

## **Abstract**

Many Christians today believe that when I am *justified*, God clears my record of sin, after which He views me “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned. However, this is a terrible misunderstanding. Justification actually encompasses a powerful vision of restoring life to us as God intended. As such, it is both experiential and relational in scope, not primarily judicial.

## **Introduction**

What does it mean to be “justified by faith”? What if we have misunderstood this term and thus robbed it of its amazing implications for Christian living? More than that, what if this term actually means a real change has occurred in our life that dramatically impacts who we are in a very fundamental way?

Most Christians have been taught that when we come to God in faith and become a Christian, God erases our record of sin and declares us to be righteous in his eyes, and this is what the Bible means when it says we have been “justified.” Further, this word is usually understood in a purely legal sense. That is, while we have been pardoned and our record expunged so we will pass the final judgment, it does not mean that we have actually become holy or purified in some way. Whatever deep moral changes we might expect to take place, we generally use other words for that process, such as regeneration or sanctification. Justification itself is usually limited to a forensic, legal action taken by God in relation to our guilt and innocence, not in relation to our actual sin condition.

The truth is that New Testament justification is a very relational and experiential term. To be justified means that our very life has been corrected and set right with God. We have, in fact, become “righteous” people who live differently by virtue of having become children of God. This is not theological hair-splitting. We are talking about *acknowledging the real power to transform lives which is in view when authors use the term ‘justification’*, rather than treating it like an accounting transaction in the books of heaven.

When two people confess aloud their love for one another and recite marriage vows to each other, they are then declared to be husband and wife. But we understand that the pronouncement by the minister does not *make* them husband and wife; he is simply declaring before God and community a new reality that now stands before them. Nor does the minister say, “from now on we will view these two people *as if* they are a wedded couple, even though that’s not possible.” (I think it would be the last ceremony he was ever asked to oversee.) No. What the minister does is *acknowledge* publicly what has just actually happened to the couple: they are now husband and wife (which is different than who they were before!).

In similar fashion, when the NT authors say we have been justified, they are declaring that something real has happened to us that changed who we are. It is an acknowledgement that our relationship with God has been set right! Not just due to an accounting transaction in the books of heaven, but in reality. That is what real active faith in God does to us – it sets us straight.

### **Exploring the Grammatical Context**

Throughout the New Testament, the words *righteousness* and *justification* occur in a variety of contexts, as different parts of speech, and sometimes with significant differences in meaning. However, many of these nuances are hard to see in English, for which there are two main reasons. First, these two families of words (in English) come from a single family of words in Greek, based on the noun *dikios*. Scholars who translate these terms look to both the context of the word as well as their own prior theological assumptions in order to choose between the English terms *righteousness* and *justification* (and their related words). In many passages, either family of words might fit quite well. And a comparison of translations would demonstrate that translators do not always choose the same one. Frankly, there is no problem here, if we understand from the start that righteousness and justification are two aspects of the same thing. But for English readers, this means that if we are to have any hope of grasping the theology of Paul and the other apostles, these two English terms need to be studied together.

Second, we need to pay attention to the different parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) in which these terms occur, because there is always an inherent relationship between them. To say this another way, to be “justified” (verb) means that we have become a “just” or “righteous” (adjective) person, in some sense (either forensically or in reality), which is the essence of “justification” (noun). All of this helps us understand the basic meaning of the original term. Only then we will be able to work through what the Bible means when it says we have been justified by faith.

In this section, we will look at this larger family of words (*dikios*), separated by parts of speech and by context, beginning with those passages that are clear and then moving toward those that are more theologically ambiguous. In that way, we can make use of established, concrete definitions to shed light on how Paul and others understood the work of God in the lives of Christians.

We begin with where this term shows up as a noun, which forms the basis for the entire family of words. What we see immediately is that its meaning depends entirely on the context in which it is used.

