

Righteousness — Needed for Health, Healing and Wholeness

Adapted from *Robes of Righteousness* by Joyce Meyer

Strong's Concordance

From G1342; equity (of character or act); specifically (Christian) justification:—righteousness.

From G1349; equitable (in character or act); by implication innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):—just, meet, right (-eous).

According to Strong's Concordance, righteousness means innocent, holy, just, right in character or act. The dictionary refers to righteousness as the state of being morally right and justifiable. These words define God's character, not mans. We are not right with God in ourselves. In our natural state we are corrupted by sin and in rebellion against God; therefore, we cannot be right with him. On the contrary, we are to be judged by God. So what can we do? On our side, nothing can be done. Yet the Bible tells us that God has already done something—precisely what needed to be done. God has provided the righteousness we need through faith.

Romans 1:17

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

It is through believing what God tells us about His son that we are given the gift of righteousness.

The word righteous is closely related to justify which means to be acquitted and not made guilty, to be declared or made righteous in the sight of God; to be made as if we never sinned, to have no condemnation and no guilt after repentance through Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:17

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

This scripture tells us that righteousness is a gift to us from God. We don't really understand or expect "free gifts in our culture." In fact, we don't really trust "free things." "What's the hidden cost?" we want to know. "What's the drawback? What's the catch?" Yet the Bible says **righteousness is a free gift from God**. We take it for free or not at all. When God says something is free and we go against Him by persisting in trying to earn it instead of just receiving it with thanksgiving, we won't get it. We need to believe God and receive his gifts his way. Righteousness is a gift to us who are believers in Christ Jesus. It's a gift from God. Do we deserve it? NO! Do we need it? YES! Do you want it? WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND THE BLESSING THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS, YOU CAN'T HELP BUT WANT IT!

This is the heart of the good news, for unless God is willing to give this righteousness to us and actually does give it, the mere existence of a perfect righteousness would not be very good news at all. In fact it would be rotten news, for it would only increase our sense of condemnation. God didn't reveal his righteousness so that we would strive for it and inevitably fail, but so that those who came to Christ might stop their fruitless striving and instead trust Him. We get to rest in Christ's righteousness, knowing that God has given it to us and that we can ever after stand before God, not in our own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ Jesus.

In **Isaiah 53** we read that Jesus bore our sin and our guilt for us on the cross. He that knew *no sin* was made sin so we could be made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

When we know who we are in Christ, we know that we are righteous.

To be made righteous we must be acquitted, declared not guilty, made clean from sin. Only God can do this for us; and he did it for us when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He didn't die for his own sin. He had no sin of his own. When we believe Jesus died for our sins and ask him to be our savior then the resulting fruit of righteousness, the free gift of God to us in Christ Jesus, is ours.

We serve a holy God who cannot condone sin and does not desire to be in the presence of sin. He created us to be holy like him. He desires fellowship with us, but refuses fellowship with unrepentant sinners. Therefore he clothes us with the righteousness of Christ so we can be pure and holy and enjoy fellowship with him.

God wants to give us a robe of righteousness, clothes of honor.

He wants us in right standing with Himself. He doesn't desire to keep seeing our sin and shortcomings. No, when we repent and come to Jesus, God never brings up that repented sin again. God is not our accuser. Satan is. Like we've said before, if you're still feeling guilt and shame for sin you've repented of, then it's an attack by Satan and you need to use your authority and banish him from attacking your thoughts and mind in Jesus' name.

You see, God knew we would sin and need a Savior. He knew that without His intervention we could not walk in the holiness and righteous ways of God.

We see this in **Zechariah 3**, where God didn't tell the priest, Joshua, to walk in His ways until after He had given him a change of clothes and a robe of righteousness. God clothes us in the robe of righteousness first to equip us for his work.

Isaiah 61:10

I delight greatly in the LORD, my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 61: 3

To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness and despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

Yes, God's plan for us is that we be clothed in righteousness, that we be oaks of righteousness for the display of His splendor—a good plan.

One more thing before I go on: this is important. It's why I keep repeating it.

We need to separate who we are in Christ from who we feel like we are.

Many people never feel right about themselves. They wonder what is wrong with them, why they are different and not as good as everyone else. Or they feel the opposite and better than everyone else. We need to totally separate our feelings and our actions from our understanding of righteousness. Joyce Meyer says that we need to separate who we are in Christ from what we do for Christ. We need to think "I'm right with God" not "I do

everything right.” We never make ourselves righteous by our acts. Nobody but God is righteous and God’s the only one who can give the gift of righteousness.

There is no condemnation from God when we repent and trust Jesus to forgive our sin; no condemnation and no remaining guilt. Guilt should leave the minute you repent. When you sin, you feel guilty. That’s normal. We need to put our faith before our feelings. It is not “well, I still feel guilty so I must still be guilty.” Once we truly repent before God, really repent and quit making excuses for our sin, we believe by faith that God forgives us and there is no more condemnation. We replace our guilt with faith that God has made us righteous through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. We pay no attention to how we feel after repentance; we confess not guilt but faith in God. If I still feel guilty, I refuse it and tell those wrong feelings that God has forgiven me and removed my guilt when I repented. You can’t have your sin forgiven and hang on to guilt.

