

## Spiritual Misalignments

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About twenty years ago, after enduring a lingering pain in my arm, it was recommended to me that I visit a Chiropractor. After a few x-rays and other exams he told me my spine was out of alignment, and probably had been for quite some time. The doctor informed me that many people are living life with spinal misalignments, causing many conditions that all too often go totally unnoticed.

Often Christians have a spiritual misalignment that unfortunately many wonderful believers live with on a day to day basis that robs them of the Lord's fullness of joy, peace, contentment and power. In order to understand this condition and its correction, there are two words that I believe every believer must understand. These words are not new, they have been used for 2000 years of church history. The first word is **Justification**, which is defined in Webster's 1828 dictionary as, *'The remission of sin and the removal of all guilt and punishment; or an act of free grace by which God pardons the sinner and accepts him as righteous, on account of the atonement of Christ.'*

Justification is a legal term, not a moral term, meaning simply that without Christ we all would stand guilty before God. God is perfect, we are not, nor could we ever be—thus, by Christ's death on the cross, He paid for our sins before God. When we receive Him as our Savior, we are *legally* pronounced *perfect* and have the very righteousness and holiness of God accredited to our account!! God sees the Christian as He would see His blessed Son, Jesus. God now sees the believer as if he had NEVER sinned. The Christian's past is gone, the present and future are being lived as the scriptures declare, *In Christ*. How many of us determine that God thinks based upon what we think about ourselves or even our perception of what others think about us?

The next all important word is **Sanctification**--- *the act of God's grace by which the priorities and values of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world, and exalted to a supreme love to God.* (Webster's). This is our day to day walk with God - how we live life, our marriages, spiritual disciplines, our internal thought life and even our love and commitment towards God compared to our love and infatuation with the world.

Here's the mis-alignment — all too often it is our sanctification that we all regrettably use as the barometer of our Christian life. Our sanctification thus can actually rob of us peace and joy if we do not first apprehend our justification! Our internal thought life is most often being driven by our performance and not our position in Christ.

The life of Methodist founder John Wesley is a perfect example of this common spiritual misalignment. He started two Christian groups; they were called the Holiness Club and the Godly Club. These two groups had stringent requirements, loaded with self denial and rigid asceticism. After about ten years of ministry in America, he went back to England as a tortured, unhappy man. The very best he could produce in human righteousness fell far short of a true experience of the joy, liberty and power of a Spirit-filled life. Shortly after his return to England, he was invited to visit a Sunday night service at a church where Luther's

preface to his commentary on Romans was being read. Here is a brief excerpt of what John Wesley heard that evening; *“Faith is a living, unshakeable confidence in God’s grace; it is so certain, that someone would die a thousand times for it. This kind of trust in and knowledge of God’s grace makes a person joyful, confident, and happy with regard to God and all creatures. This is what the Holy Spirit does by faith. Through faith, a person will do good to everyone without coercion, willingly and happily; he will serve everyone, suffer everything for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace. Fools. Ask God to work faith in you; otherwise you will remain eternally without faith, no matter what you try to do or fabricate.”*

What John Wesley heard was life changing. Not only was our justification an absolute work of God, our sanctification is also absolutely a work of God! God will get the glory for both!

In a future scene in heaven, you and I are gathered around the throne of God. We are there crowned - crowns as a representation of our position in Christ’s family as well as a symbol of reward for the fruit our lives on earth produced. They are our *‘well done thy good and faithful servant’* reward. Let’s read of that future moment; **Revelation 4:9** *“Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, to the one who lives forever and ever, <sup>19</sup>the 24 leaders bow in front of the one who sits on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever. They place their crowns in front of the throne and say, <sup>20</sup>“Our Lord and God, you deserve to receive glory, honor, and power because you created everything. Everything came into existence and was created because of your will.”*

We give the crowns back!!! We will know then more than ever that Jesus Christ was the author of our justification *as well as* our sanctification! The pressure is off! We can now stop telling God what He is thinking about us! God’s thoughts towards us are based on our justification -- not our sanctification. If we could conform and transform our own lives, the Cross would not have been a necessary intrusion into humanity. Man cannot attain anything close to the righteousness of God, thus God must do all the work. Is it any wonder Wesley went on to state later in life *“Admire more and more and more the free grace of God!”*

What’s left for us to do then? It’s simple. Hebrews 10:22, *“Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.”*

As well as Hebrews 4:16 *“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”*

Draw near to Him every day. Fall in love with the one who loved you first - and most! Remember next time you sense an abiding pressure growing between you and God; it could be that pressure is the result of this spiritual misalignment. God draws you! He doesn’t drive you. Fall in love with Him. Make Him part of your daily life. Honor and praise Him. Pour your heart out to Him --- He will do the work that you desire in your life and more. Try it. You will see Jesus Christ is able to get you to the finish line of life with joy.

These verses in the Message Bible summarize it perfectly:

**Romans 3:22** *The God-setting-things-right that we read about has become Jesus-setting-things-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this.*

*(23) Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us,*

*(24) God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.*

*(25) God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public--to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured.*

*(26) This is not only clear, but it's now--this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness.*

*(27) So where does that leave our proud Jewish insider claims and counterclaims? Canceled? Yes, canceled. What we've learned is this: **God does not respond to what we do; we respond to what God does.***

*(28) We've finally figured it out. Our lives get in step with God and all others **by letting him set the pace**, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade.*

**AMEN!**