
JUSTIFIED, YET STILL EXPOSED TO FALLING

Christ, Our Substitute and Advocate:
the Believer's Security in the Face of
Sin



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Bibliographical reference: Reina-Valera 1960 Bible and Francisco
Lacueva's Greek-Spanish Interlinear New Testament

Justified, Yet Still Exposed To Falling

Purpose

To demonstrate from the whole counsel of Scripture that the person who repents and believes the Gospel is justified by God's grace, yet still lives in a mortal body and may fall. When the believer sins, he or she is not abandoned: Jesus Christ bore our sins, rose again, advocates for us, and guarantees that there is no condemnation for those who are in Him. This security never turns grace into permission to sin; it leads to confession, fatherly discipline, restoration, and a Spirit-dependent life.

Central Thesis

This study keeps together truths that are sometimes wrongly separated. Justification is complete because it rests on Christ; the present struggle is real because sin remains present in the believer's experience; sanctification is necessary because the Spirit works in God's children; and glorification will be final because the presence of sin itself will then disappear. The pastoral question is not whether sin should be treated lightly, but where the believer finds refuge after recognizing a fall. The apostolic answer is neither despair nor self-salvation, but Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Doctrinal Path

Repentance and faith → justification → struggle with sin → fall → confession → Christ's advocacy → restoration → sanctification → glorification.

Central Passages

1 Pedro 2:21-24; Romanos 3:21-28; 5:1; 7:14-25; 8:1-4, 31-39; Gálatas 5:16-25; 1 Juan 1:7-10; 2:1-2; Hebreos 7:25; 12:5-11.

1. Repentance and Faith in the Gospel

Biblical passage

Mr 1:15; Hch 20:21; Ro 10:9-10; Ef 2:8-9

Textual explanation

The apostolic call joins repentance toward God with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance does not purchase forgiveness through intense emotion; it recognizes sin, abandons self-reliance, and turns to God. Faith rests in Christ's person and work. Salvation comes from grace; faith receives it but does not create it.

Doctrinal relationship

Conversion marks a real change of direction, but it does not make the believer incapable of sin. This is why the New Testament addresses warnings, exhortations, and promises of restoration to people who already believe.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

2. Justification by Faith

Biblical passage

Ro 3:21-28; 4:5; 5:1,9; Gá 2:16

Textual explanation

Justification is God's judicial act: He declares the believing sinner righteous, not because moral perfection has been achieved, but because Christ's righteousness is the basis of acceptance. Romans distinguishes the finished work that establishes peace with God from the believer's later growth.

Doctrinal relationship

Justification changes the believer's standing before God. It does not claim that the flesh has been perfected or that temptation has disappeared. Confusing standing with experience produces either triumphalism or despair.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

3. The Inner Struggle and the Presence of Sin

Biblical passage

Ro 7:14-25; Gá 5:16-17; Stg 1:14-15; 1 Jn 1:8-10

Textual explanation

Romans 7 describes a painful contradiction: recognizing the good while discovering another force at work in opposition. Galatians

presents the conflict between flesh and Spirit. First John rejects claims of sinlessness. These passages do not celebrate sin; they expose self-reliance and lead us to depend on Christ.

Doctrinal relationship

A distinction must be made between sin's presence and its dominion. The believer can still feel its pressure and yield, but must no longer present himself or herself to sin as an inevitable slave. The struggle itself is not proof of divine abandonment; it often evidences a conscience awakened by the Spirit.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

4. The Believer May Stumble and Fall

Biblical passage

Pr 24:16; 1 Co 10:12-13; Gá 6:1; Stg 3:2; 1 Jn 2:1

Textual explanation

Warnings addressed to believers would be unnecessary if falling were impossible. Paul tells the apparently strong to watch; Galatians commands restoration for one caught in a trespass; James recognizes that all stumble in many ways; John writes so that his spiritual children may not sin, while also addressing the real possibility that one does.

