁶*So then, as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead*. JAMES 2:22, 26 GNT

Live By the Holy Spirit

We have been freed from the law to live by the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] In the past, the law held us like prisoners, but our old selves died, and *we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way with the Spirit, and not in the old way with written rules*. ROMANS 7:6 NCV™

Through what Jesus Christ has accomplished, God’s people have been freed from the Mosaic Law as the means of being right with him. We are instead to live by his Spirit.

Living by the Holy Spirit involves: being both alert to and responsive to the Spirit’s guidance; and relying on the Spirit’s power, to help us and change us. Along with this, our minds should be focused on things of the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:5 below).

Instead of living by sinful human nature, live by the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit*.⁵Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But *those who live following the Spirit are thinking about the things the Spirit wants them to do*. ROMANS 8:4B–5 NCV™