

# NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —


Lesson Seven

Romans 4:1-12

*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.  
Romans 4:3*

## Day 1

### Pray:



Father, please plant your word deep in my heart as I read and study it.  
Renew my spirit today so that I see with fresh eyes your goodness to me in  
Jesus.

**Read:** Romans 4:1-12. Read it again in another translation such as NLT.

### Observe:

- Write key words and themes, repeated words, or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

## Day 2- Romans 4:1-3

Paul carries on the theme of justification, clarifying it even further. He uses the examples of Abraham, “Israel’s most illustrious patriarch and David, Israel’s most illustrious king” <sup>1</sup> to show that justification by faith has been God’s only plan of salvation all along.

### Digging Deeper

Read Matthew 1:1 below. Who are the ancestors of Jesus mentioned in his genealogy?

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

1. Look back to 1:2 and 3:21. When was the gospel—the good news of salvation by grace, through faith—promised and spoken of?
  
2. In verse 2 Paul supposes something false for just a moment. What is the false supposition?
  - a. Who would get the glory in this false supposition?

### For Discussion:

Why do we love to earn our way?



It is hard to see ourselves as we really are. Especially when we look good on the outside—we haven’t murdered anyone, we don’t steal things from Walmart, we give to charity, recycle and aren’t racist. But the Bible tells us that even our righteous deeds are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). No matter how good we think we are or try to

be, our goodness doesn't come close to God's holy standard, so that we have no right to boast even in the good things we might do.

- ◆ Why does God have the right to hold us to his holy standard?
  
- ◆ Spend some time soaking up the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:21 *For our sake he made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God.*

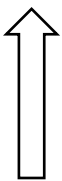
3. What is the true reason Abraham was counted righteous according to verse 3?

### Digging Deeper

We know that faith is not a work that earns us right standing with God; it is the object of our faith that is the foundation of being right before God. How do the following verses from the New Testament help us understand what Abraham's faith was in so that he was counted righteous?

Galatians 3:7-9 <sup>7</sup> *Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.* <sup>8</sup> *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."* <sup>9</sup> *So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

John 8:56 (Jesus speaking) *Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad." (NLT)*



Father thank you that salvation is your work completely! I praise you that my salvation doesn't depend on the strength of my faith but on Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith. Jesus, I love you, thank you for taking on my sin and giving me your righteousness, you are a wonderful savior!

## Picture and Ponder

"...the [crediting] of Abram's faith as righteousness means 'to account him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.'"<sup>2</sup>

### **Day 3- Romans 4:4-5**

1. What accepted fact does Paul put forth in verse 4?
2. What is *work* contrasted with in verse 5?

Scholar's Note: "*Works* is anything one is prone to rely on or rest in for salvation."<sup>3</sup>

## Picture and Ponder

"[A] saved person no longer trusts in obedience as a way to be saved. A Christian is one who stops working to be saved, not one who stops working!"<sup>4</sup>

3. Believing in God does not equal saving faith. (Jesus said even the demons believe in God.) What does saving faith believe according to verse 5?
4. In verse 5, what word describes the people God justifies?
  - a. Why is this significant?

Scholar's Note: The verb *counted* is used 5 times in 6 verses. "It means to 'credit' or 'reckon', and when used in a financial or commercial context, it signifies to put something to somebody's account as when Paul wrote to Philemon about Onesimus: 'If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.'" It can also be translated as *impute*. "The imagery of counting and crediting is financial, while that of imputing is legal. Both mean to 'reckon something as belonging to someone' but in the former case this is money, in the latter innocence or guilt."<sup>5</sup>

5. What do verses 4 and 5 teach you about:

Works-

Belief/faith/trust-

Righteousness-

Ungodly people-

## **Day 4- Romans 4:6-8**

Now Paul moves to King David as another example that God's way of salvation is not something new but was pointed to in the Old Testament as well.

1. What phrase at the end of verse 6 does Paul use to summarize what David expressed?
2. David explains justification using the other side of the same coin. What three truths does David express to describe someone who is justified in verses 7-8?

## Picture and Ponder

God doesn't just bring our account up to zero by forgiving our debt, (one side of the coin) he then credits our account with Jesus' perfect righteousness (the other side of the coin).



Read verses 7 and 8 in the NLT. Rewrite it in the first person making it a personal declaration to the Lord.

3. God counts \_\_\_\_\_ to us even though it does not belong to us and he does not count \_\_\_\_\_ against us even though it does belong to us.



How does trusting that God declares you righteous through no efforts of your own enable you to:

Be assured of your salvation?

Receive correction or even criticism?

Not be crushed in devastation when you fail?

## **Day 5- Romans 4:9-12**

1. Remember, circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people identifying them as God's chosen people who he had decided to pour out his love on. So, what question does Paul ask in verse 9?

2. What is the answer to the question in verse 10—*was Abraham counted righteous before or after he was circumcised?*
  - a. Why is the answer to this question crucial according to verse 9b?
  
3. How were justification and circumcision related in Abraham according to verse 11? (Think of the relationship between faith and baptism.)
  
  
4. Who is Abraham the father of according to verses 11-12?



“Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God, and he were to say to you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ What would you say?”<sup>6</sup>

### *One Thing:*

What is one thing from this week’s study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

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<sup>1</sup>Stott, John R.W. The Message of Romans. P.122. Intersity Press USA

<sup>2</sup>Douglas Moo, Romans p. 262 as quoted in Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 103). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Lloyd Jones, Sermon: Justifying the Ungodly. mljtrust.org

<sup>4</sup> Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 104). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Stott, John R.W. The Message of Romans. P. 125. Intersity Press USA

<sup>6</sup> D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion, p. 21 as quoted in Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 106). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

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