- In its purest form, it refers to **God’s Righteousness**.  
*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt.6:33)*

- It can refer to the perfect nature of **God's laws**.  
*The 'righteous decree' (single word) of the Lord (Rom.1:32)*
- For people, it can refer to their **good deeds** or good behavior.  
*Not because of any works of righteousness that we had done (Titus.3:5)*
- For people, it can refer to a **condition of the soul**.  
*If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing (Gal.2:21)*
- More generically, it can mean **whatever is right** and good.  
*Hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mt.5:6).*
- Theologically, it refers to **what happens** to people when they are **regenerated**.  
*In him we might become the righteousness of God (2Cor.5:21).*

Moving on to its use as an adjective, there are lot of similarities to its use as a noun. We see this in common English as well. For example: "That person is nice" (where "nice" is actually an adjective; since we could also say, "He is a nice person").

- Referring to the **nature of Jesus or God** and the quality of His actions.  
*Jesus Christ the righteous [one] (1Jn.2:1)*
- As a **synonym for those who are saved**.  
*The righteous [ones] enter into eternal life (Mt.25:46)*
- Generally referring to **good people**.  
*Her [espoused] husband Joseph, being a righteous (or "just") man (Mt.1:19).*
- Generally, whatever is **good and right**.  
*Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right [conduct] (Eph.6:1).*
- Theologically referring to either **salvation** or a **process of sanctification**.  
*Many will be made righteous [people] (Rom.5:19).*

As a verb, this word has two main uses. Its common everyday use has to do with demonstrating a person's innocence. For example, when a person is on trial in a court of law, he may quite possibly be completely innocent of the charges. And if the lawyer can demonstrate that fact to the jury, the person will be exonerated; or in a word, justified. This idea can also be extended metaphorically, as in "wisdom is vindicated by her deeds (Lk.7:35). Of course, this process can also get distorted, so that a person may attempt to justify themselves even though guilty, as in: *You are those who justify themselves (Lk.16:15).*

This verb form is also used to describe a process that happens to people who come to God in repentance and surrender. Here we get into the deep theological issues regarding what the apostles actually meant by this process. When Paul says that we have been "*justified by faith*" (Rom.5:1), is he expressing a purely

legal justification; or does he believe that something substantial happens to the individual, related in some way to regeneration or transformation?

### Observations

At this point it should be obvious that righteousness and justification are fairly broad terms, and they apply to people in a number of ways. Most important, perhaps, is the understanding that when referring to human beings, this family of words does not carry with it any sense of “sinless perfection.” That means the Bible can say Christians are righteous, meaning they have some kind of authentic goodness, yet without assuming too much. We rarely use this word in modern English conversation. But we do say things like, “He is a really good man,” like Joseph, by which we mean he has good character and is trustworthy to do the right thing. That is how the word for “righteous” is often used in the New Testament.

Indeed, Paul uses a wide variety of incredibly strong language like this in regard to Christians: “*That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*” (Phil.2:15). Our knee-jerk reaction to this verse is to over-react and water it down to say very little. But the real point is that Paul believes Christians are substantially changed on the inside, and differ significantly from their previously lost condition. Yet at the same time, he is clearly not advocating a God-like, sinless perfection.

The reason why this is so important is because many Christians have difficulty hearing the full impact of the words justification and righteousness when it comes to their own experience. Nearly all of us have heard that God “views” us as righteous in a way that has little to do with our actual condition. Perhaps God only *imputes* righteousness (Rom.4:6, KJV), by which we mean that God has declared us righteous or credited us with Christ’s righteousness, but not that we are actually righteous. The word *impute* here is thought to imply a purely legal declaration that takes precedence over any reality of transformation.

However, there are two serious problems here. First, as we have just noted, all through the Bible people are called righteous in contexts that we are meant to take at face value; meaning, they really are *good* people, not merely labeled good.

Second, (in my humble opinion) the word *impute* is actually a poor translation<sup>1</sup> of the original Greek term which is actually about recognizing a certain quality or condition that something already has. As such, it is often translated as “consider” a thing to be such-and-such; like when a minister acknowledges that the couple before him are now husband and wife.

---

1 The word *impute* is probably chosen due to translator bias.

“Wages are not *considered to be* a gift but as something due” (Rom.4:4).

“So you must *consider* yourselves dead to sin by alive to God” (Rom.6:11).

