

Heidelberg Catechism 59-61 – How to become Right with God

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Today you will hear how to become right with God.

Our headings are:

You must believe what the Bible says to be right with God

You must have faith to believe what the Bible says

What is the result of believing what the Bible says?

Our goals are: That you will see the need for faith and you will use this gift of faith to receive the full promises you have in Jesus to be saved.

You must believe what the Bible says to be right with God

59 Q. WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO YOU, HOWEVER, TO BELIEVE ALL THIS?

A. In Christ **I am right with God** and heir to life everlasting.

1. If you say “I believe in God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and was buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; I believe a holy catholic church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting,” you are right with God and an heir of heaven.

You can never go to hell. You are assured of going to heaven and be there for eternity.

Without believing in Jesus Christ, you are not right with God and you will die in your sins and go to hell.

You must have faith to believe what the Bible says

60 Q. HOW ARE YOU RIGHT WITH GOD?

A. Only **by true faith in Jesus Christ**. Even though **my conscience accuses** me of having grievously sinned against all God’s commandments and of never having kept any of them, and even though **I am still inclined toward all evil**, nevertheless, without my deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. **All I need to do is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.**

61 Q. WHY DO YOU SAY THAT BY FAITH ALONE YOU ARE RIGHT WITH GOD?

A. It is not because of any value my faith has that God is pleased with me. **Only Christ’s satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness make me right with God**. And I can receive this righteousness and make it mine **in no other way than by faith** alone.

1. So how are you able to believe what is confessed in the Apostles’ Creed and be made right with God?

By faith only! So faith is essential to your salvation and your future. If you have no faith, you have no future-not a good one.

2. What is faith?

Faith is the means – the only means - by which you receive what God offers to you.

Faith is like a spiritual hand from God.

Faith is a taker; it is a noun.

By faith you receive **knowledge and assurance of what Christ has done for you – and you are saved forever.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified by faith** apart from the deeds of the law.

Galatians 2:16 "knowing that a man is **not justified by the works** of the law **but by faith in Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 3:8 Yet indeed **I also count all things loss** for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them as rubbish**, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that **which is through faith in Christ**, the **righteousness which is from God by faith**;

3. You have no right to faith as it is a gift.

How humbling! You desperately needed faith and God gave it as a gift! Free for you...but costly for Jesus.

You must show your appreciation for it. Only the most ungrateful would ignore the one who gave a most needful gift.

You must share it. What is worse than to hoard a gift that others need when you have a bountiful supply?

4. You must have faith in Jesus; he is the object of your faith.

1Corinthian 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who **became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption**—31 that, as it is written, "**He who glories**, let him glory in the LORD."

Do you see why this doctrine is humbling?

1John 5:10 He who believes in the **Son of God** has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; **he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

4. By faith, God grants you the credits of Christ's salvation out of pure love.

Romans 4:2 For **if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about**, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 **But to him who does not work but believes on Him** who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is accounted for righteousness,**

If you cannot rest in God's credits in Jesus, you cannot rest.

This goes against our modern sense of value and ego! There is no thumping of the chest and saying: "I did this." You simply thankfully receive what God offers.

5. There are things which are hindrances to your faith and they rob you of being made right with God.

a. Your conscience can make you feel hopeless when you sin. But you have to remember you are not saved by your own work and you must **therefore reject the temptation to feel hopeless.** Even if you are guilty for breaking all of God's laws, remember you were saved by grace through faith in Jesus. So don't become despondent. **It is the Devil's trap to feel guilty to make you feel hopeless and you give up.**

That's how the sneaky snake works.

Romans 3:9...**Are we better than they? Not at all.** For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "**There is none righteous, no, not one;**

If fact, throughout your life you are inclined to all kinds of evil as the Apostle Paul was.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in **my members**, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

b. You might be tempted to think you deserve good things from God because you are special or because of what you do, but you do not deserve anything from God. You have no right to faith or salvation. Faith and salvation are gifts of God; they are from sheer grace.

Titus 3:4 But when the **kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works** of righteousness which we have done, **but according to His mercy** He saved us...

You **may not boast of any intrinsic ability to earn or merit your salvation.**

Romans 3:24 being **justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Furthermore, **God doesn't need anything from you so he has no obligation to give you faith.** You need everything from him. You are the one full of sin. How can a sinful man attain to the heights of God's holy majesty when he is full of sin? Man became darkened. Only God can shine that light again in you to make you receive what he has done.

c. Some people believe they are justified when God sees faith working in them and God is therefore compelled to reward them. This is not true faith. No one is saved by covenant faithfulness – by actions.

Faith does not include works. This is a dangerously false doctrine that is close to the Roman Catholic heresy and it robs Christ of his glory. In fact, **you are not saved by faith itself. It is what you receive by faith...the person and work of Jesus Christ...that saves you.** Through faith God declares you righteous. Faith itself is not rewarded...justification (a work of God) is rewarded.

d. Faith is not simply mental agreement with the Word of God as Roman Catholics teach. Those who think faith is simply mental agreement with certain facts do not have faith.

e. Other things that can hinder your faith are:

Your knowledge of the Bible. Knowledge by itself is meaningless. Knowledge doesn't save.

Reformed faith. We have the most accurate doctrines in the world, but doctrines don't save. Faith does.

Heritage. Heritage (family relations) does not give you pass into heaven. It may give you access to the Word of Truth, but you have to receive it for yourself. **Children, you must take warning from this.**

What is the result of believing what the Bible says?

1. Your perfect Savior, by his life and death, causes God to declare you to be perfect.

Romans 4:24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised **because of our justification.**

Those who are justified are **treated just as if they never sinned.**

2Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

So you simply must receive by faith what God has done for you through Jesus.

John 3:18 "He who **believes in Him is not condemned**; but **he who does not believe is condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

2. You have peace that starts to grow in your heart.

You are **left with pure amazement** at Christ's good work for you!

You know you are a Christian and you know you have true relationship with your heavenly Father.

So with peace with God, you can worship him. You have direct access to him.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also **we have access by faith** into this grace **in which we stand**, and **rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

3. You have everlasting life...that begins now and will be completed in eternity.

John 3:36 "**He who believes in the Son has everlasting life**; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Conclusion:

Only in Jesus you are right with God. **You can only be in Jesus by receiving his work of living and dying for you, and do so through faith** – faith which he gives to you. So salvation is all of the Lord. And the result: You are **declared to be perfect** and you have eternal **peace with God** and **joy in your soul**. You can **worship** him.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. What an incredible thing – your salvation! You were totally incapable to save yourself, but your sins have been removed permanently from you. Be amazed. You are declared righteous! **Let this humble you.**

2. And since you continue to sin throughout your life and you continue to be forgiven through Jesus Christ, let this humble you more. Ask God to destroy your ego more and more and help you to serve him better.

3. Boast of Christ to others, not how good you are. Praise him at morning, noon, and night.

4. Share this treasure with the world, starting in your home.

Finally, if you are not a Christian let me say this: You will go to hell without faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is a gift only God can give you. You need faith to receive the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as your own work. You will get faith if you read God's Word and ask God for his Holy Spirit to help you.