



# Justification by Faith

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It's role  
in the healing  
of the soul

# The Ascension of Christ

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All the believer's blessings now are due to:

## Union with Christ in his ascension

The Father “seated us with him in the heavenly places” (Eph 2:6)  
“Seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God..., for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:2,3)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3)

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# The Ascension of Christ

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So, believers are now united with Christ in heaven,  
along with all of his blessings and gifts

And one of the most important of those blessings is  
Justification by faith

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# Justification by Faith

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It's a controversial doctrine in our day  
And it has caused lots of problems  
But it's an essential basis for the Christian  
life and therapy

But let's situate it in its larger context first

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# Declarative Salvation

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Upon faith in Christ, God declares believers to be forgiven, righteous, saints, children of God, beloved, and morally and spiritually perfect

So, from the moment they devote their lives to Christ, they have all the blessings that characterized him as a human being

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# Justification by Faith

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- Two parts of justification
    - Forgiveness for sins (Ro 3:25)
    - Imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Ro 4:24-25)
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# Justification by Faith

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What does this contribute to our mental health?

All humans are haunted by shame and guilt

Shame, in particular, is associated with all major forms of psychopathology and enormous human suffering

So, all forms of secular therapy have to address this, one way or another, usually by denying true shame and guilt and assuming humans are good or there is no such thing as good.

Secular therapies, therefore, minimize human evil and the harm humans cause one another, fostering a kind of denial of reality

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# Justification by Faith

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This is because humans were created good, so we need to know we are good, or we suffer

Christianity is able to take evil and harm more seriously, because it was dealt with by God on the cross, and at the same time, teach counselees that they are good, but that goodness is the gift of God through Christ

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# Justification by Faith

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What are the problems of justification by faith?

It seems to suggest that our lives don't matter, making it a "moral fiction."

Versions of Christianity that teach justification without change are a heresy

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# Justification by Faith

In addition to Declarative salvation there is

- Experiential salvation
  - Believers are enabled to experience the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of these declarative realities God gives all believers
- Christiformative salvation (traditional label: sanctification)
  - Believers are enabled to realize this salvation as it is internalized in their brain/souls
- Communal
  - Fellowship of believers loving one another is supposed to bring healing in community (Eph 4:11-16)

# Justification by Faith

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How can we internalize and manifest our justification?

1. By meditation on our union with Christ
2. By confession, repentance, and receiving forgiveness
3. By communion with God
4. By treating our brothers and sisters like they are righteous
4. By listening to those who criticize us
5. By practicing love and justice

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All of this is Christian psychotherapy

ERIC L. JOHNSON

*Author of Foundations for Soul Care*



# God & Soul Care

THE THERAPEUTIC RESOURCES

— of —

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

# Gideon Institute of Christian Psychology and Counseling

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