



Week 4 Message-Based Curriculum

Opening

- Begin with a brief welcome and prayer to set the tone for the group time.
- Introduce the theme: So much of life is driven by the pressure to prove ourselves—to others, to God, even to ourselves. But what if the gospel says that pressure doesn't belong to us at all? What if justification by faith truly means we have *nothing left to prove*?

Discussion Questions

CONNECT

- What's one area of your life where you feel the pressure to prove yourself to other people?
- What's the funniest or most ridiculous thing you've ever done just to prove a point or justify a silly decision (like an unnecessary purchase, for example)?

DISCOVER

Read Galatians 2:11-21 together:

- Why does Paul confront Peter so strongly in this passage? What's at stake if Peter continues acting the way he does?
 - In what ways is Peter falling back into behavior-based faith? Where might we do the same without realizing it?
 - Paul repeats the phrase "made right with God." What does he mean by that? What does *justification* actually mean—and why is it central to the Christian life?
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APPLY

- We often treat Christianity like a performance—attending church, reading the Bible, crying during worship, serving consistently—but deep down we’re just trying to earn approval. What’s the danger in that? How can we tell when we’ve slipped into self-justification?
- How do we properly balance trusting in and resting in what Christ has done for us and still pursuing spiritual growth and obedience without slipping into a performance-based faith?

Read Philippians 3:2-11 together:

- Paul lists an impressive spiritual résumé and calls it all “garbage” compared to knowing Jesus. What are some of the “résumé items” (accomplishments, rules, or reputations) we cling to for worth in Christian culture today?
- If justification is a gift we receive—not a status we earn—how does that change the way we approach things like prayer, Bible reading, serving, or even failure?

RESPOND

Reflect silently or discuss:

- What’s one way you are still trying to “clean yourself up” before you come to Jesus?
- What’s a specific area where you need to stop striving and start trusting?

Challenge this week

- Every time you feel pressure to prove your worth (spiritually or otherwise), stop and pray: *“Jesus, I trust what You’ve done over my own effort. Help me to know that what you’ve done for me is more than enough, even when I’m not.”*

GROUP PRAYER

- **Grateful for the Gift:** Thank God for the finished work of Jesus on the cross.
- **Help Us See:** Ask the Holy Spirit to expose the areas where we still try to justify ourselves.
- **Courage:** Pray for the courage to stop performing and start trusting.

CLOSING

Next week we wrap up the Image-Bearer series by talking about Spiritual Gifts. In preparation for that, take some time this week to read 1 Corinthians 12.