“I *consider* that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed” (Rom.8:18).

It seems to me that the word means “to correctly identifying the real nature of something.” It is never used to put a label on something that is purely in the mind of the beholder but does not reflect reality in regard to the object being viewed. Yet we have been taught to disregard all of that and think of God viewing us through some kind of label or legal pronouncement that is diametrically opposed to our actual condition.

Thus when Paul describes the connection between faith and righteousness, he is not saying that God “labels” us with a forensic righteousness because we believed; rather, *faith itself is considered to be a form of righteousness!* Now to be clear, this kind of faith is not merely a mental agreement with an explanation we heard about how to go to heaven when we die. The kind of faith Paul refers to is a deep trust in God that turns our life over to Him. When Abraham *believed* God, he packed his bags and started a journey to the promised land. That’s active faith! So to paraphrase Paul, *Abraham believed God enough to follow Him, and God said that trust was the kind of righteousness He was looking for.* In other words, active faith is good and right by its very nature. This is especially obvious when Paul says the promise came to Abraham “*through the righteousness of faith*” (Rom.4:13).

We also need to point out that this kind of active faith is not a form of “works righteousness.” There is nothing particularly meritorious about a trapped victim of evil turning to a Savior for help and rescue and a new kind of life. We don’t “earn” God’s work in us; we simply trust that He is a better God than we could ever be to our self. God’s grace is not opposed to effort (Dallas Willard)! Active faith is simply a meaningful response to Grace.

Taking this one step further: if faith is righteousness, and if we are justified (the verb) by faith, then in essence Paul is saying that we are “set right” by believing God. Believing and trusting our good God is what “pulls” us straight in life. Aiming at anything else or following any other god, twists our soul and kills our spirit. Faith in God is what sets us straight and puts us on the right path that leads to the life God wants for us and the relationship that He wants with us.

A number of translators have correctly seen this connection between faith and righteousness in Romans 10:6, all of which are following the Greek here very closely.

- the righteousness grounded in trusting (CJB)
- being made right through faith (ERB, EXB, ICB, NCV)
- righteousness that comes by faith (EHV)
- righteousness that comes from faith (NRSV)
- put right with God through faith (GNT)
- faith's way of getting right with God (NLT)

Now contrast that with translators who are committed to forensic justification:

- faith makes them acceptable to God (CEV)
- God's approval which is based on faith (GW, NOG)

What the reader needs to know is that the words "acceptable" and "approval" are nowhere in the original text, nor is anything remotely similar to be found there. This is clearly a translator bias. The difference in meaning is like night and day. Unfortunately, even when the text is translated well, many of us have been conditioned to hear it as if the authors meant nothing more than the way God has decided to look at us.

#### **Is a purely forensic definition ever a plausible understanding?**

A great many theologians will strongly defend the idea of a purely forensic imputation of righteousness to the believer, insisting that all moral transformation must come under the heading of sanctification. But let's consider for a moment what this would mean for the term.

In a normal courtroom setting, a person is "justified" only after all the evidence is presented and the jury comes to the conclusion that the charges made by the prosecution simply do not add up. The defendant is pronounced "not guilty" because they are truly innocent of the charges. In a word, they have been justified. That's what the word means. Just as the word *righteousness* always refers to genuine goodness, the word *justified* always means that a real genuine goodness has been acknowledged.

A convicted person might be pardoned if it can first be demonstrated that he was wrongly convicted, and would therefore be justified. But if everyone knows he is guilty and he gets pardoned anyway, we would begin to wonder about the corrupt nature of the judge. We don't "justify" criminals.

Yet, there are theologians who want us to believe that God, the perfect judge, will "justify" a guilty person and declare him to be "righteous" even though nothing has changed, right in the face of the person's own confession of guilt! One can only say that this is a very novel definition and unprecedented usage of these words! Everywhere else in Scripture, these terms have real substance and meaning. But here, we are

supposed to suspend all sense of their established meaning, and believe that when it comes to the issue of conversion, we are to apply a new set of definitions. I think they ask too much.

