



Reflecting the Character of God
Matthew 1:19; Micah 6:8
Week 1 of 3

One of the greatest challenges confronting believers today is to communicate the message of Christ in terms that everyday people can understand. Words like “Righteousness” have become unrecognizable to many in our culture, and even to many in the church.

Yet it’s hard to talk about the gospel without coming to terms with the word “righteousness” (Greek, dikaiosuna). In fact, the New Testament uses the term in one form or another no less than 228 times. What, then, does “righteousness” mean.

The word “righteous” goes back to a base, meaning “move in a straight line.” Thus, “righteous” (rightwise) means “in the straight (or right) way.” Used with reference to morality, “righteous” means living or acting in the right way.

But what is the “right” way? In our society, people commonly say that everyone must determine what is right for oneself. However, Scripture offers a different standard—indeed, the ultimate standard of rightness or “righteousness,” God Himself. God’s character reveals what is absolutely right. He is the measure of moral right and wrong.

He is also the source of right living. It’s important to understand that righteousness involves more than just determining whether or not one has lived up to the perfect standard that God sets. The fact is, no one has except Jesus ([Rom. 3:23; 5:18-21](#)). Thus, in a legal sense, all of us stand guilty before God. We are all “unrighteous.” We have all “sinned” (literally, “missed the mark”).

But the message of the gospel is that God has done and is doing everything that needs to be done to restore things to the way He originally intended - to the right way. For example, He dealt with sin through



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December 5, 2010



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Jesus' death on the cross, and He transfers the righteousness of Christ to those who trust in Him. As believers, we can enjoy a restored relationship with God.

That means that we can begin to live with righteousness, that is, in a way that pleases God and fulfills His purposes for us. We can do that because He gives us the ability to do it. Rather than trying to "prove" ourselves good enough for Him or live up to impossible moral standards, we can relate to Him in love, expecting Him to help us as we make choices about how to live.

The gospel, then, is "good news" because it reveals God's right way. It tells us that He is a good God who, in love and mercy, has done something about the wrong way that the world has taken. [The Word in Life Study Bible, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville; 1993), pp. 538-539.]

This week's Daily Bible Reading will shed light on the subject of righteousness from the book of Romans.

DAY ONE – [Romans 1:16-17](#)

DAY TWO – Romans 3:9-20

DAY THREE – Romans 3:21-31

DAY FOUR – Romans 5:1-11

DAY FIVE – Romans 8:1-17

Memory Verse:

"You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." (Romans 6:18)



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