

Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners

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Lesson Title: “Acquittal” (pp. 165-178)

Session 12

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The main point of this lesson is: Real change comes only when we live solely in the acquittal of God’s justification.

Focus on this goal: To help adults grow deeper in Christ by repenting of their efforts to supplement their acquittal

Key Bible Passages: Galatians 2:11-16

Before the Session

1. If you have a lawyer in your group, invite him/her to prepare a 2-3 minute explanation on what “acquittal” means in the legal system. If not, research the term and prepare to report it yourself. (Step 1)

2. Obtain a large writing surface and markers. (Steps 2-3)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

**State** that today’s lesson focuses on a law term: *acquittal*. **Engage** learners to share what they know about the word or what images come to mind. **Give deeper insight** by **inviting** your law expert to share about the term, or **share** the research you did on your own.

**Share** a time when you were reprimanded for something and were certainly guilty. (Consider a speeding ticket, fighting with a sibling as a child, or something along that line.) **Relate** whether you were acquitted of the charge and what happened. **Observe** that today’s Scripture and insight will help us better understand our spiritual acquittal through faith.

Step 2. Justification and Sanctification, Part 1

**Write** *justification* and *sanctification* on the writing surface with plenty of space between the two. Next to “justification” **write** *outside→in,* and next to “sanctification” **write** *inside→out*. **Use** the Day One section “Justification” (pp. 165-167) to **help** learners begin to grasp this word. **Direct attention** to the author’s definition (p. 166) as “declared faultless with respect to our legal standing,” not because we are truly innocent, but because we are given Jesus’s record of perfection.

**Say:** *Often, we look to ourselves to consider whether or not we’re right before God. But that’s the wrong focus.* **Enlist** volunteers to read Hebrews 12:2 and Galatians 2:15-21. **Lead** a discussion on how both of these passages help us see our justification biblically.

Step 3. Justification and Sanctification, Part 2

Under the word “justification,” **write** *standing*. Under “sanctification” **write** *walk*. **Use** the first paragraphs of Day Two (p. 167) to talk through these differences. **Read** the third paragraph of the Day Two (p. 168), which begins with the sentence, “Think of how we grow physically . . . .”

**Invite** a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 3:2-5. **Emphasize** the phrase “having the appearance of godliness.” As a group, **brainstorm** the spiritual danger of thinking you’re godly when actually you’re only acting in a godly manner.

From “Sanctification by Justification,” **read** the sentence (p. 168) that begins “Reflection on the wonder of the gospel . . . .” **Engage** learners in choosing to reflect and meditate on, not just read, Scripture in order to let it change us from the inside out.

Step 4. Justification and Fear

**Invite** a volunteer to read Galatians 2:11-16. As the volunteer reads, **turn to** 1 Thessalonians 2:4 in your Bible. **Explain** that, as theologically deep as the Galatians passage is, Paul’s point is found in verse 12: Peter was fearing the approval of others.

**Read** 1 Thessalonians 2:4, and **contrast** the two passages to show that, though Peter was saved, he was slipping away from justification and into fear. **Share** a time when you started living in a certain way not because of your faith convictions, but because of the influence of others.

**Read** the Day Three paragraph (p. 171) that begins “We walk through life . . . .” **Engage** learners in commenting on the paragraph’s truth.

Step 5. Justification and Idolatry

**Instruct** learners to read silently the opening paragraph of Day Four (pp. 171-172). **Choose** one of the diagnostic questions for idolatry and **share** how it exposed an idol in your own life. **Challenge** learners to go back to this paragraph several times this week and invite the Holy Spirit to convict them of any idolatry in their lives.

**Read** the Day Four paragraph (p. 172) that begins, “Here’s the point . . . .” **Help** learners see the relationship between false justification and idolatry.

**Direct attention** to the Day Four Note (p. 173) to **drive home** our own vulnerability to shift to false justification and idolatry.

Step 6. A Closing Portrait

**Using** the Day Five content (pp. 173-174), briefly **give** an overview of Martin Luther’s early life and focus on justification. If you have any personal insight from your own reading of or about Luther, feel free to **share** that briefly.

**Invite** volunteers to read John 14:6 and Luther’s quote while preaching on that passage (p. 174). **Encourage** group participants to heed carefully these words of Martin Luther and stay on “the right way” of the gospel (p. 174). **Stress** that even if adults might have been walking with Christ for decades, we must continue in Him alone as our only source of salvation.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Read** Galatians 1:6, followed by the second Martin Luther quote (p. 175). **Use** these to **challenge** every learner to dig deeply into God’s Word.

**Read** the final Day Five paragraph (p. 175) and **use** it as the basis for your closing prayer, **asking** the Lord to give all participants a new fire for the gospel and a biblical understanding of justification.