Wouldn't it make far more sense, and bring far more harmony to Scripture, if we could retain the real meaning of these words throughout our understanding of salvation as well? We simply need to recognize that real genuine faith – the kind of faith that causes a person to turn and rely on God in order to walk in a new direction – that this faith is in fact the kind of righteousness that constitutes our part in reconnecting with God in the blood covenant He offers us. Because faith really does re-orient our life, by surrendering to God's invitation to return to Him as our Lord and Father. And having been reconnected and indwelt and reborn and drawing our life from God, it can then be said of us that we have been set right; we have been made righteous; we have been justified.

Now there's a reason to hit our knees in gratitude and hope and relief!

Furthermore, righteousness and justification are not stand-alone terms that we can redefine to fit into a judicial view of salvation. Because when we do that, we also have to change the definition of *faith*! Whereas faith in Scripture is always an active, full-person surrender to God, the kind of faith needed for a legal pardon is nothing more than a mental assent to a doctrine about how to go to heaven when you die. Dallas Willard referred to this as "bar code faith": where at the final judgment, God can scan our brain to see if we had previously agreed to His plan of salvation, in order to get access to heaven. Thus reducing justification to a forensic label has the unintended consequence of also watering down the Biblical meaning of faith!

Forensic justification also downgrades the meaning of *grace*! How often have we heard that "grace is getting something you don't deserve, or not getting what you do deserve"? That's not grace! Grace is everything God does for us and in us that we cannot do for ourselves (Dallas Willard). When a fireman rescues a person from a building, that's grace. When a lifeguard saves a drowning person, that's grace. When you care for a person who is too ill to care for themselves, that's grace. And when God enters our life and regenerates our spirit, rescuing us from the powers of darkness, that's grace!

When children are rescued from slavery, no one asks whether or not they 'deserved' to be saved. That would have no place in the story. They are saved by the grace of the rescuer. Jesus healed people because He is good and loves to heal. The question of merit was never considered. Turning grace into a legal transaction, keeping you from getting "what you deserve," is repugnant to the gospel. Salvation is a real thing that changes our life forever. It's not a judicial ruling in the courts of heaven that you can then act on if you feel enough gratitude to do so.

These are all reasons why reducing justification to a forensic, legal transaction has dramatic and drastic repercussions for the Christian life. Justification is not about obtaining eternal security which then makes possible a relationship with God. To be justified means *we now have a right relationship with God that is eternally secure!*

### **Attempts to Defend Forensic Justification**

Perhaps the single greatest problem with a purely legal view of justification is that it divorces salvation from sanctification. Now invariably, the response from those who defend a forensic understanding of justification is this: Salvation is a multifaceted event in which all of the parts must be taken together as a whole. Justification is only one facet. Salvation also involves repentance and redirecting one's life. If we say there is a legal aspect to salvation, that does not require us to divorce salvation from sanctification.

Sounds good. But there are multiple serious problems with this defense.

1. As we demonstrated already, righteousness is always a real thing everywhere else in Scripture, not a label that is applied without regard to reality. And justification is always based on reality as well, and not something applied by fiat. Yes, it is true that God no longer holds our sin against us. But that's forgiveness, not the meaning of justification!
2. We have also seen how a purely forensic view of justification ends up redefining and watering down other significant terms like grace and faith. These are serious problems.
3. No matter how hard you protest that justification and sanctification are connected, that's not what people hear. Once it is stated that justification is purely a declaration that a person's guilt has been cleared so they will pass the test at the final judgment, the rest of the story becomes optional. That is why people commonly believe that one can be a Christian forever without ever becoming a disciple. Praxis matters here, and this common approach to Christianity reveals the fact that this pardon theory is deeply flawed.
4. Problem #3 is further exacerbated by the way this legal process has been embedded into the way our gospel is often presented today. "If you will confess your sin and believe that Jesus died for you, God will forgive your sin and you will be saved. After that you 'should' try to live the way God asks, out of gratitude for his gift of salvation." Although quite popular, this is expressly NOT the gospel of the New Testament! And it's not that hard to trace its roots back to this misguided view of forensic justification.