Doctrinal relationship

Falling must not be presented as a desirable norm or a final identity. The biblical response combines truth and gentleness: acknowledge sin, go to Christ, receive correction, and resume the path of obedience.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

5. Christ as the Perfect Example

Biblical passage

1 P 2:21-23; He 4:15; Fil 2:5-8

Textual explanation

First Peter 2:21 places the believer's unjust suffering under Christ's footsteps. The verse primarily teaches example: Christ suffered without responding through sin, deceit, or threat. His conduct reveals perfect obedience and confident surrender to the righteous Judge.

Doctrinal relationship

Following His footsteps does not mean repeating His redemptive work or attaining sinlessness by human effort. It means that the Redeemer also forms in the redeemed a new way of responding to suffering.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

6. Christ as Substitute at the Cross

Biblical passage

Is 53:4-6; 1 P 2:24; 2 Co 5:21; Gá 3:13; He 9:26-28

Textual explanation

Substitution is explicit in 1 Peter 2:24: Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree. The passage moves from the example of verse 21 to the unrepeatable work of verse 24. The Righteous One takes the place of the unrighteous; the debt is not denied but dealt with at the cross.

Doctrinal relationship

The sufficiency of the cross prevents two errors: treating sin as insignificant and imagining that repentance or discipline completes something Christ left unfinished. Works add no merit to His sacrifice; they are fruit produced in those reached by it.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

7. Christ as Advocate and Intercessor

Biblical passage

1 Jn 2:1-2; Ro 8:33-34; He 7:25; 9:24

Textual explanation

John holds two statements together without contradiction: he writes so that we may not sin, and he declares that if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father. Christ's advocacy does not minimize sin; it answers sin on the basis of righteousness and propitiation. Romans adds that the One who died and rose also intercedes for us.

Doctrinal relationship

The fallen believer should not hide from Christ but go to Him. Our Advocate does not plead imaginary innocence; He presents the effectiveness of His own work. This truth produces humility, gratitude, and restoration, not arrogance.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

8. Confession, Cleansing, and Restoration

Biblical passage

Sal 32:1-5; 51:1-12; 1 Jn 1:7-9; He 4:14-16

Textual explanation

To confess is to call sin what God calls it, without excuse or concealment. First John links confession with God's faithfulness and justice to forgive and cleanse. The cross is not repeated; its sufficiency is pastorally applied to the believer's conscience.

Doctrinal relationship

Restored fellowship must be distinguished from a new justification. The corrected child returns to transparent communion with the Father; sonship is not purchased again by tears or penance.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

9. No Condemnation in Christ**Biblical passage**

Ro 8:1-4,31-39; Jn 5:24; 10:27-29; Col 2:13-14

Textual explanation

Romans 8:1 answers the cry of Romans 7 with a judicial declaration: there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Security rests on union with Christ, on God's justifying act, and on the Son's intercession. It does not depend on denying the struggle but on the Savior's sufficiency.

Doctrinal relationship

‘No condemnation’ does not mean ‘no correction,’ ‘no consequence,’ or ‘no call to holiness.’ It means that the final sentence against the believer was borne by Christ and cannot be reinstated by an accusation that ignores the cross.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

10. Condemnation, Discipline, and Consequences**Biblical passage**

2 S 12:9-14; 1 Co 11:30-32; Gá 6:7-8; He 12:5-11

Textual explanation

Condemnation belongs to the courtroom; discipline belongs to the family. Hebrews presents correction as evidence of sonship and as a means by which God produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Temporal consequences can be serious even when judicial guilt has been dealt with in Christ.

Doctrinal relationship

This distinction protects against two extremes: interpreting every hardship as punishment for a specific sin, or assuming forgiveness automatically removes every consequence. Divine discipline is wise, fatherly, and directed toward our sharing in His holiness.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

11. Sanctification by the Spirit

Biblical passage

Ro 8:12-14; Gá 5:16-25; 2 Co 3:18; Fil 2:12-13; 1 Ts 5:23-24

Textual explanation

The grace that justifies also trains and transforms. Sanctification is not the repair of a defective justification; it is the development of a life already reconciled to God. The Spirit produces fruit, illuminates the Word, convicts of sin, and empowers obedience.

