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March 1999

...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15b

What to do with Righteousness

When we are saved, we receive the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:9, 10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

A definition of righteousness is, “the God-given justification whereby a person stands in the presence of God without any consciousness of sin, guilt or shortcomings.”¹

The question then is what do we do with that righteousness. I want to consider some of the things we can do with the righteousness of God we receive when we are saved.

One thing we can do with the righteousness of God is nothing. We can be glad we have righteousness, have an intellectual acceptance, and not do anything with that righteousness of God.

Romans 10:3

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going

about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

We need to submit or subject ourselves to the righteousness of God. To either ignore it or just have an intellectual acceptance is not subjecting ourselves to the righteousness of God. At best, this is holding the Word in regards to righteousness but not being held by the Word. We may know about the righteousness of God; be able to quote scriptures about the righteousness of God and still not do anything with the righteousness of God in our lives.

Another thing we can do with the righteousness of God is claim righteousness in our life while we continue to allow unrighteous actions in our life that are contrary to God's Word without challenging those actions and trying to change our behavior.

Romans 5:21

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grace reigns by way of righteousness. The righteousness of God is ours by believing on Jesus Christ and is not dependant

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upon what we do or don't do.
But God then asks this question.

Romans 6:1

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God did not make us righteous in Christ Jesus so that we can continue in sin with no concern about correcting unrighteous behavior and with the attitude that God's grace will cover for us. God's grace does covers for us but it should be as we are trying to live righteously according to God's Word.

Romans 6:11-13

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

Even though we have the righteousness of God, we can still yield ourselves to unrighteousness. But God did not give us righteousness so that we

can let sin reign in us. God did not give us righteousness so that we can yield ourselves as instruments of unrighteousness. That is just the wrong way to look at what to do with the righteousness of God.

One thing we can do with the righteousness of God, that is in accordance with God's purpose for righteousness, is to use righteousness to help us live righteously and stay in fellowship with God and walk with Him. I can think of at least two ways that the righteousness of God helps us stay in fellowship with God.

The first is that as we endeavor to walk with God, the righteousness of God helps us to not be discouraged from that walk by sins or unrighteous actions we commit.

I John 3:9

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The seed of God in Christ in us, which is the righteousness of God, is not affected by sin in our lives. We know we cannot loose the righteousness of God when we sin. That gives us confidence to continue challenging unrighteous actions in our life so we can change our behavior and live righteously and

walk with God.

Another way that the righteousness of God helps us stay in fellowship with God is that it gives us access to God.

Ephesians 2:13, 18

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

When we do sin and break fellowship with God, we do not need to go through a period of sacrifice or penance in order to be made righteous before God because our righteousness is in Christ Jesus. What we do need to do is confess to God our sins in order for God to cleanse us of that broken fellowship with Him.

I John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It is the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus that gives us access to God so we can go to God and ask for forgiveness. We do not need to go to a priest or some other person. We do not need to go to a temple or a church building. We can go directly to God because we have

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access to God due to the righteousness we have in Christ Jesus. And if we go to God, He promises to forgive us and cleanse us from unrighteousness that keeps us from fellowship with Him.

So, what to do with righteousness? Every person who is saved has the righteousness of God in him through Christ Jesus. And every person who has the righteousness of God in him has the freedom of will to decide what to do with that righteousness.

Some people are satisfied just knowing they have the righteousness of God. Some want to claim righteousness and at the same time continue to allow unrighteous actions and behavior in their life, without challenge. And some want to use that righteousness as a basis to challenge unrighteous actions and behavior so they can live righteously, stay in fellowship with God and grow in their walk with Him. I'll take door number three!

In God's Love
Ray

¹ Victor Paul Wierwille, *The Bible Tells Me So*, (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1971), p. 67