5. And finally, a close look at many of these theologians will reveal that their theology of sanctification is also distorted and even rooted in human performance. In practice it often gets reduced to, "If you try hard to do what is right, the Holy Spirit will help you." Again, this is NOT sanctification as laid out in the New Testament. And to the point here in this article, if sanctification is works-based and justification is purely forensic, where is the inherent connection between justification and sanctification which they claim exists? Other than both having been supposedly packaged together by God, they have nothing in common. And the argument that one must look at the Christian life as a whole in order to understand salvation, does not hold up either. Because they also insist that it is justification alone that secures our pardon at the last judgment, regardless of how we live the rest of life. I'm not arguing that we are instead saved by how we live our life; I'm just pointing out that the proponents of forensic justification are trying to have it both ways, when in fact their theology is simply incongruous.

### **God's Intent**

What is missing in most debates about justification is the basic question: What is the real problem in human beings that God is trying to solve? If it were merely guilt, then forensic justification would be sufficient, and the New Testament could surely have a great deal shorter. But if we go back to the Old Testament prophets who foretold of a New Covenant, it should become clear that God had a far more powerful answer in mind for the plight of humanity. God was determined to rescue people from evil, transform their hearts, and indwell them with His very presence! That is why Paul hammers the wonderful news of becoming free from sin itself, not just free from judgment over sin.<sup>2</sup>

### **Critique**

Nearly every theologian who has critiqued forensic justification has pointed out the obvious problem that once justification is seen as purely legal and has nothing to do with acknowledging a real change in people, then the gospel becomes segmented and people see salvation and discipleship as two separate decisions. On the other hand, if justification is a term that captures God's initial intervention in a person's life, then the decision to truly follow Jesus is the act of faith that is needed, and sanctification becomes an inherent part of salvation.

### **Why it Matters**

What matters here is that when I trust God for my life and for what is true about life, I am in the kind of relationship with God that He has always wanted: to Father me, Shepherd me, guide me, live within me, interact with me, heal me ... and all that we read about in the New Covenant. This way of having been set right with God is that the authors called *justification*.

---

<sup>2</sup> Life transformation at conversion is especially obvious in Romans 6.

If instead, we believe in a truncated gospel about how to have our record expunged so we can pass the final judgment, we are left with a solution for the afterlife that has very little connection with how we live today. Our far away God records the changes in a book, and then pretends to see us as righteous only because Jesus is standing in the way between Him and us. No matter how hard we try to put this gospel together with life, it falls terribly short of what the New Testament authors were talking about. And if there were any doubt about this, one only has to read how these theologians struggle to describe sanctification for the Christian.<sup>3</sup> Many of them are completely unable to describe any of it in terms of our relationship with God, or how it is deeply embedded in the process of salvation itself.

My friend, God has come and offered to rescue us from the very power of Evil, and restore us to the relationship that He intended for us from the beginning of creation! That is the Good News Gospel. Eternity is part of our inheritance as His children, not the other way around! The gospel is about becoming a real child of the living God, and everything that comes with that.

In the end, the real issue with forensic justification is that it is an integral part of a much larger problem: the truncated gospel of cheap grace that has dominated the Western Church for generations. Reducing the gospel to a forensic clearing of our record with its optional benefits was one of the greatest accomplishments of Satan in the entire history of the Church. It has robbed the gospel of its power and left Christians wondering whatever happened to the abundant life promised in the New Testament.

More than anything, correcting our vision of justification resets the tone for how we engage with God as Christians. Instead of, “Lord help me to do the right things,” we pray for whatever strengthens our set-rightness with God. “Lord, open my eyes to see the unseen realities of the Kingdom in which I now live; help me to experience your presence here with me; lead me in my relationships with others; heal those wounded parts of me that doubt Your goodness, or that have trouble believing Your way is best; free me from whatever grip this world system still has on my soul, so that I can be closer to You.” We are then working out our salvation from God’s intention to its full fruition in us.

### **Revisiting a few Theological Passages**

Given our fresh perspective, let’s see how this changes the way we read Scripture.