Doctrinal relationship

The believer participates actively—watching, praying, confessing, resisting, and serving—while recognizing that God is at work within. Growth may be uneven; its measure is not proud comparison with others but increasing dependence on Christ.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

12. Glorification and Final Deliverance

Biblical passage

Ro 8:23-30; 1 Co 15:51-54; Fil 3:20-21; 1 Jn 3:2; Ap 21:4

Textual explanation

Present Christian experience includes groaning and hope. The redemption of the body will publicly complete what God began. In glorification there will no longer be the presence of sin, corruption, or death. Likeness to Christ will be complete because we shall see Him as He is.

Doctrinal relationship

Future hope prevents both perfectionism and resignation. We have not yet arrived, but neither are we walking without a destination. The One who began the good work will bring it to completion.

Application

Read the passages in context, identify what they affirm about Christ, and respond with confession, faith, and concrete obedience. Avoid turning a personal experience into a rule for everyone.

Direct texts

These passages should be read in full. The summary indicates their role in the argument and does not replace the biblical text.

Reference	Contribution to the study
1 P 2:21-24	Christ left an example, committed no sin, and bore our sins on the tree.
1 Jn 1:7-10	Acknowledges the reality of sin and

	God's provision of cleansing and forgiveness.
1 Jn 2:1-2	Exhorts believers not to sin and presents Jesus Christ as Advocate.
Ro 7:14-25	Describes the inner conflict and directs deliverance toward Jesus Christ.
Ro 8:1-4	Declares no condemnation for those who are in Christ.
Ro 8:31-39	God justifies; Christ died, rose, and intercedes.
Gá 5:16-25	Sets out the flesh-Spirit conflict and the fruit of the Spirit.
He 7:25	Affirms Christ's continuing intercession and saving ability.
He 12:5-11	Distinguishes fatherly discipline from judicial rejection.
2 Co 5:21	Summarizes the substitutionary exchange centered in Christ.

Complementary texts

These passages should be read in full. The summary indicates their role in the argument and does not replace the biblical text.

Reference	Contribution to the study
Is 53:4-6	Anticipates the Servant who bears the guilt of others.
Sal 32:1-5	Shows guilty silence, confession, and forgiveness.
Sal 51:1-12	Expresses repentance and the desire for restoration.
Pr 24:16	Presents the righteous person's fall and rising again.

Jn 5:24	Relates faith, eternal life, and passage from death to life.
Jn 10:27-29	Emphasizes the Shepherd's care and the security of His sheep.
1 Co 10:12-13	Warns against self-confidence and promises a way of escape in temptation.
Gá 6:1-2	Commands gentle restoration of the one who falls.
Stg 3:2	Recognizes that all stumble in many ways.
Fil 1:6	Affirms God's faithfulness to complete His work.
Col 2:13-14	Presents forgiveness and cancellation of debt at the cross.
1 Co 15:51-54	Directs hope toward final transformation.

Essential Doctrinal Distinctions

Concept	Meaning
Justification	God's definitive declaration based on Christ.
Sanctification	The Spirit's progressive work in the believer's life.
Glorification	Final deliverance from sin's presence.
Condemnation	The judicial sentence from which Christ delivers the believer.
Discipline	Fatherly correction directed toward righteous fruit.
Confession	Honest acknowledgment of sin before God.
Advocacy	Christ's representation on behalf of the believer.

Frequent objections

1. If we still sin, what changed at salvation?

Our standing before God, our relationship to sin, the presence of the Spirit, and our destiny changed. Salvation does not deny the struggle; it breaks sin's claim to define us and guarantees its final defeat.

2. Does eternal security authorize sin?

No. Paul rejects that conclusion in Romans 6. Grace unites the believer to Christ and calls the believer to present himself or herself to God. Using grace as an excuse contradicts its transforming purpose.

3. Why does a justified person still need an Advocate?

Because justification does not immediately remove sin's presence. Christ's advocacy applies the effectiveness of His work and sustains the child's relationship with the Father.

4. Does confession mean being saved again?

No. Confession restores affected fellowship and acknowledges the truth before God. It does not repeat the sacrifice or turn sonship into a prize that must be earned each day.