But righteousness will show itself in right thought, action, and attitude.

Yes, being righteous does change what you do. Joyce Meyer says “Interestingly enough, your ‘do’ never changes your ‘who,’ but your ‘who’ always changes your ‘do.’”

Once we understand our righteousness is through Jesus and not our own good actions, we must transfer it to every practical situation that causes guilt or sin. Knowing who we are in Christ makes us nicer, kinder, more forgiving, more peaceful, simpler, and easier to get along with. You stop saying the negatives and beating yourself up for past mistakes. And when we correct our children, we address only their negative behaviors rather than who they are. For example, I don’t like your behavior when you hit your sister instead of you’re really naughty and bad when you hit your sister.

Here’s a way to check whether or not you understand walking in righteousness.

- + The person who doesn’t understand righteousness may lack joy, peace, power in prayer, be insecure and not bold, be timid and fearful.
- + He may feel his worth is based on his actions. (No, our worth and value is in who we are in Christ, not who we think we are, not what others think, not in what we achieve or in what we do on our own.)
- + People who don’t understand righteousness may be touchy and easily offended. They may talk and think negatively about themselves. They may be easily defeated. They may fall into sin and carry a load of guilt and condemnation. They may compare themselves to others to try to look better. They may not accept themselves as valued individuals in Christ Jesus.
- + They may have a powerless prayer life.
- + They may have pride problems.

Do any of these things seem to describe you?

There are two kinds of righteousness.

- + 1. The **self-righteous** try to be something in themselves. They look at the works of the flesh for their good feelings. They look at their daily actions, thoughts, service to God, prayer life, Bible study and worship as a way to earn the right to be God’s children. They fight pride and are often frustrated.
- + 2. The **God-kind of righteous** is a growing thing. We understand it a little at first, and we keep growing in understanding the rest of our lives. God wants us to know we are righteous through our faith in Jesus, not what we do. The righteous shall live by faith. Romans 1:17c. It isn’t what we do, but whom we trust.

Because it isn't what we do, we can avoid comparison and jealousy. Nobody else can do our part like we can, what God's prepared for us to do, just like we can't do the part of anyone else.

Righteousness is who we are in Christ.

Anything we have our confidence in other than God constitutes self-righteousness. Anything we put before God becomes our god.

Righteousness Confessions to Meditate on:

- ✦ I know God loves me and that I am made right by the blood of Jesus. I am rooted and grounded in Jesus.
- ✦ I don't have to do everything right to be right with God.
- ✦ When I repent of my sin I am cleansed from all unrighteousness, and God is faithful and just to forgive my sin. (**1 John 1:9**)
- ✦ I live under grace, not the law. In myself I can never keep the law. Only Christ could, but He's my Savior and I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.
- ✦ I am a child of God, loved and adopted into his family, covered with a robe of righteousness in Jesus.

The devil has an easier time defeating you if you don't know your right standing with God.

The breastplate of righteousness is part of your armor. Don't just carry it, wear it! To exercise authority over Satan you must be wearing your breastplate of integrity, moral rectitude and right standing with God.

Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.

When people are under attack, they often look for what they did wrong. The attack may be because you're doing something right. The devil wants to give you trouble when you're doing things God's way and bringing about his plans and purposes, so he attacks you. He causes you to doubt yourself at times when you have no cause to rightly doubt yourself. When under attack, meditate on how righteous you are in Christ Jesus. It's hard to pray boldly when you lose sight of your righteousness and standing in Christ, but the Holy Spirit will fight for you when your spirit discerns that you need to come against Satan. He will bring to your mind the scriptures you know about your place and standing in Christ.

Ephesians 1:4-5

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will.

He chose us as his own in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. We aren't blameless, but he sees us as blameless. God planned in love for us to be adopted as his sons and daughters in Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will because it pleased him and it was his kind intent. Adopted people are chosen people. We are chosen by God because God loves his son and we are in him.

1 Corinthians 1:30

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

It is part of the plan of salvation that God sent Jesus to make us righteous.

Feelings of unworthiness are the trick of Satan. Speaking out the scriptures of who you are in Christ will help you overcome guilty condemnation. Also, if you've been witnessing to someone and preaching grace to them doesn't bring them into the kingdom, then try showing them that they can't be righteous, keep the law and go to heaven on their own merits. Then share the covenant of grace through Jesus. Each of us needs God's righteousness every minute. The law is for the unbeliever. Grace and the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ are for the believer.

1 Corinthians 1:25, 27

We are everything in Christ and nothing in ourselves. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. But God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:3b

Abraham believed the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness.

When we, like Abraham, believe the Lord, God credits it to our account as righteousness. Yes, when we believe God, a deposit of righteousness is placed in our account. When we sin against God in unbelief, a charge is placed on our account. These sins or charges are bought back by the blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 19b-20a

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

The price paid was the blood, the sacrifice, the death of Jesus Christ for our sins.