#### **Acts.13:39**

Here is a sentence from a sermon by Paul to the Jews in Antioch. His main point was that their promised Messiah had indeed already come, and the new kind of life that had been prophesied as part of His coming was now available to all. He then contrasts the two primary covenants in saying: “*By this Jesus*

---

<sup>3</sup> See *Five Views of Sanctification*, Gundry (ed). One of the most depressing books I’ve ever read.

*everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses” (NRSV).*

What is not obvious in many translations is that Paul used the term *dikios* here. The NET is one that comes very close to a literal rendition of the Greek: *“By this One everyone who believes is justified from everything from which the law of Moses could not justify you.”*

Searching through various translations, it is actually quite surprising how many see this Greek word as having real-world impact, along the lines of “to be freed” or “made righteous.” For example: *“Through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (NASB).* Also: *“Through this One everyone who keeps trusting is made righteous” (TLV).* From the larger context, one could argue that this is indeed what Paul had in mind: a real-world transformation of people, which was a promised outcome of the reign of Messiah.

Now while this may or may not be definitive in terms of our argument here, look what happens when they try to translate it in forensic terms: *“Everyone who trusts in him is freed from all guilt and declared righteous—something the Jewish law could never do (TLB).* Unfortunately, if Paul had actually said this, he would have been wrong! The Law actually did have provision to cleanse everyone’s guilt and defilement from everything, embedded in the great Day of Atonement. *“For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord” (Lev.16.30).* If the Law could clear the guilt of people, then Paul had to be telling the Jews of Antioch that faith in Christ could do more than clear guilt; it could actually result in people being set free from sin. That is what Paul meant in regard to being justified.

### **Gal.2:16-21.**

Here Paul is deep into his defense of his gospel of grace, arguing against those who would require Gentiles to become Jews in order to fully justified: *“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but **through faith** in Christ Jesus, even we [Jews] have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law ... I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through [works of] the Law, then Christ died needlessly” (NASB 1995).*

Perhaps the first thing we need to see here is that Paul views *faith* as a real-world way of trusting God for his entire life. Faith is not an idea or a doctrinal belief, but a trust so deep that he would die to his old way

of life in immerse himself in the life of God.<sup>4</sup> In the big picture of Paul's worldview,<sup>5</sup> this is exactly what God wants with all people: a real, interactive relationship. What's more, it is this kind of life-changing active faith in the gift of God by which we are *justified*.

If we stop and view this from God's perspective, it helps us see what is at stake here. God has already moved heaven and earth to "seek and save those who are lost." The question is, What does He want from us in response? Is He looking for compliance with His laws? Not so much. He wants us to run to Him for rescue and restoration, wanting Him to be our Father and Lord. That's faith: acting on what cannot be seen in the natural on the basis of His revelation to us, and to be reconciled to Him. This is a life that cannot be achieved by effort, no matter how "righteous" it may be. It is *received* by real faith. And when that happens, our life is set to rights; we are justified!

### Conclusion

Justification is not a legal declaration, erasing our record of sin, that makes everything else possible in regard to salvation. Rather, it is a way to sum up what happens to a person who by faith has been rescued from evil, regenerated, and set right with God. In retrospect, they have been justified. For Paul, salvation and justification are almost synonyms: *For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness (or justification), and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation*<sup>6</sup> (Rom.10:10, NASB). Once we see this, the texts regarding justification and righteousness take on real-world meaning and change how we see ourselves in relationship to God.

Through death and resurrection, we have truly been reborn as children of a Holy God! As a result, our lives have been "set right" (justified). That is a reality to be lived into and lived out in our crazy world. Above all, justification needs to be understood in *relational* terms! Putting our lives in the hands of God is the ultimate act of relational trust.

"I will not be my own god, nor will I follow after any other. I need You to rescue me from that which I cannot free myself, Lord God. I surrender to all that you have for me, so that as Your child, I can live my life with you, and one day reflect You in all that I think or do. Amen."

That, my friends, is faith that leads to righteousness, and sets us right with God. And that is *justification*.

---

4 See also the motif of death and resurrection in Romans 6.

5 See Ephesians 1, where Paul spells out the big story of God's intentions for all of creation.

6 This sentence is in the style of classic Hebrew parallelism! (belief/confession results in salvation/*dikios*).

A compilation of most occurrences of *dikios* and related terms<sup>7</sup>  
( with Strong's numbering ). Special section on Romans at the end.

