

## **Raising the Knife - The Faith of Abraham - Justification by Works**

True or False?            Watch out for curve balls!    You can write notes on the back, too.

1. The term justification can be applied to a person but not their activity            T        F
2. The name Abraham means "Father of a Multitude"            T        F
3. Abram's name was changed to Abraham in Genesis 26            T        F
4. The biblical event immediately prior to the birth of Abram was the Tower of Babel            T        F
5. Abraham put Isaac on an altar instead of putting himself on an altar            T        F
6. Abraham knew God was going to stop him from killing Isaac            T        F
7. Abraham is an example of an imperfect believer who walked by faith and produced good works            T        F
8. Abraham was justified in no other way than by faith            T        F
9. Paul's writing in Ephesians 2:8-10 does not contradict James' writing in 2:14-26            T        F
10. Justification by works refers to displaying our faith, not to getting saved            T        F
11. Paul never mentions works and James never mentions faith            T        F
12. Both faith and works justify, only in different ways            T        F
13. Works undermine the effectiveness of our faith            T        F
14. Ultimately, we are declared righteous (justified) by God at salvation by believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ            T        F
15. According to both Paul and James, justification is primarily by faith and evidentially by works            T        F

# RAISING THE KNIFE

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THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM AND  
JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS

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*James 2:21*



# INTRODUCTION

- **Materials included are from the following sources:**
  - **Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**
  - **Willmington's Guide to the Bible**
  - **Zane C. Hodges' "The Epistle of James"**
  - **Chris Tiegreen's "One Year Walk with God Devotional"**
  - **Don Den Hartog's sermon last Sunday "Living Before an Audience of One"**
  - **Meganne Oakleaf, contributing editor**
  - **The NASB version**

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# THE WORKSHEET:



A True/False quiz



You will find some but not all the answers as we proceed through the lesson



Review together at the conclusion



Everyone gets a passing grade



Any questions or comments so far?

# **JUSTIFICATION – A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

- **Accused of treachery by my brother, related to stealing his girlfriend**
- **I was found to be not guilty**
- **I was in essence “declared righteous”**

## JUSTIFICATION

- **What does being justified mean to you?**
- **Anyone have a real-life example that they would care to share?**
- **How about a biblical example?**

**JAMES 2:21**

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**WAS ABRAHAM  
JUSTIFIED BY  
WORKS, BY HIS  
FAITH, OR  
BOTH?**

## **“Justification” in the Greek**

- **Root is DIKE (DEE-KAY) = “justice”**
  - as related to punishment, execution of a sentence
- **DIKAIOS (DEE-KAY-OS) is an adjective = “right conduct”**
- **DIKAIOO (DEE-KAY-OOS) is the verb form = “deem or declare righteous”**

