

Righteous through Faith

Romans 3:21-31

June Memory Verse: Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

NOTE: This weekend is the last of the month. Keep pushing through to memorize this verse as a family. When you (or your kids) run into hard things this week, practice the verse together. Model what it looks like to apply Scripture to everyday life. As we walk through hard things ahead of us, we know we can do it because of Christ... not because of us.

Opening Activity: Choose one or two that seem most appropriate for your children to start the lesson. Feel free to work them into the lesson if you kids start to get antsy and lose their attention span... like ours do!

- Practice saying Philippians 4:13 together, along with other verses you have memorized. Say it in funny voices, say it as loudly or as quietly as you can, say it while standing on one foot. If your kids are writers, have them write it down on a pretty or cool piece of paper to hand in their bedroom.
- Pray together as a family for any needs you or others have. Remember to thank Him for His blessings and what He is doing in your lives, too.
- Define *righteous*: morally right; a good (or right) standing before God.
- Define *faith*: (reference Hebrews 11:1) Acting on your belief in God.

Today's lesson focus is on how we are declared righteous through our faith in Christ. This is a prime opportunity to talk about how God sees the sin in our hearts. But He wants us to be with Him, so He sent Jesus to die on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven. That was the only solution. Now, we can be right before God because of our faith in Jesus.

Lesson: The goal here is not to teach a perfect lesson, but to remember that the word of God never returns void (Isaiah 55:11). Our job is to teach His word regularly and faithfully, trusting that He will take care of the rest.

- Provide a quick recap to your kids, especially since it's been a few weeks: "We are learning from the book of Romans about how to live in a way that pleases God. Romans was written by a missionary named Paul who loved Jesus and wanted others to love Him, too. We have learned that we are called to obey, to belong to Jesus, and to be holy. We've talked a lot about making righteous (or good) choices instead of sinful (or bad) choices. God rewards righteous choices and punishes sinful choices. Obeying in our hearts matters more than obeying with our hands."
- Introduce the passage: "Today, we are reading Romans 3:21-31. Paul is talking about how our righteousness, or the things that make us good before God, is not because of what we do. We aren't righteous because we obey our parents or follow the law, but because God makes us right."
- Read Romans 3:21-31, stopping to repeat verses, explain words, and ask questions, as appropriate for your kiddos. Focus especially on verse 28.
 - *Key concept:* We are righteous when we have faith in God, not when we follow the rules.
 - This passage explains that God sees us (both Jews and Greeks) as righteous when we put our faith in Christ, because of what He did on the cross (vs. 22).
 - Following the rules, obeying the law, or "walking the line" does not grant our righteousness (vs. 21). We have all sinned (vs. 23) and that sin separates us from God.
 - However, just because our righteousness doesn't come from the law, that doesn't mean we don't obey the law (vs. 31). As followers of Christ, we should seek to honor Him however we can, and part of that is by obeying the law.

Consider reading the passage in The Message or NIV, which are often the easiest to understand. Countless versions of the Bible can be found online at www.biblegateway.com.

- Review the passage:
 - Vs. 21-22: In the Old Testament, God only considered people righteous if they obeyed the Law that He gave to Moses (Exodus 19-20). But Paul is explaining a new righteousness: one that comes from God when we put our faith in Jesus.
 - Vs. 23: We are all sinners who are separated from God – the law shows us that! We can never keep all the rules.
 - Vs. 24: But Jesus makes us clean before God by His grace.

- o Vs. 27-31: By having faith in God, we are justified. God is the God of both Jews and Gentiles. We should all obey the law because we love God.
- **Connect the Gospel:** "God created everything, including people. But the first people God made, Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God. Now, everyone in the world is born with a sin nature. That means we all sin. The punishment of sin is death and separation from God forever. But God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth so that we don't have to be punished forever for our sins. Jesus lived a sinless life. He was put to death on a cross, taking the punishment for our sin and guilt. He rose to life three days later, showing that He won over sin and death. If we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. Then we can know Him, be part of His family, serve Him, and spend eternity with Him in heaven. Eternal life with Jesus is our best reward for following and obeying Him."
- "When we put our faith in Jesus, because of what He did on the cross, we are righteous before God."
- Pray, then do some of the activities below, as appropriate for your family.

Activity Ideas: These are designed for use at the end of the lesson or throughout it to break up the "sitting still" times.

- **Write it out:** Write out the word **RIGHTEOUS** on a big piece of paper. Have your kids color it while you talk about what the word means. Come up with examples of righteous things we can do (such as obeying our parents, being helpful, etc.). Talk about how those things do not make us righteous, but we do things because we **ARE** righteous. Compare it to your child: He/she does not obey to earn your love; rather, he/she obeys because you love them already. That is like how we relate to God: we do not obey His law because we want Him to love us. We obey His law because He already loves us and we want to show that we love Him, too.
SUPPLIES NEEDED: Paper/poster board, markers
- **We put our faith in...:** *NOTE: It's so easy for people to put their faith in something other than Christ (such as a good night of sleep, a hot cup of coffee, a new toy, etc.). We don't even recognize it immediately, but then we start noticing the thought patterns that proclaim, "If I had slept well, my day would have been better... if I had one more cup of coffee, things would be okay... if I had that cool toy (or tool or outfit), my life would be so much more enriched." We have an opportunity as parents to model to our kids that our faith is in Christ ALONE. This activity moves us in that direction. Have your kids run around the house and gather some of their favorite items: stuffed animals, movies, shoes, etc. Line them up against the wall or couch. Tell your kids that you want them to make a really big jump and one of the items they grabbed is going to catch them. One by one, have your kids jump. Ask, "Did your toy catch you? Did your shoes catch you? Hmm... We thought they would! That's called faith: we believed they would catch us, so we jumped... but they didn't catch us at all! That's because we should only put our faith in Jesus. He is the only One who can catch us every time."*
SUPPLIES NEEDED: Random household objects that kids collect.
- **Print the coloring sheet on the next page or make your own.** Talk again about how God calls us righteous because of our faith in Christ.
SUPPLIES NEEDED: Printer, paper, crayons/markers/etc.