**1343. dikaiosunee (noun): righteousness; right**

**== God's righteousness**

Mt.6:33. seek first the kingdom of God and his *righteousness*

2Pet.3:13. we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where *righteousness* is at home.

**== human goodness; good deeds**

Phil.3:6. as to *righteousness* under the law, blameless.

Titus.3:5. not because of any works of *righteousness* that we had done

1Jn.2:29. you also know that everyone who does *right* has been born of him.

1Jn.3:7. Everyone who does what is *right* is *righteous*

**== what is right and good (generic)**

Mt.5:6. hunger and thirst for *righteousness*

Acts.13:10. you enemy of all *righteousness*

Gal.5:5. we eagerly wait for the hope of *righteousness*

1Tim.6:11. pursue *righteousness* (2Tim.2:22)

2Tim.3:16. All scripture ... is useful ... for training in *righteousness*

1Pet.2:24. so that we might die to sin and live for *righteousness*

2Pet.2:21. the way of *righteousness*

Rev.19:11. in *righteousness* he judges and wages war

**== condition of the heart**

Gal.2:21. if *righteousness* comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing \*\* theological

Gal.3:21. if a law had been given that could make alive, then *righteousness* would indeed come through the law

---

<sup>7</sup> From Wigram, *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*

**== righteousness; justification (theological statements)**

Mt.5:20. unless your *righteousness* exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees

2Cor.5:21. that in him we might become the *righteousness* of God

Eph.4:24. the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true *righteousness* and holiness

Phil.3:9. not having a *righteousness* of my own that comes from the law but one that comes through faith in Christ, the *righteousness* from God based on faith.

Heb.11:7. *righteousness* which is according to faith.

**1345. dikaioma (noun) == righteous statute; decree**

Lk.1:6. walking in the *ordinances* of the Lord

Heb.9:1,10. had also *ordinances* of divine service ... various *ordinances*

**1342. dikaios (adjective): righteous; just**

**== Applied to God or his perfection**

Jn.17:25. *Righteous* Father

Acts.7:52. the coming of the *Righteous* One

2Thess.1:5. the *righteous judgment* of God

2Tim.4:8. the Lord, the *righteous* judge

1Jn.1:9. he who is faithful and *just* will forgive us

1Jn.2:1. Jesus Christ the *righteous*

Revelation (multiple refs to God)

**== synonym for Christians**

Mt.13:43. Then the *righteous* will shine like the sun

Mt.13:49. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the *righteous*

Mt.25:37. the *righteous* will answer him

Mt.25:46. the *righteous* into eternal life

Acts.24:15.. resurrection of both the *righteous* and the *unrighteous*

Heb.12:23. to the spirits of the *righteous* made perfect

Jas.5:16. The prayer of the *righteous* is powerful and effective

1Pet.4:18. If it is hard for the *righteous* to be saved

**== a good person; Applied to people (present age)**

Mt.1:19. Her husband Joseph, being a *righteous* man  
Mt.5:45. He sends rain on the *righteous* and on the *unrighteous*  
Mt.13:17. many prophets and *righteous* people longed to see what you see  
Lk.1:6. Both of them were *righteous* before God, living blamelessly  
Lk.2:25. Simeon; this man was *righteous* and devout  
Lk.18:9. some who trusted in themselves that they were *righteous*  
Acts.10:22. Cornelius, a centurion, a *righteous* and God-fearing man  
1Jn.3:7. Everyone who does what is *right* is *righteous*

**== Upright Behavior or action; whatever is morally right**

Mt.20:4,7. I will pay you whatever is *right*  
Mt.23:28. you also on the outside look *righteous* to others  
Lk.12:57. why do you not judge for yourselves what is *right*?  
Acts.4:19. Whether it is *right* in God's sight  
Phil.4:8. whatever is *just* ... think about these things  
Jn.5:30. my judgment is *just*  
Eph.6:1. obey your parents in the Lord, for this is *right*  
Phil.1:7. It is *right* for me to think this way about all of you  
2Pet.1:13. I think it *right*, as long as I am in this body  
1Jn.3:7. Everyone who does what is *right* is *righteous*