**Applicable to both a person  
and/or their activity**

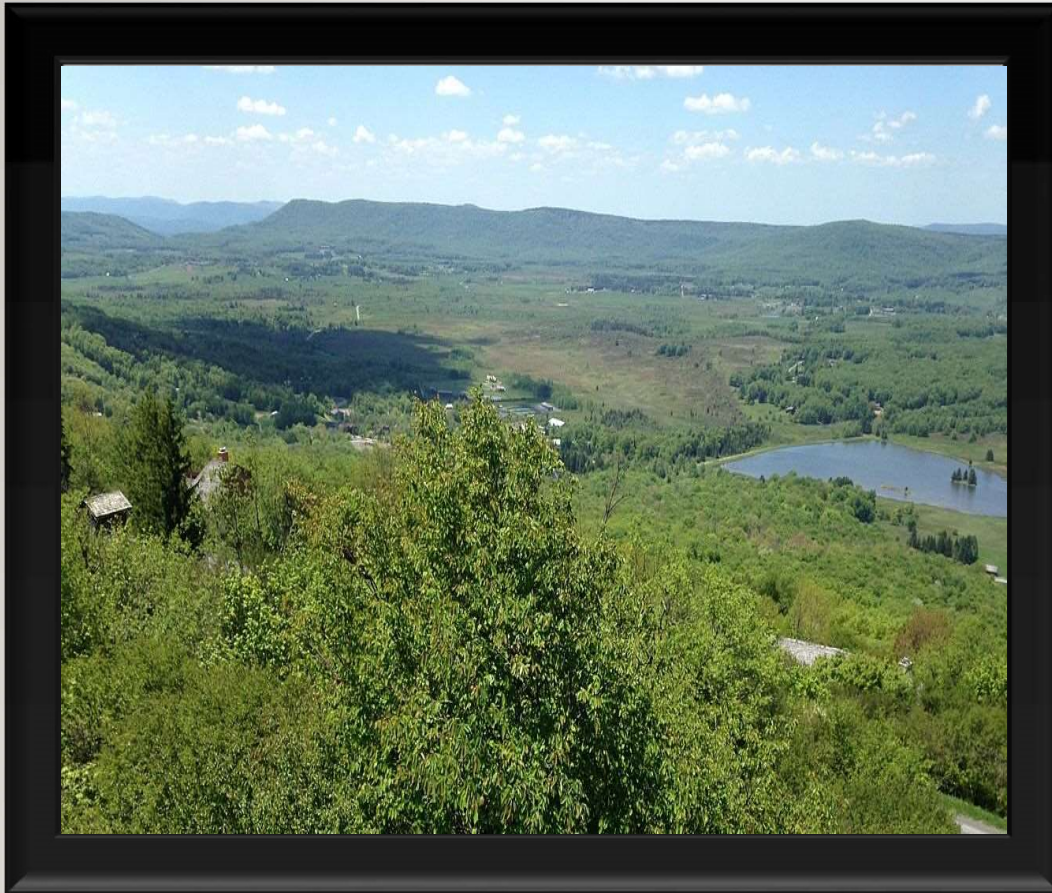
## **IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO ABRAM'S BIRTH:**

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- **Genesis C.6-9 Noah and the Flood**
- **C.10 All the families of the earth come from Noah's three sons**
- **C.11 Tower of Babel**
- **Abram's birth, ~2166 BC, in Ur of the Chaldees**







## **ABRAM'S EARLY LIFE AND WALK WITH GOD**

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- **C.12 God's charge to Abram, "Go"**
  - **To a Land yet to be revealed**
  - **To become a Great Nation**
  - **To have Blessing and Fame**
  - **To a widespread Blessing and Cursing on others**
- **Abram's response: obedience**
- **God responds to his obedience: The Promised Land - Canaan**

# C.15 PROMISES CLARIFIED AND VALIDATED BY COVENANT

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A shield and  
great reward, v.1

An heir from his  
own body, v.4

Multitudinous  
“seed” =  
descendants, v.5

Imputed  
righteousness,  
v.6

Validated, v.9,17,  
18

Long life, v.15

Cp. Acts 7:2-8

# **GOD GIVES AND GOD TAKES AWAY...**

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- **C.21 The promise comes to life!**
  - **The one and only direct descendant is born:  
Isaac, v.3**
- **C.22 The test from God, v.2**
  - **What was He thinking?...**
  - **One word: SACRIFICE**

## ROMANS 12:1+2

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- **SACRIFICE + SELF**
- **Abraham had already put himself “on the altar” of submission and obedience, making SACRIFICES doing so**
  - *See Genesis 12:4, 15:6*
- **His *literally* putting Isaac on the altar was proof of that**

# RAISING THE KNIFE!

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**C.22 Isaac as the burnt offering**



**An act of worship**



**The fire and the knife**



**What was Abraham thinking?...**

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## WHAT WAS ABRAHAM THINKING?



C.22 Unquestioning faith, v.8



“God will...” proves prophetic!



The knife is raised, poised, ready to strike, v.10



Deep, abiding faith - abiding is obeying  
*Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*



He did not know God was going to stop him

# WHAT WAS ABRAHAM THINKING?

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**What Abraham did know was that God would fulfill His promises.**

- **How did he know that?**
- **Resurrection of Isaac - See Hebrews 11:19**

**What promises are you clinging to?**

- **How do they affect the way you live?**

**C.22 Proof is in the Pudding, v. 16-18**

- **Questions or comments?**



## NOW JAMES 2:21...

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- Can we all agree that **Abraham** was a **God-given** example of an imperfect believer who walked by faith in **God** and produced **God-enabled** good works?
- Can we also agree that seeing **Abraham's** obedience shows his faith to be real and glorifies **God**?
- Time to **VOTE**: What do you think, was **Abraham** justified by works, faith, or both?