We need a solid foundation for our lives and our ministries. We need a foundation that cannot be shaken. Those who identify their shaky areas and bring them to God so he can teach them are those with a firm foundation.

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

There are signs, things that go on in your life when your foundation is shaky.

Hebrews 5:13

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

If we talk negative when things get negative, we don't wear our robe of righteousness. If we put ourselves down, we don't wear our robe of righteousness. When we are convicted of being wrong, we are to repent, line up our words with scripture, and wear our robe of righteousness.

We need to take the time to get a solid foundation in who we are in Jesus Christ.**Isaiah 54:14-15, 17**

In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you. If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. No weapon forged against you will prevail and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me, declares the LORD.

My heritage from God is peace in turmoil, a righteousness that never changes.

Psalm 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 32:17

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

What we go through is ordinary, common to all men. What is not ordinary is our response. We don't fall apart for we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. If everything in your life is hard, check your foundation in Christ. We talk too much about what we don't know and understand, about the trouble and troublemakers, and too little about God, his good plan, how much he loves us, what he does for us and his promises to us.

Proverbs 10:25

When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.

Life is hard where there is no righteousness or no revelation of being made righteous, and when we're living by the law it's easy to be hardhearted and legalistic with ourselves and with others. According to **Galatians 3:10** anyone who lives under the law is doomed to disappointment, that is, trying to be right with God by our own good works is impossible and will never work. According to **Romans 3:20** no person will be made righteous in God's sight through the works of the law. The function of the law is to make men conscious of sin and show us what holiness is. This causes us to repent, which produces holy character, the character of God. God cleanses us when we repent and restores us to righteousness.

In **Matthew 3:13** Jesus came to be baptized. John said "what?" and Jesus said to go ahead, that he needed to do this to fulfill all righteousness. Righteousness must be fulfilled, completely. That begins when we accept that we've been made righteous by the blood and continues as we sow the Word of God into our lives. This should produce the fruit of righteousness by the seed sown in our lives and a harvest of righteousness as we reap more believers who become righteous in Christ

When is it especially hard to do what's right?

There are certain times it's much more difficult to know and remember that we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. At these times, it is more important than ever to remember our position of righteousness in Christ Jesus:

- ♦ **When you don't have a revelation that we're righteous through the blood of Jesus.**
- ♦ **When you don't feel like doing it.**
 - 1) You must make a decision to do right, paying no attention to feelings/emotions.
 - 2) This is part of sharing the sufferings of Christ
- ♦ **When part of you wants to do right and the other part doesn't because it's too hard.**
 - 1) We say it's too hard, but it isn't. We may be lazy. We may be in the flesh.
 - 2) Yield your body to righteousness, not to sin. **Romans 6:14**

When is it especially hard to do what's right? *(cont.)*

- ♦ **When you're physically weary.**
 - 1) Keep your life in balance. Don't get overtired and open the door to Satan. Being too busy makes it hard to be a victorious Christian. Ask God to order your days.
 - 2) Take a day off when you need it to prevent burnout, physically or mentally. This may prevent attack for Satan waits for an opportune time. We are not so important we can't take a break. We are not indispensable. The work will wait or God will get it done without you.
- ♦ **When you don't see results after you've been doing what's right.**
 - 1) Do not faint. Let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. **Galatians 6:9-10** This is a command to persevere. It's wisdom and obedience to follow it.
 - 2) Trust God and keep on doing right, even when it doesn't feel fun.
- ♦ **When you seem to be the only one in your group doing it. (family, church, friends, etc.)**
 - 1) Think first. When you respond to peer pressure, you set yourself up for judgment, gossip, and being made fun of. Remember Daniel? God gave him wisdom and the ability to interpret dreams, and saved him from the lion. Remember Elijah in the desert who told God "I'm the only one left" and God said, "No, I've got 7000 ready to bow to me."
 - 2) We are to be uncompromisingly righteous. When God leads you to do right, follow him, not your friends or your flesh. Say: "I just can't resist God. I'm going to do what God wants me to." Say: "I may be the only one in my group choosing right, but there are many in the body of Christ throughout the world that are doing the right thing, so will I." Say: "This is an opportunity to give glory to God and thank him."
- ♦ **During specific attacks of temptation.**
 - 1) Sometimes Satan's working on you more than other times. Triumphant through these times strengthens and purifies us for other hard times to come.
- ♦ **When you are not being treated right.**
 - 1) So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. **1 Peter 4:19** Don't worry about how you're being treated and what you have to put up with. Don't focus on it. Lift your eyes and let God lift your heart. Deposit yourself with God and continue to do right.
 - 2) Learn to love the unlovely. Love isn't a test until we get around someone who isn't easy to love. The command is still there to love and do right to people.
 - 3) Don't say "it's not fair." Trust that God will bring justice at the right time.
 - 4) Look at what Christ puts up with all the time from you and He still treats you right. Do what's right so righteousness is fulfilled.

Additional Scripture:

Romans 3:10-11

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Psalm 11:7

For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.

Psalm 145:17

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.