

Welcome to Westside Grace Ministries Lesson Plan One Let's Begin

LESSON ONE TITLED:

Initial Justification versus Lordship Salvation

A CSI/FBI Investigative Study of the Relationship Between Faith, Justification, Discipleship, and Sanctification.

Theme Verse:

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

This lesson seeks to distinguish God's **judicial act of declaring the believer righteous (initial justification)** from the ongoing call to **obedience, discipleship, and progressive sanctification**. While many theological systems combine these doctrines, this lesson investigates whether Scripture consistently keeps them distinct.

Lesson Objectives

By the conclusion of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. **Define initial justification biblically.**
2. **Explain the primary claims of Lordship Salvation.**
3. **Distinguish judicial justification from practical sanctification.**
4. **Identify passages frequently cited in the debate.**
5. **Evaluate those passages according to context.**
6. **Recognize where Scripture speaks of salvation and where it speaks of Christian growth.**
7. **Apply careful hermeneutics to avoid doctrinal confusion.**

CSI FBI STEP 0 — Pericope Identification (Scene Boundary Control)
Definition of a Pericope

A **pericope** is a complete literary unit of Scripture that forms one coherent thought. Proper interpretation begins by identifying the correct boundaries of the passage before drawing theological conclusions.

Failure to establish the proper pericope often leads to:

- **proof-texting**
- **doctrinal confusion**
- **mixing audiences**
- **confusing justification with sanctification**

Biblical Information:

Primary Topic

Initial Judicial Justification

Secondary Topic

Discipleship and Lordship

Genre

Didactic Epistles

Primary Authors

- **Paul**
- **James**
- **Luke**
- **Matthew**
- **John**

Primary Audience

Believers and churches.

Realistic Optimism

Truth can withstand investigation. If our theological conclusions are biblical, careful examination will strengthen rather than weaken them.

Cognitive Load Theory

Intrinsic Load

Students must distinguish several doctrines that are related but not identical.

- **Faith**
- **Repentance**
- **Justification**

- **Regeneration**
- **Sanctification**
- **Discipleship**
- **Reward**

Extraneous Load

Avoid assuming every passage discussing obedience is explaining how one becomes justified.

Germane Load

Construct separate biblical categories before attempting theological synthesis.

Existential and Epistemological Critique

Existential Question

How does one become right with God?

Epistemological Question

How do we know?

The answer must arise from Scripture rather than theological tradition.

CSI FBI STEP 1

Define the Terms

Initial Justification

God's once-for-all judicial declaration that the believer is righteous through faith in Christ apart from works.

Progressive Sanctification

The lifelong process whereby believers increasingly conform to Christ.

Lordship Salvation

A theological position generally arguing that genuine saving faith necessarily includes submission to Christ's lordship and that a transformed life inevitably evidences true conversion.

A careful distinction should be made between:

- **what justifies**
- **what demonstrates spiritual growth**
- **what earns rewards**
- **what concerns fellowship**

These categories should not be collapsed into one another without exegetical warrant.

CSI FBI STEP 2

Primary Text

Romans 3:28 (KJV)

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Observation:

Paul explicitly excludes works from the basis of justification.

Romans 4:5 (KJV)

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Observations

Notice Paul says:

- **worketh not**
- **justifieth the ungodly**
- **faith counted for righteousness**

These statements emphasize God's judicial declaration, not subsequent Christian growth.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (KJV)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Paul excludes works as the ground of salvation.

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What Lordship Salvation Usually Emphasizes

Commonly cited passages include:

- **Matthew 7**
- **Luke 9**
- **Luke 14**
- **James 2**
- **John 15**
- **Hebrews**
- **1 John**

Many proponents argue that genuine faith necessarily produces obedience and perseverance.

The interpretive question is not whether obedience matters—it clearly does—but whether these passages define the condition for initial justification or describe the life of one who has already been justified.

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Exploration Before Interpretation

Questions to ask of every passage:

- **Who is speaking?**
- **To whom?**
- **Under what covenantal setting?**
- **What issue is being addressed?**
- **Is the subject eternal justification, discipleship, fellowship, rewards, kingdom participation, or practical holiness?**

Only after these questions are answered should theological conclusions be drawn.

