

APPLYING TRUTH TO LIFE

Grace Gatherings

THEOLOGY NIGHTS | MARCH 27, 2024

REMINDER: GRACE GATHERINGS ARE PAUSED UNTIL MAY 8

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG

Question 16

Define **faith** in biblical terms explaining its relationship to **justification** and **sanctification**.

Question 16

I. Define biblical faith

Hebrews 11: Faith is **supernatural**.

Faith is a **gift** from God (Eph. 2:8).

Faith is believing or trusting according to God's **truth** about Jesus Christ. It is the **assurance** of things hoped for.

But saving faith involves more than believing. It is our total-person **response** to God's work of **saving grace**. (Gal. 2:16, 20; Phil. 3:9-10)

Question 16

I. Define biblical faith

Saving faith, God's gift of faith, is a **certain** and **supernatural** confidence in God (assurance), who has made the promises of salvation to us in His Son, Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:13-14; Gal. 3:6-9)

“Assurance” (hupostasis)

hupo = under + *stasis* = stand

“It refers to essence, substance, real content—reality as opposed to mere appearance.” *(John MacArthur)*

Question 16

I. Define biblical faith

“Faith, far from being ambiguous or unsure, is concrete conviction. It is the present confidence of a future reality... faith is a supernatural certainty about the truth of the gospel and the reliability of Christ.” *(John MacArthur)*

That message is contained in Scripture alone, and it tells us to put our faith in Jesus Christ as the **only** certain provision for forgiveness and right-standing with God.

This is a work that **God** does in us. This is a work that is **contrary** to our human nature of suppressing and rejecting the truth. (1 Cor. 2:14)

We are believing, but God is working that belief in us by the gift of His grace in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why it is **saving** faith!

Question 16

I. Define biblical faith

In shorthand: Genuine faith is **divinely implanted assurance** in God and in His truth about Jesus Christ (the gospel of grace).

Saving faith is the channel or instrument God uses in His work of bringing us to salvation. Faith is not the **cause** of our salvation. God is the cause of our salvation.

Question 16

I. Define biblical faith

In other words, salvation is not found **in** faith; we are not to have faith in our faith. Faith has an **object**—we are believing and **trusting** in a **Person**. (John 5:39-40; involves us in loving, loyal surrender to Him)

The **object** of saving faith is Christ (Heb. 12:2) so that faith is **looking to Christ**. Saving faith turns **from** sin (repentance) and involves the entire person as a sinner who turns **to** believe on Jesus with all his heart for the forgiveness of his sins.

Saving faith, the faith that trusts in Christ alone for forgiveness, involves all that you are in believing in all that Christ is and has done for you.

Question 16

I. Define biblical faith

It is plain to see that saving faith **involves** us in a **total** life commitment to Christ; it takes in the matters of loyalty, assent, trust, knowledge, leaning on God's goodness, seeking God, and obeying God in love.

Saving faith is **more than** believing that God is, but not less than that. This faith is not a work of mankind because it is God who has supplied it to us as His gift of grace. And it is God who works it in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Question 16

II. What role does faith have in our justification (right standing with God)?

Justification by faith is God's means of supplying **His** righteousness on behalf of believing sinners. What we need, as sinners separated from God by our sins, is forgiveness and right-standing (righteousness) before God; we need to be made holy (Heb. 12:14).

Faith is the means, the instrument, by which we apprehend, lay hold of, take possession of **Christ Himself** as God's provision for our forgiveness and righteousness in salvation (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Faith is not a work we do apart from the grace of God, but our faith, as God's gift, is the **means** through which we **receive** God's justifying grace.

Question 16

II. What role does faith have in our justification?

Justification is by faith in the sense that through the channel of faith in Jesus Christ, God **declares** the now-believing sinner **legally** forgiven and in possession of the **righteousness** of Jesus Christ.

Faith is the instrument, the channel, or the means of our justification
“because it is the **attitude of the heart** that does not rely on any work that we can perform.” *(John Gerstner)*

Question 16

II. What role does faith have in our justification?

Believing is a gift from God and, though **we are doing the believing**, it is not a work we do to earn God's forgiveness.

Through faith, **we look to God alone** who justifies the ungodly, and by our faith God credits to our spiritual account the **righteousness of Christ** which He secured for us through His death and resurrection (Rom. 4:5)

Question 16

II. What role does faith have in our justification?

Jesus works this faith in us (Phil. 1:6):

- Christ **promised** this salvation to us before He made the world.
- He **secured** it for us on the cross.
- What He promised and secured He **creates** in our life through the instrument of faith.
- He causes us to **persevere** in saving faith to glorify us in eternity.

Question 16

III. What role does faith have in our sanctification?

In justification, God saves the ungodly person. He does something that is impossible for men to fully comprehend or to do for themselves. Sinners cannot justify themselves because we are guilty and dead in our sins before God.

Sanctification is God **making us into** what He has declared us to be in Christ. Our sanctification involves a **lifelong process** of Christians **growing** in the grace and knowledge of Christ so that we **become more like Him** in our entire person.

Question 16

III. What role does faith have in our sanctification?

Key phrases in that definition distinguish sanctification from justification and help us understand the role of faith in each.

For example, “lifelong process,” “become more like Him,” and “grow in Christlikeness,” all describe a **cooperative** effort between God and the believer throughout their lifetime (Phil. 2:12-13).

But in justification, God’s work is **not** a cooperative process with the believer; God acts in a **one-time, one-sided, instantaneous** event of declaration: “This person is righteous forevermore in my Son.” **Done!**

Question 16

III. What role does faith have in our sanctification?

Because believers are no longer under condemnation but redeemed by God's grace and at peace with the Lord (Rom. 5:1; 8:1); saving faith compels us to believe God, have confidence in God, and completely **yield** to God **as He transforms us** (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:28) into the image of Christ.

An ongoing faith (trust) in Christ is an active, striving, persevering **effort** to live what God has already declared us to be in Christ (Col. 3:1-4; Col. 1:29).

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