5. Does every fall prove there was never faith?

No automatic verdict is warranted. Scripture calls for self-examination but also records corrected and restored believers. Fruit and perseverance matter; final judgment belongs to God.

Conclusion

The believer has been justified by faith and reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. The believer may still fall because sin's presence has not yet been removed from mortal experience. Yet the believer is not left defenseless: Christ, who committed no sin, bore our sins in His body on the tree, rose again, and intercedes as Advocate. Security therefore rests not on human ability never to stumble, but on the Savior's sufficiency. This security never trivializes sin. It leads us to confess, receive the Father's correction, walk by the Spirit, restore the fallen gently, and await glorification. In Christ there is no condemnation; in the Christian life there is still struggle, discipline, and growth; in the final consummation there will be no presence of sin.

Study questions

1. What is the relationship between repentance and faith?
2. What changes—and what does not change immediately—in justification?
3. How does Romans 7 distinguish renewed desire from indwelling sin?
4. Why must 1 Peter 2:21 be read together with 2:24?
5. In what sense is Christ our example, and in what sense our Substitute?
6. How does 1 John 2:1-2 guard against both license and despair?
7. What is the difference between condemnation, discipline, and consequences?
8. How should a believer respond after sinning?

9. What role does the Spirit play in sanctification?
10. How does the hope of glorification transform the present struggle?

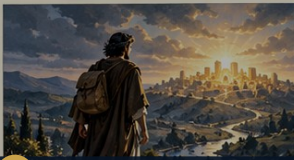
Note on Sources

Biblical references are supplied for contextual reading. Brief Spanish quotations follow the Reina-Valera 1960. Francisco Lacueva's interlinear is used to observe the Greek text, without attributing unverified wording to it or building doctrine on isolated etymologies. The English and Portuguese versions translate the study's editorial exposition; an authorized Bible edition in each language should be consulted for liturgical reading or publication of extended quotations.

Appendix I - Doctrinal Infographic

JUSTIFIED, YET STILL EXPOSED TO FALLING

Christ, Our Substitute and Advocate: the Believer's Security in the Face of Sin



1 REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Acts 20:21

Turn to God and rest in Jesus Christ.



2 JUSTIFIED

Rom 5:1

God declares the believer righteous through Christ's work.



3 THE STRUGGLE REMAINS

Rom 7:24-25

Sin's presence calls for dependence on Christ.



4 WE MAY STUMBLE

1 Cor 10:12

The warning calls for vigilance, not despair.



5 CHRIST, OUR EXAMPLE

1 Pet 2:21-23

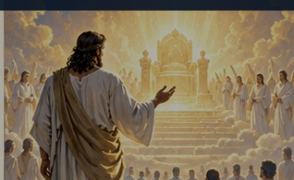
He suffered without sin and left steps of obedience.



6 CHRIST, OUR SUBSTITUTE

1 Pet 2:24

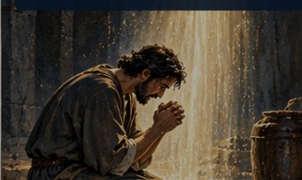
He bore our sins in His body on the tree.



7 CHRIST, OUR ADVOCATE

1 John 2:1-2

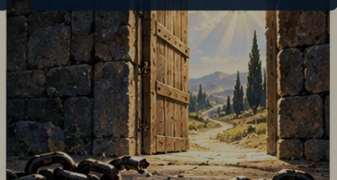
If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father.



8 CONFESSION AND CLEANSING

1 John 1:9

We acknowledge sin; God forgives and cleanses.



9 NO CONDEMNATION

Rom 8:1

Our security rests in being in Christ.



10 FATHERLY DISCIPLINE

Heb 12:5-11

God corrects His children to produce righteousness.



11 WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Gal 5:16-25

Grace produces fruit and growing obedience.



12 GLORIFICATION

1 John 3:2

Deliverance from sin's presence will be complete.

Compiler's biographical note



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Editorial note: sensitive personal data, identity documents, addresses, and other private information are omitted.