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## POLL RESULTS... FROM GOD'S WORD

### Genesis 15:6

- “Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.”
- Abram was declared righteous (justified) **BY FAITH**

### Genesis 22:16

- “I swear by Myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,...”
- Abraham was justified by his obedience in putting Isaac on the altar, so **BY WORKS**

Correct answer is **BOTH**, right?

## ARE WE ALSO JUSTIFIED BY BOTH?

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- **What about Paul's comments in Ephesians 2:8+9?**
- **Does Paul contradict James 2:24?**
- **Or is that just a perceived contradiction?**
- **Let's compare the two... Ephesians 2:8-10 with James 2:14-26**



Paul: we are justified **BY** faith

James: we are justified **FOR**  
and **BY** works



Paul: our faith justifies us before **GOD**

James: our works justify us  
before **MAN**



Paul: faith is the **ROOT** of justification

James: works are the **FRUIT** of  
justification



Paul: saving faith and what should follow

James: what should follow  
saving faith



Chris Tiegreen, "Faith will show itself in works, but it will never show off."

**DIFFERENT FOCUS, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE,  
SAME RESULT**

# JAMES' FOCUS ON FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS EXPRESSED IN...

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v.16, "What use is that?"

v.20, "useless"

v.26, "dead"

"spirit" is in breath, humanly speaking, and "dead" as in "of no use or value, ineffective, powerless"

Cp. Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is alive and active."

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:**

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- **Paul stresses works in 1 Timothy 6:18, Titus 3:8, as well as in Ephesians 2:10**
- **James stresses faith in 1:3, 6, and 2:5**
- **Any questions about the supposed conflict?**

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**SALVATION  
BY WORKS?  
ME GENOITO!**

James and Paul are both saying what Don Den Hartog shared with us in his sermon last Sunday: You can have faith that produces little or no fruit, or you can have faith that produces some or much fruit



**Rewards come to those whose obedience produces fruit**



**James is writing about the impact of works in the life of the believer, on his faith, and on the world**

# **“FRUIT PRODUCTION DETERMINES WHETHER SOMEONE IS SAVED...”**

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- **There is faith and there are works**
- **Better said, there is faith that produces works in the life of the obedient believer**
- **There may be a need for introspection**
- **“A silent believer may be indeed considered a saint before God, but he remains a sinner before man until he walks the walk and talks the talk of Christian service.” Dr. H. L. Willmington**



# PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- **Have we responded to God's call to "Go forth?"**
- **What sacrifices are we willing to make?**
- **Is there visible evidence of our obedience?**
- **Have we asked anyone what service we can perform?**
- **Have we asked for help to get over any fears that are holding us back from actively serving?**

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

- **There is a faith-based justification and there is a works-based justification**
- **Justification is implicit within salvation but not limited to salvation**
- **There is a strong tie between being delivered and being declared righteous, but they are not one and the same**
- **Our faith is incomplete and immature without works to display its reality to the world**
- **Faith without works fails to fulfill our calling as ambassadors for Christ**

## **FINAL QUESTION:**

- **By whom are we ultimately declared righteous, when, and on what basis?**

# WRAP UP

## Review My Teaching Goals

- 1. Justification is not the same thing as salvation
- 2. James teaches a works-based walk of faith rather than a works-based salvation
- 3. Our life of faith is not complete without works
- 4. Our works prove the quality of our faith
- 5. Abraham is a God-given example of an imperfect believer who walked by faith and produced good works which reflected God's empowerment and brought glory to God
- 6. Being justified by faith provides for our deliverance by God while being justified by our works provides for our testimony of faith to the world

# WRAP UP

## Review worksheet answers

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. F
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. T
11. F
12. T
13. F
14. T
15. T

**FINAL  
OPPORTUNITY  
FOR SHARING**

- **Anyone recall a story of justification by works they would like to share?**
- **What does “being justified” look like in your life?**
- **In closing, this example:**
  - **Call to Bible School**



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**Hope you enjoyed it as  
much as I did.**