**== Other**

Mt.9:13. I have not come to call the *righteous* but sinners (Mk.2:17; Lk.5:32)  
Mt.27:19. Have nothing to do with that *innocent* man (Pilate's wife)  
Lk.23:47. Certainly this man was *innocent* (centurion)  
1Tim.1:9. law is laid down not for the *righteous*  
1Pet.3:12. the eyes of the Lord are on the *righteous*  
Mt.23:35. all the *righteous* blood shed on earth

**== Theological statements (see also Romans below)**

Gal.3:11. no one is considered *righteous* ... by the law, for the one who is *righteous* will live by faith.

**1344. dikaioo (verb)**

**== to vindicate; to be proven to be right or good; to display righteousness**

Mt.11:19. wisdom is *vindicated* by her deeds (Lk.7:35)

Mt.12:37. by your words you will be *justified*, and by your words you will be condemned

Lk.10:29. wanting to *vindicate* himself [self-justification]

Lk.16:15. You are those who *justify* yourselves [self-justification]

1Cor.4:4. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby *acquitted*

Gal.3:11. that no one is *justified* by the Law before God is evident (NASB)

**== to justify; justifies; justified (Theological Issues)**

Lk.18:14. this man went down to his home *justified*

Acts.13:39. by this Jesus everyone who believes is *set free* from all those sins from which you could not be *freed* by the law of Moses \*\*

1Cor.6:11. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were *justified*

Gal.3:8. foreseeing that God would *justify* the Gentiles by faith (NASB)

Gal.3:24. the Law has become our tutor ... so that we may be *justified* by faith

Gal.5:4. You who are seeking to be *justified* by the Law; you have fallen from grace (NASB)

Titus.3:7. having been *justified* by his grace

**1346. dikaiose (adverb) justly; righteously; a quality of action**

Lk.23:41. we indeed *justly* (came under judgment)

1Thess.2:10. how devoutly and *rightly* and blamelessly we behaved

Titus.2:12. to live sensibly, *righteously*, and in a godly manner

1Pet.2:23. he entrusted himself to the one who judges *justly*

**1347. dikaiosis (noun) acquittal**

(only occurs 2 time in NT)



=====

**Romans:** Since this word occurs so many times in Romans, we have summarized them here. Unless listed otherwise, the term is always the noun (1343): Righteousness.

**1345. dikaioma (noun) == righteous statute; decree**

Rom.1:32. having known the *righteous decree* of the Lord

Rom.2:26. keep the *requirements* of the law

Rom.8:4. the *righteous commandment* of the law should be fulfilled in us

**1341. dikaiokrisia (adj) == perfect**

Rom.2:5. when God's *righteous judgment* will be revealed

**1342. dikaios (adjective): righteous; just**

Rom.3:26. he is *righteous* (or *just*) and the justifier of the one who has faith

Rom.7:12. and the commandment is holy and *just* and good

**== Theological statements**

Rom.1:17. The *just* will live by faith (or *righteous one*)

Rom.2:13. not the hearers of the law who are *just* with God but ...

Rom.3:10. There is no one who is *righteous*, not even one (i.e. justified in themselves)

Rom.5:19. many will be made *righteous*

**1344. dikaioo (verb) == to justify; justifies; justified** (Theological Issues)

Rom.2:13. the doers of the law who will be *justified*

Rom.3:26. he is the *justifier* of the one who has faith

Rom.3:28. a man is *justified* by faith

Rom.4:5. one who ... trusts him who *justifies* the ungodly, such faith is considered righteousness

Rom.5:1,9.. having been *justified* by faith ... we have now been *justified* by his blood

Rom.6:7. For whoever has died is *freed* from sin \*\* CONTEXT 6:1-14

Rom.8:30. whom He called, He *justified*; and whom He *justified*, he also glorified

== Other similar: Rom.3:4,20,28,30; 4:2,5; 8:33

--end--