

### Where does the faith come in?

- As you hear (read, recall, ponder) the word of God, you believe. That is the connection between hearing and faith we see in Romans 10 and Galatians 3.
- As you meditate on God's word, his Spirit does a work on you.
  - You believe things about God's holiness and what he requires of you that you previously didn't see or didn't accept.
  - You accept things about yourself that you previously denied.

### 2. Confess your sins to God.

#### What is confession?

- Confession is your acknowledgement before God that you have failed to uphold his righteous standard. It is agreeing with God about you.
- Confession addresses specific sins that you commit (both doing what God prohibits and failing to do what he requires).
- Confession also acknowledges the attitudes and desires of your flesh that are contrary to righteousness. It recognizes your *character* issues.

#### How does confession lead to sanctification?

- Sanctification is not a mystical work that takes place without your knowledge or against your will. If sanctification is received through faith, how could it be apart from our knowledge or will?
- Confession is part of the process that God uses to bring us into submission as he sanctifies us through faith (1 John 1:9)

### 3. Trust that God will change you.

- The temptation at this point is to try to change yourself through your own willpower and effort (Galatians 3:3).
- All true righteousness comes by faith (Galatians 3:5).
- Trust is also essential in sanctification, because God will use trials as a crucible in which to sanctify you. God uses trials as discipline, to illuminate sin, and to make us dependent on him (James 1:2-4).

### 4. Walk in obedience.

- Obey the word you have meditated on.
- Flee the sin you have confessed.
- Act on the righteousness you believe he is producing in your life.

# Sola Fide (Faith Alone)

## Romans 1:17

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For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." —Romans 1:17

### "the righteousness of God"

- Before Martin Luther was saved, he understood "the righteousness of God" in this verse to refer to God's own righteousness: his holy character, his just actions, his right judgment.
- When Luther later wrote of his conversion, he confessed that he had "hated" the phrase "the righteousness of God," because if it referred only to God's own righteousness, it meant condemnation for men who could not measure up to God's holy standard.
- "At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words," Luther wrote, and he came to understand that "the righteousness of God" here refers to the righteousness that is *from* God, that he grants to us.
  - Further on in Romans (3:22; 4:5; 9:30), it is evident that when righteousness and faith are presented together, the righteousness refers to a righteousness that men receive from God.
  - The conclusion of Romans 1:17 supports this understanding because the righteous who "live by faith" can only refer to men: a fully self-sufficient, all-knowing, and all-wise God has no need to live by faith.

### The gospel

- The word "it" near the beginning of verse 17 refers to "the gospel" from verse 16.
- The righteousness that God grants to us is revealed in the gospel.

### "from faith for faith"

- The pattern of this phrase is to list two items that define the beginning and the end of a process. It implies that everything in between is included as well.
  - It is similar to using "from plowing to harvest" to refer to an entire farming season or "from rough draft to final edit" for the entire writing process.

- In Romans 1:17, both the beginning and the end (as well as everything in between) are faith. This is Paul's way of saying that our righteousness is through *faith alone* — *sola fide*!
- There are two essential ways that we receive righteousness from God, and in both cases the righteousness is received through faith:
  - Justification
    - God *imputes* Christ's righteousness (the righteousness that he accomplished during life on earth) to you. He declares that you are righteous in his sight.
    - Jesus' perfect love, his perfect submission, his perfect obedience has been credited to your account through faith.
    - This is immediate and occurs at the moment you are born again.
      1. You hear the gospel.
      2. You believe the gospel (as by God's grace his Spirit quickens you).  
(Romans 10:17 shows this connection between hearing and faith.)
      3. God justifies you.  
(Romans 5:1 teaches that we are justified by faith.)
  - Sanctification
    - God *perfects* you in the image of Christ. He causes you to die to the sin that remains active in your flesh even though you have a new nature in Christ. He causes you to grow in righteousness.
    - Although you do not perfectly love, submit, or obey, God's spirit is at work to cleanse your rebellion and selfishness and perfect your righteousness through faith.
    - This is a process that begins when you are born again and continues for your lifetime. But the means is similar to that for justification:
      1. You hear the truth of God's word (which is the gospel).
      2. By God's grace, you respond to truth is faith.
      3. God sanctifies you.  
(Galatians 3:5 makes clear that sanctification, like justification is "by hearing with faith.")

## How do we exercise faith that leads to sanctification?

### 1. Meditate on God's word.

#### Why is this important?

- It's not the aural sense as sound reaches your ears that is necessary.
- It is receiving and understanding the word of God that is important. (John 17:17 Romans 10:17; Romans 12:2; Galatians 3:2-3)

#### How do you do it?

- Psalm 77:11-12 uses three verbs to describe meditation:

I will **remember** the deeds of the LORD;  
yes, I will **remember** your wonders of old.

I will **ponder** all your work,  
and **meditate** on your mighty deeds. —Psalm 77:11-12

- To **remember** is to call to mind, to deliberately put something in your thoughts.
- To **ponder** literally means to let something resound.
  - The word is often used of music that is full and reverberates within a space
  - In this sense, it means to hold God's word in your thoughts and let it reverberate in your mind.
- To **meditate** means to continue to pore over something, to ruminate on it.
  - This is the word that suggests a cow chewing her cud
  - When we meditate this way, we continue to return to the word to try to gain everything we can from it.

#### Remember:

- Be patient. Meditation doesn't happen in a few minutes. It may be hours, days, or even much longer before you experience results for a given passage.
- Be prayerful as you meditate, asking God to grant you understanding and relying on his Spirit to do so.
- It is *not* the goal to discover what *you* think about a passage (or a doctrine or a practice). The goal is to discover what God meant in the passage.