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Exegesis versus Eisegesis

Exegesis draws meaning from the text in its context.

Eisegesis imports theological assumptions into the text.

An important methodological caution is not to assume that every command to obey Christ explains the basis for receiving justification.

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Paul's Judicial Language

Paul repeatedly uses courtroom terminology.

Examples include:

- **justified**
- **righteousness**
- **imputed**
- **counted**
- **reconciliation**
- **peace with God**

These emphasize God's legal declaration concerning the believer's standing before Him.

CSI FBI STEP 7

James 2

James writes:

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

The context must be examined carefully. James addresses the demonstration of faith before others and the practical outworking of belief. Paul, by contrast, focuses on how a sinner is declared righteous before God. Whether these are complementary uses of "justify" or evidence for a broader theological synthesis is a matter that requires careful contextual analysis rather than assuming identical meanings in every occurrence.

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Case Law Principle Track:

Paul frequently reasons from the Old Testament.
Students should investigate:

- **Genesis 15**
- **Psalm 32**
- **Habakkuk 2:4**
- **Deuteronomy**
- **Leviticus**

Observe how Paul develops legal principles concerning justification apart from works while also instructing believers to live holy lives.

CSI FBI STEP 9:

Exploration, Interpretation, and Extrapolation

Explicit Statements:

- **We are justified by faith.**
- **Justification is by grace.**
- **Christ died for sinners.**
- **Salvation is God's gift.**

Reasonable Implications

- **Believers are called to obedience after justification.**
- **Sanctification flows from new life in Christ.**
- **Good works have an important role in the believer's walk.**

Assumptions or Traditions Requiring Careful Testing

- Every command to obey defines the condition of initial justification.
- Any failure in obedience proves a person was never justified.
- Every warning passage addresses loss of justification rather than other covenantal or pastoral concerns.

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Miscontextualization Suspect Matrix (MSM):

Common interpretive concerns include:

- Confusing salvation with discipleship.
- Confusing justification with sanctification.
- Confusing fruit with the root of salvation.
- Confusing evidence with cause.
- Ignoring audience and literary context.
- Reading systematic theology into every text without first establishing its immediate context.

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Evidence Evaluation:

Level One

Explicit statements receive the greatest interpretive weight.

Level Two

Reasonable implications should be consistent with explicit statements.

Level Three

Traditions and theological systems must remain subject to biblical correction.

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Salvation Is a Person:

The believer's assurance ultimately rests in Christ Himself.

John 14:6 (KJV)

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Salvation is grounded in union with Christ rather than in human merit.

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Practical Application:

A justified believer should:

- **pursue holiness,**
- **submit to Christ's teaching,**
- **grow in obedience,**
- **love fellow believers,**
- **serve faithfully,**
- **persevere in faith.**

These are fitting responses to grace and are central to Christian discipleship.

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Final Investigative Verdict:

Scripture clearly teaches that God's grace justifies sinners through faith and not based on works. Scripture also clearly teaches that believers are called to lives of obedience and growth. The central interpretive challenge is determining, passage by passage, whether a text addresses the basis of God's judicial declaration, the evidence of faith, the process of sanctification, or the responsibilities of discipleship. Sound exegesis requires that these categories not be conflated without careful contextual support.

CLEAR Implementation Protocol:

Capture Reality

Identify whether a passage addresses justification, sanctification, discipleship, assurance, or reward.

Locate the Obstacle

Recognize assumptions that merge distinct biblical doctrines.

Establish Next Action

Study each passage within its literary, historical, and theological context.

Act Immediately

Practice careful observation before drawing doctrinal conclusions.

Review Evidence

Reevaluate conclusions in light of the whole counsel of Scripture.

Final Investigative Challenge

As you study passages concerning faith, obedience, perseverance, and discipleship, ask:

Does this text describe how a sinner is declared righteous before God, or does it describe how one who has already been justified is called to live?

Allow each passage to answer that question on its own terms before integrating it into a broader theological framework.

Closing Declaration – Westside Grace Ministries

Thank you for participating in this CSI/FBI Investigative Lesson. Continue to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV) by examining every passage in its context and testing every conclusion against Scripture.

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