Faith That Rests on His Faithfulness

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16, KJV)

The golf swing is a complicated movement pattern that requires the brain and body to communicate with each other. The hindrance is that what you think you feel is rarely what is actually happening, which makes the swing hard to learn on your own.

Collecting tips from different Instagram instructors likely makes things even more confusing, because not every swing is one-size-fits-all. A good instructor works with each person's body, strengths, and weaknesses.

Most days, reading scripture feels just as confusing. It has so many layers that we need a variety of sources, interpretations, and translations, because no one person has the exact right meaning.

Jewish rabbis study scripture by asking questions. Because the text is not linear, they investigate it, asking "Why?" after every answer. They enter into a conversation with God and keep their imagination open. The Hebrew language is layered with pictures and numerical meaning, and its words connect to one another throughout the narrative.

The Greek language of the New Testament is also nuanced. Today's scripture in the English Standard Version reads, "… but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ …" (ESV). A reader might take this to mean that Paul is justified by his own faith (the evidence of things not seen), meaning declared righteous and not guilty.

The King James Version reads, "the faith of Jesus Christ." That one three-letter word shifts whose faith is in view. An AI overview of the Greek phrase pistis Christou explains that pistis can mean "faith," "belief," or "faithfulness/trustworthiness," while Christou allows for either the believer's faith toward Christ or Christ's own faithfulness.

The KJV's wording leaves both possibilities open. Scholars still debate the best translation, but our believing matters, as Paul writes, "even we have believed in Jesus Christ."

It is clear, though, that we are not justified by our performance: not by works of the law, and not even by the strength of our faith, which often fluctuates with life's challenges.

Here is the truth we can hold onto even when we feel confused: God asks for a human response of believing in Jesus rather than relying on the law or our good behavior. Our salvation rests solely on Jesus' faithfulness: his perfect obedience, his road to the cross, and his victory over the grave. Our faith simply opens our hand to receive the gift of his faithfulness.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for being faithful when I am not. Help me rest in what you have done. Amen.

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